

**5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Green Party**  
*Candidate Screening Questionnaire for 2018*

Instructions: For the ease of party members attending the Endorsement Meeting, we have grouped questions by topic. Please be sure to answer all items, including each question after the main topic.

**Name:** Les Lester

**Office for which you are seeking endorsement:** U.S. Representative, 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District

**Campaign contact information** (as appropriate: email, mailing address, phone, website, facebook):

Website: <http://leslester.blogspot.com>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/les.lester.9>

Email: [leslester@usfamily.net](mailto:leslester@usfamily.net)

Phone: 612-978-7559

**1. Please tell us about your background and decision to seek public office.** Why are you seeking elected office? What background experiences have shaped your decision to stand as a candidate in this election? What are the skills and experiences that qualify you for this position? “I was a little boy during Freedom Summer, in Mississippi, in the early 1960s. My grandmother was a civil rights leader and often spoke on issues, much like Fannie Lou Hamer who co-founded the Mississippi-based Freedom Democratic Party—I was molded in a political environment. On June 5<sup>th</sup>, when U.S. Representative Keith Ellison decided to vacate his 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District seat, I was at-once taken aback and intrigued. Taken aback because I had cheered for him in his endeavors, but intrigued by the political possibility, now, to espouse issues that I’d felt needed to be discussed in the national town hall. I have dedicated my life to public service. I have written about issues impacting the poor and oppressed, and I’m a graduate of the Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Global Change at the University of Minnesota. I have served as the director and co-founder of The Youth Development League, an organization designed to mentor and expose at-risk youth to the broader world; worked in radio and newspaper, where I championed issues of the oppressed, and served as a public relations person where I’ve networked with mass media officials to espouse needed information to the public. I was publisher of Teen World magazine, the magazine for tomorrow’s leaders, from 1988 to 1991, and I’m currently an ordained minister.”

**2. Please tell us about your policy goals.** Which policy issues would be the focus of your campaign and, if elected, your tenure in office? What strategies will you use to enact policies? “I aim to stand on a platform of enacting an inclusive and fair society, and push for an economy that works for all Minnesotans. Of utmost importance is ensuring that all Minnesotans have a livable wage; I applaud the \$15-an-hour enactment in Minneapolis and will work to further clarify and solidify the issue in underscoring that \$60-100 million-dollar compensation packages

to CEO's is decadent and corrupt. And those excess dollars going into one CEO's pockets can be spread equitably around the company. A single-payer Medicaid initiative is my idea of the Affordable Care Act expanding and reaching its ideal. Currently, there are too many expenses associated with Medicare. And I will do all in my power to ensure that seniors first, and all Americans, are relieved of the stranglehold for-profit insurers have on the U.S. public. Insuring that the U.S. continues to educate the public on a green-ecology is high on my list, because this is the only planet we have to live on. Mars is not an option because it does not have its own oxygenated environment. And mechanized air in in-door facilities only is not something most people would like to live in for a lifetime. Meanwhile, I applaud NASA and the emerging private space initiatives working to extend our reach into the universe. I believe in comprehensive immigration reform with the understanding that much of our southern border was once Mexico, in earlier periods, and Mexico opened its arms to the U.S. as a friend in the 1800s. But the historical record indicates that the U.S. went on to colonize and annex Mexican lands through coercion and war. We must be a better friend to our southern neighbor. If elected, I will remain in office as long as I am effective. I will coalesce with legislators whom I find to be in Washington to better the public good and work to ensure that they know that I will back initiatives that I believe will benefit Minnesotans and the American people. I will be clear that I stand for maintaining propriety and justice, in the Congress, and will be inviting to all who believe in progress. Meanwhile, I do understand that one must be flexible enough to realize that others can have perspectives outside of one's own milieu that can stretch one's, theretofore, perceptions and enhance one's core belief system(s)."

**3. Please tell us about your involvement with the Green Party, including your relation to the four pillars and ten key values.** How would your candidacy demonstrate commitment to the Green Party's values? Are there any positions in the platforms of the 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Green Party or the Green Party of Minnesota with which you disagree? If so, please explain. "The Green Party's platform mirrors my beliefs and life thrust. The thought of a far-reaching and verdant society makes me feel good about America's and the world's future. The four pillars of Ecological Wisdom, Nonviolence, Social and Economic Justice, and Grassroots Democracy encompasses the ideals of America at its best. Decentralization of wealth and power, meanwhile, can ensure that the social, political, and economic capital we have collectively and generationally contributed to in making America a great nation will expand and endure, ever progressing into the future. Economic equality, gender equity, respect for diversity, personal and global responsibility and focusing on our unified future and global sustainability are all principles that guide my daily personal, and public, life. I agree with the Green Party platform wholeheartedly."

**4. The 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Green Party views the 2018S election as an important opportunity to build the party by inspiring new people to become involved and by increasing awareness of the party.** How do you see your campaign helping to meet these goals? What experience do you have in working with other people to inspire public involvement? "I have worked in civil rights over the years, in advertising, in sales, and in media where I've put together people-oriented events, etc. I'm a blogger and social media aficionado who believes that an effective Green Party can represent a changing of the guard in this turbulent period in

American politics. Just as the 1800s Whig Party is no more, there are critical points in history where a major shift occurs and the submerged aspirations of a large block of people are addressed by a new political movement.”

**5. If endorsed, how will you promote the Green Party?**

“I will promote the Green Party as the new and verdant 3<sup>rd</sup> Party that Americans are looking for. I will point out how Jesse Ventura won in an election between two well-known popular Democrats and Republicans (Skip Humphrey and Norm Coleman), in the Reform Party because people were tired of the same partisan politics with no real answers. I will point-out how the Green Party and the North Star State are tailor made to lead the nation into a verdant 21<sup>st</sup> century, where we will stop using fossil fuels, and elect to promote green energy, ecological urban renewal and sustainable urban agriculture that supplements existing agricultural practices.”

**6. Please tell us about how you intend to campaign in the constituency from which you are seeking election.** What strategies do you already have? What resources will you need for the campaign and how do you hope to mobilize these resources? If endorsed, what are ways that Green Party members can be of greatest assistance to your campaign? “I plan on relying on the Green Party to explicate their historical experience with past elections and glean from that accrued knowledge. Meanwhile, I will use social media and mass media to generate name recognition. I will contrast myself with the other candidates as one with a broad viewpoint that “transcends the do the same things” as current Democrats and Republicans have shown over the past few years. I will ask, “What has Ilhan Omar really done since she’s been in the State House? I will point out how Margarete Kelliher has been adequate at playing business as usual partisan politics, but what has she really done to distinguish herself as a trailblazer that will help to transform lives, and the world we live in? I will raise funding, and or request assistance from the Green Party and upload a “Go fund Me” page and a webpage with a “contribute” button to ensure I have enough Green Party 3.5” round green election buttons/pins that will read, “Vote Les Lester” with Green Party on the sides of the circle and “Write In” at the bottom, with small writing that says “Let’s Shock the World.” I’ll need enough people at the polls on election day to give out buttons to everyone going into the voting facility (and since there’s a required distance from the poll, I’ll give many of the buttons away in the local schools, since I will guest teach in the various Minneapolis and surrounding schools in the Fall of 2018). Keith Ellison received 55,431 votes, for example, in the 2010 election. I am currently studying who voted for him and what were their needs and concerns, in all of his elections. I need to be able to reach those voters through mail post cards, and other means. I need to “know” the demographics and how they voted last time. I need to be able to blur the edges between me and the Democrats, yet stand alone in my green ecology and merging the full Black history, and addressing the achievement gap framework; and how it will benefit all Minnesotans and Americans. And how electing me and my platform will bring prestige to Minnesota. I will speak at forums such as Assata Speaks, Solidarity Twin Cities, the upcoming Metro State University racism conference and need connections to western and south Minneapolis suburb audiences.”

**7. Have you been endorsed by or are you seeking the endorsement of any other political party for this office and this election?**

"I have not sought or been endorsed by any other political party."

**8. The candidate screening process asks us to seek information about "factors about the candidate's background that might be problematic if publicly known." Realizing that many background characteristics come about for a variety of reasons, we want you to share with us any information that would be important to know, along with any explanation that you see appropriate.** (Examples could include being party to any ongoing, unresolved legal matters or past legal matters; having been terminated from a job for cause; having been removed from a community or public office for cause; and other items that could potentially be damaging to the Green Party.) These background factors in and of themselves do not automatically disqualify a candidate, but are important among other considerations to know during the screening and endorsement process.

"I have a pristine record. I have never been involved in criminal activity. I have a love for all people and simply discuss the truth when I engage in political matters, with the aim of bettering our society."