SHSC 2019 online candidate survey questions

What is your name?
Isabelle J. Kerner

1. For which position are you running?

Seattle City Council District 7

2. What do you know about the unmet basic human needs in the district you would represent?

There are not enough toilets. There is no sanitization, no running water. We do not have enough waste bins. We have people living in third world conditions. We are letting people die on our streets. We are also not protecting the general public or the vulnerable people on our streets by releasing violent repeat offenders.

3. What has afforded you the privilege and power to run for office, and how will it impact your role in this position?

No one has provided me the opportunity to run for office except myself. I am not the chosen person of any group. I made this decision independently. The reason I am running is because I want to fix the problems and I don't trust that anyone else can. I have yet to encounter an actual detailed idea that could be more successful than what I am proposing. I spent months visiting every camp I could find. I talked to thousands of those on the street. They helped create the solution. This will impact my role in the sense that I won't owe any group or wealthy person any favors. I will be allowed to base my judgements off of what I know, what I don't know, and what I learn.
4. What experience do you have in listening to and amplifying community voices? In what ways do you base your policies and priorities on the needs of those who will be most impacted by them?

Well, I have always tended to draw quite a bit of attention. I am also quite loud and I do not ever hesitate to call people out what it is necessary. I talk as much I listen and I learn a lot from talking. I also always call every interest effected to get their point of view. At the age of 23, I never had time to be an 'activist'. I worked full time through college to graduate without debt and started working at an IP law firm just a few days after. I move fast and if there is one thing I have learned throughout this campaign is that you cannot do everything at once and expect to get any of it done well. We have to prioritize and right now, the camping crisis is first on my agenda.

5. The cost of health care increases every year. Recent federal policy changes have threatened the long-term sustainability of Medicaid — such as attempts to reduce funding or turn the program into a block grant — and have aimed to undermine the viability of private health insurance markets — such as eliminating the individual insurance mandate from the Affordable Care Act (ACA) or not defending the ACA in court. Given so many barriers being placed at the federal level, how would you work to improve health care access at the local level to ensure stronger and more vibrant communities?

To be honest, I never fully supported Obamacare. I support basic health care coverage for all individuals but I studied this legislation extensively and there are a lot of flaws. Obamacare would never have passed if the legislation itself did not cater directly to the interests most effected. I believe that we should all have basic health care and then be offered the option to purchase additional insurance if necessary. As someone with 3 years experience dealing with hospitals, pharmaceutical and insurance companies--I can tell you first hand that this system is flawed. There are great aspects of it including the free birth control mandate. However, there were many unintended consequences. While raising the age an individual could remain on their parents plan to 26 allowed more individuals to retain coverage, I have seen it also reduce the drive for young individuals to work. Health insurance is a very complicated system that few adults even
understand. We need our youth to be accountable for their own health. That is my opinion and it is totally fine if you disagree. I am not against the ACA or PPACA but I am not entirely for it either.

6. Federal policies over the last few years have created a climate of fear for immigrant and refugee communities across the country. Even Washington State, long a welcoming environment, is no stranger to these challenges, as the recent Department of Licensing scandal showed. This climate of fear impacts immigrants and refugees of all statuses, and new research shows this fear is driving immigrants away from health and human services programs they are legally eligible to participate in. What would you do to leverage local systems and resources to bring immigrant and refugee communities back out of the shadows?

I think Seattle should make its own program for allowing illegal immigrants to quickly gain citizenship. I do not understand why we are letting the federal government have any say. I think we could easily get every one of the State Senators to sign a bill that would allow sanctuary cities to implement their own citizenship program with little oversight from the Federal Government. They are already here. It makes no sense to me why we can't throw the book at the federal government and write our own chapter.

7. Over half Seattleites and over 40% of people in King County are renters. Currently in most of Washington State tenants can be forced to move with only 20 days’ notice and even within the city of Seattle, there is no guarantee that a landlord will renew a tenant's lease. [For King County Candidates] As part of the King County Council, will you enact just cause protections to give tenants stability? [For Seattle Candidates] As part of Seattle City Council, will you expand just cause protections for renters with fixed term leases who are up for a lease
renewal? [For both] What are your plans and strategies to protect renters?

In my experience, the biggest problem is that renters give up. The system is complicated, difficult to navigate, and renters are rarely even aware of their rights. We should offer rent credit to those earning under a certain income just as we do with the UDP program.

8. In 2018, the consulting firm McKinsey and Company conducted an extensive analysis of the current crisis response and homeless housing programs in Seattle and King County. They found that our region dramatically under-invests in housing and other system-wide responses, while the numbers of people experiencing homelessness grows. They found that between 2014 and 2017, the number of households accessing homelessness services grew by an average 11 percent a year, while funding grew by an average 2.4 percent a year. The McKinsey analysis estimated an additional investment of between $360 and $410 million per year for at least ten years is required to make and maintain progress in solving homelessness. Such added resources would bring our community in line with sister cities and counties addressing homelessness and affordable housing crises. What are three specific revenue options (local, regional, and state) you would use to generate the necessary funds to fill the gap between current local, state, and federal dollars, and the housing and service system investments required to do the job for Seattle and King County residents experiencing homelessness?

I am sorry but this not just a housing issue. We have a spending problem, not a revenue problem. I can give you a list of 15 vacant buildings that could house 100 people. Instead, they have been sitting vacant for a year. The housing-first approach works only for the people who are not on our streets because of a drug addiction, disability, mental
9. Seattle and King County are in the midst of a child care crisis because child care is expensive and unaffordable for many working families. At the same time, some child care providers cannot afford to pay workers a living wage and stay in business. What ideas do you have for solutions?

I will admit this is not a question I know much about. I do not have kids and I am also single. There are two members on the current Council who are not up for re-election that are currently both pregnant. This is a great issue for them to tackle, but I don't feel right speaking on an issue I have very little experience with.

10. Survivors of gender-based violence frequently enter the criminal justice system due to their victimization, but criminal justice responses are woefully inadequate and problematic for most survivors for a variety of reasons, especially Black, indigenous, and other survivors of color, refugee and immigrant survivors; and gender non-conforming survivors. What specific solutions will you bring forward for addressing issues of gender-based violence in our city? What mechanisms would you employ to shift the structural oppression and racism, specifically in criminal justice institutions?

This question is a bit touchy for me. As someone who was violently attacked in public by a group of men who I later learned identified as gay, I was listed as the suspect of a 'Hate Crime' on the SPD report despite the fact that the men were apprehended three blocks away urinating in the middle of the street after a bystander chased them down. They assaulted at least two other people over the next month. We have repeat, violent offenders walking out streets. I firmly believe that being a member of a protected class does not serve as an excuse to inflict bodily harm on any individual. Not only does it
propagate the stereotyping and prejudice we are trying to aim away from, it also can degrade the mental health of an entire city.

11. Describe how you would represent your constituents to ensure there is a pathway to emergency food services for all who need it. What policies and investments would you support so that residents across Seattle and King County have equal access to adequate, culturally appropriate, healthy food?

We need to make it easier to get into the SNAP program and if we can't expand it further at the State or Federal level, we need to start here with the city. We can find a way to fund it. I am tired of hearing that we don't have enough funding. The problem is not the funding, it is where the funding is going.

12. According to a 2017 FBI report, nationwide reports of hate crimes increased by 17% from 2016 to 2017; by 32% in Washington State, and 198% in Seattle. Within Washington State, 38% of reported hate crimes were in Seattle. The City Auditor analyzed data that reported hate crimes doubled from 2014 to 2016 and doubled again from 2016 to 2018. 54% of the crimes related to race/ethnicity and 32% sexual orientation. What are your ideas for responding to hate crime in our region without criminalizing communities of color?

I think the increase in reported hate crimes has more to do with the general level of disagreement and polarization throughout our country. In order to develop a more loving, caring, compassionate, and understanding society, we are going to have to get along and tolerate the fact that not any of us will ever agree on everything. There are win-win ways to resolve any conflict or disagreement as long as we are willing to compromise, listen to each other, and make an effort to understand why others view the world differently. Oftentimes, we are what our experiences have been. To change our
minds and embrace diversity, we must first all be open to new ideas, new perspectives, and different ways of living.

13. As a city, we have moved to district representation. However, the needs of our residents are not necessarily most efficiently and effectively addressed by district. Nonprofit services most often cross multiple districts and people who make use of the services interact with providers throughout the city. How will you work to represent both the needs of your district as well as Seattle as a whole?

I am going to need to re-direct this answer to the page on my website: https://kernerforcouncil.com/camping-crisis

14. Will you support an automatic annual inflation adjustment tied to the CPI-W for the City's human services contracts so providers can maintain current levels of service as costs of doing business increase?

We need to find a way to decrease the 'cost of doing business', investigate to see who is profiting off of this problem and try and streamline all of these different organizations together so they are more effective.