

# Spokane Candidate Questionnaire

The member organizations of Smart Justice Spokane and Spokane Community Against Racism (SCAR) Platform for Change coalitions asked candidates running for Sheriff, County Commissioner, Prosecutor, Judge, Washington State Representative, and Washington State Senator to respond to 20 questions about racial justice, policing, housing, incarceration, services, and community.

See them all at [spokanecandidates.org](http://spokanecandidates.org)



Smart Justice Spokane is a broad coalition of over 30 organizations working together to end mass incarceration and eliminate racial disparities in our local criminal justice system. We organize and mobilize together for effective, restorative solutions that are driven by the experiences and needs of those impacted by the criminal justice system. The recovery and integration of those caught up in the criminal justice process is essential for a strong, healthy, and just community.



Spokane Community Against Racism (SCAR) Platform for Change is a coalition advancing a vision of systemic change for the Spokane community that embraces a holistic vision of public safety. This vision reexamines what is considered crime, accounts for its root causes, and recognizes that shared prosperity and community care are at the heart of a healthy society.

# Timm Ormsby

## Candidate for State Representative Pos 2 Legislative District 3

### **1. What racial equity problems exist in Spokane and how will you use this position to fix them?**

Too many racial equity issues exist in our community. As a state legislator and chair of the House Appropriations Committee, the best way I am able to combat racial inequities in Spokane and across the state is through budget investments and language directing state agencies to equitably distribute our shared resources. Funding community-based organizations with trusted messengers/navigators to help individuals and families access culturally appropriate services that are proven economic equalizers.

Good-paying jobs with benefits, access to capital and credit, and business startup funds are proven to build economic security and inter-generational wealth. We have made large state budget investments in the Community Reinvestment Fund, Immigrant Relief Fund, and targeted access to credit and capital for disadvantaged and underrepresented businesses are recent examples.

### **2. You have an opportunity to re-envision law enforcement and the criminal legal system in Spokane County - what should it look like?**

Criminal legal systems should focus on both distributive and procedural justice – a fair and equitable allocation of resources that includes those impacted by decisions in the decision-making process about what is just.

### **3. How can the community hold you accountable day-to-day in-between elections?**

With invitations from engaged and interested individuals and groups to meet to discuss issues, define expectations, and to ask for explanations of actions taken.

## **Policing**

### **1. What is your role in ending racial disparities in law enforcement stops and arrests, and in advancing meaningful oversight and investigation of law enforcement?**

By codifying and fully-funding data-informed, evidence-based practices, programs, and procedures addressing implicit and explicit bias in stops, arrests, oversight, and investigation.

### **2. What is your assessment and position regarding the militarized culture of law enforcement, lack of appropriate norms and requirements for de-escalation, and continued use and purchase of military equipment by law enforcement?**

Police equipment should be acquired and used solely for the safety and defense of the civilian population and responding peace officers. Goals, tactics, and strategies for civilian policing and military national defense are entirely different and should be created and implemented considering that foundational fact. The state has and continues to create and fund policies to train to a new standard and expectation for police interaction.

### **3. What are your thoughts about police presence in our schools and how juveniles are impacted by the legal system?**

Safety in schools requires an examination of what evidence-based supports and services are proven to contribute to student and staff safety and security. Not enough is known about the impact of law enforcement presence in schools. My concern is that involving police officers in what are generally minor juvenile offenses will have a lasting negative impact on students. I believe we should be re-investing in school counselors, nurses, mental health professionals and social workers.

**4. With the fall of Roe v. Wade and the resulting projected increase of nearly 400% in people coming to Spokane County for abortion care, what will you do to protect pregnant people's right to abortion care without being criminalized, especially if they are traveling to Spokane County for that purpose? How will you protect medical personnel and clinics in the same context?**

The state legislature is developing policies and funding options to guarantee access to abortion care for anyone seeking it in WA State with clearly defined protections for practitioners and clinics.

## **Incarceration**

**1. What is your position on Spokane County building a new jail?**

I am hopeful the expanded County Commission will objectively pursue the matter with justice, the incarcerated individual's and correction staff safety, rehabilitation and return on investment as their standard. There is little or no role for the state on this issue.

**2. Which of the recommendations of the Spokane County Justice Task Force to reduce the jail population, as outlined in the below documents, do you support or oppose and why?**

I agree with supported release with appropriate corresponding programming. I have worked to ensure that specific Spokane County criminal justice efforts are funded in the state budget. This funding includes enhanced behavior health rates, jail diversion programming, and criminal justice court navigators that are able to help individuals access programs and services to stay out of jail.

**3. What experience do you have with the criminal justice system and what have you done to engage the voices of the justice- involved or formerly incarcerated in your work?**

I was a defendant in a DUI case. I also have a lengthy voting record of support for positive and compassionate programs and policies that don't permanently and irreparably ruin the lives of the justice-involved. I have always been responsive to recommendations from groups and individuals representing justice-involved and formerly incarcerated individuals. DOC re-entry, personal and skill development programming, healthcare, housing, employment, and behavior health policies and funding have been the direct result of legislative member and staff meeting with these communities.

**4. Our courts continue to lack trauma-informed training and responses, culturally appropriate responses, and interpreter services and training around the immigrant community. People describe being shamed, ignored, and frustrated by our current system. How can you, in your role, help change this (including funding, training, increased staffing etc.)?**

State funding for qualified service providers, interpreters, and training appears to be adequate, but both the public and private sector are experiencing severe qualified workforce shortages. Addressing workforce shortages in the public system and the private sector is a high personal and professional priority.

**5. The Washington State Supreme Court issued a letter acknowledging that our court system is racist and asked every member of the legal community to work on this. What are your thoughts on this statement and what are you doing about it?**

I agree and commend the Court for acknowledging the injustices of the criminal legal system and accepting responsibility for their role in prolonging these injustices. I especially appreciate this text from the letter: "We cannot undo this wrong□□but we can recognize our ability to do better in the future. We can develop a greater awareness of our own conscious and unconscious biases in order to make just decisions in individual cases, and we can administer justice and support court rules in a way that brings greater racial justice to our system as a whole." My responsibility and commitment in my racial justice journey in my public role is to intentionally consider policy and funding decisions through an equity prism.

## Services and community

### **1. What experience do you have with persons experiencing mental illness and how will you use your position to ensure there is an effective rollout of the recently authorized 988 crisis response system?**

I have family members and friends who have been diagnosed with mental illnesses. I spent a great deal of time in the 2021 legislative session shepherding the fiscal components of the 988 legislation through the legislative process. I believe the system is adequately resourced, but the work has only recently begun. As with most policy and funding decisions, our experience dealing with the challenges of the rollout will inform future policy and budget decisions.

### **2. With the goal of addressing the root causes of substance use disorder, what is your position on legislation to partially redirect state cannabis revenues to local prevention, outreach, and recovery support services and end arrests and prosecutions of people for possessing drugs for their personal use?**

Addressing the root causes of substance use disorder are worthy goals, and funding for these and other related efforts are currently provided in the state budget. I am, however, generally opposed to dedicating sources of general tax revenue and statutorily funding specific programs as we do with fee-generated money. The state budget is a reflection of our shared values. It should be able to adapt and respond to evolving problems and solutions.

### **3. Domestic violence continues to be a great concern in our community, with too few shelter beds. How do you plan to address this issue?**

As a state, we have prioritized the funding of DV and crime victim programs. As a community, we need local government to more fully acknowledge and help fund the solutions to build and maintain DV and CV program access. In Spokane County, acknowledging our much higher-than-average DV rates is an important first step.

### **4. How would you address the early learning gap in our community?**

Achieving equity in early childhood education is a fundamental goal, and the state has made huge new early learning investments. The bulk of the recently passed capital gains tax was purposefully put in the Education Legacy Trust Account for early learning.

For new taxes, voters want to know how it will be used and what they can expect to see improved.

There is promising work being done to address the early learning gap locally that is culturally appropriate, innovative, and accessible. The challenge is not just the cost, location and available slots. It is also the hours of the day it is available outside of the usual 9 to 5 work day and a Monday through Friday 40-hour work week. The state is preparing to address this issue in the next legislative session.

## Housing

### **1. Why do you think people become homeless in Spokane County and what will you do to address that? For example, what do you see as the County's responsibility to provide shelter and transitional housing as well as partnering with the City of Spokane?**

Having worked on this issue for 17 years, there seems to be as many reasons for homelessness as there are homeless individuals and families. The state has and continues to provide considerable resources for new and existing programs for local governments to address their community's unique homeless dynamic. There is a frustrating lack of commitment and pace of action by the city administration and county government.

### **2. What is your vision for dealing with the lack of housing in our community? What funding (such as using ARPA for rental assistance), tenant rights and protections, affordable housing and infill are needed to keep people housed?**

The pandemic and market-related price boom that resulted laid bare the fragile nature of housing for far

too many of our neighbors. The state committed money to get us through the emergency, but zoning and land use (infill), market dynamics (rent increases), and lack of inventory are enormous challenges. There is a lot of energy around the middle housing initiative. I am optimistic we have the will and knowledge to go down a productive path to smart, responsible, and affordable housing development.

**3. People who once had stable housing are often put at risk due to inadequate aging- and disability-related personal care and supports. How do public and private funded in-home services fit into your plan to address our housing crisis?**

Our state has led the nation in transitioning from residential to a more in-home care model. With adequate funding for our caregivers and innovative care plans, in-home care is a core strategy to address our aging and disabled population's living arrangements.

## **Spokane Community Against Racism Platform for Change Coalition Partners:**

Spokane Community Against Racism (SCAR)

Asian Pacific Islander Coalition (APIC) -  
Spokane Chapter

Eastern Washington Progressives

Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience

FUSE Washington

Greater Spokane Progress

Hispanic Business/Professional Association

Latinos en Spokane

MAC Movement

Muslims for Community Action And Support

Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane  
(PJALS)

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Greater  
Washington and North Idaho

Progressives of Spokane County

RAIZ of Planned Parenthood

Red Skirt Society

SHAWL Society

Smart Justice Spokane

Spectrum Center Spokane

Spokane Alliance

Spokane Ministers' Fellowship

Tenants Union of Washington State

## **Smart Justice Spokane Coalition Partners:**

ACLU of Washington

All Saints Lutheran Church

Carl Maxey Center

Chihak & Associates – Disability Attorneys

Disability Rights Washington

Community Building Foundation

Community-Minded Enterprises

Freedom Project East

Fuse Washington

Fulcrum Institute Dispute Resolution Clinic

Greater Spokane Progress

I Did The Time / Revive Center for Returning  
Citizens

KYRS Thin Air Community Radio

League of Women Voters Spokane Area

Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center

NAMI Spokane – National Alliance on Mental  
Illness

Neighborhood Alliance of Spokane

Northwest Fair Housing Alliance

Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane

River Warrior Society

SEIU Healthcare 775 NW

Smith-Barbieri Progressive Fund

Spokane Branch Unit 1137 NAACP

Spokane Community Against Racism

Spokane Low Income Housing Consortium

Spokane Tribe of Indians

Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane

University Legal Assistance, Gonzaga Law  
School

Washington Community Action Network

Washington Education Association, Eastern  
Washington

Washington State Council of City & County  
Employees – Local 270 AFSCME