

# 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>	Dr. Patricia Weber
<b>Position Sought</b>	Senator, 32LD
<b>Campaign Contact Information</b>	Website: <a href="http://www.votepatweber.com">www.votepatweber.com</a> Email: <a href="mailto:patweber@votepatweber.com">patweber@votepatweber.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.

**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?**

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

- 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?**

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

- 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?**

<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?

A sense of personal safety, of freedom without favor and equality without exception for all people is the foundation of my conception of public safety. Driving a car down the freeway, expecting our fellow drivers to stay in their lane is one of the greatest examples of mutual confidence and trust in our society. Our mutual expectation that other drivers will do “right” as we share the public space is the idea of public safety. Our mutual expectations that we all have agreed to a commonly shared set of laws and to abide by these shared rules provide our conception of public and personal security.

Ours is not a perfect system. There are examples of discrimination, inequity, and exclusion. We have tried affirmative action, no affirmative action, preferences, quotas in the distribution of the benefits of following the rules. Often those with the power to control the crafting of rules, or those enforcing the rules, forget about freedom and equality that belongs to all people. They violate basic universal human and civil rights of some people.

People of goodwill must challenge the public policies that permit discrimination and violation of civilized safeguards that societies create for their communities. The Doctrine of Discovery issued by the Catholic church in 1493 conferred upon European monarchs and their explorers, including Christopher Columbus, the legal right to declare non-Christians to be non-humans and to kill them or enslave them and take their property. The idea of Doctrine of Discovery remains embedded in public policies and law today.

The Doctrine of Discovery has legitimized mining, fracking, extraction of minerals, water and resources that take wealth from indigenous communities to benefit the wealth accumulation of others, destroying the environment and the rules of public safety that have been created. The rights by conquest and domination, grounded in the Doctrine of Discovery, are in conflict with the Universal Law of Human Rights and the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Doctrine of Discovery was adopted to legitimize the divine right of kings and white, European men while the Universal Law of Human Rights legitimates the rights of individuals, everywhere.

We will only have full public safety if the rights of every individual, everywhere, are acknowledged and protected. Safety for some, at the expense of others, is a warped idea. Women and men, white and BIPOC, shall benefit equally. Inequality is not perpetuated. This is called “mainstreaming” and entails bringing the perceptions, experience, and interests of all impacted individuals to bear on policy-making, planning and decision-making.

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

I believe the procedures of the United Nations' mainstreaming analysis could be of great use in instituting comparative analyses of the impact on diverse citizens of any policy-making, planning and decision-making in the State Legislature. At the present time legislation simply describes what conditions in a society could be changed when a particular program is instituted. However, the proposed legislation is generally devoid of any impact on public safety of the individuals who might be touched by the proposed legislation.

The impact of a tax, or a regulation, or whatever is being proposed, is not included. An impact analysis is a technique that is designed to uncover or unearth the "unexpected" negative effects of a change on an organization or individual. When legislators are often directed to consider "who benefits and who pays", that type of deep impact analysis does not happen.

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

Perhaps.

**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	<i>Patricia Weber</i>	Date: 6/13/22
Printed Name	Patricia Weber	