

[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>	Emily Alvarado
<b>Position Sought</b>	State Representative 34th LEgislative District
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## Part I – Yes/No Questions

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

**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?**

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>No</b>	

<b>Additional Comments</b>	
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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?**

<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>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>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>No</b>	

<b>Additional Comments</b>	
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- 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?

We all deserve to be safe from violence. I believe true public safety begins with upstream, proactive community investment, particularly in communities of color that have suffered from sustained public disinvestment. We need to invest in housing, health care, including behavioral health care, education and childcare, economic opportunity, and civic infrastructure. When people have their needs met in stable, supportive communities, there is less violence. I also support investments in mental health crisis responders and social workers, and other efforts that connect people in crisis with resources. Community-driven violence prevention and restorative justice programs, which reduce violence and incarceration, are essential. Part of public safety is rebuilding trust through strong police accountability. Racial bias and over-policing needs to be addressed; and we need to listen to impacted communities. We also need stronger gun laws that remove guns from our communities— bans on assault style weapons, longer waiting periods, tougher background checks and stronger “extreme risk” laws so we can reduce gun violence.

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

As a legislator, we need to approach public safety beyond the scope it is defined as now. With a rise in hate crimes, we need to address how we can create safety for community members beyond policing. We must understand that community members can feel unsafe or wary of police interactions therefore we must create a safer environment for people to report hate crimes. I also support investment in mental health counselors for victims of hate crimes, conflict resolution, and other efforts that connect people in crisis with the resources they need.

Public safety is more than policing. We must work together on prevention to address the uptick in hate crimes. Culturally appropriate and community-led community safety is the way forward.

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

We need meaningful police accountability. We should not water down legislative attempts to eradicate excessive force and racial targeting. I will support deep investments in BIPOC communities and criminal legal reforms that address the policies that lead to the overrepresentation of Black community members in our carceral system. The negative impacts of the carceral system do not end the minute someone leaves prison– we must invest in measures that actively undo harm from this system. I will fight hard to ensure that formerly incarcerated people have access to housing, education, and employment including through expanding conviction clearance and expungement. If elected, I will follow the lead of the Black caucus on how to make continued, meaningful progress.

**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	Emily Alvarado	Date: 6/27
Printed Name	Emily Alvarado	