

ACLU People Power Washington

2020 Police Reform

Candidate Questionnaire



Candidate Name	Frank Chopp	
Position Sought	State Representative, 43 rd LD, Position 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	Yes		
	Banning tear gas	Yes		
	Use of body cameras	Yes		
2	Do you support abolishing qualified immunity for police?	Yes		
3	Do you support de-escalation standards and accountability for police?	Yes		
4	Do you support independent, civilian review of complaints of police use of force?	Yes		
5	Do you support eliminating investigation and discipline of use of force against civilians as topics for collective bargaining by law enforcement unions?	Yes		
6	Do you support decertification for serious misconduct by law enforcement officers?	Yes		
7	Do you support ending police use of and access to surplus military equipment?	Yes		

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Part II – Free Response Questions

What is your idea of public safety?

Public safety is about addressing harm, providing opportunity, and investing in services that promote healthy communities. For too long, local governments have improperly used police to address a wide variety of issues, especially in communities of color. As the Executive Director of a large social service provider (now known as Solid Ground), I saw the positive impact that healthcare, housing, and treatment has on people's lives. Instead of incarcerating people, we need to offer affordable and accessible substance use and mental health treatment – not as a coercive diversionary program, but as a proactive service available to anyone who needs help, and which will provide welcoming facilities in our local communities.

For example, I've provided leadership to fund a new UW Behavioral Health Teaching Hospital, a new Behavioral Health Institute, hundreds of millions of dollars for supportive housing for those with mental health challenges, and many other public investments to truly address public safety.

Along with legislation like the proposed Treatment and Recovery Act, which I strongly support, I'm optimistic that we can address the root causes of community safety issues. I greatly appreciate the leadership of the ACLU in this very important public policy of the Treatment and Recovery Act.

Many issues related to poverty are inappropriately addressed through the criminal justice system. I advocate for a wholistic view of public safety, understanding that addressing poverty can improve the safety and well-being of the whole community. I saw the impact of anti-poverty programs as the Executive Director of Solid Ground, where our programs helped tens of thousands of low-income people access the resources they needed. Giving folks shelter, food assistance, and healthcare had a lasting impact on our community and helped address public safety concerns without criminalizing low-income people. Incarceration rarely helps someone out of poverty; more often, it cuts people off of their support networks and traps them in a cycle of incarceration.

In the legislature, I've fought for investments in affordable housing, free healthcare for kids, public transit service, public education, and other social services that have helped millions of Washingtonians. Anti-poverty programs, equitable and greater funding for public education, and free college tuition for all low-income students are essential to healthy and safe communities with economic opportunity and public safety.

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?

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Yes! I took the pledge the very day Councilmember Girmay Zahilay announced
#ElectedsForJustice: <https://twitter.com/ChoppRep/status/1268709370914734080?s=20>

We need systemic changes in policing. When I took the pledge, I committed to engaging with community, especially with folks impacted by police violence. As a white person, I don't have the lived experience of a person of color. It's incumbent on me to actively engage with communities of color and support their priorities for police reform. As a legislator who came up through the ranks as a community organizer, I always write policy with the folks who will be most impacted. This community organizing approach is often lacking in public policy, which is why I work so hard to bring marginalized groups into the policymaking process. To promote much-needed police reform, I will continue working with communities of color and supporting their policies and priorities.

In the months since I signed the pledge, I've met with members of the I-940 coalition and many others, including the families of victims of police violence and brutality. They have helped set the agenda and I offer my support – including my relationships with organized labor, my experience passing progressive legislation, and my know-how as a lifelong community organizer. Following the lead of the community coalitions and working with leaders like Councilmember Zahilay and my legislative colleagues who are people of color, I will prioritize legislation that enacts immediate reforms and combats systemic racism in policing and in all parts of our society.

I'm optimistic we can pass significant legislation next session, but fixing our broken criminal justice system will be an ongoing process. I've been a partner for the I-940 coalition and its new iteration, and I'm committed to supporting significant and immediate reforms. I'm in this fight to get justice and equal treatment for all.

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?

In this arena, collective bargaining agreements have gone far beyond wages, benefits, and retirement – they've prevented law enforcement officers from being held accountable in cases when they've violated someone's life. That's fundamentally different than bargaining agreements with other unions. We cannot give police unions veto power over a victim's due process, especially when it involves the deprivation of the civil liberties of an entire community. Police bargaining must be reformed so there is always due process. When an officer violates a person's civil liberties, there must be serious consequences, otherwise police will continue to abuse their authority.

The problems with the current law enforcement collective bargaining agreements were on full display during this summer's racial justice protests. Seattle police repeatedly used tear gas, military gear, and aggressive tactics against protesters, even when crowds were peaceful. In cities across

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the country, police shot rubber bullets at journalists and many others on live TV. Bargaining agreements have created dangerously unaccountable police departments.

Police bargaining contracts that obstruct due process have allowed police to act with near impunity, to the point that their violent responses to protests threaten our constitutional rights and ignore court orders. I'm grateful to the Washington ACLU's efforts in court to hold the Seattle police and others accountable. Working with organized labor, I will work to change state law to prevent police contracts from obstructing due process and to promote police accountability. I'm proud to be endorsed by the Washington State Labor Council, UFCW 21, SEIU 775 and 1199NW, UAW 4121, and many others. One of the endorsers of my campaign is Nicole Grant, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Martin Luther King Labor Council, which ejected the Seattle Police Guild from its membership earlier this year. I look forward to working together to fundamentally address the problems with police contracts.

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

We must pursue specific strategies to ensure law enforcement is held accountable, that there is oversight and transparency, and that training is tailored to address longstanding biases in police departments. Based on my conversations with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, I will prioritize and actively support these reforms in the next session:

- Permanently ban the use of tear gas, a toxic chemical that endangers people's health, made all the more evident with the COVID pandemic.
- Prohibit law enforcement officers from covering up any portion of badge. Local jurisdictions can find other ways to express mourning without obscuring names and badges.
- Prohibit law enforcement agencies from accepting surplus military equipment.
- Further restrict use of excessive or deadly force by police.
- Address the felony bar law to ensure there is due process in circumstances when law enforcement uses lethal force.
- Require state collection of data on police use of force.
- Strengthen de-escalation and anti-bias training for all law enforcement officers.
- Establish disciplinary actions for law enforcement officials who engage in hate speech.
- Require hiring practices and annual reviews to include PTSD evaluation and access to mental health services.
- And more.

This is an evolving set of policies and priorities. As I continue to engage with impacted communities, I'll support the reforms they feel are needed. Although police funding is primarily a local decision, I support initiatives to reinvest police funding in social services, including affordable housing, healthcare, childcare, and public education. The criminal justice system can't address many public safety needs, such as mental health, substance abuse, and homelessness. Investing in social services can act as a police reform by addressing the root causes of public safety issues and

by reducing interaction between police and communities that have been impacted by police violence.

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: 9/30/20
Printed Name	Frank Chopp	