



## AFT Washington 2022 Candidate Questionnaire

### About AFT Washington

AFT Washington represents approximately 6,500 education professionals working in community and technical colleges, regional universities, early learning, and K-12. Our members work with all ages of students, from young children in pre-K education settings to adults in higher education, as well as all facets of education. Our members are bus drivers, maintenance workers, faculty, paraeducators, food service workers, custodians, success coaches, grounds crew members, and more.

Together, with our members and national organization, we advocate and fight for:

- Safe, welcoming, and thriving neighborhood schools for every student, and high-quality, affordable post-high school opportunities to fulfill our paramount duty to help *all* students succeed, at every level;
- Economic and advancement opportunities for everyone;
- Affordable, high-quality healthcare for everyone;
- Democracy, pluralism, and voting rights by involving the voices of students, parents, and the community, side-by-side with educational employees and elected officials;
- Racial, social, financial, and civic equity, and fighting back against discrimination, hatred, and bigotry.

We hope you will take this opportunity to complete the questionnaire below and allow us to better understand your candidacy. Completing the questionnaire is required for consideration of endorsement or possible campaign contributions. If our Committee on Political Education (COPE) decides they would like further information, we may ask you to participate in an interview.

To be considered, return your completed questionnaire via email, by close of business, on March 25<sup>th</sup> to [aftwashington@aftwa.org](mailto:aftwashington@aftwa.org). If you have questions, please leave a message at 206-242-4777.

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### Candidate Biographical Information

**Name:** YASMIN TRUDEAU

**Candidate for which office:** 27<sup>TH</sup> LD SENATE SEAT

**Party affiliation:** DEMOCRAT

**Political background** (*offices held or currently hold, offices ran for, party positions, etc.*): APPOINTED TO STATE SENATE 27<sup>TH</sup> LD – NOV. 2021

**Community or organizational memberships** *(past and present):*

Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs

ONEAMERICA 501C3 – BOARD VICE CHAIR

ONEAMERICA 501C4 – BOARD MEMBER

SEATTLE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

YOUNG AMERICAN LEADERSHIP PROGRAM – HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL PROGRAM

**Current occupation:** RACIAL EQUITY IMPLEMENTATION MANAGER

**Current employer:** WA STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE / WA STATE SENATE

**Are you currently a member of a labor organization? NO**

**If yes, which labor organization, and how long have you been a member?**

**If not currently a member of a labor organization, have you ever been? NO**

**If yes, which labor organization, when, and for how long?**

*General*

**1. Why are you running for this elective office?**

I have chosen public service as my career path and have been so honored to serve my home state of Washington in various roles. But when the opportunity to take both my lived and professional experiences presented itself through the open Senate seat, I knew it was the next step I wanted to take for the community I live in and love so much. The people of the greater Tacoma area showed up for me when I had nothing and it is my life's mission to always pay that generosity and kindness forward.

**2. What qualities distinguish you from other candidates for this office?**

I have a lived experience as a first-generation immigrant who was born into violence and abuse but have used those experiences to help inform how I show up and support others. I believe that I bring personal insight into the many critical issues we are tasked with addressing in Olympia. As a former homeless and foster youth, and first-generation college student, I know first hand the struggles of adequate and affordable housing, and the need for language access and opportunities for quality education. I want to bring this to the table to find solutions that work for all Washington families, especially those that are often limited in their ability to advocate directly with elected officials.

In addition, my former role as the Legislative Affairs Director for Attorney General Bob Ferguson has uniquely prepared me to take my advocacy goals and turn them into real, tangible legislative action.

*Revenue and Education*

1. For decades Washington State has had the most regressive tax system in the country, contributing to underfunding of public education and many other investments in the public good. **The pandemic has highlighted the numerous gaps in education funding that persist, for example in the form of the digital divide, the need for wrap-around services, stagnant wages, etc. When new funding is allocated, it is often for specific populations of students or specific programs and in relatively small sums. How will you approach finding new sources of revenue to both invest in Washingtonians and create a more progressive revenue system?**

**I support all efforts to move away from our regressive tax system to a more progressive revenue system.**

**Do you support...**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Capital Gains Tax?</b>	<b>x</b>	
<b>Wealth Tax?</b>	<b>x</b>	
<b>Estate Tax?</b>	<b>X</b>	
<b>Elimination of cap on Workforce Education Investment Account tax?</b>	<b>x</b>	

2. During the pandemic, many Washingtonians have lost their jobs and been evicted from their homes. The poverty rate has increased during the pandemic, particularly for BIPOC Americans. In the 2022 legislative session, a bill was introduced that would have given cash assistance to those below the poverty line with a stipend, also known as Universal Basic Income or Guaranteed Basic Income. **What is your position on this policy? Do you believe it can help address the racial wealth gap?**

I support a universal basic income. As a person who grew up in poverty, I believe that any opportunity to allow our working families to stabilize and reduce the stress and trauma of meeting basic needs is a worthy one to invest in. And while I lead with my values, it is also something I believe is fiscally wise as it relieves the necessity for additional supports on the back end when folks are destabilized and extremely vulnerable. Put differently, investments in our people on the front end has multiple, positive outcomes for everyone.

3. Public education, from K-12 through Post-High School has seen state disinvestment for several decades. **What will you do to increase the funding of community and technical colleges in order to invest in the workforce? Do you support pay equity for part-time faculty?**

I truly never understood how investing in education could be seen as disinvestment and I think there are likely multiple opportunities to increase education funding and invest in our workforce. I am committed to working both budget and policy solutions with labor and community organizations, like AFT, to figure out what faculty and students need and/or want to see in the spaces they occupy. While I could come up with some creative ideas, I feel it would be presumptuous for me to assume that I have better solution than the impacted individuals who have been organizing on these issues.

I strongly support pay equity. I think if we are relying on part-time faculty to teach our students, then we **MUST** ensure that they are treated fairly and paid accordingly. There is no reason why someone has more value because they work more hours. Any time dedicated should be time valued. I also feel that

sometimes institutions will rely on part-time workers to avoid paying more for full-time workers so when we have pay equity for everyone, everyone benefits.

4. Pre-K 12 employees work with students dealing with a wide range of issues outside of school, e.g. trauma, behavioral challenges, developmental disabilities, health issues and more. This can pose safety issues, for example for paraeducators who are often hit, bitten, shoved or in other ways harmed because of student behavior. Many factors contribute to this phenomenon, which translates to a range of potential solutions. **How would you approach problem solving if a group of workers sought your support in addressing this issue?**

I have lived these issues in my educational journey and still face these issues with my younger brother who has an IEP and has had multiple paraeducators. One of my best friends is also a paraeducator and we talk about her work often. These are difficult and complicated scenarios, but I always approach them with empathy and understanding first. We cannot blame students who are struggling or the paraeducators who are too often undercompensated and overworked. Instead, I think we come to the table, take a thorough look at what we are hoping to address and talk through how we can all get there. I have done this over the last decade my brother has been in the formal education system and even in the most challenging circumstances, I find that this approach ends up with everyone heard and respected. Once that happens, then we can build space where we can truly think about how to creatively support everyone involved.

5. In recent years public officials have attempted to solve budget problems through privatization of public services. This diversion of public funds has led to a poor quality of services, reduced accountability, and a loss of good jobs, while failing to realize the promise of saving money. **What is your position on privatization in the education arena? Please explain.**

I think some public-private partnerships can be a creative solution in very limited capacities but not for fundamental areas like our education system and other government/constitutional obligations. Plus contracting out important work, especially as a cost-saving measures, harms everyone. This includes those on contract. I think we have a state responsibility to equitably fund education and that includes paying living wages and benefits for our education workforce and I will always stand by that.

**Do you support...**

	Yes	No
<b>Public tax dollars funding private charter schools?</b>		<b>x</b>
<b>Privatization of school and college resources (i.e. counseling, childcare, student services)?</b>		<b>x</b>
<b>Public Capitol Funds for projects at private colleges and universities?</b>		<b>x</b>

*Collective Bargaining*

1. Many Washingtonians recognize the value of union representation and are organizing at their workplace, such as legislative aides in Olympia, workers at Starbucks, etc. **Do you support every worker's right to collectively bargain for better working conditions, and their right to join a union? Please explain.**

Yes, absolutely. I was also proud to support collective bargaining legislation and implementation as a manager at the AG's office. It was also awesome to vote on the Legislative Aide CB bill and gave remarks in strong support when it come to the Senate floor.

2. We see ongoing attempts to weaken unions and diminish working conditions here in Washington State and at the federal level. **What policies can support unions and workers' rights and how will you work to enact such policies?**

Worker rights are incredibly important to me. I come from a family that was exploited for their workforce in some of the most extreme ways and this makes me very appreciative of workers and worker rights. It also makes me very anxious and worried about the current trend. I believe that, if we want a healthy and stable economy, we must ensure the health and well-being of our workforce. This means supporting collective bargaining rights and safe and supportive working conditions. I look forward to supporting policies further this goal.

### *Social Justice*

1. What do you see as **your role** as a state official in addressing racial, social, and economic inequities in our educational system? **Please specifically address each issue.**

Governing must address these issues because these are the issues that impact the communities we serve. When they are not centered or go unaddressed, then we fail those most vulnerable among us and that fails the health and well-being of the whole populace. This is even more critical through our education system because these are the most influential spaces we grow up in. If we don't learn and grow with one another, we fail in honoring each other and our society becomes more fractured as a result.

I have worked throughout my career on the importance of not just speaking about racial, social and economic disparities but also intentionally working on resolving the resulting inequities that result, both on an interpersonal level and on an institutional level. I will continue to do this in my public policy decisions and my one-on-one conversations with other elected officials and with individual organizations and member of our community.

I also respect that you are hoping to address each issue individually, but I will admit that I do not believe any of them exist on their own. They are inherently linked. I believe we can look at policies and situations that may have more focus in one area, but I have found that, for example, you cannot speak about social inequity without including race and economics.

2. We are faced with numerous threats to social justice, including ongoing threats to our immigrant communities, the housing affordability and student debt crises, police accountability, and more.

**Where have you shown leadership and acted on issues of social justice in the past? What will your social justice priorities be if you win your election?**

My community organizing and advocacy began with a focus on the threats I was witnessing and experiencing as a part of a historically marginalized immigrant population and as the first Muslim-American in the State legislature, I am made acutely aware of how far we still have to go. That is why I have supported multiple budget and policy efforts in this space including, but not limited to language access, health coverage for undocumented immigrants, and farmworker rights.

I also serve on the housing committee and voted for many measures to increase access to affordable housing. This includes advocacy in both the operating and capital budget investments. But I also introduced a bill that reflected on my family's experience as low-income tenants. SB 5749 adjusted the law so that landlords can no longer force tenants to pay through on-line portals that can create impediments for many renters who are low-income, have limited English proficiency and/or limited access to the internet. I look forward to supporting and introducing many more policies that reduce barriers for our working families.

As the Legislative Director for the AGO, I helped to draft and pass a student loan bill of rights here in WA. But, as a person saddled with student debt, I feel the weight of this archaic approach to educational opportunity. I look forward to continuing to champion for student debt relief and reforming these spaces so that our workforce is enabled to seek positions that draw on their passions and their experiences and not just what will help pay off ridiculous amounts of debt.

I am not sure what specific areas of social justice will present themselves but I look forward to working with community to offer my position to activate positive social change. And when I was thinking about what values I want my office and my position to be rooted in, I committed to only introducing policies that either 1) increase opportunity and/or 2) decrease disparities. I stand by that in making all of my public policy decisions.

3. Several bills were passed in the 2021 legislative session designed to reduce police violence and hold police accountable; in the 2022 session attempts were made to dilute the definition of excessive force and minimizing the role of de-escalation. **What is your position on these issues?**

I served as the Vice Chair of the Senate Law and Justice Committee and have a history on these issue from when I worked to ensure the support of the AG on 12 of the 13 bills introduced on this topic in 2021. So, when the first bill in question (5019) came through the committee, I was the only NO vote and felt that it went too far in attempting to dilute the definition and I saw it as a tactic to introduce problematic amendments, given the title. My suspicions were correct and when the bill came to the floor, I spoke out against many of those amendments, including an attempt to reinstate vascular neck restraints and police vehicle pursuits for reasonable suspicion standards. My community was rocked by the death of Manuel Ellis from a vascular neck restraint and I had too many conversations about the public safety threats of vehicular pursuits without strong sideboards. So my vote off the floor also remained a strong NO.

When HB 2037 came before us, I worked with the Coalition of Policy Accountability and the ACLU on the amendments they wanted to see in order to get to a neutral position on the bill. I worked closely with the Chair and Senator Pedersen to vote a striker out of committee that limited force, based on reasonable suspicion only if an actual crime is suspected (as opposed to a civil offense) and to make sure

that officers would only be able to respond to intentional flight and not just fearful community members leaving a scene when police are present. Unfortunately, this striker was stripped on the Senate floor and that shifted by yes vote out of committee to a NO. There is so much more context here but it is safe to say that I was very disappointed and demoralized by the support of this process and I look forward to working to build strong internal coalitions to avoid this behavior in the future.

4. Hate crimes have risen 25 percent nationally since 2015. But the number of hate crimes in Washington state increased by 97 percent. There were 542 hate-crime incidents reported statewide.

**How do you plan on addressing the increase in hate crimes in Washington state?**

I think this is where it is really important to listen to our impacted communities. We are not a monolith, and it is not a sustainable solution to simply enhance criminal penalties. It doesn't serve to get to the heart of what is causing this anger and hate in the first place so our approach must be inclusive and creative. To me, this includes opportunities culturally inclusive approaches and more of a focus on restorative justice.

## Campaign Information

**Are there any additional comments you would like to provide that you believe are necessary in understanding your candidacy?**

I truly want to provide my voice and experience for the benefit of our people. It has motivated all of my educational and career decisions and it is what will inform my campaign and role as an elected public servant.

**What is your overall campaign budget?**

I am not sure until after filing week. 😊

**How many volunteers are currently working on your campaign? What is your goal for volunteers working on your campaign?**

I am in the process of hiring a campaign manager and working out these logistics. Given that I will have a baby due in July, I will be relying on volunteers to help me with doors but my goal for them is to get a positive experience that will support their future goals and their values.

**To date, how much money have you raised and obtained pledges for?**

I have managed to raise about \$53,000 so far with no corporate PAC dollars and I have about \$5,000 in organizational and individual pledges at this time. I have also refused to accept corporate PAC money moving forward so I will be relying heavily on organizations, unions and individuals to fund my campaign.

**Please provide any endorsements you have received:**

WFSE, Win with Women, Attorney General Bob Ferguson, Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal, Congressman Derek Kilmer, Speaker Lauri Jinkins, Washington State Labor Council, OneAmerica, Leslie Cushman – citizen sponsor I-940

**Campaign address:** 2522 N. Proctor St. Box #520

**City:** Tacoma

**Zip:** 98406

**Campaign phone:** 714-474-3190

**Home phone:**

**Email address:** [peopleforyasmin@gmail.com](mailto:peopleforyasmin@gmail.com)

**Website address:** working on this now.