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2020 Pierce County Democrats Endorsement Questionnaire
-Partisan Election-

Candidate name: __Preston Anderson_____

Position sought: __Pierce County Council District 4_____

Date submitted: __03/30/2020_____

Candidate qualities and conduct: The Pierce County Democratic Central Committee endorses and supports qualified Democrats seeking elected office. When deciding whether to recommend endorsement, the Endorsements Committee may consider the candidate’s dedication to Democratic Party values and principles, the viability of the campaign, and the candidate’s qualifications for office, among other things. Endorsed candidates are discouraged from supporting non-Democratic candidates or from supporting any candidate who doesn’t represent Democratic values. Endorsed candidates should distinguish themselves from any Democratic opponents in an objectively fair, informational, and non-confrontational fashion.

By submitting this endorsement questionnaire, I publicly affirm:

- I am a Democrat and will uphold Democratic Party values.
- I will abide by the above principles of conduct.

You may respond N/A (not applicable) if appropriate. Expand or decrease space as needed.

Questions

1. Why are you running for this particular office?

I wish to be an active presence in the community, outreaching Pierce County constituents regularly, keeping them engaged and ultimately personally invested in programs and projects that improve the quality of life for all Pierce County residents. It is painful to see that Pierce County is being depicted as anti-public transportation. I believe as a councilmember, with energy and resolve, I can potentially shift some attitudes toward investing in public infrastructure to include transportation and behavioral health.

2. What are your qualifications (traditional or not) for seeking this elected office?

I have worked in the behavioral health care field as a clinical social worker for over ten years. My years of working at the micro-level and being involved in varying capacity at the policy-

level has enabled me to sharpen my insight into the behavioral health care crises impacting the Puget Sound area. This is critically needed especially so in Pierce County where the increase in sales tax for behavioral health has still not passed out of the council.

3. What are the 1 - 3 most important issues for your district or your elected body/office?

- Affordable Housing
- Behavioral Health Care for all
- Improving air quality around the Port of Tacoma by enhancing the freight corridor and investing in green-technology.

4. Why should the Pierce County Democratic Party support you for this position, and how have you demonstrated Democratic values?

I have been actively engaged in my community whether serving on the Tacoma Human Rights Commission or outreaching the community to educate and mobilize against Gerrymandering. My focus has been upon giving a voice to the marginalized. Even as a clinician, upholding Social Work values, I ensure the people I serve are valued and given a voice. I would continue to cultivate this ethic once on the council.

5. When elected, how will you make yourself accessible, and how would you obtain constituent input on issues and decisions?

It is my nature to listen to people, to be actively involved in the conversation, to provide the people I serve space to voice their concerns, to connect with their peers/neighbors, and to collectively invest in the process of creating a welcome forum for discussion. I plan to have regular town hall sessions where people can come together and talk with each other, not at each other. Additionally, I would foster welcoming forums that are inclusive, and value diversity and equity. As a clinician with plenty of experience facilitating difficult discussions I believe I would be a valuable addition to the County Council.

6. How have you previously provided and how would you increase access and influence for people and groups that may lack them?

I have gone to shelters in the past to provide a forum to discuss concerns around employment barriers with populations profoundly marginalized. I would not hesitate to speak out for the marginalized. It is also important to advocate for those who may lack resources to have their voice heard—an example is the times County Council meetings are held; many lower-income

residents cannot come during these hours. Again I would ensure the council had a presence in the community during evening hours and within the communities of my constituents.

7. Do you support unrestricted access to reproductive health care for all women, including the right to abortion? Yes.

8. What are the core functions of the elected office/body you seek; how can you improve them?

The core functions of the Pierce County Council are passing legislation, setting county policy, and adopting the county budget. One of my goals is to enhance transparency and continue to expand access to council meetings to the public.

9. Please list any key endorsements.

Actively soliciting endorsements.

IF ELECTED TO THIS POSITION (*some questions may not be applicable*):

10. What would you do to ensure that your constituents each have a truly equal and fair opportunity to succeed based on merit and effort, rather than pre-existing status or classification?

I would like to promote greater involvement within the communities with organizations who actively promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Having a regular discussion on the council around diversity, equity, and inclusion is essential to ensuring the constituents recognize the importance these values have in creating a healthy and happy environment for all. This is done on the council, through created commissions and boards, and also it is imperative that the councilmember facilitate this discussion in the community as well.

11. What benefits and problems come from increasing population; how would you address them?

Some benefits we've seen in Pierce County with the increase in population is the subsequent investment infrastructure and services necessary to support the growth in population. Some problems we run into, however, is efficiently moving people around the region within limited space and inadequate public transportation. I would heavily promote the need for Pierce County residents to support greater investment in public transportation—this would require the councilmember to actively outreach and educate in person.

12. How would you support workers, including union workers, whether employed privately or by government?

I wish to help build a thriving South Sound that creates family wage jobs, strengthening the presence of unions for generations to come. I believe further gains can be made with growing the presence of unions in Pierce County. Even in spite of the economic disruption of COVID-19, when we rebuild and reorganize it is going to be important that unions be allowed to take the lead to ensure worksites are safe, pay and benefits keep pace with the market, that workers be provided an adequate safety net, and that as a community we can celebrate and recognize the contributions of our local unions.

13. What policies and actions would you take to protect and improve the natural environment?

Being an active outdoorsman and avid hiker the protection of our natural resources is exceptionally important to me. I believe the region is far behind where we need to be with investing in fire mitigation in the Western Cascades. I would educate the community about this critical need and hopefully enhance public engagement to where the community would want to invest more in maintaining our natural resources. Federal and State money would also need to be solicited to catch-up to where we need to be with protecting our forests.

14. What would you do to increase housing access and decrease income inequality?

One of the answers to decreasing income inequality is expanding worker's rights to unionize and negotiate their contracts. Increasing housing access is just as important. Creating more affordable housing has to be a collaboration with other government bodies to lower the cost of housing and to dilute the speculative real estate market. This requires action at the city, county, multi-state collaboration and Federal intervention. This cannot be done by Pierce County alone.

15. Identify any budget challenges for your elected office/body; how would you deal with them?

With the COVID-19 pandemic it is uncertain how profoundly impacted our county budget will be. This is evolving day-to-day. Soliciting the cooperation of the community in shared sacrifice and investment will be a key piece to creating the next county budget. Again, outreach and education within the community will be critical to ensuring the county is able to continue functioning with limited resources.

16. How will you approach safety, police, and court system issues – and what are they?

In Pierce County we are blessed to have a Sheriff who values community engagement. While serving on the Tacoma Human Rights Commission during the verdict served to George Zimmerman following the murder of Trayvon Martin, we had a community forum at the Shiloh

Baptist Church in which Sheriff Paul Pastor showed and spoke to the community. I wish to continue that level of community engagement and earn the trust of my constituents. As a person of color I am familiar with how our community at times views the police force. I hope to bridge difficult conversations and advocate for communities that may not otherwise be given an opportunity to be heard. I also recognize the importance our sheriff's deputies and police officers have in ensuring the safety of our community. They continually put their lives on the line for others. As a Veteran I know the value of service and intend to regularly celebrate their service and sacrifice to the community.

17. Finally, any additional comments you would like to share with the Committee:

It is hard to quantify and put on paper the unique strengths and character I would bring to the role as County Council Member. However, I can assure you that my service to my country in uniform was done with full knowledge of the inherent dangers and sacrifice involved, yet I still came forward and answered the call and deployed to Iraq. In the interest of dismantling voter suppression in the southeast I took up that call and traveled 3000 miles to pitch in with an effort to outreach, educate and mobilize the community to end Gerrymandering. I am willing to sacrifice comfort and convenience for myself in order to improve the quality of life for others. I am willing to advocate, to fight for justice and equity. I am willing to have difficult and authentic conversations—it is much needed in politics today.