

CWA Candidate Questionnaire

Response ID:42 Data

2. SECTION A

1. Candidate Name:

James Talarico

2. Are you currently an elected official?

Yes

3. If yes, current position and when were you first elected?

Texas State Representative for House District 50, elected in 2018

4. Title of office you are seeking:

U.S. Senate

5. District (if any):

6. Party Registration:

Democrat

7. Why are you running?

I was born to a single mom who worked overtime at a hotel to support me. We lived in a little apartment in East Austin. There wasn't room for a nursery, so I slept in a crib in her closet. She was so proud of that closet. She decorated it with pictures and toys — no one was gonna tell her it wasn't a nursery!

As a former public school teacher, I know what it's like to work early mornings and late nights in an underpaid, stressful job. I know what it's like to be crushed by student debt and medical debt. And I know what it's like to feel like the system isn't working for you.

Meanwhile, the richest 1% of Americans now own more wealth than the entire middle class. Dozens of the largest corporations pay zero dollars in federal taxes. They lobby for policies that cut their own taxes while raising taxes on all of us. And they lobby against regulations that would stop them from monopolizing markets and artificially jacking up prices. That's a big reason that everything is so expensive right now.

We need a government that serves working people instead of giant corporations. And we need a government that rolls back the barriers keeping us from living the American dream — whether they're unnecessary tariffs or outdated zoning regulations.

As a legislator, I've stood up to billionaire mega-donors and special interests, and I've worked to cut bureaucratic red tape — passing major legislation to lower the cost of prescription drugs, housing, and childcare. I passed major legislation to improve the quality of early childhood education, funnel millions of dollars into our public schools, reform our state's juvenile justice system, and more

Because my House Democratic colleagues saw me as a fighter, they selected me to lead the fight against Governor Abbott's billionaire-backed voucher scam that aims to defund our public schools to subsidize private education for the wealthiest Texans. I've led the fight against Christian Nationalist legislation that marginalizes our Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, and atheist neighbors.

I did that by coming prepared to committee meetings and House floor debates, holding the authors of harmful bills accountable and forcing them to answer tough questions about the impact of their legislation. I did it by saturating the press and social media

with viral messages that helped to win the messaging war on that harmful legislation.

That legislative and communications work earned me the title of one the Top 10 Best Legislators by Texas Monthly magazine — and those are the skills that I am prepared to carry with me to Washington as the next U.S. Senator from Texas.

8. Why are you asking for CWA's endorsement?

If I am going to win this race and become the first pro-union Senator from Texas in over 30 years, I'm going to need CWA in my corner to advise me on workers' rights policies at the federal level and stay closely connected to the needs, ambitions, and dreams of union members on the ground in Texas. This campaign and my service in the Senate will be 100% in partnership with Texas unions.

CWA, along with other major labor unions such as the AFL-CIO, AFSCME, TSTA, and Texas AFT, endorsed me as a champion for working Texans in the state legislature. I want to continue working alongside labor leaders through this campaign and when he is elected to the US Senate. Texas AFL-CIO has given me a 100% pro-union voting record.

9. List any past activities with CWA, including any instance of standing with workers during a labor dispute:

In September, I joined picket lines with striking hotel workers demanding better wages and better working conditions in Houston. <https://www.threads.com/@ltalarico/post/DOrJSNCD8Nd/video-i-joined-the-picket-line-with-striking-hotel-workers-in-houston-if-you-put-in-the>

Within the first two days of the campaign, I hosted a roundtable with labor leaders including from across the state. In November, I co-hosted a breakfast with the Gulf Coast AFL-CIO in Houston, which included Brian Kelley, Belinda Aguilar, Ilesa Daniels Ross, and Myko Gedutis with CWA.

10. Please list the organizations (community/issue groups, unions, etc.) that have endorsed you in the race:

No Dem Left Behind
Austin Stonewall Democrats
134 PAC
Mothers Against Greg Abbott
Women's March
Mothers for Democracy
Austin Young Democrats
The University of Texas at Austin University Democrats
Over 120 local, state, and federal leaders from every corner of Texas

11. Please list any relevant organizations of which you are a member:

Texas State Employees Union

12. What are the main issues that you hope to address if elected?

The first legislative package I will focus on in the U.S. Senate will be on democracy and rooting out corruption. Every other issue we care about — the cost of living, public school funding, health care access, and equality for all — comes down to whether Texans of all backgrounds have equal access to the ballot box and equal access to influence political and policy outcomes. Here are just a few of my priorities:

Democracy & Corruption

I believe that if we reform our campaign finance system and increase access to the ballot box, the sky is the limit in terms of what we can do for our communities. As a U.S. Senator, I will prioritize legislation to cap campaign contributions at every level of government, ban dark money super PACs, and ban partisan gerrymandering so that every American has an equal say in our politics and our policymaking.

Wages & The Cost of Living

Right now, the rich are getting richer, and the rest of us are struggling to get by. I'm putting forth an ambitious agenda to close tax loopholes and make the wealthiest Americans and giant corporations pay their fair share so that we can lower costs for the

rest of us.

The federal minimum wage was last raised in 2009. This is the longest stretch in our nation's history without an increase. Even worse, the cost of living has gone up 51% in this period. You cannot get by on \$7.25 per hour. I support raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour. I also support restoring the Child Tax Credit, protecting Energy Star to reduce utility bills, and expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit and Low-Income Housing Tax Credit to lower costs for working families.

Health Care

I'm working with policy experts now on landmark legislation that would secure \$2 generics for Americans with chronic diseases like hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol, and asthma. I'll work to reverse the harmful provisions in the recently passed "Big Ugly Bill" by restoring the Affordable Care Act's enhanced tax subsidies and fully restoring Medicare and Medicaid.

Public Schools

As a former public school teacher, I know that public schools at their best are designed to be the great equalizer. While we haven't yet achieved that vision, I am committed to strengthening our public schools and fighting back against a national voucher scam that will defund schools — particularly in Black and brown communities — to subsidize private education for the wealthiest Americans. To start students off right, I'll fight for universal early childhood education, including free PreK for every three and four-year-old, and strong investments in childcare for children under three to ensure childcare is affordable for low and middle-income families. I'll prioritize policies that recruit and retain high-quality teachers, and graduating students with the tools to make informed decisions about continuing their education or starting their careers.

13. Candidate Cell:

XXXXXXXXXX

14. Candidate E-Mail (non government):

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

15. Campaign Name:

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

16. Campaign Address:

XXXXXXXXXX

17. City:

XXXX

18. State:

XX

19. Zip Code:

XXXX

20. Campaign Website:

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

21. Campaign Manager's Full Name:

XXXXXXXXXX

22. Cell:

XXXXXXXXXX

23. E-Mail (non government):



3. SECTION B

24. Please Print Name

James Talarico

25. Signature

Signature of: James Talarico

26. Date

01/03/2026

27. Which of the following actions will you take to support workers?

	Yes	No
I will walk on picket lines and attend rallies in support of workers.	X	
I will directly and publicly promote neutrality and voluntary recognition with decision makers where organizing efforts are ongoing.	X	
I will directly and publicly urge employers to negotiate contracts in good faith and will offer to serve as an intermediary when requested.	X	
I will speak out publicly and write letters to employers and workers in support of workers' efforts in forming a union and bargaining contracts.	X	
I will pay all workers in my office and on my campaign a living wage.	X	
I will respect the rights of workers on my campaign to unionize.	X	

4. SECTION C

28. Do you support the Protecting the Right to Organize Act (H.R. 20/S. 852)?

Yes

29. Please explain why or why not:

Unions and worker advocacy are essential to protecting workers' rights and reducing inequality. Weakening labor laws have led to worse working conditions and stagnant wages. The federal government must both empower workers and hold corporations accountable for labor violations.

30. Do you support the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act (H.R. 2736/S. 1352)?

Yes

31. Please explain why or why not:

As a public employee myself, I understand the importance of ensuring public sector workers are protected and have the right to organize. Public sector employees shouldn't have fewer rights to unionize or organize because of where they work. That's why I authored legislation to repeal Texas' so-called "Right to Work" status.

32. Will you oppose any federal right-to-work (a.k.a. "right to work for less") policy, and use your platform to oppose any such anti-worker bills in your state and broader community?

Yes

33. Please explain why or why not:

These policies are anti-worker. That's why I authored legislation to make Texas a "Right to Organize" state.

34. Do you support the Keep Call Centers in America Act (H.R. 4954/S. 2495)?

Yes

35. Please explain why or why not:

We should support companies that hire US workers and have higher labor standards, rather than offshoring that undercuts American labor.

36. Do you support the Tax Fairness for Workers Act (H.R. 2671/S. 1286)?

Yes

37. Please explain why or why not:

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017's suspensions of these deductions are baldly anti-worker and anti-union. We must reverse them.

38. Do you support the No Tax Breaks for Union Busting Act (H.R. 2692/S. 1310)?

Yes

39. Please explain why or why not:

Taxpayers shouldn't be footing the bill for massive corporations engaging in anti-worker, union-busting activities. These tax deductions increase inequality and let corporations rake in massive profits while stopping their workers from accessing the fruits of their labor.

40. Do you support the Empowering Striking Workers Act (H.R. 5206/ S. 2731)?

Yes

41. Please explain why or why not:

The Empowering Striking Workers Act will protect workers who have taken the last resort action of striking and ensure their families can still eat and pay their bills.

42. Do you support the No Tax Breaks for Outsourcing Act (H.R. 995/S. 409)?

Yes

43. Please explain why or why not:

We should not be rewarding companies for eliminating American jobs and moving overseas. Instead, close tax loopholes to level the playing field for U.S. businesses, encourage domestic investment and job creation in the U.S, and ensure corporations pay their fair share of taxes.

44. Do you support the Protect America's Workforce Act (H.R. 2250/S. 2837)?

Yes

45. Please explain why or why not:

We must reverse this dangerous EO and ensure that federal workers have the right to bargain and collectively organize.

46. Will you fight to defend existing workers' pensions, and pledge to oppose any attacks on these hard-earned benefits?

Yes

47. Please explain why or why not:

Protecting workers' pensions is critical for maintaining long-term economic stability and fulfilling legal and moral commitments to employees. I will oppose any attacks on these hard-earned benefits.

48. Will you support the Protecting Health Care and Lowering Costs Act (H.R. 4849/S. 2556)?

Yes

49. Please explain why or why not:

Texas already has the highest uninsured rate in the country. I strongly oppose the Big Ugly Bill's recent cuts to Medicaid that will kick Texans off their healthcare and hurt our already struggling rural hospitals.

50. Will you oppose legislation to create a commission that would fast track cuts to Social Security and Medicare (H.R. 3289)?

Yes

51. Please explain why or why not:

I will oppose any legislation to cut life-saving programs like Social Security and Medicare that Americans have paid into throughout their careers. We can take alternative actions to protect the financial solvency of these programs that don't punish retired workers.

52. Do you support the Lowering Drug Costs for American Families Act (H.R. 2254/S. 1186)?

Yes

53. Please explain why or why not:

Like I experienced with insulin, many Americans feel the burden of high prescription drug costs. In the state legislature, I worked across the aisle to pass legislation to cap insulin co-pays at \$25 and allow prescription drug imports from Canada to lower prices. In Washington, I will support federal legislation to lower prescription prices, including increasing price transparency and negotiating power to ensure fair pricing.

54. Will you support and strengthen paid leave in all places of employment, including by ensuring that all workers have at least 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave, and oppose any attempts to cut such programs?

Yes

55. Please explain why or why not:

I support passing paid family and medical leave legislation that would allow Americans to take time off work to bond with a new child, recover from an injury or illness, or care for a seriously ill family member.

56. Do you support the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act (H.R. 2531/S. 1232)?

Yes

57. Please explain why or why not:

Violence against the health care and social services workers who keep us safe, healthy, and our communities running is absolutely unacceptable. I support taking immediate action to protect these workers.

58. Do you support the No Robot Bosses Act?

Yes

59. Please explain why or why not:

New technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), have the potential to transform our culture and economy. While we should take advantage of exciting new opportunities, I know we must protect our workers first. AI has the potential to displace jobs, present data and security risks, and affect workplace safety.

I stand with the bipartisan majority of Americans who support regulations on AI. I will incentivize the use of AI to make jobs safer, less repetitive, and better paid — rather than to eliminate them — and to create pathways for workers to move into higher-skilled, better-paying roles as the economy evolves; ensure AI companies follow the same copyright laws as everyone else; protect workers from invasive AI surveillance in the workplace; and ensure the right to transparency and human review for automated decisionmaking around promotions, discipline, and terminations.

60. Do you support the Stop Spying Bosses Act?

Yes

61. Do you support the Stop Spying Bosses Act?

Yes.

62. Will you support the Raise the Wage Act (H.R. 2743/S. 1332), which raises the federal minimum wage to \$17 an hour by 2030 for all workers and gradually eliminates subminimum wages for tipped workers, workers with disabilities, and youth workers?

Yes

63. Please explain why or why not:

It is unacceptable for anyone in the country to work full-time and still be impoverished. It's far past time for the federal government to increase the minimum wage. In the Texas House, I supported Texas workers by filing legislation to increase the state's minimum wage to \$15 per hour. I would champion legislation in the Senate to raise the federal minimum wage to a living wage.

64. Do you support the Child Care for Working Families Act (H.R. 4418 /S. 2295)?

Yes

65. Please explain why or why not:

Texas is home to approximately 2.3 million young children, most of whom have both parents working. Families need affordable and accessible options, but child care is currently more expensive than college tuition in Texas.

Challenges accessing childcare don't just hurt families; they hurt our economy. Estimates suggest that Texas is losing out on \$9.39 billion annually due to insufficient childcare. The federal government must prioritize meaningful childcare reform. I support allocating additional funding to the childcare market, capping costs to make childcare affordable for parents, and providing subsidies for childcare centers to incentivize providers to enter and remain in the market, and to help them pay workers a living wage.

66. Do you support the elimination of the filibuster?

Yes

67. Please explain why or why not:

The filibuster is an archaic procedure that is holding our government back from passing significant legislation to move America forward.

68. Do you support the Freedom to Vote Act?

Yes

69. Please explain why or why not:

It all comes down to democracy, voting rights, and getting Big Money out of our politics. Every other issue we care about — the cost of living, public school funding, health care access — all come down to whether all communities have equal access to the ballot box and equal access to influence political and policy outcomes.

70. Do you support the Protecting Our Democracy Act (S.2838)?

Yes

71. Please explain why or why not:

One of my top priorities is eliminating corruption and restoring trust in our political system. The Protecting Our Democracy Act will strengthen the separation of powers and increase transparency and accountability in our government.

72. Do you support the Restore Trust in Congress Act (H.R. 5106/)?

Yes

73. Please explain why or why not:

I strongly support preventing Members of Congress from insider trading.

74. Do you support universal access to high-speed reliable Internet access that prioritizes fiber to the home and high-road employers who use a skilled and trained workforce?

Yes

75. Please explain why or why not:

More than 7 million Texans lack broadband access, most of them in rural areas. Rural Texans struggle to work, learn, and access telemedicine due to inadequate connectivity. In 2023, Texas was promised \$3.3 billion from the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment program, but the federal government only delivered \$1.3 billion. The federal government must fulfill its commitments to rural Texans.

I support increasing the federal funding dedicated to expanding broadband access across Texas to achieve the goal of universal high-speed, reliable internet access.

76. Do you support ensuring that “one-touch-make-ready” policies that allow unskilled, untrained, low-wage contractors to move existing equipment on utility poles do not supersede provisions of collective bargaining agreements that ensure that that work will be done safely by highly-trained union members?

Yes

77. Please explain why or why not:

I support ensuring policies prioritize worker safety and do not undercut existing collective bargaining agreements.

78. Do you support broadening the base to ensure that the FCC can continue sustainably funding these programs?

Yes

79. Please explain why or why not:

I strongly support achieving universal phone and internet service.

80. Do you support closing the carried interest loophole?

Yes

81. Please explain why or why not:

I support closing tax loopholes that allow corporations and billionaires to pay a much lower tax rate than working Americans.

82. Do you support implementing a tax on financial transactions?

Yes

83. Please explain why or why not:

See above.

84. Do you support a ban on stock buybacks?

Yes

85. Please explain why or why not:

I support raising the tax on corporate stock buybacks, which corporations use to artificially inflate their stock prices instead of making investments to grow their company or pay their employees the full value of their work.

86. Do you support the Tax Excessive CEO Pay Act (H.R. 5298/S. 2818)?

Yes

87. Please explain why or why not:

Corporations raking in record-breaking profits exacerbate inequality by giving their executives massive paychecks while average employees don't see equivalent benefits to their pay. We can reward the work of corporate executives while ensuring average workers have livable wages. I support increasing the corporate tax rate for corporations that pay their top executives more than 250 times what they pay their median worker. This allows corporations a choice: they can either reduce pay inequality voluntarily or pay an additional tax to the federal government.

88. Do you support the Price Gouging Prevention Act (H.R. 4528 / S. 2321)?

Yes

89. Please explain why or why not:

Corporations should be held accountable for excessive price increases that harm Americans, especially in emergency situations. In the legislature, I passed legislation that allowed Texas to import cheaper prescription drugs from Canada at a fraction of what they cost in the U.S. due to price gouging by Big Pharma.

90. Do you support the American Energy Independence and Affordability Act (H.R. 5862)?

Yes

91. Please explain why or why not:

I advocate investing in both renewable and traditional energy, and increasing energy production, to meet our current energy needs while also preparing for the future. I support the Energy Independence and Affordability Act to reinstate clean energy tax credits that have made Texas a leader in clean energy, brought high-paying jobs to our state, reduced energy costs, and prioritized environmental protection. These tax credits funded projects that made Texans a reliable energy producer. It hurts our economy and residents to eliminate these credits.

92. Do you support ending “Too Big to Fail” by breaking up the Wall Street mega banks and separating depository banking from risky investment banking?

Yes

93. Please explain why or why not:

94. Do you support the Stop Wall Street Looting Act?

Yes

95. Please explain why or why not:

I support increasing transparency and accountability of private equity and closing tax loopholes to make sure they're paying their fair share.

96. Do you support restoring the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to its full authority, ensuring it has the necessary resources to protect consumers from financial abuse?

Yes

97. Please explain why or why not:

I support fully funding the CFB so that it has the resources to properly protect American consumers.

98. Do you pledge to speak out and fight against structural racism that still exists within our country today?

Yes

99. Please explain why or why not:

First and foremost, I have always ensured that the team I surround myself with is reflective of every community in Texas. My leadership team is majority women and majority people of color — so that I can ensure our approach to politics and policymaking is informed by diverse perspectives.

Second, I have set my campaign infrastructure up in a way that ensures my policymaking is guided by my constituents and the people of Texas — not billionaire mega-donors or special interests. Ever since I first ran for public office, I have rejected corporate PAC money.

Third, when I am fighting back against legislation designed to hurt marginalized communities, I make sure it is grounded in strategic partnership with community leaders on the frontlines of the issue. I have held the strong belief over the course of my legislative career that good governance depends on deep listening and honest dialogue, and that is why my office in the Texas House has held the reputation of welcoming people from every community to have a voice in our office and our policy-making.

As a state legislator, my door was always open to groups representing the underrepresented. I authored and carried amendments against harmful legislation against Black and marginalized communities in partnership with advocates like Equality Texas, Texas Civil Rights Project, and so many others. I committed to speaking out and fighting against structural racism in my work at the legislature.

This is the commitment I plan to keep in the U.S. Senate, because approaching public policy cannot circumvent community engagement as a first step.

100. Do you support comprehensive immigration reform that will grant lawful status to individuals eligible for DACA/DAPA and TPS?

Yes

101. Please explain why or why not:

I strongly support protecting DACA/DAPA and TPS and providing a path to legalization and citizenship. I believe we can both welcome the stranger — refugees and folks who want to contribute to our economy and pursue the American dream — and we can keep people out who mean to do us harm.

102. Do you support the continuation or reinstatement of humanitarian and refugee programs such as the CHNV Parole Program, which offer safe, legal pathways for individuals fleeing violence, political instability, or humanitarian crises?

Yes

103. Please explain why or why not:

I support restarting and continuing humanitarian and refugee programs, with clear measures to root out fraud in the system so that only legitimate claims are approved, and ensure there are protections to prevent exploitation of immigrants.

104. Do you support the Equality Act (H.R. 15/S. 1503)?

Yes

105. Please explain why or why not:

We must prohibit discrimination in all forms — including based on gender identity and sexual orientation. The Equality Act is essential to protecting our LGBTQ+ community members from discrimination.

106. Do you support the BE HEARD Act?

Yes

107. Please explain why or why not:

In the legislature, I made workplaces safer by supporting legislation to protect workers who notify law enforcement about abuses in the workplace, even if they signed an NDA. I support ensuring workers are safe from harassment and civil rights violations in the workplace.

108. Will you oppose any free trade agreements that do not include strong, enforceable labor and environmental protections?

Yes

109. Please explain why or why not:

We have the power to ensure trade agreements protect workers' rights and our environment, and I strongly support using that power.

110. Will you oppose any free trade agreements that include Investor-State Dispute Settlement provisions?

Yes

111. Please explain why or why not:

I oppose Investor-State Dispute Settlement provisions because of their propensity to undercut labor and environmental protections.

112. Do you support the Good Jobs for Good Airports Act?

Yes

113. Please explain why or why not:

No one should work full-time, especially at a job that keeps our economy and people moving and requires strong safety standards, and still live in poverty.

114. Would you support efforts to address the issue of contaminated air on our aircraft and make flying safer?

Yes

115. Please explain why or why not:

I support ensuring that our aircraft are safer for both travelers and the people who work on them.

116. If elected, would you encourage the NMB and the Administration to utilize the law as intended, including the right to strike, in order to encourage “prompt” settlement of disputes?

Yes

117. Please explain why or why not:

We should ensure that the NMB and the Administration are utilizing the law in a way that supports workers' rights to collectively bargain and doesn't drag contract negotiations on for extended periods.
