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2020 Pierce County Democrats Endorsement Questionnaire
-Partisan Election-

Candidate name: Rebecca Parson

Position sought: U.S. House of Representatives in Congressional District WA-06

Date submitted: 5/5/20

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?

The biggest factor in deciding to run was the urgency of the warning that we only have until 2030 to take bold action on climate change to stave off the worst consequences of climate change. My opponent Derek Kilmer has made it abundantly clear that he opposes the Green New Deal, and he says that it would violate House ethics rules for him to swear off oil money.

Aside from climate, people in WA-06 are dying of addiction, lack of healthcare, and homelessness, and every year that goes by is more lives lost.

Our district has had Democratic representatives for 55 years, so there's no excuse for us to be represented by the 11th most conservative Democrat in the House (as ranked by GovTrack). The people of WA-06 want and need policies like the Green New Deal, Medicare for All, and a housing guarantee.

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

- Court-Appointed Special Advocate for Foster Youth in Pierce County [2019]
- Commissioner on the Tacoma Area Commission on Disabilities [2018-present]
- Co-Leader of Indivisible Tacoma [2017-2018]
- Volunteer with Tacoma Tenants Organizing Committee [2019-present]
- Board Member of Whole Washington [2019-present]
- Precinct Committee Officer for precinct 27-401 [2019-present]
- Chair of Endorsement Committee for 27th Legislative District Democrats [2019]
- Member of Tacoma Democratic Socialists of America [2018-present]

Organizing candidate forums, conducting candidate interviews, canvassing for other candidates, and interacting with city staff, city councilmembers, activists, people detained at the NWDC, and more has qualified me to be a member of Congress. Unlike many members of Congress, I'm not a millionaire and I'm a renter who knows what it's like to worry about paying rent next month. I'll never forget that my purpose as a representative will be to serve my constituents and help people build decent, dignified lives for themselves with economic security.

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

Affordable housing, healthcare, and good union jobs.

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

For my entire adult life, I have fought for Democratic values: I serve as a commissioner on the Tacoma Area Commission on Disabilities to advise City Council on how to make Tacoma more livable with people with disabilities, and I'm an organizer with the Tacoma Tenants Organizing Committee where I have helped secure significant protections for renters in Tacoma. Additionally, I have worked alongside community members to co-organize several events: a fundraiser for detainees in the Northwest Detention Center; candidate forums for Pierce County Prosecutor, WA Supreme Court Justice, and Tacoma City Council; and a vigil after Charlottesville at the Tacoma Chinese Reconciliation Park.

Unlike Rep. Kilmer, I am in alignment with the state Democratic Party platform in calling for single-payer healthcare.

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

I believe politicians should directly serve their constituents, not corporate donors and lobbyists. I am the only Democrat in the race who doesn't take money from corporations or lobbyist donors. As a representative, I will commit to close contact with my constituents with regular Town Halls through a variety of formats, including in-person town halls, online town halls, regular "office hours" around the district, and attending the meetings of our local activist groups. I will listen more than I speak, and use my platform to uplift my constituents' needs and accomplishments.

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

In 2008, I served as a human rights observer for an indigenous community in Mexico that was being threatened by paramilitary groups, helping to increase their safety and access to a higher quality of life.

I've also served in AmeriCorps, where I worked at a nonprofit that helps first-generation college students go to college and thrive there.

I've visited with a person detained in the Northwest Detention Center (NWDC) to hear about his experience there and his suffering in being detained — as a senior with two serious medical conditions — away from his children and grandchildren. When a Tacoma City Council member asked to meet with me and another Indivisible Tacoma leader to discuss the NWDC, I relayed the reports of deplorable conditions there and recommended the City Council member meet with La Resistencia, since that organization is led by people detained. I hoped in that way to increase the access that people detained have to our city's leaders.

As a commissioner on the Tacoma Disabilities Commission, I chair the committee that's working to bring a wheelchair-accessible taxi service to Tacoma, so people with disabilities have greater access to transportation than they do now.

My political policies recognize the uneven power structures that exist today and aim to uplift and empower the working class, who lack the access and influence they deserve. I support single-payer healthcare, which would take power away from pharmaceutical and insurance companies and give it to the people. I believe in truly affordable housing, increased rights for workers, disability rights, LGBTQIA+ rights, indigenous rights, and women's rights. My environmental, health care, and educational policies recognize that communities of color and poor communities are often hit the hardest by the policies we need to change.

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

Yes, without compromise. I believe in a universal Medicare for All system, which includes access to reproductive health care for all women. I support safe, legal, affordable abortion, birth control, high-quality pre- and post-natal care, gender-confirmation surgery and care, and family planning services.

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

First and foremost, a Member of the House must represent the needs of her district. She must place her constituents' welfare over those of corporations and lobbyists, be in consistent contact with her constituents, and use her platform to spotlight the lives of the people she represents. As the only candidate in the race who refuses corporate donations, I will fight to truly get money out of politics. As the first woman or member of the LGBTQIA+ community to run for this seat, I will bring representation and lived experience that Congress still, to a large degree, lacks.

9. Please list any key endorsements.

Tacoma City Council Member Chris Beale, Port Angeles City Council Member Schromen-Wawrin, the Washington State Democrats' Progressive Caucus, and Chimacum School Board Member Sarah Martin.

Brand New Congress, the Washington State Democrats' Progressive Caucus, the Democratic Socialists of America, Our Revolution, the People's Policy Project, and Matriarch PAC.

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?

Firstly, we must recognize that equity means that different groups of people start from different places due to racism, sexism, homophobia, religious bigotry, and other forms of discrimination. Therefore, disadvantaged groups must be given extra support with funding, e.g., more funding for historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). In order to achieve true progress, we cannot have race-blind policies.

Secondly, my labor platform was ranked by the national think tank Data for Progress as the second strongest of any congressional candidate — including incumbents — in the country. Helping strengthen the labor movement will give my constituents an equal opportunity to succeed.

Thirdly, I will work to balance the uneven allocation of power in this country by supporting universal programs like Medicare for All, free public college and trade school for all, and housing for all. These policies will help uplift everyone.

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

Increasing population usually brings gentrification, which has myriad negative impacts, especially on communities of color. Tacoma is experiencing some of the fastest rising rents in the country due to population growth, and to combat this, I support national rent control, just cause for eviction, funding for community land trusts, and investment in social housing through a Homes Guarantee. We must protect those who were born and raised here, including Indigenous peoples, while also welcoming those who choose to make Pierce County their home, including immigrants.

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

I support:

- Making it easier to form and join a union through measures such as a majority sign up process.
- Passing H.R. 2474: the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act.
- Enacting “first contract” provisions so that employers cannot prevent union formation via endless stalling.
- Giving federal workers the right to strike, so federal workers can fight for better pay and treatment just like any other union member.
- Repealing Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act, so that “right to work” is eliminated.
- Guaranteeing the right of all public employees to bargain collectively.
- Mandating codetermination on corporate boards, so that employees have 45% representation on corporate boards at all corporations with \$100+ million in annual revenue and at all publicly traded companies.
- Guaranteeing the right of first refusal, so that workers can buy a company when it goes up for sale, is closing, or is moving overseas.
- Establishing sectoral collective bargaining, so that wages, hours, and benefits will be set across industries, preventing a race to the bottom in union standards.
- Passing H.R.582: the Raise the Wage Act, to raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour.
- Ending the ability of corporations to renege on union contracts after merging.
- Banning the permanent replacement of striking workers, so all workers can strike without fear of losing their jobs.
- Establishing federal just cause, so employees can’t be fired at will.

- Ending the exemption of domestic and agricultural workers from protection under the Fair Labor Standards Act, the National Labor Relations Act, and other federal labor laws.
- Ending the misclassification of employees as contractors or supervisors.
- Banning the issuance of federal contracts to companies that outsource jobs, bust unions, or pay low wages.
- Eliminating the ability of employers to shirk their duties to employees via franchisee and contractor arrangements.
- Allowing secondary boycotts, so unions can boycott companies that engage in union-busting.
- Passing federal legislation enacting fair scheduling requirements, so that all workers have predictable, stable, and sufficient work hours.
- Ensuring that, under Medicare for All, unions can still negotiate for wrap-around services and benefits non-duplicative of those provided by Medicare for All.
- Implementing the Keep Our Pension Promises Act, so the pensions of 10 million Americans cannot be cut. If we can bail out Wall Street, we can bail out workers.
- Banning employers from forcing employees to attend anti-union meetings.
- Guaranteeing the right of all workers to unionize, including farm, domestic, and food service workers.

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

I'm fighting for effective climate action NOW, and recognize that we require a real response immediately. Incrementalism cannot continue, because 2030 is a hard deadline. In Congress, I will fight for a Green New Deal, a federal jobs guarantee for everyone in the new green economy, single-payer healthcare to mitigate the array of negative health outcomes related to climate change and industrial pollution, holding giant polluters criminally accountable for the willful destruction of our environment, and supporting local efforts to create change in how food is grown, processed, and delivered. I am especially committed to protecting the beauty, health, and biodiversity of our forests; keeping our water free of pollution and recovering the Orca population; and respecting the sovereignty of Tribes in our ecosystem with their traditional fishing rights.

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

As someone who's rent has increased 16% in the last four years and as tenants' rights organizer, affordable housing is at the forefront of my campaign. I support universal rent control, a national grace period of 14 days for rent payment, and just cause for eviction. Housing is a human right, and skyrocketing rent prices should not propel people into homelessness. I will fight for federal investment in public housing and anti-gentrification community land trusts. I also support a \$15 minimum wage and increased rights for workers.

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

The most pressing budget challenges are how corporate bailouts and our bloated war budget take precedent over working people, and I will fight for a moral budget that puts an end to our forever wars and unlimited corporate bailouts.

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

A key safety and police issue in this region primarily is the criminalization of our homeless neighbors. Law enforcement's role should be to protect and serve, and I intend to heal its relationship to the public by fighting for federal legislation to stop the endless encampment sweeps, and instead enact financial penalties for municipalities with laws against loitering, sleeping in cars and parks when the shelters are full, and feeding the homeless. We also have an unjust court system that I have witnessed as a Court Appointed Special Advocate to be disproportionately cruel to poor people and people of color, and we need federal laws to reduce mass incarceration and the over-policing of these communities.

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

I am a Pierce County resident and a lifelong Democrat, and I will fight for the people of this county and this Congressional District. I would be honored to receive an endorsement from the Pierce County Democrats.