

QUESTIONNAIRE: U.S. REPRESENTATIVE, CD10

1) Please describe the qualifications, including education, and life experiences that make you the best candidate for the office of U.S. Representative for CD10.

I am a working mom of a five-year-old and a seven-year-old. I'm a Washingtonian, born and raised, but my upbringing was *not* the typical one you hear from most politicians. I grew up the daughter of a single mother. My mom struggled with substance abuse issues so I spent the first ten years of my life in and out of foster care, and I ended up homeless at 16. I know what it's like when the deck is stacked against you. But I also know what can happen when our communities come together -- because I am the product of strong and strategic investments in progressive policies that change people's lives for the better.

Vital programs like Head Start helped me survive childhood. The guidance and mentoring of caring public school teachers and counselors who believed in me, and relentlessly helped and encouraged me to go to college -- they motivated me to do something positive with my life. And I would not have reached that next level without the further help of grants and scholarships that gave me the opportunity to go to Washington State University. In short, thanks to these progressive investments and caring mentors, I was able to break the cycle of poverty and change the arc of my life for the better.

With that help, I achieved three major milestones that I'm very proud of:

- 1) I became the very first in my family to graduate from college, earning a degree from WSU and then a Master's degree from Gonzaga.
- 2) I was hired, first by Senator Patty Murray and then by Governor Inslee's administration, to work on the needs of the South Sound, and in particular, to be an advocate for military families and veterans. I can tell you as the twin sister of a 17-year combat veteran in the United States Air Force -- the little brother that I sent off to war after 9/11 is not the man who came home. Servicemembers put their lives on the line to defend our freedoms, and I was proud to be an outspoken advocate for service members, veterans and their families, making sure that they gain access to the opportunities and benefits that they've earned and deserve.
- 3) I became a state representative, elected in 2016 after narrowly defeating a Republican incumbent. I was the first African American woman elected to the legislature in 18 years, and the only legislator with kids under 5. I became the crucial 51st vote for landmark progressive policies to pass the legislature and become a model for the nation, including the best Paid Family and Medical Leave policy in the nation, apprenticeship and job training programs that are providing skills training for thousands, and the first in the nation public option for health care as well as the first long term health care benefit.

What I have realized throughout my career, and as a legislator as we fought and won these landmark battles over the kind of policies that had made a difference in my life and thousands like me, was that I had a unique perspective to offer in these debates. My background, the obstacles I've overcome, and the progressive investments that I bear witness to afford me a viewpoint that's not often seen or heard in many corridors of power and that is desperately needed right now.

That's why I'm running for Congress.

2. Please describe what you believe are the most significant issues in this race and why.

As I write this, I am at home in self-isolation, just like millions of Americans all over the country. Outside a pandemic is killing thousands and putting millions more out of work. Workers across every industry have been impacted and while we will see a day where we have beaten this virus and hopefully saved as many lives as we can, the economic recovery following a crisis of this magnitude will be immense. It has become clear we need a coordinated public health response from our federal government, and currently the federal government has not been up to the challenge. Thanks to the leadership of our state officials, led by Governor Inslee, we have been able to slow the spread of coronavirus here in Washington, but there is a long road to return to normal life ahead.

In Congress I will be a fierce advocate for implementing lessons learned from the coronavirus pandemic to ensure the federal government is prepared for any outbreak in the future, while fighting for aid to individuals and small businesses that have suffered as a consequence of the pandemic. The Trump administration's reckless funding cuts to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) slowed our response to the coronavirus crisis. We need to drastically increase funding for the CDC and ensure they implement policies and procedures that will prevent another pandemic on this scale.

Not since the Great Depression have we seen an economic challenge like this one, and the response should be just as bold now as it was then. We need investments in public works and programs in our states and communities on the scale of FDR's Works Progress Administration. Good paying jobs focused on supporting communities across the country with the projects based on the local need. Whether that be roads and bridges, hospitals and post-offices, or improved and expanded childcare facilities, we will move on from the Darwinian federalism of the Trump administration to a true partnership with states and local governments to ensure prosperity for all.

3. Do you plan to accept corporate PAC money for this campaign? Who is your single largest campaign donor?

I'm proud to have a broad base of support - working families, union members, and working moms -- just like me. We are fueled by grassroots supporters with 73% of our donations under \$100. And that grassroots support is because people across this district trust me to bring real reform to Washington, DC. While I may accept corporate PAC contributions during this campaign, I am committed to fighting for the women, children veterans and working families of the 10th district, not the corporate elite or their advocates.

Jeff Bjornstad is my largest individual donor. He is Patty Murray's former Chief of Staff and my old boss.

4. Do you support reversing the results of the Citizens United decision?

Yes, I support overturning the disastrous Citizen United decision that allowed dark, undisclosed special interest money to take over our politics. We have to end their influence and give real people a louder voice. In the meantime -- we've got to shine a bright light on the special interest donors who try to hide their money. People have a right to know. We have to make all campaign contributions open and transparent. And we've got to toughen the penalties for political corruption. Politics shouldn't be about personal profit. It should be about people.

5. Would you support the creation of a small-donor public financing program for Congressional elections?

Yes, I would support the creation of a small-donor public financing program for Congressional elections. As a woman of color operating in a system that wasn't built by me or with my inclusion in mind, I support removing as many barriers as possible for real people – not just millionaires – to run for office and make a difference in their communities.

6. What is your first priority for CD10 in the next session of congress?

Currently we are dealing with an unprecedented pandemic that has killed tens of thousands and put millions of people out of work. We have a long road towards recovery, and it's critical we have leaders in Washington D.C who will fight to put us on the right path towards stability.

As an economic developer, I believe I am the best prepared for the work required to put our country back on track as we deal with skyrocketing unemployment and a global recession. My top priority in Congress will be ensuring economic relief for constituents and small businesses in the 10th congressional district, as well as for people around the country.

As the fallout from the coronavirus pandemic continues, issues such as housing and health care costs, homelessness, economic inequality and deteriorating infrastructure are becoming even more pressing.

Progressive achievements at the state level to improve wages and benefits and help working families afford necessities like childcare, health care, and family leave to care for newborns or sick relatives have helped immensely. We've shown these progressive policies can strengthen our economy and make lives better.

It is critical in these times that we ensure the federal government working in tandem with states to ensure the benefits of these policies are enacted, fully funded and reach every corner of our state and country.

7. Would you vote for the Voting Rights Advancement Act, which would restore key portions of the Voting Rights Act and give the federal government tools to fight back against suppressive laws that target communities of color?

Absolutely. As a woman of color, I know firsthand how important it is to remove restrictions to voting. In Congress I will wholeheartedly support the Voting Rights Advancement Act.

8. What is your position regarding the importance of reducing carbon dioxide emissions to combat climate change?

The changing climate is no hoax – it's a threat to our economy, our way of life, our entire existence. It's the defining challenge of my generation.

As a former WA State Representative, I'm proud to have been a part of Washington state's bold leadership in combatting this crisis. We've established a Clean Energy Fund to grow jobs in this industry, we've built a \$6 billion wind industry from scratch by incentivizing the private sector with renewable energy standards, just this year we passed a law to end Washington's use of coal and shift our state to use 100% clean energy to generate electricity, and I was one of the first legislators to push for our state to have an environmental justice directive to combat climate change and protect communities of color so they are not left behind, again.

I believe America must take a leadership role in addressing climate change, not only to protect ourselves from threats like hurricanes and wildfires that increasingly threaten our daily lives and

resources, but because we must take advantage of the economic opportunity that exists to be a leader in the creation of clean energy jobs and the next generation of economic innovation.

I will be a leader in Congress in raising the profile of, and fighting for solutions to, the climate crisis. I will bring credibility and experience to the fight that comes from my experience as a legislator at the forefront of elevating this crisis in the national dialogue and crafting innovative solutions to address the threat. I'll have the urgency that comes from being a 30-year-old with two small children who understands their future will be severely degraded unless we successfully meet this challenge now.

9. Do you support the Green New Deal?

I applaud the ambition of those behind the Green New Deal and the energy they have brought in raising the profile of the climate issue on the national stage.

As a working mom of two young kids, I think every day about the future our kids will have with our world literally on fire. And as someone who has worked on economic development, I understand the urgency and importance of comprehensive environmental action and the repercussions of inaction.

During the 2019 legislative session, I sponsored the Healthy Environments for All (HEAL) Act, which would require Washington state agencies to develop strategies to apply an environmental justice lens to their work and target investments in low income and communities of color - communities that are on the front-lines of pollution and health disparities. While this policy didn't pass as legislation, it did go on to be funded in the budget that same year, and is currently being implemented. The partnership between labor, the environmental community and communities of color behind the HEAL ACT is a model for how we can make progress on climate change and other issues that impact us all.

I support the goals of combatting this climate crisis with everything we have and engaging a national mission employing bold and innovative solutions to solve it. Defeat is not an option. In terms of specific policies, Washington's Governor Jay Inslee laid out a detailed and comprehensive approach to addressing this crisis on a policy level during his presidential campaign and I would be a strong leader in Congress working with the next president to make these policy prescriptions a reality with great urgency and priority.

10. Do you favor having the United States participate in the Paris Accord of 2015?

Absolutely. The Paris Accord was a major step in bringing the global community together to fight climate change. The fact the Trump administration pulled out of the Accord is reckless and unacceptable, and if elected I will push for the United States to reenter the Paris Accord.

11. Do you believe that laws are needed to address gun violence?

As the mom of two young children in our public school, there is nothing more important than reducing the absurd level of gun violence in our country. We have become numb to the nearly daily tragedy of mass shootings that threaten our schools, our children, our neighborhoods and communities once thought to be safe from such madness.

As a Washington state legislator from 2017-2019, I voted in favor of numerous pieces of legislation that has strengthened gun laws here in Washington state.

They include banning bump stocks, empowering law enforcement to remove firearms from the location of a domestic violence arrest, banning undetectable and untraceable printed firearms, closing the loophole for people with a record of violence and have been found incompetent to stand trial to purchase firearms, and requiring a six-month ban on the purchase or possession of a firearm by an individual that has been held for 72 hours because they are a risk to themselves or others.

The time is long overdue for Congress to reject the gun lobby and act on the overwhelming support Americans and Washingtonians have for common sense measures such as stronger background checks, preventing mentally ill and domestic abusers from getting access to guns, and banning military style assault weapons that have no business on our streets and in our neighborhoods. I will support these efforts with all my being.

12.What is your position on managing documented immigration, undocumented immigration, and “Dreamers”?

As someone who worked as an immigration advisor in our higher education system for nearly 8 years, working to ensure students and faculty could come to the US legally, as someone whose father’s family immigrated to the US as migrant farmworkers, and as someone who works as an economic developer, I believe that immigration ensures a richness of diversity that drives our economy and builds healthy communities.

I am a strong supporter of comprehensive immigration reform and ensuring a pathway to citizenship for law-abiding new Americans already living in the United States. As the mother of two young children, I am appalled by the current administration’s approach to family separation at the border. As someone who spent many years in foster care as a young child, I know the trauma that is being inflicted on these poor children and I believe we need to end this outrageous treatment of children immediately and increase the capacity of our asylum courts and immigration judges so that we can process applications quickly and humanely.

As a state representative, I fought for DREAMers and as a member of Congress, I will fight to protect the rights of DREAM children and their parents. I’m proud that my state and our communities have been welcoming to immigrants and refugees seeking opportunity and greater freedoms.

A bipartisan framework already exists in Congress for creating a pathway to citizenship for millions of undocumented new Americans who are paying taxes, following the law and contributing to their communities. Once we defeat Donald Trump and send his racist exploitation of this issue packing, we must come together as a country to fix this problem.

13.Should the United States rejoin the Iran Nuclear Deal? Why?

Yes, the United States should rejoin the Iran Nuclear Deal. Iran continues to be a threat in the Middle East. A state sponsor of terrorism that calls for the destruction of Israel, the Iranian regime has a long history of provocation in the region and an unacceptable human rights record. Their continued support of the terrorist organization Hezbollah poses a threat to the United States and our security interests in the Middle East. In the past months Iran has stepped up their provocations and have been directly responsible for increased unrest in the region.

As a member of Congress, I will look to partner the larger international community to prevent the Iranian regime from developing nuclear weapons, and support efforts to limit Iran's development of ballistic missiles. I support the current economic sanctions and diplomatic pressure from the larger international community, including the United Nations. The United States must hold Iran accountable for any attempts to prevent peace in the Middle East.

14. What is your position on international trade agreements?

Washington is one of the most trade-oriented states in the country, with roughly 1/3 of all jobs related to trade. In the state legislature I supported efforts to I support fair trade agreements that will protect workers and human rights, the environment, and public and consumer health, and that can facilitate and encourage commerce with our friends and partners.

I was proud to see the entire labor community's advocacy paid off with the changes that made it into the final USMCA deal. While not perfect, the expanded worker protections and enforceable labor standards are a big step in the right direction for future trade agreements. I was especially proud to see the inclusion of the Brown-Wyden amendment that will ensure workers in Mexico have legal protections to organize and will penalize companies that try to stop them.

If a president wants "fast track" authorization then they will have to ensure that Congress' role in the negotiations up front is expanded so that amendments are not necessary when it comes time to ratify. Failing that test, I would oppose the request for trade promotion authority and reserve the rights and responsibility of Congress to act as a check on the executive and as the closest representatives to the people of their state and district.

15. What is your position on regulating financial institutions to protect consumers?

As someone who grew up in poverty, I understand the value of a dollar. It's why I'm committed to ensuring a fair and equitable banking system that supports all citizens, not just the 1%.

As a Washington state representative, I served as vice-chair of the Business and Financial Services committee. During my time in the legislature I fought for reforms to increase access to credit for communities of color and working families and held insurance companies accountable on behalf of consumers.

In Congress I will continue to hold big banks accountable, and promote equitable banking regulations that help all citizens, not just those at the top of the income bracket.

16. Should the VA health system be privatized?

No, and I will fiercely oppose any efforts to privatize the VA in Congress.

17. What is your current position on health care for all?

When I was in college, I found a lump in my breast. At the time, I did not have access to health insurance, and while I was sitting in the doctor's office, I had no idea how I would be able to afford treatment that could potentially save my life. I was fortunate that it was diagnosed as a benign tumor, but nobody should have to worry about whether or not they can afford vital medical treatment. Later in life I was diagnosed as pre-diabetic. The prescription drugs that were needed to manage my diagnosis cost almost as much as my mortgage each month, and I couldn't get my insurance to cover the cost, leaving me without access to vital medication that could help keep me healthy.

I believe health care is a right for every American, not a privilege. To that end, I believe we need to move as quickly as possible toward universal health care coverage and to do everything possible to make health care and prescription drugs more affordable.

I'm proud of our efforts in Washington state where we've established progressive models for the country in pursuit of these goals – we've cut the uninsured rate from 14% to nearly 5% thanks to an efficient implementation of Obamacare, and we've established the country's first long term care benefit that helps aging residents to stay in their homes while getting care.

I applaud the recent U.S. House passage of the Lower Prescription Drugs Now Act, which would allow the government to directly negotiate drug prices for Medicare recipients and bring down prices for all medicines as a result.

I would aggressively pursue this ambitious approach to reducing health care and medicine costs by supporting other efforts, many of them with bipartisan support, to stop pharmaceutical industry price gouging, create out-of-pocket limits for prescription drug costs under Medicare, and expand access to dental coverage.

18. Please fill in the blank: _____ lives matter. Why did you choose that word?

Black Lives Matter.

In a society that has institutionalized racism, classism, sexism and gender norming, I believe that when we are able to acknowledge that Black Lives Matter, we will have taken a step toward recognizing that ALL lives matter. Until then, and until we realize that there is no true "equity and inclusion" in this country until our black and brown communities can walk the streets without fear of being shot by police, until black women can gain access to maternal medicine that will ensure that their babies don't die at a higher rate, until black families have access to healthcare that does not leave our families dying disproportionately from preventable disease or COVID-19, we can not say truly, that All Lives Matter.

19. Do you believe women have a right to control their personal healthcare needs including contraception and abortion?

It is important to me personally that we have women in office so that there are more advocates for policies that directly benefit women and families.

Reproductive freedom is a basic right that every woman in this country deserves. I'm 100% pro-choice, a strong supporter of Planned Parenthood, and I have an A rating for NARAL Pro-Choice Washington. I believe decisions about pregnancy and a woman's own body are deeply personal and should be made between a woman, her loved ones and her doctor. I'm proud that Washington state has made progress in expanding and defending these rights by requiring that health insurance covers abortion as well as maternity care and covers the cost of birth control without out-of-pocket costs.

As a Washington state representative, I was a sponsor of bills to end the "pink tax" on hygiene products marketed towards women and to cut the sales tax on diapers. I was an advocate for paid family leave so parents like me could stay home with newborns and granddaughters like me could spend time with our aging and ill elders.

In Congress, I will continue fighting for women's issues and rights, including working to enshrine the right to abortion as a civil right. I will support fully restoring funding for Planned Parenthood, and I will

support eliminating the Hyde Amendment -- the Supreme Court has found that women have a constitutional right to abortion, and that means it shouldn't be limited only to women who can afford it.

20. Do you support collective bargaining on behalf of all workers?

Absolutely. As a former WFSE member, and the spouse of a former Teamster now ALPA member, I know how vital unions are in protecting the rights of workers and their families. I believe in the right of all workers to organize and collectively bargain. We must work to remove unreasonable barriers to unionization, ensure unions have access to employees, and employers should recognize employees decision to unionize if a majority of employees sign cards to do so.

As a State Representative in Washington state I voted to ensure employers cannot retaliate against workers for talking about their salary levels, granted bargaining rights to Assistant Attorney Generals, clarified bargaining rights for public employees after the Janus decision, and provided interest arbitration to Department of Correction employees and capitol campus police officers. These votes and others earned me a 100% lifetime rating from the Washington State Labor Council, and in Congress I will continue to be a staunch supporter of unions and workers.

I will use my role in Congress to speak in support of federal employees and their union rights, call out baseless attacks, and will be a champion of policies to protect both employees and their unions.

21. What legislation would you promote to create small businesses in order to create new jobs?

As we work to recover from the coronavirus pandemic, small businesses need our support now more than ever. As an economic developer, I know how important our small businesses are to creating good, family wage jobs. In Congress I will fight for legislation that allows the SBA to expand their services and support networks.

And as we rebuild our economy, I believe we need to build an inclusive and representative economy. Currently there are too many obstacles minority owned businesses must overcome. In Congress I will support policies ensuring equitable government contracting practices and push to expand the SBA's 8(a) program to support minority owned businesses.

22. What is your position on the presence or absence of religion in government?

I believe in the separation of church and state. A Christian myself, I adamantly support religious freedom; however, religion should be absent in government. A government of the people, by the people, and for the people, has to be a government of ALL people. Given that our nation has hundreds of religions practiced, I would never want any one religion to interfere with the fair and equitable implementation of public policy on behalf of all people.

23. What is your position on the role of government in supporting public education?

Growing up in and out of foster care, it was educators who guided me to overcome my childhood adversity and show me a path to success. Every student in America deserves to have a quality public school in their community, and educators who can afford to live in the community they teach, so that we can prepare the next generation to succeed, no matter their ZIP code.

As a Washington state representative I have fought for educators and for key investments that have strengthened that path to opportunity in our state – the biggest teacher salary increases in the nation,

largest ever expansion of early childhood education, and linking of tens of thousands of students with apprenticeships and on-the-job training by supporting a law this year to create free and low-cost college for 110,000 Washingtonians – paid for by big corporations in our state that owe part of their success to the well educated workforce our public education system has produced. In Congress, I would build on this success by increasing the amount of Pell Grants that can be provided to students, raise the income threshold so more families are eligible.

In Congress I will be a champion for enhancing the federal partnership and funding of public schools and teachers, while also reversing misguided policies of the Trump administration, such as arming teachers in our classrooms, diverting federal funds to private schools, and punishing students who were victims of for-profit college fraud. I am opposed to public funds going towards charter schools or school vouchers.

24. What caucuses do you plan to join if elected?

I am a progressive Democrat. As the daughter of a single mother, who suffered from substance abuse issues, I spent the first ten years of my life in and out of foster care, relying heavily on the social safety net and programs like Head Start and food stamps. I'm a product of our state's investment in our social safety net and know first hand what progressive policies can do to lift someone up. It's why I'm a Democrat and a progressive, and I'm running for Congress because I want to be a catalyst for progressive action that improves the daily lives of our kids, working families and local communities and will look to partner with those that share those same values.

I have not decided on which caucuses I would like to join if elected, and I look forward to learning more about each caucus as the campaign progresses.

The candidate assumes full responsibility for all answers to this questionnaire. Your responses to this questionnaire should be considered public knowledge as we cannot assure confidentiality when making the questionnaire available to our membership.