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**Candidate:** Dow Constantine

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**Question #1:**

How would you describe your post COVID-19 recovery plan? How does it ensure equity, safety, and long-term economic security for immigrant communities and communities of color? How are you incorporating the voices and needs of these communities in your plans?

**Answer:**

In June 2020, I joined Public Health Director Patty Hayes in declaring racism a public health crisis. Working with a core team of predominantly Black, Brown, and Indigenous employees, I proposed an Anti-Racist Policy Agenda and funded community groups to share expertise and hone the agenda to ensure we were prioritizing the right actions. Now, through COVID recovery efforts, we are funding tens of millions of investments supporting that agenda.

This is our chance to rethink our economy as we recover from COVID. Using federal American Rescue Plan dollars, I have created a $630 million COVID economic recovery plan approved by the King County Council and already being used to revitalize the economy and protect our most vulnerable. By focusing on public health, community supports, and jobs and economic recovery, we will transform this crisis into an opportunity, leveraging this unprecedented investment to make a permanent and positive difference for all in King County.

Developed with community input, key specific investments include: over $100 million in rental assistance for those in need; $25 million for BIPOC businesses and economic resiliency; $20 million supporting creative economy organizations and $11 million for an arts recovery fund; over $10 million for new construction apprenticeships and job training; $9 million for unincorporated King County small business grants and permitting; $6 million for food security, including funding a food-hub and supporting community-based organizations to purchase culturally-appropriate foods; $5 million to track and target hate and bias; $1 million creating economic pathways for young people involved in gun violence.

These investments support communities of color, immigrant, and refugee communities, and help create foundations for long-term success and stability. Moving forward, I’ll continue to listen to those voices and prioritize a truly equitable recovery responding to the specific needs of our neighbors and communities.

**Question #2:**

Over the course of the pandemic, there has been a rise of xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment, in large part due to disinformation about the origins of COVID-19. Meanwhile, many immigrant communities and communities of color lack access to culturally competent and language accessible resources about COVID-19, which contributes to vaccine hesitancy. How will you use your position to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of our immigrant and refugee communities?

**Answer:**

In response to the rising violence mentioned above, King County joined with community to form the Coalition Against Hate and Bias. The coalition was founded to strengthen community through visibility, reporting, data collection, education, and support and empowerment for those affected by bigotry and xenophobia. Driven and led by community, the coalition operates separately from law enforcement –neighbors support one another. I’m grateful the Muslim Community & Neighborhood Association is one of our coalition partners in this effort.

I’ve announced $5 million in emergency funding to track and combat hate and bias crimes in King County, including funding for multi-language media outlets.

Community buy-in is important, but authentic input, based on life experience, is most valuable for creating successful policy. Listening to stakeholder organizations and affected communities is how we’re best able to address the priorities of the refugee and immigrant communities. Our King County Immigrant and Refugee Commission is composed of members who are from, work with, and live in immigrant and refugee communities. These include members like Lalita Uppala (who leads Indian American Community Services), who described her work with the commission as “being a conduit between King County… and the immigrant and refugee communities that reside in it.”

King County recently reached the 70% mark for vaccinations across all racial and age groups, the first county of its size to achieve this feat. This was only possible due to partnership between King County Public Health and trusted community groups. By allowing community leaders and organizations to address their community with a culturally appropriate approach and language, we’ve been remarkably successful. This is the same method we’ve embraced to expand access to programs like affordable healthcare and bus passes. There remains more to do, but we are on the right path because of this genuine commitment to community partnership.

**Question #3:**

Given the local police killings in recent years of Charleena Lyles, Manuel Ellis, Tommy Le, and many others, how do you plan to address police violence, the use of lethal force, and the need for accountability?

**Answer:**

As Executive, I will act on the voter mandated responsibility to enact significant reforms in the King County Sheriff’s Office with a department that embraces and reflects the values of King County and its residents, and ensures all communities truly feel welcome and safe.

Under my leadership, we worked directly with impacted communities and families who have lost loved ones due to police violence in designing a new inquest process that will ensure real and increased accountability for the sheriff’s department. This will continue to be my approach – working alongside communities of color and criminal legal system reform advocates and experts, we will transform our policing systems to ensure everyone feels safe in King County.

Now, I am looking to the community at-large and our search committee (Public Safety Advisory Committee) to develop the changes to our King County Sheriff’s office that I will be presenting to the King County Council for approval. Of the 13 members of PSAC, 11 are from overpoliced, impacted communities, reform organizations, and oversight committees, and 2 represent police staff.

Some of my priorities for transparency and accountability include ensuring body cameras for every sheriff’s officer, a transparent hiring and discipline process for officers, new teams with social workers and behavioral-health experts so officers aren’t responding to emergencies where they aren’t needed, reviewing past practices, and regular, frequent community engagement.

Finally, appointing a sheriff who shares and is accountable to these values and sets the tone for the entire department will be crucial. This decision will occur with the extensive input of community and thorough exploration of candidates to ensure we make the right choice – committed to accountability, transparency, community co-creation, and safety for all.

**Question #4:**

Public schools often reflect the racial and class inequities of the communities they serve. Schools in low income tax brackets have less funding and disproportionately prioritize security presence over social services, which contributes to overcriminalization of black and brown youth and significant opportunity gaps. How would you use your influence over budget allocation to address these systemic issues in the education system?

**Answer:**

While King County does not supervise public education, I recognize the important role and opportunity we have to shape the direction and outcomes of future learning for our region’s kids. That’s why I originated and led ‘Best Starts for Kids’—the most comprehensive approach to healthy child development in the nation, investing in equitable support for children, youth and young adults, funding free school clinics, and working with 500 community organizations.

This year, through the levy renewal, we’re adding 3000 spots for quality, subsidized child care, which will help give kids, many Black, the foundation and support they need to grow up happy, healthy, safe and thriving—to succeed in school, and in life. Every child deserves the strong foundation, with mentorship and community guidance along the way, needed to reach adulthood healthy and ready to excel.

Through Best Starts for Kids, and through diversion efforts, we are investing millions into community-based organizations serving Black youth, supporting education and restorative justice in schools while specifically fighting the school-to-prison pipeline. For example, our Restorative Community Pathways program will divert 800 youth away from the criminal legal system completely.

We will continue to advocate for the Legislature to increase investment in our students, and work with local school boards to promote programs that best serve underrepresented youth. But we’re also not going to wait, and will further take the lead through Best Starts and other programs that make an immediate and lasting impact in the lives of King County’s youth.

**Question #5:**

While technology can bring innovation that helps improve our daily lives, we must also consider the potential for misuse of personal information and unregulated mass surveillance. Technology abuse and surveillance have disproportionately impacted Muslim, Black, Brown, Native, and other marginalized communities across the United States. How do you plan to control the proliferation of dangerous biometric and AI technologies and limit the possibility of abuse?

**Answer:**

There is no doubt that the rapid development of surveillance software can and will be used to unfairly target communities of color and pry into the lives of the most marginalized in our society. That’s why this year King County became the first county in the nation to ban the use of facial recognition software. We know – and it’s statistically proven – that this kind of software is racially biased and inaccurate, and runs the risk of abuse and overuse. Our ban prohibits the Sheriff’s Department from using this kind of software.

Unlike my opponent, who wrote a bill allowing the continued use of this surveillance software against the vocal opposition of civil rights organizations like the ACLU, in King County and under my leadership, we are putting the rights and privacy of our people above the profits of technology companies.

As similar kinds of technologies continue to develop, we will work with the most impacted to determine what uses are appropriate for government use. We have an obligation to consider the disparate impact of biometric and AI technologies, which will not affect all communities the same way. We are an innovative and forward-looking region, and it’s for that reason that I am confident we can adopt the latest technologies when and where appropriate, and do so with equity and justice at the forefront, informed by the very communities who know best.

**Question #6:**

How has your campaign worked so far to engage Muslim communities?

**Answer:**

Engaging with the Muslim community has been a major priority for our campaign and for my office, and I’m proud to have attended and led multiple events with leaders and neighbors from King County’s Muslim community. For example, in response to the pandemic, I worked with Muslim community partners to distribute masks and host vaccine pop up clinics. I’ve also visited the Muslim American Youth Foundation in Burien to learn more about their work in community and how we can best support those efforts. And, in September, my campaign will be joining a Muslim prayer and community event.

Our office has also worked with the Muslim community to support and grow shared community spaces, for example, providing funding for the Mall of Africa and supporting displaced businesses to create a cultural and economic hub for Somali-owned businesses in South King County.

As the war in Afghanistan comes to an end, we will work to support Afghan refugees and ensure they receive the support they need as they arrive in King County.

For continued success in this office, I know how important it is to meet with our diverse communities where they are. Hearing directly from King County’s Muslim communities, I look forward to learning how we can address their needs and then continuing to put those priorities into action.

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**Candidate:** Joe Nguyen

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**Question #1:**

How would you describe your post COVID-19 recovery plan? How does it ensure equity, safety, and long-term economic security for immigrant communities and communities of color? How are you incorporating the voices and needs of these communities in your plans?

**Answer:**

Raised on social services in King County, I had an especially close look into the impact that our policies and leadership has on working families. I also know that all of these issues are delicately interconnected, and when our most marginalized are given the support and opportunity to thrive, we all benefit. Because of that experience, I sounded the alarm early on calls for budget cuts in the midst of the pandemic, and led the way on building a no-austerity budget with COVID relief packages that will help our communities when they need it most.

This is a time to start investing in people. Homelessness, gun violence, and lack of economic mobility are all because the government has not prioritized the basic needs of everyday people. I have done the work, been out in the community, and built coalitions to fight for my core priorities listed on my website. My entire leadership style is grounded in shared power, bringing in those most impacted into the decision making processes.

**Question #2:**

Over the course of the pandemic, there has been a rise of xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment, in large part due to disinformation about the origins of COVID-19. Meanwhile, many immigrant communities and communities of color lack access to culturally competent and language accessible resources about COVID-19, which contributes to vaccine hesitancy. How will you use your position to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of our immigrant and refugee communities?

**Answer:**

We need to be proactive about responding to the needs of immigrant communities and communities of color. Instead of waiting until the problem has been exacerbated or until we're in crisis mode, we need to be prepared for and anticipate needs. Genuinely engaging community and listening to their needs must be an ongoing process in order to build real trust.

We are currently in the midst of a refugee crisis with people from Afghanistan fleeing to the United States, including King County. We must provide in-person resources by contracting with nonprofits which currently serve refugee and middle eastern communities + ensure government-subsidized housing is available for families to have a safe place to call home. Social workers who can work with family members to sign up for basic government services such as food stamps + free transit. Finally, having in language news, TV, and other grounding + community building resources are key to making folks feel safe, welcome, + connected.

**Question #3:**

Given the local police killings in recent years of Charleena Lyles, Manuel Ellis, Tommy Le, and many others, how do you plan to address police violence, the use of lethal force, and the need for accountability?

**Answer:**

This issue is at the crossroads of our broken justice system. Simply put, we are asking the King County Sheriff’s office to do too much, + we have to create an internal cultural shift within departments. Having armed police officers responding to non-violent misdemeanors + mental health crises unnecessarily escalates situations to the point of violence. King County needs to cede away some of the responsibilities currently in the hands of KCSO + give them to trained social workers + community groups. Specifically, KCSO should no longer be conducting traffic stops or handling episodes of mental distress and addiction. I proposed a bill last session to ban police from pretextual + traffic stops, + I’d like to follow through with that in King County as well.

The King County OLEO has a vital role to play in holding bad actors in law enforcement accountable for their behavior + maintaining transparency. Their continued oversight needs to be supported through whatever mechanism is necessary.

**Question #4:**

Public schools often reflect the racial and class inequities of the communities they serve. Schools in low income tax brackets have less funding and disproportionately prioritize security presence over social services, which contributes to overcriminalization of black and brown youth and significant opportunity gaps. How would you use your influence over budget allocation to address these systemic issues in the education system?

**Answer:**

Currently, schools are funded based on the property taxes of the community around them. Neighborhoods facing historical redlining and underinvestments mean lower property values and as a result, lower property taxes paid into their local schools. The solution here is NOT raising property values or taxes in historically underfunded school districts. Rather, the solution here is aggregating funding for school and dispersing fairly.

We need to change how our schools are funded. We need to dismantle our segmented school funding system which allows schools in wealthy neighborhoods to be much better funded than schools in historically redlined neighborhoods. Instead, we should be pooling property taxes into district-wide funds which school districts can then distribute in an equitable way, based on historical funding, the number of students at each school, and the variety of electives available at each school.

**Question #5:**

While technology can bring innovation that helps improve our daily lives, we must also consider the potential for misuse of personal information and unregulated mass surveillance. Technology abuse and surveillance have disproportionately impacted Muslim, Black, Brown, Native, and other marginalized communities across the United States. How do you plan to control the proliferation of dangerous biometric and AI technologies and limit the possibility of abuse?

**Answer:**

I’m proud to have written the nation’s first bill on facial recognition, restricting how state agencies can use facial recognition technology and requiring law enforcement agencies to obtain a warrant before they can use facial recognition technology as part of a criminal investigation. This bill ensures that facial recognition technology is used with concerns for the moral implications that come with them by implementing regulatory checks and balances, and as our technology evolves, so should our bills. I'll be keeping a close eye on this issue, and use my background in tech and governance to ensure our laws regulate these tools in the most equitable and effective way possible.

**Question #6:**

How has your campaign worked so far to engage Muslim communities?

**Answer:**

Personally, I have been actively volunteering to support refugees from Afghanistan coming to King County. Campaign-wise, I have built strong relationships with organizations and individuals which serve Muslim communities, and am always looking for further ways to engage and bring folks in.

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**Candidate:** Sally Caverzan

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**Question #1:**

How would you describe your post COVID-19 recovery plan? How does it ensure equity, safety, and long-term economic security for immigrant communities and communities of color? How are you incorporating the voices and needs of these communities in your plans?

**Answer:**

I would describe my post-Covid recovery plan to be Green and Humanitarian.

One area of concern is the eldercare industry where a majority of workers are immigrants and women of color. It is an under-compensated profession. There are homecare deserts in King County where seniors are not able to get an aide due to cumbersome travel. A homecare worker may ride a bus an hour each way for just a 4 hour shift. Not sustainable.

At the County Level, we could provide free ORCA cards/credits for HCAs. The safety of an entire population of vulnerable disabled adults counts on these skilled workers being able to get to them.

A NEW King County Conservation Corps. This program would help households at risk of eviction or utility shut-off to contribute to the public good in exchange for utility credits or rental credits paid directly to landlords. With eviction moratoriums coming to an end we need a longer term solution to prevent gentrification.

**Question #2:**

Over the course of the pandemic, there has been a rise of xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment, in large part due to disinformation about the origins of COVID-19. Meanwhile, many immigrant communities and communities of color lack access to culturally competent and language accessible resources about COVID-19, which contributes to vaccine hesitancy. How will you use your position to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of our immigrant and refugee communities?

**Answer:**

While many people are ready to beat-down the vaccine hesitant, I have much compassion for people of color. The Tuskegee Syphilis experiment lasted into the 1970s. That historical context that was not taught to us in school has been a cautionary tale passed through the experience of the people who lived it. It is an important dark history that by simply refusing to teach it, reinforces valid distrust in the system. When we teach about the wrongs of the past, that acknowledgement demonstrates our communal commitment to “never again.”

Research proves that health outcomes for black men are improved when they have a physician of color. These patients are more likely to accept preventative screenings and vaccines in general. I believe that the most effective way to get the vaccine out to hesitant BIPOC folks is representation in delivery. Vaccination worker recruitment from the community of intended recipients is the fastest ways to overcome the perceived outsider threat.

**Question #3:**

Given the local police killings in recent years of Charleena Lyles, Manuel Ellis, Tommy Le, and many others, how do you plan to address police violence, the use of lethal force, and the need for accountability?

**Answer:**

My vision of police reform starts with mental health. PRO-active, not RE-active. ALL law enforcement need undergo minimal mental health counseling hours annually, not just those in hot water after an incident. Most therapists say if a counselor tells you they don’t personally need a therapist, you should fire them. I believe the same with police. Any police officer with the hubris to believe they do not need mental health therapy (job related or not) is waving a red flag.

We should be training human service professionals to be police officers and to implement that balance of expertise in response. The affluent areas of North King County have the RADAR program to respond to mental health disturbances, but not the South where more BIPOC populations reside. We need to expand the RADAR program across the County.

**Question #4:**

Public schools often reflect the racial and class inequities of the communities they serve. Schools in low income tax brackets have less funding and disproportionately prioritize security presence over social services, which contributes to overcriminalization of black and brown youth and significant opportunity gaps. How would you use your influence over budget allocation to address these systemic issues in the education system?

**Answer:**

I believe that the path to healing communities is reparative. I am very open to the idea of a redline-reparation property tax. Meaning that communities that traditionally held racial exclusion covenants would be subject to additional land tax on properties over a TBD value. This exceptional value in the land was reaped upon systemic hate and to the disadvantage of others. Such funds could help off-set the financial/educational/opportunity gap that directly correlates to lower property value

**Question #5:**

While technology can bring innovation that helps improve our daily lives, we must also consider the potential for misuse of personal information and unregulated mass surveillance. Technology abuse and surveillance have disproportionately impacted Muslim, Black, Brown, Native, and other marginalized communities across the United States. How do you plan to control the proliferation of dangerous biometric and AI technologies and limit the possibility of abuse?

**Answer:**

Technology serves a crucial role in protecting and serving. We know that eye witness reports, even police reports, are subject to inaccuracies or self-serving mistruths. If George Floyd’s murder had not been captured on a cell camera, the Truth would have been lost and the officer’s protected from accountability. Cameras become problematic once they are used to change the truth, to fill in the gaps rather than to fact check. Using facial recognition for black & brown faces yield statistically significant poor results to the extent that I believe that it has the potential for more harm than good. It’s good enough for Amazon Go where lives are not on the line, but not for suspect identification.

**Question #6:**

How has your campaign worked so far to engage Muslim communities?

**Answer:**

My “campaign” is just me. We need to get the money out of politics thus I have not taken a donation nor affiliated myself to any political party nor their resources. I am able to speak as a home visiting social worker and to reflect upon the crisis in Afghanistan.

I unfortunately anticipate that the forthcoming Afghanistan refugees may not be universally warmly received, creating new/different trauma. One of the only Pashtu communities in King County is in my District. Culturally, these families are private regarding personal matters, making finding a translator for human service purposes difficult. I think it is a reasonable prediction that more Pashtu speaking Afghanis will come to our area. Whether or not they are eligible voters, I view them as constituents and a part of the people I am vying to represent.

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**Candidate:** Sarah Perry

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**Question #1:**

How would you describe your post COVID-19 recovery plan? How does it ensure equity, safety, and long-term economic security for immigrant communities and communities of color? How are you incorporating the voices and needs of these communities in your plans?

**Answer:**

My post COVID recovery plan is comprehensive and helps ensure equity and long-term solutions by getting to the root cause of the challenges we face. My personal values structure is about social inclusion for all, economic opportunity for all and protection of our air, water and land. I am committed to building systems and structures within King County that are equitable and reflect these values as we recover from COVID.

For example, we have seen clearly that our essential workers have transit stops far from their homes with less convenient schedules in comparison to white-collar workers. Current reductions due to the budget and ridership decreases as a result of the pandemic have further exacerbated the issue and cancelled certain routes altogether, impacting least resourced areas dramatically. I will use my voice and my vote on Council to apply an equity lens to our transit policies and practices to center those with the greatest need.

In addition, our cities like Redmond and Issaquah are sorely lacking in low-income, affordable and workforce housing, which results in our day-care workers, our nurses, our teachers, our construction workers, our part-time workers and more to live outside of our district and travel great distances for their employment while not being able to live, work, play and raise their families in the same community. I will be a voice for equity in housing as we recover from COVID.

Finally, in our district, the current incumbent focuses on supporting businesses where there is a personal relationship over time, while many business owners from communities of color, have yet to see the same level of outreach and care from their representative. I am committed to a regional conversation to lift small businesses in each of our communities so that communities can thrive for the greater good, creating opportunity for all. We know that if we work toward equity in housing, transit and jobs, diversity and inclusion will follow.

**Question #2:**

Over the course of the pandemic, there has been a rise of xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment, in large part due to disinformation about the origins of COVID-19. Meanwhile, many immigrant communities and communities of color lack access to culturally competent and language accessible resources about COVID-19, which contributes to vaccine hesitancy. How will you use your position to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of our immigrant and refugee communities?

**Answer:**

I want to use my privilege and platform, both during the campaign, and once in office, to address the inequities in our communities by listening, leading or stepping aside as needed and guided in partnership with the Indigenous, refugee, immigrant, Muslim, Hindu, African-American, Latinx communities and other communities of color disproportionately impacted by xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiments. I am committed to bringing our communities together to work on community-driven solutions. This includes focusing on education, racial bias training, moving to a system rooted in equity and fair treatment, and electing leaders who serve as role models. The current incumbent has a concerning record on race and equity issues and simply has not shown up for these communities in her 20-year tenure on the council. This needs to change and I am eager to be part of that change.

I am committed to building a diverse staff and volunteer structure during the campaign. Once in office I am committed to forming a Community Coalition with representative voices from the communities in our district to ensure that County practices and policies that impact the residents in our district are developed and delivered in a way that will reach the members in each of our communities most effectively and equitably. This includes vaccine distribution and expanding language options for vaccine resources.

I am running to not only be a County Councilmember, but an ally and someone to count on to be responsive, accessible and personally and professionally engaged with the work of justice and equity. I am running for office to bring forward each of our voices for a better future for us all.

**Question #3:**

Given the local police killings in recent years of Charleena Lyles, Manuel Ellis, Tommy Le, and many others, how do you plan to address police violence, the use of lethal force, and the need for accountability?

**Answer:**

As our next King County Councilmember for District 3, I will be a strong voice for policies around transparency, accountability and de-escalation training. I will be a voice and a vote for the transformation needed to ensure ALL communities feel safe in King County – meaning a public safety system that protects Black residents instead of needlessly putting them at risk and in danger because of biased policing. On Council, I will push for responses from social workers and other first responders, in emergency situations, especially those involving behavioral health; advocate for body cameras on all sheriff’s officers; and engage with community members who are most impacted to determine additional reforms and oversight structures.

It is time to have open communication and work together to put the funding, people, and resources into our homeless community, our healthcare system, and our community building. The most important issue is bringing trust and care back into housing, governmental assistance, and aid programs.

**Question #4:**

Public schools often reflect the racial and class inequities of the communities they serve. Schools in low income tax brackets have less funding and disproportionately prioritize security presence over social services, which contributes to overcriminalization of black and brown youth and significant opportunity gaps. How would you use your influence over budget allocation to address these systemic issues in the education system?

**Answer:**

We must fund schools equitably and ensure the wealthiest among us and large corporations pay their fair share. We can then allocate resources to the schools and districts with the greatest need. I also believe we need to prioritize hiring teachers and faculty that reflect the students they serve. I am a strong supporter of prioritizing equity, diversity and inclusion in all of our schools and I support funding for training for teachers, paraeducators and all support staff to change norms and create a space where all are able to recognize intersectionality within the classroom to foster a system that gives each student the resources that they need to thrive. To the extent that I am able to use my platform to vote and advocate in this area, I will always support our teachers, paraeducators and support staff in ensuring that they receive the needed training and culturally relevant materials to be able to reach each child from that child’s racial, ethnic, gender orientation, religious and socio-economic status to help each child to their greatest potential for success.

**This document was truncated here because it was created in the Evaluation Mode.**