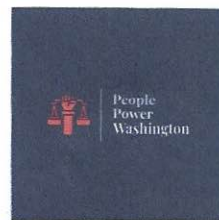


# ACLU People Power Washington

## 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

<b>Candidate Name</b>	Joe Kear
<b>Position Sought</b>	LD 17 Representative Pos. 2
<b>Campaign Contact Information</b>	Website: <a href="https://www.joekear.com">https://www.joekear.com</a> Email: <a href="mailto:joekearforstaterrep@gmail.com">joekearforstaterrep@gmail.com</a>

## 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?**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>No</b>	
<b>Additional Comments</b>	

- 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?**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>No</b>	
<b>Additional Comments</b>	

- 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.



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

<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>No</b>	
<b>Additional Comments</b>	

- 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?**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>No</b>	
<b>Additional Comments</b>	

- 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 understand that law enforcement is usually after the fact but I believe the public wants law enforcement to be visible as a deterrent. I support additional staffing to allow a community policing approach. But importantly we also need to have more training in equitable law enforcement to make law enforcement personnel aware of biases and discrimination. We need law enforcement to treat every member of the community with respect and to be able to be objective. We also need more training in de-escalation.

I also support behavioral health crisis response teams, like the successful CAHOOTS program in Eugene, OR. We don't need armed officers performing first response duty for members of the community in the middle of a drug or mental health crisis. These programs need to be available in every part of the state.

I also believe we need caseworkers on the street to work personally and extensively over time with homeless individuals. The chronic homeless have underlying issues and most would benefit from residential treatment centers but SW Washington State is among areas of the country with the fewest dual diagnosis treatment facilities. We should be transitioning the homeless to treatment, halfway houses and permanent housing. It will probably take less money that what we currently spend on encounters with law enforcement and jail, ER and hospital stays, and shelters and camps.

Another area of concern is keeping our communities viable and feeling like safe places. Funding for litter removal and graffiti removal, is also a priority, even though it seems minor. A community that looks like it cares, and like it is safe, is one that is conducive to maintaining safety. (The NYC subway system learned that removing graffiti nightly kept new graffiti to a minimum).

What are the ways to measure progress? Tracking the number of cases of discrimination in policing. Tracking the number of un-housed individuals. Tracking the cases of vandalism. Tracking the number of women and minority personnel in law enforcement.

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

We have a wealthy state. We can afford to fund community programs like staffing for community policing and behavioral crisis response teams. I would advocate for funding these approaches.

I would also seek funding for comprehensive approaches to the homeless crisis. We have chronically homeless individuals in every community and in rural areas, living in the woods. People living in survival mode, living moment to moment, are not able to move forward. Theft and drugs

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*People Power is the grassroots arm of the ACLU - while we adhere to ACLU principles, we are volunteer-driven and do not work for or officially represent the ACLU. People Power activists work in and from their local communities to further civil rights and liberties for all.*

are just part of survival for many. We need to take the humanitarian measure of actually providing housing and treatment.

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

As I mentioned, tracking progress with female and minority staffing can be helpful in creating law enforcement that is better at community relations. This is not to overlook the many examples around the country of biased treatment coming from female and minority officers. But it is moving in the right direction.

We also have to consider reforming our jails. Some law enforcement personnel move between jail duty and street duty. The inhumane conditions in our jails, and the exploitation of inmates with fees and assessed costs that become future burdens is not the way to treat people. That outlook could unfortunately be transferred to the street.

**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: 6/27/22
Printed Name	Joe Kear	