

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	Frank Chopp
Position Sought	State Representative, 43 rd District, position 2
Campaign Contact Information	Website: www.frankchopp.com Email: frankchopp@comcast.net

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	I have supported and voted for this proposal in the legislature.

- 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	I have supported and voted for this proposal in the legislature.

- 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	

- 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 have supported and voted for this proposal in the legislature.

- 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	

- 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	

- 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?

To help ensure public safety, it is imperative that we advocate for and enact laws addressing the root causes of crime and community disfunction. This agenda includes fighting poverty, creating social and racial justice, as well as promoting police accountability and criminal justice reform.

Public safety is about addressing harm, providing opportunity, and investing in services that promote healthy communities. 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. For example, instead of incarceration for many people, we need to offer affordable and accessible substance use and mental health treatment.

One of the best ways to get people up and out of poverty, is to get an education. For example, I initiated and enacted the Workforce Education Investment Act in 2019, to mandate free college and university tuition for all low-income students, over 50% of whom are people of color. It is the best student financial aid program in the nation.

There are many ways to measure progress in these regards: lowering the number of people living in poverty, increasing high school graduation rates, as well as tracking the number of post-secondary certificates, degrees, and apprenticeships leading to employment with living wages.

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

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

As a legislator, I have compiled a long list of enacted legislation and budget allocations along these lines, including major revenue sources to pay for a great variety of community investments in our people, particularly for low-income communities.

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

It's incumbent on me as a State Representative, to engage with communities of color and support their priorities for public safety, police reform and accountability. As a legislator who came up through the ranks as a community organizer, I have work with and consulted the folks most impacted.

For example, I met with members of the I-940 coalition and many others, including the families of victims of police violence and brutality. They helped set the agenda for legislation to implement police reform and accountability, including Initiative 940 and a set of legislative proposals in 2021 that were proposed by community-based coalitions of advocates.


I not only voted for the package of legislation in 2021, but also voted in 2022 against weakening those reforms.

Looking ahead, I will support legislation that enacts further reforms and combats systemic racism in policing and in all parts of our society. This includes much greater de-escalation training for police in handling confrontational situations.

Along with legislation like the proposed Treatment and Recovery Act, I'm optimistic that we can address many of 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.

We have made some significant progress, but there is much work to be done.

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: 6/30/22
Printed Name	Frank Chopp	