

# 350 Action 2019 Candidate Questionnaire

## Jamaal Bowman

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### About You

**Your Name:** Jamaal Bowman (NY-16)

**What office are you running for, and as which party?:** *Democratic candidate for Congress, NY-16*

### Policy Positions

**Do you support a Green New Deal that ends fossil fuels and provides an immediate and just transition to 100% renewable energy? Explain what that means to you.**

Yes. I have been fighting with the front lines of the climate justice movement for over 15 years and I'm running for Congress because it's time to fight even harder. We are truly on the edge of irreversible climate tipping points and we need immediate and bold transition off of fossil fuels now, as well as massive ecological drawdown efforts. We must fight for 100% renewable energy and not accept energy plans that rely on pollution that largely lands in communities of color (e.g. biomass, incinerators, nuclear). We must confront the fossil fuel industry for knowingly destabilizing the climate and hold them liable and accountable -- not collaborate on their plans for carbon capture technology that will allow the FF industry to continue to expand. Future generations will live or die by the decisions our political leaders make today, and I will fight for my kids and all future generations' right to live. It's time to take a stand: no Jordan Cove, no new fossil fuel infrastructure, and a Green New Deal that cools the planet invests in our communities and creates millions of jobs.

**How will you center racial, economic and social justice in your climate policies?**

As a supporter of the Green New Deal, I believe we need to address the climate crisis while addressing many wrongs, like redlining. After the 2008 crisis, working-class, Black and brown communities were often treated with the least compassion while the rich got away. This mistreatment of our most vulnerable continues today through housing. We need to make sure that every family has a chance to build wealth by ensuring a homes guarantee.

The costs of pollution have been felt by many communities of color. Superfund sites are almost exclusively in working-class, Black and brown neighborhoods. The asthma rates in the Bronx are some of the highest in the nation, due to air pollution. We need to make sure that not only do we clean up our environment, but also push for Medicare for all so these communities have the resources to address the health issues caused by large corporations and bad governmental policies.

**Do you support a moratorium on all new fossil fuel infrastructure, including pipelines, fracked gas and oil, compressor stations and coal power plants? Please tell us with specifics what you'd do if elected to stop the expansion of the fossil fuel industry and keep fossil fuels in the ground?**

Yes, I support a moratorium on all new fossil fuel infrastructure, including all elements listed above. I also support a federal ban on fracking, as this practice not only hurts our environment at the macro level but also has serious, well-documented consequences for individuals living near fracking sites. I also support taxing fossil fuel companies to subsidize the transition to renewable energy. In addition to pushing progressive environmental protection policy, serious work must be done to reverse the Trump administration's decision to open up more land for drilling, in addition to reversing the administration's decisions regarding a range of other environmental issues. Further, I will advocate ending the tax breaks and rebates the federal government gives to big oil.

**Do you support the investigation of the fossil fuel industry's role in causing climate change, blocking climate action, and misleading the public? If so, do you have plans for a process to hold the industry financially accountable for that role and related harms?**

If any company, in any sector, produces a product or products that knowingly cause harm, they need to be held accountable and are liable for damages to those affected. The fossil fuel industry has been reckless and negligent, all in the interest of expanding their profit margins. This is unacceptable. They should be held criminally and financially responsible. We should bankrupt them and give them a penalty similar to what the cigarette industry received. If legal action outside of the federal government can hold them accountable, I will support that as well.

**Do you pledge to reject any contributions from the fossil fuel industry, as defined by the "No Fossil Fuel Money Pledge"?**

Yes

**Do you support plans to create an immigration policy that allows a path to citizenship for undocumented people?**

Yes. I support the abolition of ICE and DHS. I support amnesty for currently undocumented people living in the US, as well as the progressive policy that establishes a path to citizenship for undocumented peoples. Under the current system, we are benefitting from the exploitation of migrant labor, while the government simultaneously terrorizes migrant communities. This is unacceptable, and I plan on using my power in office to push through progressive reform.

**What are your specific plans on addressing the refugees and other migrants at the US borders?**

The people at our borders are economic refugees and should be treated as such. The reason they are here is a direct result of our foreign policy. We need to define in law what a refugee is so that it is not up to a political appointee to undermine the intent of the law. I am for abolishing ICE, and detention centers run by CPD since this crisis is not just on the border, but also in our neighborhoods in New York. I support policy to ensure that those who cross the border "illegally" are not treated as criminals and I will work to ensure that local authorities do not cooperate with DHS or ICE.

**How do you see climate change impacting mass migrations and what are your plans to address the increase in refugees as a result of the climate crisis?**

Anyone seeking refuge from the manmade climate crisis deserves to be admitted into the United States, especially considering the US's role in exacerbating climate change. The US signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees the right to seek and enjoy asylum in other countries. It is high time we start acting on that commitment. Moreover, a Green New Deal will ensure that we invest in the technology and infrastructure to build the cities and economy needed to absorb mass migrations. The future of our planet will include our diverse cultures living together in harmony

**What are your plans for criminal justice reform?**

We must end government contracts with private prisons and related contractors. When people are profiting from putting others in cages, it is clear that the system has failed. We must end the practice of solitary confinement and putting people in cages. Jails need to be rebranded and redesigned as reform centers to provide offenders with education and technical skills in alignment with careers and housing once released. We must invest in education, jobs, and job training to prevent people from committing offenses in the first place. I also support ending cash bail to ensure that the poor are not criminalized. Additionally, I support the retraining of police officers, and community policing. I will also advocate for the federal government to incentivize states to achieve pay parity for public defenders; this will bring more public defenders to the bench, and improve the quality of public defenders overall.

**Do you support a worker's right to unionize?**

Yes. As an educator and principal, I have been a union member for decades. My wife is also a teacher and is a union chapter leader. My mother raised us on a postal workers' union salary.

**Do you support a \$15/hour minimum wage?**

As a minimum starting point, yes. The minimum wage should start at \$22 and should be tied to inflation and the cost of living depending on the locale. This way the minimum wage would self adjust, and workers will not have to sustain themselves on two or three or four jobs. Like many of our policies, this would have positive effects in terms of family time spent together. Parents and caregivers will have more time with the most vulnerable in our society: the elderly and our children.

**How do you plan to address the resurgence of white supremacy in the public discourse? Please tell us your plan to respond to white nationalist terrorist acts in this country?**

During the recent Congressional testimonies of the FBI, Rep. Ocasio Cortez exposed how white supremacists are not referred to as terrorists. I am against the war on terror. I propose instead, a war on white supremacy, a war on poverty (yes, I said it, move over Johnson), a war on inequality. This war does not need an army, but instead the GND, Medicare for All, and education for all.

GND is a policy that is centered around not only climate justice but also making sure those communities that were left out of the American dream due to redlining are not forgotten. We need to explore HR. 40, and figure out a plan for reparations. We need to end the privatization of prisons and detention centers and work on rehabilitation rather than incarceration. We need to stop building jails and start building

schools and hospitals. We need to address the racialized health disparities in this country, including the worst maternal mortality rate among industrialized nations by pushing for Medicare For All. We need this not only for Black and brown communities but also for poor white families, such as coal miners who are losing their jobs due to the decline of coal. We need a vision that encapsulates the needs of all and restores the dignity of all. That is the way to fight white supremacy.

**What is your plan to reduce gun violence and mass shootings?**

First and foremost, my campaign is about investing in people and their communities. Some areas of the district face serious issues regarding gun violence, and it is largely a consequence of trauma and poverty. This requires serious investment in mental health resources. At the same time, the US is clearly facing a gun violence epidemic. I am for universal background checks, as the majority of the population already supports such action. I am also in favor of government buyback programs and closing the gun show loophole, and I will advocate banning the manufacturing and sale of assault weapons.

**Do you support the payment of reparations and/or related structural adjustment to remunerate the descendants of enslaved African Americans to addressing America's history of codified and systemic racism?**

Yes, I believe in reparations. As Ta-Nehisi Coates pointed out in his Congressional testimony, slave owners were provided reparations after the civil war! HR 40 is a bill that looks to study what reparations could look like. This is a necessary first step towards coming up with an adequate plan to right these historic wrongs.

**Do you support the return of unceded lands and territory or related royalties to Indigenous Populations as a form of redress for America's history of codified and systemic racism?**

Yes. The US government has used and abused land that rightfully belongs to indigenous populations for too long, and it is time to right those wrongs. Additionally, this has close ties to climate change; much of the lands wrongfully taken by the government have been used to drill for fossil fuels. In order to move to a more sustainable future, we need to return these lands to their rightful owners, who have known how to live sustainably by the land for centuries - long before European colonizers arrived in North America.

**Do you support Medicare for All?**

Yes! Medicare for All is a critical element of my platform. Currently, Medicare, Medicaid, and VA healthcare is focused on improving healthcare outcomes, rather than boosting profits, and they perform as well as or better than the private industry since the priority is serving people and not making money. Medicare for all will be better for the nation as a whole. Most of our fundamental research is done through the government and the infrastructure it has created.

Although big pharma spends more money on research, most of the chemically new drugs come from government-sponsored research. Big pharma spends a significant portion of their money on “me too” drugs. These are drugs that have already been created, and our resources are being used to rediscover or chemically repackage these pre-existing drugs, all for the sake of profit. This kind of practice caused an increase in insulin prices, causing deaths across the country.

For this reason, I strongly believe in a government-run single-payer system that creates a monopsony. With a focus on outcomes, administrative costs will be reduced, and as the single major customer, price controls will naturally exist.

We are not doing anything new here. We are following every other developed country. This is a no-brainer! We used to be a country dared to do great things like sending the first human to the moon. We need to dream big again.

**Do you support a woman's right to choose?**

Yes

**Race:**

Black

**Gender:**

Male