

350 Action 2019 Candidate Questionnaire

Jeff Merkley

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About You

Your Name: Jeff Merkley

What office are you running for, and as which party?: *U.S. Senate -- Oregon*

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. Sen. Merkley is an original cosponsor of the Green New Deal and was the first person in Congress to introduce legislation to transition America to 100 percent clean, renewable energy. Fighting climate chaos and jumpstarting a clean energy economy is one of Merkley's top priorities and has been for many, many years.

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

Sen. Merkley is an original cosponsor of the Green New Deal. One of the key elements of the Green New Deal is to make sure that the frontline communities that often bear the brunt of fossil fuel pollution share the benefits of clean energy and will not be left behind in the transition. The Green New Deal will create millions of clean energy jobs, especially in frontline rural and urban communities that have chronic high unemployment. Sen. Merkley believes that we must ensure that the urban, rural and fossil fuel communities have key roles to play in the movement to transform our energy economy. By doing so, we can create an economy that works for everyone and promote racial and social justice. Sen. Merkley also believes in the importance of free, prior and informed consent for Indigenous communities and that is why his 100 by 50 Act includes one of the strongest tribal consultation provisions ever put into federal legislation.

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?

Sen. Merkley is the original sponsor of the Keep it in the Ground Act that would effectively ban offshore drilling in public lands and waters. Sen. Merkley has also introduced legislation blocking drilling in the Arctic Ocean as well as co-sponsored a number of other bills that would block fossil fuel infrastructure and extraction. When many elected officials stayed silent, Sen. Merkley opposed the Jordan Cove LNG export terminal in Oregon, pressured the Obama Administration to block the Keystone XL pipeline, and

opposed DAPL. On a related note, Sen. Merkley also introduced legislation to allow federal employees to divest from the fossil fuel industry.

Do you support an 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?

As a member of the Senate's Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, Sen. Merkley has investigated their network of misinformation and dark money. That's why he cosponsored the Climate Change Disclosure Act which would force fossil fuel companies to disclose their greenhouse emissions to the SEC, as well as the company's fossil fuel-related assets and how those assets are affected by climate chaos. Sen. Merkley was a leading opponent of Rex Tillerson's nomination as Secretary of State. Sen. Merkley is also strongly supportive of states like Massachusetts and New York that are investigating Exxon for their lies, as well as the brave youth from Our Children's Trust who are suing the government for inaction.

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. In 2013, Sen. Merkley voted for major immigration reform legislation that would have created a pathway to citizenship for millions of undocumented immigrants. Unfortunately, while the bill passed with a large bipartisan majority, the House Republican leadership refused to bring it up for a vote.

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

As you may know, Sen. Merkley was the first Senator to shine a light on the Trump administration's horrific child separation policy, reporting out on children in cages and having the police called on him outside a massive child prison in a former WalMart. Sen. Merkley has made numerous trips back to investigate child prisons in Tornillo and Homestead, border patrol stations where children have died, both the American and Mexican sides of ports of entry where the administration is blocking entry to people seeking asylum, and the Northern Triangle countries. Sen. Merkley believes we must treat every person arriving at our door with dignity and respect. And we should shut down for-profit child prisons, accelerate rather than hinder the placement of children with sponsoring families, improve rather than cut aid to the countries people are fleeing, establish basic standards for health and hygiene in detention, and vigorously defend and enforce the Flores decision that prioritizes keeping children out of prisons, which are inherently damaging. Sen. Merkley has introduced several bills to end the Trump administration abuse of migrant children and families and implement these and other recommendations, including the Stop Cruelty to Migrant Children Act, and even wrote a book on this topic.

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?

We are already in crisis mode. Back in 2018, Sen. Merkley traveled to several countries in Africa and saw firsthand the displacement of refugees due to extreme droughts and famine caused by climate chaos. Climate chaos is seen as a significant contributor to the crisis causing so many to leave the Northern Triangle countries seeking refuge. Sen. Merkley understands that the situation is only going to intensify as long as we don't aggressively address the crisis, and believe we need to do everything in our power to transition to a clean energy economy as quickly as possible to stem the tide of climate chaos. At the same time, Sen. Merkley believes the U.S. must increase food and humanitarian aid to regions suffering the most from mass migration. Sen. Merkley helped secure a significant increase in funding for the International Disaster Assistance (IDA). He also helped maintain funding for the P.L. 480 Title II program, a food aid program that President Trump tried to eliminate in his 2018 budget. And he worked hard to preserve funding for Migration and Refugee Assistance.

What are your plans for criminal justice reform?

Sen. Merkley was the first senator to publicly support the decriminalization and legalization of cannabis. Sen. Merkley is also a cosponsor of the Marijuana Justice Act that would end the federal criminalization of cannabis and expunge federal marijuana use and possession crimes. The bill also pressures states to change their cannabis laws if the state disproportionately arrests and incarcerates low-income people and people of color. And the bill creates a community reinvestment fund for job training, reentry services, and expenses related to the expungement of convictions and more.

Sen. Merkley has also cosponsored the Justice Safety Valve Act, which would empower federal judges to impose sentences below mandatory minimums and voted for the First Step Act. He recently released a blueprint to save our Democracy that includes voting reforms to allow formerly incarcerated people the right to vote after serving their time. Sen. Merkley is also an opponent of capital punishment.

Do you support a worker's right to unionize?

Yes. Before he became a U.S. Senator, Merkley championed the card check in the Oregon Legislature and has been a leading supporter of pro-union legislation such as the Workplace Democracy Act throughout his time in the Senate.

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

Yes.

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?

Sen. Merkley believes we have to call it out every time we see it. Sen. Merkley has used his position to speak out against hateful rhetoric and actions. Sen. Merkley believes we must create a moral example to follow and he has used his microphone to do just that in Oregon and around the world. In terms of the Senate, Merkley has called for hearings on far-right terrorism and what we can do to stop it and used his position on the Appropriations Committee to push the Department of Homeland Security to prioritize enforcement efforts around white supremacist terrorism.

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

Sen. Merkley believes Congress must stand up to the NRA and pass gun safety legislation. The American people overwhelmingly want us to get it done. Sen. Merkley is a cosponsor of the Background Check Expansion Act that would expand federal background checks on all gun sales and effectively close the

Charleston loophole. Sen. Merkley is also a co-sponsor of the Assault Weapons Ban of 2019 that would effectively ban military-style assault weapons and high capacity magazines. He also cosponsored the 3D Printed Gun Safety Act to rein in “ghost guns” that are not traceable. And he co-sponsored the Protecting Domestic Violence and Stalking Victims Act of 2019 that would prevent those who have stalked and/or committed acts of domestic abuse from buying or owning a firearm. Sen. Merkley has also advocated for additional funding for the CDC to conduct gun violence research. Sen. Merkley never hesitates to call out the NRA for their efforts to stop gun safety legislation from passing.

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?

For centuries, African Americans were robbed, under cover of law, of all of the wealth they created, and for another century our laws and state-sponsored or -sanctioned terrorism and discrimination dramatically limited the ability of many African Americans to earn and save. Of course, discrimination and disparities persist to this day throughout our society. Today’s wealth gap is inextricably tied to the founding and construction of a nation based on slavery and discrimination, and so Sen. Merkley supports legislation that would create a commission to provide recommendations and insights on how to best come to terms with our history of slavery and its legacies.

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?

Senator Merkley recognizes that the genocide and theft of Native lands are irreparable injustices on which our country is built, and has fought to make the federal government live up to its obligations and make amends for past wrongs. Senator Merkley has introduced and passed a number of bills nullifying a fraudulent treaty, rebuilding tribal fishing sites on the Columbia River, restoring tribal control over their private lands, as well as restoring federal land to Oregon tribes. He will continue to fight for tribal sovereignty and to rectify injustices perpetrated against Native Americans.

Do you support Medicare for All?

Yes. Sen. Merkley is a co-sponsor of Bernie Sanders’ Medicare for All legislation.

Do you support a woman's right to choose?

Yes

Race:

White

Gender:

Male