

ACLU People Power Washington



2022 Policing and Public Safety Candidate Questionnaire – State Legislature

[People Power Washington – Police Accountability](#) strives to bring just and equitable public safety to our local communities through relationship building, education and policy reform. We champion policies that divest from police and reinvest in community-based solutions and alternate crisis response, decriminalize non-serious offenses, and implement accountability and enforceable standards for police officers and agencies. Our vision is for public safety in Washington to be community-driven and to meet the needs of all people equitably.

Our group’s work advocating for police accountability in our local communities has made us well aware of the important role our local government and elected officials play in driving policy around this issue. Appreciating the impact the Washington State Legislature has on our day-to-day lives, our hope is to empower voters with a non-partisan resource to understand how to vote their values through a lens of police reform and re-imagining of public safety.

Candidate Information

Candidate Name	Jeff Strickler
Position Sought	WA 16th LD, position 1
Campaign Contact Information	Website: www.electjeffstrickler.com Email: contact@electjeffstrickler.com

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Part I – Yes/No Questions

1. Do you support prohibiting traffic stops by armed law enforcement officers for low-level, non-moving violations such as vehicle registration violations and equipment failure?

Yes	Yes
No	
Additional Comments	In general I see these non-moving violation as a poor use of our police resources.

- Traffic stops are one of the most common ways members of the general public interact with police. For decades, there have been significant racial disparities in traffic stops, particularly for low-level violations, unjustified by the crime-fighting value. This undermines community trust, fairness, and wastes law enforcement resources.
- While there's a perception that traffic stops are dangerous for police, the reality is that they are far more dangerous for those being stopped, especially if they are people of color.
- As a result, Seattle and other jurisdictions, including Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and the State of Virginia, have restricted or banned traffic stops for low-level traffic violations.

2. Do you support establishing an Independent Prosecutor for cases of criminal conduct arising from police killings?

Yes	Yes
No	
Additional Comments	

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- Police investigating themselves present an inherent conflict of interest. County Prosecutors work closely with law enforcement and rely on law enforcement for gathering evidence, interviewing witnesses, and providing defense to law enforcement.
- Prosecutors, exercising prosecutorial discretion, often fail to file criminal charges even when unarmed citizens are killed at the hands of law enforcement.

3. Do you support a state law that would remove obstacles, like qualified immunity, when suing police officers for violating a person’s civil rights?

Yes	Yes
No	
Additional Comments	No person or entity should be immune from the consequences of violating someone’s civil rights.

- Today when someone’s constitutional rights have been violated or they are seriously injured or killed by the police, victims or victims’ families can only sue police or the department under federal law 42 USC 1983.
- This federal law includes the legal principle of qualified immunity, which protects government officials performing discretionary immunity from civil suits unless the plaintiff shows that the official violated "clearly established statutory or constitutional rights of which a reasonable person would have known."
- In essence, there are little to no consequences for when law enforcement commits the above actions.
- State legislation could give individuals a legal remedy under state law that does not currently exist.

4. Do you support a state law that would authorize the Attorney General’s (AG’s) Civil Rights Division to investigate a law enforcement department where there are patterns of misconduct?

Yes	Yes
No	
Additional Comments	I would also want to maintain the ability of the DoJ to take action in those cases where the AG is compromised of negligent.

- Today, in order to hold a law enforcement department accountable for patterns and practices of misconduct such as discriminatory policing, the US Department of Justice is the only entity that can investigate the department and bring a lawsuit or consent decree to effect change.
- State legislation could authorize the AG’s Civil Rights Division to investigate systemic practices that deprive individuals of rights protected by the Washington Constitution, to address the most harmful practices in a department and ensure a minimum quality of policing across Washington.

5. Do you support strengthening law enforcement accountability by establishing statewide protocols for complaints, investigations, discipline, and disciplinary appeals for serious misconduct?

Yes	Yes
No	
Additional Comments	Local control, IE: at the state level, is preferable and should be welcomed by departments wanting to maintain high standards.

- Holding officers accountable through termination or suspension for serious misconduct at the department-level is important for maintaining public trust and confidence in law enforcement.
- Currently, procedures for administrative accountability are determined separately for each police department or sheriff's office across the state resulting in inconsistencies and lack of public trust.

6. Do you support ending long term solitary confinement?

Yes	Yes
No	
Additional Comments	No good reason for this practice to exist.

- The UN Mandela Rules define long term solitary confinement as torture.
- Human beings have a basic biological need to establish and maintain contact with others. The deprivation of human contact causes severe psychological consequences including depression, anxiety, paranoia, PTSD, psychosis, self-harm and even suicide, which interfere with rehabilitation of incarcerated people.
- The use of solitary confinement does not reduce violence or staff assaults in prisons.

Part II – Free Response Questions

What is your idea of public safety? What are tangible ways to measure progress toward this goal?

I appreciate the use of the term public safety rather than law enforcement in this question, as the difference between the two is an important mental shift. Too often in the United States, we view challenging issues through a default lens of policing, because the real solutions are more challenging. Take examples like homelessness, drugs, immigration, domestic abuse, and school shootings. It's relatively easy to throw more police and police budgets at these issues, but our police are overworked and inadequately trained for many of these missions. We need to involve more social workers, mental health and other health specialties, and find ways to target the root causes rather than treating the people involved as law breakers to be penalized. Rather than measuring by persons jailed or fines levied, we'll reach a point of measurement like people off the streets and reengaged in life, or in the reduction of violent episodes.

What would you do, as a state legislator, to further your idea of public safety?

We need to take more things off the plate of the police that aren't their core strengths. Let our police train and be equipped for our most violent situations - the ugly jobs that no other group has the skills to take on. Separately, let's appropriately fund and bolster those groups - public and private - in our communities that are working to end homelessness, end poverty, end drug abuse, end domestic violence, and all the multitude of social issues that have defaulted to police in the past.

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


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In my area, I observe that many of our roadways are inadequate for our traffic, where the State Patrol is used as a control measure rather than investment in better infrastructure. Accident response teams would be a more appropriate use of public spending.

Given ongoing incidents in my local police department, it's very apparent that we need reform measures that would enable faster outside review of police actions and behaviors, with real consequences. I'm very concerned at the influence of right-wing extremist ideology in our police forces.

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: 13 June 2022
Printed Name	Jeffery Strickler	