

King County Democrats 2023 Endorsement Questionnaire

Name

Maritza Rivera

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Candidate name

Maritza Rivera

Candidate pronouns

She/Her

Candidate name pronunciation

MAR-RITZ-A RE-VERA

Campaign Filer_Name

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Link to candidate headshot

https://maritzaforseattle.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/maritza_rivera.jpg

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What type of position are you running for?

City - Seattle

What position are you running for?

Seattle City Council

Are you a Democrat?

Yes

Have you ever been a member of another political party?

No

Have you ever been found in violation of a Public Disclosure Commission, Federal Election Commission, or Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission regulation?

No

Do you have a code of conduct for campaign staff and volunteers?

No

If you have campaign staff, do you support them joining a labor union?

Yes

Do you support employees of your jurisdiction (e.g. your city's employees, the Port's employees, etc.) exercising their collective bargaining rights without fear of retaliation, including the right to bargain and strike for better working conditions and pay?

Yes

Are you willing to have yourself, your staff, and your peers undergo training to understand and combat institutional racism, implicit bias, and sexual harassment?

Yes

Will your campaign accept contributions from corporate fossil fuel PACs?

No

Will your campaign accept contributions from corporate pharmaceutical PACs or corporate health insurance PACs?

No

Will your campaign accept contributions from corporate building industry PACs, including the Building Industry Association of Washington (BIAW) and the National Association of Home Builders?

Yes

Will your campaign accept contributions from law enforcement or sheriffs' organizations?

No

Will you return contributions from companies or PACs who are aligned with the organizations listed above and others that conflict with Democratic Party values?

Yes

Have you made any donations to Republican candidates or Republican Party organizations in the last 5 years?

No

Have you previously participated, or will you be participating, in a candidate training program like Institute for a Democratic Future or Emerge?

No

Please describe your background (education, employment, community and civic activity, union affiliation, and political activity).

My life experiences have shaped me into being the ideal candidate for Democrats and the residents of District 4. My parents moved from Puerto Rico to New York in search of a better life. I grew up in a tough neighborhood in the Bronx, on the 5th floor of a five story no elevator building. My dad was a union welder and my mom worked at a factory. I was tapped to work in the White House as President Clinton's Hispanic liaison and later served as a Vice-President of the National Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, where I worked closely with Hispanic small businesses from across the country.

In Seattle, I have had the privilege of working at the ACLU post 9/11 to protect Muslim communities from xenophobia, at City Hall working for Former City Council Member Tom Rasmussen, for Mayor Durkan, and now in the Harrell Administration as Deputy Director of the Department of Arts & Culture. This combination of non-profit, civil-society, city council and mayoral administration experience makes me uniquely qualified to help our city solve its most pressing challenges.

What motivated you to run for this position and how would you evaluate your success?

As a mom of two teenage daughters, I will never forget the hours waiting and worrying outside Ingraham High School as my girls were in lockdown after a student was fatally shot inside.

At that moment, I knew I had to take action. I never expected to run for political office, but I am running for City Council to restore Seattle to the safe and vibrant city I moved to more than two decades ago.

I am running to make restoring our public safety system a priority because I know from personal experience that failing to take public safety seriously harms low-income and underserved communities the most. I won't rest until we get to 5-minute response times for priority 911 calls, take home and car break-ins seriously, and get guns off our streets and out of our schools.

What are the top three issues of urgency that you will address if elected?

1) Crime and public safety. I know first-hand that working families and communities of color like my own disproportionately feel the burden of higher property crimes, hate crimes, gun violence, and the failure of our city leaders to step-up and ensure we are safe. Very soon I am releasing a full campaign plan that outlines how I will work to ensure 5-minute response times for priority one calls, a return to full staffing at pre-2021 levels, a comprehensive approach to getting drugs and guns out of our streets, collaborate with neighborhoods to address safety, take property crime seriously and invest in proven alternatives to law enforcement that reduce crime while also reducing harm for communities of color.

2) Childcare. As a parent myself, I chose to put my personal career on hold to take care of my family. After the birth of my two daughters, we did the math as a family— and it simply was not possible for us to afford high-quality child care for our kids in the City of Seattle. I feel incredibly lucky that my family had the means to allow me to take time off and care for our kids, but I know for so many families that's just not possible. This reality is bad for families, bad for our economy, and bad for the workers who make this City what it is.

3) Government accountability. Having worked at the city in various capacities including a department and for a council member, I have also seen first hand how good stewardship of public dollars has become a lost art. We routinely fund programs with dubious real world outcomes. I will work to restore public trust by ensuring every dollar of public money is allocated to the priorities clearly articulated by voters and residents. Bringing urgency to addressing the pressing issues facing our city also means being a tireless advocate for rebuilding trust that our government is a good steward of public dollars.

How will you involve all residents and engage all communities in the decision-making process?

The biggest mistake an elected official can make is to assume they know everything. The job of the next councilmember for District 4 is to represent everyone in our community and to work every day to make their life better. Part of what has held us back in this City is that politicians have started choosing who they want to represent and listen to based on who agrees with their politics. But the truth is, if we're going to truly create real solutions to our real problems, and at the scale and size of those problems we need to bring together stakeholders from all backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences. As a community organizer, I know that any real change worth fighting for requires a movement and a coalition that is representative of the community we serve. I know that getting elected won't mean anything unless doing so means more people are brought to the table than just myself. As the next councilmember in District 4 I want to be a conduit for marginalized voices and those that feel unaccounted for in the halls of City government.

How have you promoted an enduring environment of inclusivity, diversity, and equity?

My entire career I have been focused on inclusion, diversity and equity. I have had the privilege of working at the ACLU post 9/11 to protect Muslim communities from xenophobia, as the White House Hispanic Liaison under President Clinton and the Vice-President of the National Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. In each of these roles, it was my job to bring under-represented voices and marginalized communities into the halls of power to enact change and create a better world. In my current position at the Seattle Office of Arts and Culture I am responsible for ensuring our compliance with

Seattle's Racial Justice Initiative and ultimately our commitment to anti-racist work practice that centers the creativity and leadership of people of color - those most impacted by structural racism - to move toward systems that benefit us all.

If elected, how will you address inequalities experienced among BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, or other marginalized communities and advance an agenda of equality?

My parents moved from Puerto Rico to New York in search of a better life. I grew up in a tough neighborhood in the Bronx, on the 5th floor of a five story no elevator building. My dad was a proud union welder and my mom worked at a factory. This perspective enhances how I approach public policy in an intersectional way to advance racial and social justice.

I bring a ferocious commitment to address gun violence, public safety, hate crimes, and skyrocketing costs for families, all of which disproportionately impact families of color like my own. I am also keenly aware of how our upside down tax code burdens middle, low, and no income families that are disproportionately from communities of color and want to bring real accountability to our budgets and tax code to ensure responsible, progressive and fair investments are being made.

Ultimately though, one person being elected to local office will not itself advance racial and social justice unless that person is committed to elevating marginalized and oppressed voices. I know that I don't have all the answers, and I'm committed to ensuring my constituents have an advocate for them and the things that affect their life in City Hall.

Will you commit to change zoning, permitting, and other obstacles in your city to increase housing availability for mid and lower income levels?

Yes

Will you commit to an increased percent of funding towards community and behavioral health services?

Yes

Will you actively support increased non-auto dependent transportation?

Yes

Do you support alternatives to the forced removal of unhoused people?

Yes

Do you support regulations to restrict police practices historically applied unfairly or abusively?

Yes

Do you support offering broadband internet access as a public utility?

Yes

Will you support allocating public safety budget dollars to the LEAD and CoLEAD programs of community-based intervention and diversion?

Yes

All municipalities are facing housing issues in their region. What changes will you make and how will you fund those changes?

When I talk to neighborhoods and future constituents throughout Seattle about allowing reasonable housing like quad-plexes, townhomes, row houses, and mixed-use development in their community there are very few people opposed. If we allowed development of up to quad-plexes everywhere in the City while expanding transit-oriented development, we would address a very significant portion of our housing affordability crisis and preserve the unique character of our neighborhoods.

I know that confronting this crisis will require collaboration with our regional partners to identify progressive revenue. The McKinsey report shows we will need between \$450 million and \$1.1 billion more in pending every year for the next decade to meaningfully address homelessness. That's why I support the Mayor's proposal for a new housing levy which does a great job of collaborating with business, labor, the region and state to tackle affordability— it is an excellent mode. Additionally, our state's tax code is one of the most regressive in the country, with those that can least afford it paying upwards of 20% of their income while those that can most contribute to our city's prosperity pay less than 2%. New taxation should avoid increasing the burden on middle, low, and no income families.

All municipalities are facing behavioral health issues in their region. How is your community specifically affected, what changes will you make, and how will you fund them?

Illicit fentanyl kills at least two people every single day in King County. Mayor Harrell's executive order outlines an evidence based approach to addressing addiction and the flow of drugs in our city. We know what works to address this crisis and it is time we step up to deliver. First, we know users hooked on drugs are victims that need ready access to treatment. That's why I support the Mayor's plan to create a drug overdose unit modeled after Health One, build a post overdose diversion facility, and pilot new research based drug abatement programs. Second, we know repeat offenders

and providers of drugs must face serious accountability to stop this epidemic in its tracks. The Mayor got it right when he emphasized key high-crime hot spots with extra patrols, directed SPD to focus on the distribution of drugs, and furthered his partnership with the City Attorney to pursue the high utilizers initiative. I won't rest until we've taken our city back from its most urgent public health crisis— fentanyl and drug addiction.

Ongoing inequity is an issue in King County. Other than housing, what are your immediate plans for addressing this injustice?

One of the biggest drivers of inequality in our region is the unaffordable, broken, and inaccessible childcare system. As a parent myself, I chose to put my personal career on hold to take care of my family. After the birth of my two daughters, we did the math as a family— and it simply was not possible for us to afford high-quality child care for our kids in the City of Seattle. I feel incredibly lucky that my family had the means to allow me to take time off and care for our kids, but I know for so many families that's just not possible. This reality is bad for families, bad for our economy, and drives inequality in our city.

I believe no family in the City of Seattle should pay more than 10% of their income on childcare. To accomplish this I believe in three core principles. First, we need to treat child care as essential infrastructure. Second, it is flatly unacceptable that those who would provide child care for our kids are paid so poorly. Third, we need to reduce the cost to build new child care centers and the cost for parents to enroll their kids.

Many cities have claimed a commitment to reducing carbon emissions. What specific actions will you take to ensure that your city drastically lowers net carbon emissions by 2030 and achieves carbon neutrality by 2050?

We are already feeling the devastating effects of climate change. We need to bring urgency to ensure a future for the next generation. There are three big categories to my approach. First, transportation. Transportation causes 58% of Seattle's emissions – the largest single contributor to climate change. We need a Seattle transportation system that helps people throughout the city in a safe, reliable, and affordable way without the use of a car. Second, resilient infrastructure. We must build infrastructure to manage the devastating impacts of climate and build resiliency in our communities. For example, we must leverage regional partnerships to maximize public use of the I-5 lid which feasibility studies show will cut CO2 emissions by reducing traffic, create thousands of affordable housing units, and create more public parks, green spaces, and tree coverage. Third, housing and commercial construction. Buildings and construction account for 37% of carbon emissions. Our most effective method of reducing emissions and meeting our climate goals is building housing near job centers, transportation, and for all ranges of income.

Will you support allocating ongoing operational and future capital funding, as well as prioritizing public lands to ensure the Seattle Social Housing Developer (as enacted by I-135) is successful?

Yes

Will you support re-funding JustCARE or a similar program to provide community-based public safety resources?

Yes

Do you support safe consumption sites in every city council district?

Qualified

Will you introduce or support legislation to fund affordable childcare facilities, with workers paid a living wage?

Yes

Will you support moving Seattle elections to even years to increase voter turnout?

Yes

For any Yes/No questions you answered “qualified”, please explain:

The urgent crisis of overdose requires us to do everything possible to keep people alive until they get the treatment they need to address their substance use disorder. That includes dramatically expanding treatment and mental health services, enforcement of laws restricting public drug use as a tool to encourage Fentanyl and meth users to seek treatment and in qualified circumstances we should consider safe consumption sites with the clear understanding that it is another way to connect with people who are at risk of overdose to encourage treatment options.

What specific legislation would you introduce to reform the Seattle Police Department?

The next Councilmember in D4 can have the biggest impact on reforming SPD through advocacy during contract negotiations. The next contract must include a preponderance of evidence standard for evaluating officer misconduct and prevent avoidance of discipline and decertification through early retirement. Furthermore, we must ensure that OPA's investigation staffing is not unreasonably limited, that community is not prevented from collecting or providing evidence to investigators, that there is transparency for impacted families and especially tribal representatives, that the city's ability create civilian responses to some service calls is not restricted, and that there are not unreasonable time limits on investigations.

While I oppose efforts to defund the police, we cannot continue to ask Law Enforcement to shoulder the burden of every social problem. We must rapidly invest and scale up alternatives to policing to lessen the need for police officers to handle every call for help and allow them to focus on priority one calls. It is a failure of leadership that we are still just talking about expanding proven programs like Health One instead of having done the hard work to ensure mental health professionals replace the need for a traditional response on a significant portion of calls.

What are your policy priorities to ensure that Seattle residents are able to earn living wages?

I believe partnerships with labor and business to grow wages are a crucial role for the next council member in district 4. Specific strategies I support to help raise wages are increasing and utilizing prevailing wages, strengthening our office of labor standards to dramatically cut down on wage theft and improper treatment of workers, and using tax incentives, grants, procurement, and ultimately the minimum wage to incentivize and require a higher wage within the private sector.

Additionally, I also believe that worker benefits are just as important. Seattle has some of the strongest labor protections in the nation but we should build on those including looking at how to create portable benefits for gig workers or workers in transient industries and expanding paid time off. But also by ensuring that the labor laws we have on the books are actually followed by fully funding our Office of Labor Standards and Office of Civil Rights. Wage theft in particular is a pervasive problem. Minimum wage, overtime, off the clock and rest violations all contribute to hundreds of billions of dollars in lost wages each year. In addition to raising wages we need to ensure workers actually get the wages their owed.

Do you support the taxes recommended in the 2018 Report of the Progressive Revenue Task Force? Please share your thoughts.

The primary recommendation of the 2018 report of the Progressive Revenue Task Force was eventually adopted in the largest tax increase in the history of Seattle that is the Jumpstart Seattle Tax. I support this tax and believe it is crucial for investing in affordable housing and addressing our most pressing issues.

The vast majority of Seattlites support progressive taxation including the additional recommendations in the report, but they also deserve to know that their city government is spending that money effectively to improve their lives. Unfortunately, far too often that is not the case.

Bottom line: our state's tax code is one of the most regressive in the country, with those that can least afford it paying upwards of 20% of their income while those that can most contribute to our cities prosperity pay less than 2%. New taxation should avoid increasing the burden on middle, low, and no income families. At the same time, we deserve more accountability on the money we have now and simply passing a new tax is not panacea to our biggest challenges. Our capacity to effectively spend our existing resources is just as important as how we increase the pie.

Will you support a Comprehensive Plan that includes upzones that allow for multifamily housing, light industrial, and commercial uses in all residential areas, as well as allowing for high rises near all light rail stations, as described in the proposed Alternative 6 plan?

Yes. When I talk to neighborhoods and future constituents throughout Seattle about allowing reasonable housing like quad-plexes, townhomes, row houses, and mixed-use development in their community there are very few people who oppose this.

Put simply, I do not support abolishing single-family zoning and believe that whatever changes we consider we need to be gradual and thoughtful in our approach to new development. At the same time, I believe that we should ensure that our zoning allows homeowners to be a part of the solution and increases density and housing affordability in every neighborhood. If we allowed development up to quad-plexes everywhere in the City while expanding transit-oriented development, we would address a very significant portion of our housing affordability crisis and preserve the unique character of our neighborhoods.

CERTIFICATION: I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the provided information is true and accurate.

Yes

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