

May 1st, 2020

To: Kimberly Graham
From: Iowa CCI Action

We are pleased to share our **candidate questionnaire** with you. Your responses will help our thousands of members and supporters around the state get clear on where you stand on our highest priority issues. **We ask that you submit your answers by 5 pm on May 11, 2020.**

Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement Action Fund (Iowa CCI Action) is a statewide people-power organization that uses community organizing, political education, citizen lobbying, direct action, and electoral work to win policies that put people before profits and communities before corporations.

Iowa CCI Action (501c4) is the political arm and sister organization of Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement (501c3), a 45-year old community organizing group with a track-record of helping everyday people be a powerful force for justice.

We are the largest organized, progressive constituency in Iowa with nearly 5,000 dues-paying members in all of Iowa's counties. We are all about taking on the corrosive influence of big money special interests and energizing, engaging, and bringing *real* people into the center of our political system.

Iowa CCI Action's Candidate Questionnaire:

These are issues that matter most to our members. We know that real change has always come from people pushing for big change at the local, state and national level. No one person or candidate is going to move our agenda for us. It's up to us to make change happen.

Iowa CCI Action will share your questionnaire responses with our membership, supporters and other like-minded people through email, direct mail, social media and other means. We will reach over 20,000 grassroots Iowans.

We look forward to your response.



CCI Action's 2020 Questionnaire

We ask you to submit your answers to jackr@iowacci.org by 5 pm on May 11th, 2020.

*** Please limit each response to the lettered questions to 200 words or fewer ***

1. Farm and Food Policy

Industrialized corporate agriculture has monopolized the farm economy, destroyed family farmers, poisoned our water, and damaged our environment. Our local politicians put corporate ag profits ahead of our health and the economic well-being of our communities.

COVID-19 has exposed the cracks in this system at every level of the food chain (from producer to packer to distribution and sale), and it is clear we need a shift back to more localized and regionalized food production that is good for farmers, workers, eaters and our environment.

- A. Currently, Iowa is home to over 10,000 factory farms that produce more than 22 billion gallons of manure every year, making Iowa the leading contributor to the dead zone in the Gulf, and has resulted in widespread water contamination and diminished quality of life throughout our state. Will you support Senator Cory Booker's [Farm Systems Reform Act of 2019](#), that includes a moratorium on CAFO's and invests in a just transition for farmers?

Yes. We also need to look into incentivizing the planting of buffer zones and installing wetlands to prevent fertilizer runoff, which contributes to the growing dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico. Furthermore, we should incentivize planting cover crops for the winter season as a form of weed control and soil loss prevention.

- B. Just as workers need a living wage, independent family farmers need a fair price for their crops and livestock in order to survive. A fair price for farmers would cover the cost of production and the cost of living (also known as "parity pricing"). Do you support farm policy that guarantees fair prices for farmers through higher price floors, supply management and a farmer-owned strategic grain reserve?

Yes. And we need to enforce antitrust laws to help level the playing field for smaller family farms. We also need to support CSAs and family farms that provide local businesses and families with food. The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted how much people depend on imported food.

2. Healthcare

Our country is facing a serious healthcare crisis. The current COVID-19 pandemic has only further exposed the cracks and inadequacies of our patchwork, profit-driven system – especially for communities of color. The problems with our current healthcare system are clear: the insurance and pharmaceutical industries are designed to profit off of our illnesses, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

- A. Do you support the bills for Medicare for All, SF1804 or HR 1384 and if you are a sitting member of congress would you cosponsor either of these bills? If you do support Medicare for All, what actions are you taking to show your support? If no, what is your alternative plan?

I fully support Medicare for All (or another, similar universal, single-payer healthcare system.) I would introduce, co-sponsor and vote for any bill that would achieve these ends. Since the day I announced my run for US Senate, I've been 100% consistent in advocating for Medicare for All.

I sometimes call it “universal, single-payer” because some voters are unclear on what the current Medicare for All proposed legislation says and they mistake it for our current Medicare system when it's actually much better and covers more. Actions I take are: I speak about it every time I'm talking to voters about my platform and I held a forum with Michael Lighty, Amy Vilela and Cathy Glasson about Medicare for All recently.

- B. The Medicare Crisis Program and Healthcare Emergency Guarantee Act, introduced by Sen. Sanders and Rep. Jayapal, would ensure that people on unemployment and their families can get healthcare during the COVID-19 pandemic and cover the costs of necessary healthcare and prescription drugs until a vaccine is developed. Do you support these measures aimed at harnessing the power of Medicare to cover necessary healthcare costs while our nation grapples with COVID-19?

As a short term, stop gap measure, yes. That being said, the long term solution is to enact universal, single-payer healthcare (Medicare for All) that covers absolutely everyone with no out-of-pocket expenses.

3. Climate Change and Energy Policy

CCI Action fights for a Just Transition, which means a 100% renewable energy system that is also 100% democratically controlled by and run to serve the interests of communities of color and the working class. We know that for our energy system to work for working people and people of color, who have been the most impacted and most at risk, we can't just switch from fossil fuels to wind and solar; we must fundamentally transform the sector of the economy that generates, distributes and owns energy. We demand a democratically controlled, ecologically regenerative energy economy that treats access and control over clean energy as a human right.

- A. Do you support a Green New Deal that encompasses 100% renewable energy for 100% of people that is locally owned and democratically controlled; includes a “jobs guarantee” for traditionally disinvested communities; and that invests in transforming our food & farm system?

Yes. I support the Green New Deal. Our campaign has been endorsed by Sunrise Dubuque, Cedar Rapids, Iowa City and Sunrise Iowa. I also support a moratorium on all new fossil fuel extraction projects.

4. Immigration

Hard-working immigrant and refugee communities are among the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and the dual public health and economic crises caused by the novel Coronavirus. Many are essential workers in Iowa's meatpacking plants, factories, farms, schools, daycare centers, and restaurants. Others are held against their will by ICE inside Iowa's over-crowded and unsanitary county jails, which are breeding grounds and ticking time bombs for infectious diseases.

- A. Do you believe undocumented workers who pay taxes should be eligible for federal benefits such as unemployment insurance, Medicare and Medicaid, Social Security, and federal stimulus checks? What will you do as a candidate to make this a campaign issue?

Yes. If this pandemic has taught us anything, it is how essential immigrants are to the workforce. If they pay taxes, they should be entitled to the same things as other Americans.

In terms of making it a campaign issue, I have spoken out about it in forums and debates. I am also releasing ads on Spanish radio in Iowa that address the issue.

- B. Do you support releasing detainees held by ICE on immigration charges in order to prevent new COVID-19 outbreaks? What will you do as a candidate to advance this policy?

Yes, I support releasing detainees held by ICE on immigration charges in order to prevent new COVID-19 outbreaks. No immigrant or refugee should be detained unless they present a credible threat of violence, period. I will promote legislation that will reform our immigration system to be sensible and humane, with a worker visa program, protection for our Dreamers, and a clear path to citizenship for immigrants.

5. Higher Education

Iowa Student Action (A project of Iowa CCI Action Fund) is a statewide student organization fighting for Free College for All, with active chapters at University of Iowa, Iowa State University, the University of

Northern Iowa, Grinnell College, Cornell College, and Drake University. Our vision of free higher education includes formerly incarcerated and undocumented students and the full cancellation of student debt.

- A. Do you support universal free undergraduate tuition -- including undocumented and formerly incarcerated students -- at all 2 year and 4-year public colleges and universities?

Yes.

- B. Do you support the full cancellation of student debt?

Yes. I left law school with \$80,000 in student debt. After 20 years of on-time monthly payments, I now owe over \$240,000. That's loan sharking and it should be illegal.

We also need to make sure that students who don't come from wealthy families can attend graduate or professional schools: e.g. medical, law or vet school, nursing school and others, and not leave with crushing debt. We must invest in all levels of education.

6. Workers' Rights

Anti-union and anti-worker laws are being passed in states across the country and Iowa is unfortunately no exception. With this pandemic, we're seeing how devastating these laws are for working people: millions have lost their jobs, while others have been deemed essential and are risking their health and safety every day to ensure we all have the groceries and supplies we need, so many of them with little to no protections on the job and no one to advocate for them.

- A. Given all the above information, do you support at least a \$15 an hour minimum wage and the right for every worker to join a union? What specifically will you do to ensure workers' rights and safety on the job?

Yes. My dad, mom, grandfather, step-dad and my son's father are all union workers. For 13 years I was a union worker and volunteer union organizer. I've walked picket lines. The right to organize is essential.

In particular, I support the Workplace Democracy Act, which would implement card check legislation, protection for organizers from retaliation, and would end Right to Work laws.

I also would make a point of confirming pro labor nominees to the NLRB, beefing up OSHA and the DOL, and instituting a \$15/hr minimum wage tied to inflation.

- B. Corporations have spent decades working to create anti-union workplaces by forcing workers to go to anti-union meetings, misclassifying employees as supervisors and independent contractors. The “Protect the Right to Organize” Act of 2019 puts in place measure to stop these practices. If elected would you sign onto the PRO Act (H.R.2474)?

Yes, workers must have the absolute right to organize. In addition to that, I would also co-sponsor Sen. Sanders’ Workplace Democracy Act.

7. Co-governance and Movement Politics

Black, brown, indigenous, women, trans, queer, and working-class people in general have not had a real stake in our government and have been intentionally excluded from having a seat at the table, while big-money corporations and billionaires rig the rules to buy our government to benefit themselves. We recognize that President Trump is a problem, but he is a symptom, not the cause, of a larger system of inequality and business-as-usual politics, which maintains the political and economic status quo. Electoral moments are only one of many tools to uplift our “People and Planet First” narrative and challenge the political and economic status quo. Our movement aims to uplift everyday people and the issues we care about.

- A. Do you plan to support Public Financing of Elections, the optimal process to rid politics of the corrosive influence of money on our democracy?

Yes. I also support limiting the election cycle proper to months rather than years.

- B. What is your plan to make sure voting becomes more accessible, not less accessible in the era of COVID-19 and beyond?

Moving to a completely vote by mail election system would be a good place to start.

- C. What is your plan to co-govern with — and be accountable to — people and planet-first movements if elected?

My staff and volunteers come from progressive movement politics, and will help keep us focused on people and planet-first movements. It’s never made sense to me that so many laws get passed without legislators seeking input and guidance from those most affected by the legislation. Those in the people and planet-first movements will have my personal cell number and email address and I’ll take their calls, reply to their emails and listen to them.