

# 350 Action 2019 Candidate Questionnaire

## Jessica Scarane

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1/07/2020

### About You

**Your Name:** Jessica Scarane

**What office are you running for, and as which party?:** Democratic candidate for US Senate, Delaware

### 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. The Green New Deal provides a path forward on several of our nation's most pressing issues: racist and classist environmental degradation, a stagnant economy, unaffordable public transit and utilities, and an imperialist domestic and foreign policy.

In order to achieve total divestment from fossil fuels by the year 2030, I support an aggressive investment in renewable energy sources. I also support ending federal subsidies that prop up the fossil fuel industry. Delaware is the lowest lying state in the country, and too many of our residents are at risk of being displaced by rising sea levels and coastal flooding as a result of climate change. Our current senate delegation is willing to compromise with Republican climate change deniers for incremental policy tweaks, but I refuse to let the fossil fuel industry drown my state for the sake of their bloated profits.

A Green New Deal would be an important tool in realizing universal human dignity. It would provide work and benefits to all those who are employed by the fossil fuel industry as they transition to new careers, ensure that the jobs created benefit communities most impacted by climate change, and create universal public energy and transportation systems. I understand that passing the Green New Deal requires building a political mandate across the country, and I am committed to supporting other candidates who will fight for the Green New Deal and our country's total divestment from fossil fuels.

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

In Delaware and nationwide, too many elected officials pit environmental protection against economic development. Low income communities of color bear the brunt of both environmental degradation and income inequality, and the Green New Deal would allow us to address both environmental and economic racism.

Our country must build more climate-resilient and inclusive infrastructure while ensuring that the economic stimulus from investing in our infrastructure goes directly to the communities most affected by climate change. I will support legislation to involve local communities in the environmental regulation and process of equitably distributing the Green New Deal funding. For example, Delaware's Superfund sites are highly concentrated in majority-Black neighborhoods, and the vast majority of our state's air pollution-related deaths

are concentrated in majority-Black neighborhoods. The safety and needs of these neighborhoods should be the priority of Green New Deal legislation, so that we can combat our nation's environmental racism.

Additionally, Native people have consistently put their bodies on the line in the fight for climate justice, and I will support the restoration of unceded lands and territory to Indigenous populations, as well as increased recognition of the sovereignty of Native Nations.

A Green New Deal will also help us to fight for economic justice by guaranteeing a well-paying job to anyone who wants one and investing in job training and apprenticeship programs in the renewable energy sector.

Finally, I will fight to pass Medicare for All so that everyone can get the healthcare and treatment that they need, since Delaware's Black and Latinx communities are disproportionately impacted by pollution-exacerbated illnesses and diseases. For example, seven neighborhoods in New Castle County were recently highlighted for their increased risk of cancer and other respiratory illnesses, and all of these neighborhoods were predominantly low income and majority-minority neighborhoods. It is vital that every Delawarean can obtain comprehensive medical care, free at the point of access so that we can address the pervasive racism in our state's and country's health outcomes.

**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 will vote against all new fossil fuel infrastructure legislation, full stop. I support legislation to end all federal subsidies to the fossil fuel industry, the nationalization of the fossil fuel industry, and using eminent domain to reclaim the land our country has lost to the fossil fuel industry.

I will fight to provide assistance to states and municipalities that want to create publicly-owned, green utilities providers. Several of our nation's banking institutions, such as Wells Fargo, are financing the impending climate catastrophe. I will support legislation to increase the number of public banks in our country so that towns and cities are able to finance green infrastructure projects while keeping accountability and ownership with local residents.

I will defend the First Amendment so that climate protesters who stand against the expansion of our fossil fuel infrastructure are not brutalized, as our government has so often done to BIPOC protesters. Furthermore, I will not watch these fights from the sidelines; I will stand in solidarity with those who are putting their bodies on the line to defend our land, air, and water.

**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?**

Yes, I believe we must hold the fossil fuel executives civilly and criminally liable for the harm they have caused. I will advocate for legislation that ensures standing to claim damages from climate change. I will support legislation that holds these companies accountable and makes them pay for the damages they've caused.

These actions taken to destroy the environment were done in the pursuit of corporate profits; it is only appropriate that corporations face financial penalties. Under the current political process, the fines that are imposed on companies for violating environmental regulations are often much less than the amount they profit from violating said regulations. At the very least, the companies should be held financially liable for more than what they profited from destroying the environment.

Additionally, I would support criminal investigations into any fossil fuel companies and executives who knowingly misled the public on the environmental dangers of the fossil fuel industry.

**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 will support a policy to grant amnesty to all undocumented people in this country, including an expedited pathway to citizenship for undocumented people that does not place a financial burden on them.

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

I will vote against any congressional budget that includes increased funds for ICE and CBP, as well as support legislation to defund ICE entirely. We must close the camps and detention facilities, and free all migrants currently detained in these inhumane concentration camps. I believe we must increase funding to hire more judges to address the backlog of cases of asylum seekers. We also must ensure that all immigrants regain their due process rights in these courts; I support guaranteeing a court-appointed attorney to anyone in immigration court.

Additionally, I support legislation that would add "gender" as a group that can claim asylum.

Finally, I believe that we must address the root causes of our refugee crisis: US imperialism and our refusal to address the devastating global impacts of climate change. I will fight for a foreign policy that respects the dignity and right to self-determination of people abroad so that we are not destabilizing other countries for our own economic benefit. Many of the refugees come from countries where our foreign policy has had a clear influence in the instability that drove them to emigrate in the first place, such as the 2009 coup in Honduras.

**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?**

Our country's reliance on fossil fuels is causing climate catastrophe abroad, and as the effects of climate change worsen, the number of climate refugees will rise dramatically. Even locally in Delaware, coastal flooding and rising sea levels will displace significant numbers of our residents from their homes.

I will fight to pass legislation that enacts comprehensive immigration reform, creates a welcoming immigration system, and significantly raises the cap on refugees admitted to this country. We must also expand funding to support refugees, including those fleeing from the impact of climate change.

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

Broadly, I support moving from a punitive to a restorative justice system. Delaware has one of the highest rates of incarceration in the country, and I will fight to decarcerate our state and country through ending mandatory minimum sentences, abolishing cash bail, supporting comprehensive police reform, legalizing marijuana, decriminalizing drug use, breaking the school-to-prison pipeline, and expunging the records of all people convicted of federal marijuana-related crimes. I support a full repeal of SESA/FOSTA and would vote to fully decriminalize sex work. I also support a moratorium on the construction of new jails and prisons. Finally, I support giving currently incarcerated people the right to vote, and restoring the voting rights of all formerly incarcerated people.

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

Yes. I support efforts to democratize the workplace and believe that drastically expanding union membership is an important goal. Democracy is something that millions have fought for over the years, and it is imperative that we recognize that democracy belongs in the workplace as well.

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

Yes. I support the immediate implementation of a federal \$15/hour minimum wage, indexed to inflation. I also recognize that \$15/hour is not a living wage in many parts of the country and will support legislation to further raise the minimum wage to a true living wage.

**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?**

White supremacy is the largest global terror threat we currently face. We must classify white supremacists as terrorists, and support funding for studies on how to dismantle white supremacy and white nationalism more forcefully and effectively.

I will fight to pass legislation that sends hate crimes to federal jurisdictions instead of state and local jurisdictions that often lack necessary resources, standardize prosecutions of hate crimes, and require that local and state police departments must send their hate crime data to the federal government.

We must address the fact that white supremacists have infiltrated the ranks of law enforcement, military, and our local, state, and federal governments. We need to overhaul police oversight and accountability at the federal level, eliminate qualified immunity, be unyielding in demanding that racist elected officials resign, and strengthen checks during the enlistment and commission process to ensure that white supremacists are not admitted into the military.

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

We must address gun violence on multiple fronts. This includes demilitarizing the police and significantly reducing our military budget, as state-sanctioned violence has claimed the lives of far too many BIPOC folks at home through police brutality and abroad through wars of empire.

We also must provide every person with a dignified standard of living: too many Americans are dying by gun suicide, or are unable to leave relationships with abusive partners for fear of being homeless and destitute.

I support allocating federal funding to study gun violence as a public health crisis, rather than simply a criminal justice issue.

Finally, I support reform to gun laws such as universal background checks, a mandatory waiting period, a rigorous permitting process and training requirements, and implementing a gun buyback program.

**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. Universal social programs alone are not enough to combat white supremacy, and I support reparations for Black Americans as a necessary step in fighting institutional racism.

In order to address racialized practices and policies, we cannot pass race-neutral policies that do nothing to rectify the structural oppression that BIPOC face. We must pass redistributive policies that center BIPOC if we want to break the racial wealth gap. There must be Congressional action to overturn the line of Supreme Court

precedent that hampers the use of race-based affirmative action or give guidance on how to better apply Fourteenth Amendment jurisprudence to combat white supremacy.

**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. It is unconscionable that we are exploiting the lands of Indigenous populations for our profit. We should return unceded lands and territories, or compensate Indigenous populations as they demand.

The United States should recognize the full sovereignty of Native Nations. Congress should pass a full Oliphant fix (separate from VAWA) to return judicial tribal sovereignty to Native Nations over both civil and criminal matters that occur within their jurisdictions.

Congress should explore repealing the rider in the Indian Appropriations Act of 1871 that prohibits Congress from making treaties with Native Nations as sovereigns.

The United States should not require that the Department of the Interior approve any and all changes to the constitutions of Native Nations.

At the very least, the process of federal recognition of Native Nations should also be reviewed and revised. As it currently stands, some of the requirements necessary for federal recognition and the methods by which they need to be proven were historically forbidden by the United States, creating structural barriers to Native Nations's sovereignty being recognized by the United States and their members receiving rights and benefits from the United States based on their membership in a federally recognized Native Nation.

**Do you support Medicare for All?**

Yes. I support Medicare for All that covers comprehensive medical, long term care, dental, vision, prescriptions, and mental healthcare with no premiums, deductibles, or copays. Healthcare is a human right, and we need to deliver on this right to everyone in the country, no questions asked.

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

Yes

**Race:**

White

**Gender:**

Woman

**If you'd like, tell us more about your identity in your own words:**