

Seattle Fire Fighters Union Local 27
2023 Seattle City Council
Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire



Please fill out this questionnaire and send it back to info@iaff27.org by Friday, June 15th by the end of the day.

Only candidates who complete this questionnaire will be considered for an interview and endorsement from Seattle Fire Fighters Union, IAFF Local 27.

I. Contact Information

Candidate Name: [Isabelle Kerner](#)

Candidate Cell Phone: [\(206\) 271-1560](#)

Council District Number: [City of Seattle District 7](#)

Campaign Committee Name: [Kerner for Council](#)

Campaign Committee Address: [Kerner for Council](#)
[PO Box 257 PMB 09096](#)
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Candidate Email Address: isabelle@kernerforcouncil.com

Campaign Website Address: <https://kernerforcouncil.com/>

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Key Campaign Staff & Contact Info: [N/A](#)

II. Campaign Questions

- a. Briefly describe your background and why you have decided to run for election / re-election to the Seattle City Council. Include any history that you have with unions and labor.

I run, own, and operate a Private Investigation Agency licensed in both Washington and Oregon. Additionally, I am a licensed HAM radio operator and EV. I am also licensed as a CEH with an abundance of IT experience and knowledge as well as capabilities.

I have experience with labor and unions but the rules of confidentiality and privileges apply so I cannot disclose those cases.

- b. Have you ever run for or held an elected office? What office(s)?

Yes. I ran for Seattle City Council District Seven (7) in 2019.

- c. Have you received the endorsement of Seattle Fire Fighters Union IAFF Local 27 or from any other IAFF Locals in your current or previous campaigns? Please list.

No.

- d. Please list any other labor endorsements for your current campaign.

N/A

- e. What is your campaign fundraising goal?

My goal is not to be a fundraiser. My goal is to get elected. I care more about votes than dollars. I already run a business and I have no financial incentive for running for this position. My dedication is to the voters.

- f. Why are you in the best position to win this race? Briefly describe your path to victory:

I am in the best position to win this race because I am a young female that was born and raised in this City and I am appalled at the direction that Seattle has gone over the last few years.

I want to get this City back on course to basic common-sense governing. In the past few years, I have accomplished every goal I have set for myself.

I hold myself accountable. I am transparent. I am not running for office for more name recognition, or to be a career politician.

- g. If endorsed by Seattle Fire Fighters, how will you utilize this endorsement for your campaign?

I would be honored to have the endorsement and do all I could to support them and be the liaison between the SFD, the Public, and any other First Responder(s). I would use the endorsement to show my gratitude and promote collaboration with other First Responders.

III. City Council Priorities

a. What will your priorities be on the Seattle City Council?

Seattle has now become an 'Emergency Room' itself as a City. I believe that priorities must be triaged with the same level of urgency and emergency that we already declared in 2015.

My primary priority is to implement the solution I had proposed in detail in 2019. The main problem is public safety. Drug addiction, mental health, lack of enforcement of pre-existing laws, increases in crime, and homelessness all play a role in this.

So do Elected Leaders that are too focused on their own careers to look at both sides of every street. This is not just a housing crisis. I have watched people placed into low-income 'supportive affordable housing' apartments literally burn down their own units.

I really only have one priority and that is a solution which I believe should and could have started 4 years ago.

b. What committees are you interested in serving on?

1. Public Safety & Human Services Committee
2. Economic Development, Technology, and City Light Committee
3. Land Use Committee
4. City Council Committee

c. What public safety issues will you focus on?

Getting the people on Seattle's City Streets and Public Spaces and Parks out of unauthorized encampments.

I think it is long overdue we address the root problems of mental health and drug addiction and if successful, that will lead to reduction in crime, homelessness, people on the streets, public camping, and cleaner streets.

d. What labor issues will you focus on?

Implement training sites for individuals displaced or unemployed in order to increase the supply of skilled workers while adding high-paying jobs that meet current workforce demands by utilizing the Apprenticeship programs already set in place.

IV. Seattle Fire Fighter Issues (Yes or No)

A) HEALTH ONE

Seattle Fire Fighters and Paramedics provide emergency medical services in the city of Seattle in addition to responding to fires, car accidents, and other life-threatening emergencies. Caring for the people of Seattle is our mission. Meeting people where they are, and providing professional, respectful, and culturally competent service to help solve their problems is what we do best.

Health One is the Seattle Fire Department's Mobile Integrated Health response unit. Launched in 2019, it is designed to respond to individuals immediately in their moment of need and better connect them with appropriate care and services - whether they need medical care or mental health care, shelter, or other social services. Health One is a multidisciplinary team with two fire fighters and case managers each bringing unique skills and approaches to the scene. The goal of the Health One program is also to ensure that fire engines and trucks remain ready for life-threatening emergencies.

In just a few years, Health One has proven to be an enormous success for our most vulnerable Seattle populations and it is being replicated throughout the country in other urban areas.

If elected, will you support and continue to fund the Health One program within the Seattle Fire Department?

YES _____ NO _____ SIGNATURE _____

B) VIOLENCE AGAINST FIRE FIGHTERS

Violence against fire fighters during EMS and fire responses has become a persistent and dangerous problem. Our city's opioid epidemic, behavioral health crisis, a lack of police officers, and animosity towards employees in uniforms has led to an increase in violent behavior towards fire fighters. This is not only a safety issue for fire fighters, but it compromises our ability to perform our job. Thankfully, the Seattle City Council just passed legislation to provide additional protection for firefighters when we are interfered with during the course of our jobs. However, this is an issue that we need to continue to monitor and take very seriously.

If elected, will you support efforts to ensure accountability for violence against fire fighters, to protect our rights as victims of violent crime, and to continue to take steps to protect fire fighters so we can perform our work?

YES _____ NO _____ SIGNATURE _____

C) SEATTLE POLICE EMT's

The Seattle Fire Department, under the world-renowned Medic One system, has provided the highest level of Emergency Medical Services, both Advanced Life Support (ALS) and Basic Life Support (BLS),

to the people of Seattle since 1970. Medic One has also trained over 1 million people to perform CPR, and maintains the highest cardiac arrest save rate in the world.

The police department has quietly established an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) program by funding EMT certifications for police officers, and they have been slowly increasing the number of certified police officer EMT's over the years. This is a serious issue for Local 27.

Local 27 has repeatedly expressed our support for police officers to have basic first aid training, CPR training, to carry AEDs in their vehicles, and to receive bleeding control training. However, responding as EMT's is not their job. This is not merely a labor issue; the highest quality pre-hospital EMS care is performed exclusively by Seattle Fire Fighters and Paramedics. Delaying care by SFD fire fighters and paramedics results in poorer outcomes for patients. In addition, Seattle Fire Fighters and Paramedics depend on our police officers for scene security, the apprehension of violent criminals, traffic control, and other critical law enforcement functions. These tasks do not get completed when they try to do our job.

If elected, will you support the world-class EMS system provided by the Seattle Fire Department and as the exclusive EMT responder to EMS incidents in Seattle?

YES _____ NO _____ SIGNATURE _____

Will you oppose programs that direct funding to create or maintain EMT programs for the City of Seattle other than Seattle Fire Fighters and Paramedics, including the police officer EMT program?

YES _____ NO _____ SIGNATURE _____

D) FIRE FIGHTER HEALTH

Cancer, cardiac arrest/heart disease, and mental health issues are prevalent among fire fighters. We have held too many funerals for our fallen brothers and sisters as a result of these killers.

No other occupation accepts exposure to the contaminants on the job that we do. Products of combustion, diesel exhaust, and PFAS are just a few of the hazards fire fighters are exposed to on a regular basis. Cancer is the most dangerous threat to fire fighter health and safety today. Cancer caused 66 percent of the career firefighter line-of-duty deaths from 2002 to 2019, according to data from the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF).

According to research by the CDC/National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH), fire fighters have a 9% higher risk of being diagnosed with cancer and a 14% higher risk of dying from cancer than the general population. Sleep deprivation is considered a carcinogen by the World Health Organization.

Cardiac arrest and heart disease also kill fire fighters in alarming numbers. Several studies have identified risk factors specifically associated with fire fighting as causing or contributing to heart-related deaths among fire fighters. Some researchers are also seeing an unusual number of younger fire fighters seeking treatment for arrhythmias. The stresses of the job, shift work, lack of sleep, and

other factors all contribute to heart related medical issues for fire fighters that are uniquely dangerous for our profession.

PTSD, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and suicide have been plaguing fire fighters for years but the stigma of asking for help has kept them hidden. Fire fighting is a stressful occupation. Working in unpredictable and hazardous environments takes a physical and mental toll. Witnessing devastating injuries and tragic loss of life and property, scenes of violence, incidents involving children, and repeated traumatic events; knowing the inherent dangers of firefighting and the critical consequences of decisions we make; and maintaining the high standard we hold ourselves to can have a cumulative impact on mental health and well-being. Fire fighters and paramedics see things that no one should have to. The cumulative effects of these exposures can have a terrible psychological impact. Statistics show that public safety personnel are 5 times more likely to suffer symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression than their civilian counterparts, leading to higher rates of suicide – including here in the SFD where we have lost fire fighters to suicide.

The emotional impacts of the job result in significant behavioral issues that also lead to increased time loss, damaged relationships, and shortened careers.

If elected, will you support health and safety efforts to minimize the risk of cardiac arrest, heart disease, cancer, and mental health issues for fire fighters and paramedics?

YES X NO _____ SIGNATURE _____

E) BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (BLS) TRANSPORT

The Seattle Fire Department provides all Advanced Life Support (ALS) transports but currently contracts for almost 100% of BLS transports in the City of Seattle. A BLS transport in a private ambulance is very expensive. Waiting times for ambulances for BLS transports have increased and the system has shown that it is not dependable and resilient. The fire department is exploring ways to provide a more dependable, resilient, and equitable BLS transport system to people in Seattle that also improves service.

If elected, will you support efforts to manage BLS transports appropriately in the City of Seattle and work closely with Local 27 throughout the process?

YES X NO _____ SIGNATURE _____

F) PFAS

We have recently discovered that the personal protective equipment (PPE) that we wear in fires contains PFAS. PFAS, which stands for “Per and poly fluoroalkyl substances” are manufactured chemicals that are not naturally occurring. They don’t naturally breakdown and are bio cumulative. They are called “forever chemicals” and they are resistant to water, oil, and heat and we now know that they are used fire fighter turnouts.

PFAS are directly linked to bladder cancer, testicular cancer, and kidney cancer, which fire fighters contract at a significantly higher rate than the general population. PFAS are also associated with liver

damage, thyroid disease, developmental issues, reduced fertility, high cholesterol, obesity, and hormone suppression.

Recent research has shown that significant quantities of PFAS are shedding from our turnout gear and are being absorbed into fire fighters' bodies. We know that most line-of-duty firefighter deaths are from occupational cancer, so this is extremely troubling.

If elected, will you support efforts to protect fire fighters from PFAS in our PPE?

YES X NO _____ SIGNATURE _____

G) FIRE FIGHTER BURNOUT & STAFFING

Seattle Fire Fighters never stopped coming in to work during the pandemic. In fact, we worked more - staffing COVID-19 testing and vaccination sites, responding to COVID-related emergencies, and responding to a large increase in calls related to unauthorized encampments due to pandemic policies. The pace has not let up and the Seattle Fire Department is busier than ever as our city continues to grow. The increase in call volume, responsibilities, and additional training is taking a toll on our fire fighters and our department continues to be understaffed.

If elected, would fire fighters be able to count on you to maintain appropriate staffing and resource levels?

YES X NO _____ SIGNATURE _____

H) UNIFORMED DISPATCHERS

Seattle Fire Fighters rely on our uniformed dispatchers to provide excellent service and keep fire fighters safe. SFD dispatchers all have experience as a Seattle Fire Fighter. Their experience and expertise provide critical incident support for our fire fighters allowing them to function safely and effectively at dynamic, complex, and dangerous incidents.

If elected, will you support maintaining uniformed dispatchers for the SFD?

YES X NO _____ SIGNATURE _____

I) APPRENTICESHIP AND DIVERSITY

The City has failed to attract and maintain a workforce in the Seattle Fire Department that is representative of the communities that we serve. Local 27 would like City leadership to prioritize these efforts by investing in a joint labor/apprenticeship program that would meet our needs. This has been done successfully in a number of cities – notably with big city fire departments in California, and we believe that similar efforts here in Seattle would produce the type of excellent, highly qualified fire fighters that better reflect the diversity of the City of Seattle.

If elected, will you work closely with Local 27 to establish a joint labor/management apprenticeship program that provides well-trained fire fighters and increases diversity in our department?

YES

NO

SIGNATURE _____

V. Seattle City Issues (Please Explain)

1) THE UNHOUSED CRISIS

Seattle Fire Fighters and Paramedics respond to many encampment fires, medical emergencies, overdoses, assaults, and other types of emergencies at unauthorized encampments every single day. These encampments are unsanitary, unhealthy, dangerous, inhumane, and socially inappropriate. Sanctioning and/or allowing these encampments puts the people in them, as well as fire fighters, at risk. There are encampments in the city that fire fighters and police officers are unable to respond to due to safety concerns.

If elected, how will you respond to the issues surrounding the unhoused community and unauthorized homeless encampments, especially in regards to emergency responses?

As previously mentioned, I would move forward with a pilot program solution that I proposed in 2019-2020 so that unauthorized camping is both illegal and legally enforceable for those who don't or won't comply.¹

2) THE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

The number of people in Seattle with mental health issues or in crisis is alarming. Every day, Seattle Fire Fighters see and respond to people in crisis for a variety of reasons, often involving violence.

When Northern State Hospital closed in the mid-1970s, and the state's other psychiatric hospitals began emptying wards in the decades that followed, community organizations and county government attempted to fill the gaps. But when the state shifted responsibility for residential mental health care from large institutions to communities, dollars of support didn't follow. Decades of paltry reimbursement rates from the state — and low to nonexistent funds for capital maintenance or improvements — eventually made community mental health facilities a losing proposition for the nonprofit organizations trying to run them. A large part of that burden has fallen on the fire department, without a commensurate increase in funding or resources.

Our Health One program is extremely useful in working to support individuals with mental health issues, but we need more resources, especially "landing zones." The number of people in mental health crisis is overwhelming jails and emergency rooms as Seattle Fire Fighters continue to bear the brunt of the impacts of people calling 911 for mental health related issues.

¹ Appendix A – Private Cargo Container Solution – 1-24

If elected, how will you support and care for those people in our community suffering from mental health related issues, especially in regards to the shift of work onto the Seattle Fire Department?

I promise I am not trying to be hostile here, but I understand that SFD is exhausted. I think most first responders are, but I am again going to defer to the Solution I proposed in 2019 and still did not give up on even in 2020. ²

3) THE OPIATE CRISIS

The opiate crisis is out of control and Seattle Fire Fighters are on the leading edge of it as well. Our fire fighters perform CPR, mechanically support respiration, and repeatedly administer Naloxone every day. It is increasing our workload and also our response times.

The King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office says 35 people have died from fentanyl-related overdoses in just the first two months of 2023. Last year in the Seattle area, 310 homeless people died, and fentanyl-related overdoses accounted for more than half of the deaths.

Seattle's fentanyl overdose crisis is so bad that the King County Medical Examiner is even running low on storage for dead bodies. And now we are seeing xylazine, also known as "Tranq," a powerful animal tranquilizer, being mixed into fentanyl with terrible consequences. Xylazine does not respond to Naloxone and causes rotting flesh, leading to amputations in users.

If elected, how will you address the opiate and fentanyl crisis in Seattle?

First, I would support policies that criminalize illegal open drug use and consumption. However, I cannot control the Courts and the County Executive who runs the Jail. For that reason, I am going to defer back to the solutions already presented.

These hardcore drugs were really not part of the Seattle scene until Marijuana was legalized and policies changed. I am not confident that by suing Purdue Pharmaceuticals, the City really accomplished much. And as someone that grew up here as a kid, as someone who has friends that are now dead because of Fentanyl—I sometimes wonder: should we have sued Purdue or banned Fentanyl? Maybe it was a cost-decision because it was cheaper than the drugs Purdue had on the market? But at what cost is any life worth it?

No one with a prescription for any controlled medication is classified as a 'drug addict'. But the only difference between those who use and perhaps abuse such controlled medications is that they can afford providers not covered by providers under Medicare Part D.

² Appendix B – DRAFT-Business-Plan-Cargo-Container-Solution-Free for Use by City of Seattle – 1-50