

# ACLU People Power Washington

## 2020 Police Reform

### Candidate Questionnaire



<b>Candidate Name</b>	Kirsten Harris-Talley	
<b>Position Sought</b>	37 <sup>th</sup> LD State Representative, Pos. 2	
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### Part I – Yes/No Questions

Please answer the following questions		Yes	No	Additional Comments
1	Do you support statewide policy for:			
	Banning chokeholds	X		
	Banning tear gas	X		
	Use of body cameras	X		
2	Do you support abolishing qualified immunity for police?	X		
3	Do you support de-escalation standards and accountability for police?	X		
4	Do you support independent, civilian review of complaints of police use of force?	X		
5	Do you support eliminating investigation and discipline of use of force against	X		

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	civilians as topics for collective bargaining by law enforcement unions?			
6	Do you support decertification for serious misconduct by law enforcement officers?	X		
7	Do you support ending police use of and access to surplus military equipment?	X		

## Part II – Free Response Questions

What is your idea of public safety?

In my vision of public safety, all people can fully participate in community without fear of harm. When the public is safe, everyone will receive equal respect for their health and welfare, regardless of their race, neurology, bodily capabilities, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, immigration status, nationality, and religion. As a queer, Black mother rooted in a multicultural neighborhood in the Rainier Valley, genuine public safety is a life-or-death issue for me, my family, and my community, and I will continue to work tirelessly to achieve it.

In order to achieve public safety, we first must end the dangerous myths that police protect the public, and that police brutality can be eliminated through incremental reforms. I am proudly an abolitionist, because I believe our moral imperative is to end modern slavery in all forms including in the carceral state that impacts BIPOC and poor communities at the highest rates. U.S. police forces, which originated in slave patrols and to this day often collaborate with white nationalists, cannot be incrementally reformed. We've seen this to be true this year in visceral reality. The reality is that our communities, in particular Black and Brown communities, do not need militarized police forces to keep our communities safe - because we keep our communities safe.

Have you taken the [#ElectedsForJustice pledge](#)? If so, what actions do you intend to take to support the 5-part plan? If not, what points are barriers to your support, and why?

Yes, I am proud to be an early pledger and believe it is in line with my goals as an abolitionist. At the state level, I pledge to audit the Washington State Patrol to better understand funding and staffing and training. I will also champion the end to qualified immunity and other necessary reforms at the state level.

Under current state labor law, Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) with law enforcement unions are often a barrier for meaningful police reform. What efforts do you support that differentiate police unions from other labor unions so that change can happen without eroding other workers' rights?

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Police forces have a unique level of responsibility due to their ability to harm or kill civilians. It is a level of trust not extended to other public employees like teachers, trash collectors, postal workers, or any members of any other government employee union. This unique trust justifies unique provisions in state labor law, for law enforcement personnel only.

Police contracts often contain provisions that make it difficult to introduce measures to increase police accountability. These provisions often restrict how and when an officer can be questioned after a complaint is filed, allow for the destruction of disciplinary records, and prohibit civilian oversight. It is unreasonable to expect individual cities to negotiate CBAs without such provisions. Instead, the simpler and more affordable solution is to simply prevent municipalities from negotiating discipline matters in the first place. Therefore, I support legislation that restricts police union negotiations to matters like working conditions, wages, and benefits. Any subject that touches upon the use of force or any disciplinary matters would be prohibited. These restrictions would be limited to use of force and disciplinary matters for law enforcement personnel unions only; no other workers would be affected, and no other rights of police unions would be affected, either.

I support efforts to remove police unions from larger labor organizations, in order to differentiate them from the rest of the labor movement, and to stop the erosion of workers' rights. Police unions differ from other labor unions in that labor unions use the power of solidarity to empower workers against their employers. Historically, police have helped employers suppress strikes and working class action.


Are there police reform/accountability measures that are not addressed here that you think would be productive to pursue?

We can never reform the police into true defenders of public safety because the current system is not broken – it is operating in exactly the way it was designed. In order to achieve the public safety I described above, we must divest from these harmful systems, and replace them with systems that are created to protect and invest in community. In 35 out of 50 of America's largest cities, including Seattle, "public safety" (mainly the police) comprises the majority of city budgets – spending more than health, libraries, early learning, parks, recreation, food security, housing, transportation, infrastructure, utilities, arts, and elections all combined. With this level of funding from cities in addition to new funding at the state level, we can replace harmful systems with true community welfare and safety services, empowering first responders such as social workers, housing and houselessness specialists, and violence prevention coordinators to respond to most emergent situations. And we can invest in programs that prevent situations that lead to 911 calls in the first place, such as quality public education, affordable housing, restorative justice programs, drug rehabilitation programs, community-based street ambassador programs, vocational training, apprenticeship programs, mental health counseling, family counseling, gun safety laws, youth recreation facilities, employment opportunities, harm reduction programs for drug use, carceral higher education programs, and antibullying education. We must also see armed police as one portion of the profitable mass incarceration industry, which needs to be abolished in its entirety.

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**I affirm that all the information provided in response to this questionnaire is true, complete, and correct to the best of my ability, and that no relevant matter has been omitted.**

Signature		Date: Sept 28, 2020
Printed Name	Kirsten Harris-Talley	

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