

# 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>	Representative Gerry Pollet
<b>Position Sought</b>	46 <sup>th</sup> District, Representative Pos. #1 (incumbent)
<b>Campaign Contact Information</b>	Website: <a href="https://www.gerrypollet.com/">https://www.gerrypollet.com/</a> Email: info@gerrypollet.com

## 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?

Public safety must mean freedom from fear, whether it is fear of being victimized by a criminal or someone acting in the name of the state. The knee on George Floyd's neck was the knee of the state, of our government. He was being arrested in the name of the state like countless Black, Brown, Native Americans subjected to fear and disparate policing. He would have been prosecuted in the name of the state – in your name and my name. So, it is up to us to dismantle racism, not to be comfortable in privilege we benefit from.

I've been committed to working, throughout my adult life, to undo systemic and institutionalized racism.

Public safety includes every single Washingtonian's right to be healthy. Gun violence and our allowance for military weaponry and failure to prevent the epidemic of death by gun suicide undermines public safety and greatly contributes to the mental health crisis – especially among youth.

As a Public Health faculty member at the UW, I know that public health has to include responding to people in mental and behavioral health crises with trained crisis responders and treatment capacity, not with armed responders. We need to dramatically increase our funding for educating, training and paying those crisis responders to meet the need for crisis responders and a full-range of treatment options (from community to in-patient for the most serious immediate crises). I've been a leader and will continue to lead on funding for educating, training and deploying professionals rather than armed police when people need mental / behavioral health interventions. Crisis response teams need to have the ability to have police support when they have professional reason to call for assistance.

It's necessary to measure and report all police uses of force, with reporting by race and ethnicity. It's unacceptable that some jurisdictions do not effectively track to require their officers to report. Without data, we can't show disparities based on race and we can't intervene to reduce the effects of longstanding institutional systemic racism. Just as with pedestrian safety, we need to have a zero fatality rate goal. Body cameras are an easy mechanism to assist in this effort, which is why I call below for the State to require every police agency in the State to be required to wear them.

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

I led on ending police unions from hiding records of police misconduct from the public, media, defense attorneys and investigations of disparities in policing. I led on efforts to allow the Criminal Justice Training Commission to permanently end a police officer's commission for violence and

discriminatory policing – regardless of what their employing police agency does. These are provisions which we did not, thankfully, roll back.

I will support codifying in law the standard adopted by our State Supreme Court that determining reasonableness of force must objectively include consideration of institutional and systemic racism.

I will continue to push for readoption of those provisions that we rolled back in 2022 that allow for discriminatory searches and use of force without any reasonable suspicion and which go beyond ensuring reasonable care to avoid force has been used, especially for minors. I led the legislative effort to ban use of physical force, planned restraint or isolation of our children in schools. The rollback opened the door to allowing police serving as misnamed “school resource officers” to use physical force on children. We know that long-term harm done to youth from physical force used against them by police or others in authority. That doesn’t diminish when it is moved outside the school building. Indeed, it increases.

I will continue to be a legislative champion to end gun violence! Public safety means living without fear of harm from guns, including both in a school or other public setting or in the home where they may be used in domestic violence or self-harm.

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


Body cameras must be required by the State to be worn by every commissioned police officer. We can’t let police unions and recalcitrant local officials continue to block this tool of justice, which has been proven to greatly reduce police violence – and to reduce violence against police!

I will continue my legislative work to ensure that the State may end a police officer’s career for discriminatory policing or violence (including sexual misconduct) regardless of local decisions.

I will continue to do the lifting to greatly expand training of mental and behavioral health specialists to fill the huge needs ranging from crisis responders to community practitioners to in-patient settings.

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**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	Gerry Pollet	