**Democratic Presidential Candidate #1: Joe Biden**



**Resume:**Vice President of the United States, January 2009-January 2017;   
U.S. Senator, January 1973-January 2009

**Age:** 76

**Medicare-for-All**

Biden does not support Medicare-for-All, instead favoring an expansion of the Affordable Care Act. In July, he unveiled a health care plan built around subsidizing the “big f#cking deal” he helped pass as Obama’s vice president. Biden’s 2020 plan would also offer a Medicare-like public option that Americans would be able to buy into. “I believe we have to protect and build on Obamacare,” Biden said in a video announcing the plan. “That’s why I proposed adding a public option to Obamacare as the best way to lower cost and cover everyone. I understand the appeal of Medicare-for-All, but folks supporting it should be clear that it means getting rid of Obamacare, and I’m not for that.”

Biden’s claim that Medicare-for-All would mean the end of the Obamacare is an odd way to promote his plan. While true that Medicare-for-All would replace and thus end the ACA, no one would lose coverage under a single-payer system.

#### ****Foreign Policy****

After eight years as vice president, Biden has logged more miles as a statesman than any other 2020 candidate. His views are decidedly mainstream and centrist, for good and ill. He has slammed Trump’s “need to coddle autocrats and dictators” and called for more support of NATO and a strong response to Russia’s sustained assault on Western democracy, including in the U.S. Yet he also voted for the Iraq war, and supported President Obama’s escalation of the war in Afghanistan.

In July, he reset his approach to foreign policy for his latest run at the White House. While speaking at the City University of New York, Biden preached the need to restore America’s relationship with the international community to what it was before the current president took office. He promised to rejoin the Paris climate accord and the Iran nuclear deal, cancel Trump’s travel ban on predominantly Muslim nations, resume sending aid to Northern Triangle nations, and more. “Donald Trump’s brand of America First has too often left America alone,” he said. “We only have one opportunity to reset our democracy. After Trump, we have to be prepared to make the most of it.”

#### ****Free College****

As vice president, in 2015, Biden called for four years of free public college, going further than Obama’s proposal for free two-year community college. Biden’s campaign website pays lip service to the need for all Americans to “obtain the skills and education to realize their full potential” from pre-K to college, but he has not explicitly endorsed four years of free public college since joining the 2020 primary (only free community college), and has been facing criticism for votes he made as a senator that made it harder for borrowers to discharge student debt through bankruptcy.

#### ****Guns****

A longtime gun control advocate, Biden responded to a school shooting in May by listing various policies that could prevent future tragedies. “The idea we don’t have universal background checks,” he told reporters, “the idea that we don’t outlaw a number of the weapons I was able to get outlawed in the crime bill, from large magazines and assault weapons and all that, this is crazy.” In the past, he pushed for a ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines as well as implementing universal background checks.

#### ****Immigration****

As president, Biden’s website says, he would “pursue a humane immigration policy that upholds our values, strengthens our economy, and secures our border.” He recently pledged not to deport veterans who aren’t U.S. citizens. As a senator, he voted in favor of the Secure Fence Act to pay for 700 miles of wall construction on the U.S.-Mexico border. He played a key role in the Obama administration championing the cause of Dreamers, or undocumented residents who were brought to the country when they were young.

#### ****Legal Weed****

Legalization advocates slammed Biden when he entered the race in April, telling Rolling Stone that he had “an abysmal record when it came to marijuana law reform.” As a senator, he helped lead the charge in the ’80s to ramp up the federal government’s War on Drugs, introducing the Comprehensive Narcotics Control Act of 1986 and calling for the creation of a “drug czar.” He has not made many public statements on the subject in recent years, but in 2014 told Time magazine that he still didn’t support legalization. In July, Biden released a plan for criminal justice reform that calls for the decriminalization of marijuana, for states to be allowed to legalize it as they see fit, and for it to be downgraded to a Schedule II substance at the federal level.

#### ****Criminal Justice Reform****

Since launching his campaign, Biden’s had to answer for his criminal justice stance in the ’80s and ’90s, including support for the 1994 Crime Bill and co-sponsoring the 1988 Anti-Drug Abuse Act, which created mandatory minimum sentences that treated crack cocaine more harshly than cocaine and contributed to the disproportionate incarceration of people of color. “It was a big mistake…” he told a crowd in January. “We thought, we were told by the experts, that crack — you never go back; it was somehow fundamentally different. It’s not different. But it’s trapped an entire generation.”

In July, Biden unveiled a comprehensive plan for criminal justice reform. It calls for abolishing the death penalty, private prisons, cash bail, and mandatory minimum sentences for nonviolent crimes; investing in reforming law enforcement and encouraging the Justice Department to hold police departments accountable for misconduct; a $20 grant program to encourage states to reduce crime and incarceration; and more. “Today, too many people are incarcerated in the United States — and too many of them are black and brown,” Biden wrote. “To build safe and healthy communities, we need to rethink who we’re sending to jail, how we treat those in jail, and how we help them get the health care, education, jobs, and housing they need to successfully rejoin society after they serve their time.”

**Democratic Presidential Candidate #2: Elizabeth Warren**



**Resume:** U.S. Senator, January 2013-present; Special Advisor for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, September 2010-October 2011

**Age:** 70

#### ****Medicare-for-All****

Warren has voiced support for the idea of Medicare-for-All, but the candidate who seems to have a plan for everything has been uncharacteristically vague about how she would execute such a massive undertaking. During a CNN town hall in March, she only expressed a desire to “get everybody at the table,” including private insurance companies, whom she envisions playing a “temporary role” in any transition toward a single-payer system.

She changed course a few months later during the first Democratic debates, however, raising her hand in favor of eliminating the private insurance industry. “Look at the business model of an insurance company,” she said. “It’s to bring in as many dollars as they can in premiums and to pay out as few dollars as possible for your health care. That leaves families with rising premiums, rising copays, and fighting with insurance companies to try to get the health care that their doctors say that they and their children need. Medicare-for-All solves that problem.”

#### ****Foreign Policy****

Warren certainly has expertise in domestic economic policy, but she’s been beefing up her foreign policy credentials as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Last fall, before officially declaring her candidacy, Warren outlined in broad strokes her vision for a progressive foreign policy in an op-ed in *Foreign Affairs*. Among other goals, Warren emphasized the importance of ensuring trade negotiations are “used to curtail the power of multinational monopolies and crack down on tax havens,” of making “honest assessments of the full costs and risks associated with going to war,” and of committing to “reprioritize diplomacy and reinvest in the State Department and the development agencies.” She also criticized the Defense Department’s bloated budget and called for pulling troops out of Afghanistan and Iraq. In June, she offered an unequivocal “no” when the New York Times asked whether American troops would still be in Afghanistan at the end of her first term in office.

#### ****Free College****

Arguing that crushing student loan debt is reducing rates of homeownership, discouraging people from starting businesses, and forcing students to drop out before graduating, Warren has declared that she would camcel up to $50,000 in student-loan debt for 42 million Americans, almost completely wiping out educational debt for three-quarters of the country’s borrowers. To prevent future generations from becoming similarly buried in student debt, Warren has proposed offering every American the chance to go to a two- or four-year college for free. (The cost, Warren says, will be covered by the tax on her Ultra-Millionaire tax.)

#### ****Guns****

Warren, who said in 2014 that she “grew up around guns and gun owners” and that she “will work to protect the rights of law-abiding citizens,” has more recently joined other senators in calling for research into the public health consequences of gun violence and for hearings on universal background checks. In January, she co-sponsored an assault weapons ban bill, and in February, she said gun violence would be qualified as a national emergency if she were elected. In June, Warren tweeted that she supports a national gun licensing program that would require Americans to hold a license before purchasing a gun, and that she also wants to ban assault weapons, prevent domestic abusers from obtaining firearms, and closing the gun show loophole.

After the August shootings that left 31 dead in El Paso and Dayton, however, Warren unveiled a wide-ranging plan aimed at reducing gun violence by 80 percent. The plan is essentially three-pronged: Warren would take several executive actions to institute gun control measures like universal background checks, prosecuting gun traffickers, and more; passing anti-corruption legislation that would end the NRA’s “stranglehold on Congress”; and sending Congress comprehensive gun violence prevention legislation that would be revisited and tweaked on an annual basis. “I’ll make sure that the NRA and their cronies are held accountable with executive action,” Warren wrote on Medium. “If we turn our heartbreak and our anger into action, I know we can take the power from the NRA and the lawmakers in their pockets and return it to the people.”

#### ****Immigration****

Warren has said that America needs to come up with immigration policy that “align[s] with our values.” In July, she delivered by unveiling a sweeping plan that includes “remaking” ICE and Customs and Border Protection; allowing more refugees into the United States; ending the abuse of migrants and reducing detention; and decriminalizing border crossings. “We already have the tools to effectively track and monitor individuals without shoving them into cages and camps along the border,” she wrote on *Medium*. “As President, I’ll issue guidance ensuring that detention is only used where it is actually necessary because an individual poses a flight or safety risk.”

#### ****Legal Weed****

Warren declined to publicly state a position when Massachusetts considered whether to legalize weed in 2016, but now says she voted in favor of the ballot measure and supports nationwide legalization. Warren has cited the racial disparities in marijuana arrests as a big reason to legalize the substance.

In 2018, Warren introduced a bipartisan bill with Sen. Cory Gardner — the The Strengthening the Tenth Amendment Through Entrusting States (STATES) Act — that would free states with legal pot from the threat of federal crackdowns.

#### ****Criminal Justice Reform****

“Our criminal justice system is broken — and right at the heart of that problem is race and we have to address this head-on,” Warren said at a CNN town hall earlier this year. Black Americans, she said, are more likely to be arrested, arraigned, taken to trial, wrongfully convicted and given harsher sentences, adding, “that it is a criminal justice system that is not only locking up too many people; it is a criminal justice system that has a problem of race right at the heart of it and we need to call it out for what it is.” Warren has also talked about making sure quality legal representation is available to everyone regardless of their income, called for getting rid of for-profit private prisons. She has also stressed the need to ensure Americans who serve time in prison are reintegrated into society.

In June, Warren released a plan to ban private prisons, stop contractors from marking up prices on commissary goods, and install an independent Prison Conditions Monitor inside Department of Justice’s Office of the Inspector General.

**Democratic Presidential Candidate #3: Kamala Harris**



**Resume:** U.S. Senator, January 2017-present; California Attorney General, January 2011-January 2017; District Attorney of San Francisco, January 2004-January 2011

**Age:** 55

#### ****Medicare-for-All****

In July, Harris unveiled her 2020 health care proposal in a Medium post titled, “My Plan for Medicare for All.”  The plan calls for the expansion of the current Medicare system while allowing “private insurers to offer Medicare plans as a part of this system that adhere to strict Medicare requirements on costs and benefits.” Harris’ plan sets the U.S. on track to adopt a Medicare-for-All-style system in 10 years (a timeframe that has drawn criticism). Even at the end of this 10-year transition period, however, the private insurance industry would not be eliminated. “This isn’t about pursuing an ideology,” she wrote in the post announcing the plan. “It’s about delivering for the American people.”

The plans puts to rest months of confusion as to whether Harris, who co-sponsored Bernie Sanders’ 2017 Medicare-for-All bill, supports the elimination of the private insurance industry. During a CNN town hall in January, Harris said “let’s eliminate all of that,” ostensibly in reference to private insurance. In May, she said the comment was actually in reference to all of the red tape in the health care system, and that she does indeed support some private insurance to supplement a government plan. She appeared to reverse course during the first Democratic debates in June when she was one of only two candidates onstage (the other being Bernie Sanders) to raise their hand when asked whether they supported the elimination of the private insurance industry. But the next day she said on Morning Joe that she misheard the question from moderator Lester Holt, clarifying once again that she does support some forms of private supplemental insurance. It’s now clear that, unlike the author of the bill she supported in 2017, Harris does indeed want to retain the private insurance industry.

#### ****Foreign Policy****

Harris has criticized Trump’s approach to foreign policy. “America’s position in the world has never been weaker,” she said during her campaign kickoff event. “When democratic values are under attack around the globe, when authoritarianism is on the march, when nuclear proliferation is on the rise, when we have foreign powers infecting the White House like malware.”

The senator has come under scrutiny from the more progressive wing of the party for her cozy relationship with Israel, and her failure to publicly condemn the nation’s human rights abuses against Palestinians. In March, Harris reinforced her relationship with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), tweeting a picture of herself meeting with the organization’s California leaders.

#### ****Free College****

In April, Harris wrote on *Medium* that she was co-sponsoring the College For All Act, which eliminates tuition and fees for public colleges and universities for 80 percent of Americans (those earning less than $125,000 per year). In July, she tweeted that she’ll “establish a student loan debt forgiveness program for Pell Grant recipients who start a business that operates for three years in disadvantaged communities.” The tweeted prompted widespread criticism for its narrow focus. A day later, Harris thanked people for their “feedback” and tried to “clarify confusion” about the proposal, stressing that she’ll also help close the opportunity gap through $12 billion in direct capital investments, along with other measures detailed on her website.

#### ****Guns****

In April, Harris said that if Congress does not enact meaningful gun legislation within her first 100 days in office, she would take executive action to bring about several gun control measures. “We need reasonable gun safety laws in this country, starting with universal background checks and a renewal of the assault weapon ban,” she said at a CNN town hall event, “but they have failed to have the courage to act.”

The executive actions would require background checks of anyone buying guns from a dealer who sells more than five guns per year, impose regulations on gun manufacturers and close the “boyfriend loophole,” which allows some domestic abusers to purchase guns so long as they were not married to the victim.

#### ****Immigration****

Harris has said we should “re-examine” the role of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), suggesting that it could be time to scrap the agency. She has been fiercely critical of Trump’s family separation policy at the border, and a vocal supporter of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, protecting undocumented residents who were brought to the country when they were young, who are also known as Dreamers.

Harris has been criticized, however, for supporting a policy that turned over arrested undocumented youth to ICE when she was the San Francisco district attorney. She has since said this was an “unintended consequence” of the 2008 policy and that she “did not support that consequence of that policy.” This has been disputed.

#### ****Legal Weed****

In February, Harris called for the federal legalization of marijuana. “I think it gives a lot of people joy, and we need more joy,” she said on New York radio show The Breakfast Club. During the same appearance, she said she smoked a joint in college at Howard University. “And I did inhale,” she said.

In July, she introduced the Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement Act along with House Judiciary Chairman Jerry Nadler. “Times have changed — marijuana should not be a crime,” she said about the bill aimed at decriminalizing marijuana on a federal level. “We need to start regulating marijuana, and expunge marijuana convictions from the records of millions of Americans so they can get on with their lives. As marijuana becomes legal across the country, we must make sure everyone — especially communities of color that have been disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs — has a real opportunity to participate in this growing industry.”

#### ****Criminal Justice Reform****

Harris’ record as prosecutor, district attorney, and the attorney general of California, a position she held from 2011-2017, has come under intense scrutiny as she has rolled out her presidential campaign. Though she did embrace many progressive measures as San Francisco’s DA and then as the state’s AG, she also started an anti-truancy program aimed at punishing parents whose children missed school, tried to prevent the release of prisoners despite an overcrowding problem, and supported the death penalty.

Harris has taken a more progressive stance since announcing her run for the White House. In March she called for a federal moratorium on executions, calling them “immoral, discriminatory, ineffective, and a gross misuse of taxpayer dollars.” A month later, she expressed “regret” for the anti-truancy program she instituted as DA. At a She The People forum later in April, Harris said she would “absolutely” pardon those convicted of drug-related crimes. “We have to have the courage to recognize that there are a lot of folks who have been incarcerated who should not have been incarcerated and are still in prison because they were convicted under draconian laws that have incarcerated them,” she said.

**Democratic Presidential Candidate #4: Bernie Sanders**

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#### Resume: U.S. Senator, January 2007-present; U.S. Representative, January 1991-January 2007

#### Age: 78

#### ****Medicare-for-All****

Sanders is the author of Medicare-for-All legislation in the Senate. His bill would transform Medicare into cradle-to-grave insurance coverage for all American residents, financed by taxes, so there would be no fees at doctors offices, emergency rooms, or hospitals. Over a decade, the government would need to fund and administer a $32 trillion program, but studies have suggested overall U.S. spending on health care could drop, even as tens of millions gain coverage. “Here is the truth that the drug and insurance companies do not want you to know,” Sanders tweeted in May. “Expanding Medicare to everyone will save the American people money.”

#### ****Foreign Policy****

Sanders’ rhetoric on foreign policy has often mirrored his domestic priorities, condemning the power of corporate multinationals and oligarchic concentrations of wealth. His record leans toward an anti-interventionist stance — he voted against the Iraq war and more recently did not support ousting Venezuelan dictator Nicolas Maduro, citing the U.S’s “long history of inappropriately intervening in Latin-American countries,” adding, “we must not go down that road again.” Sanders has called for Congress to reclaim its power to declare war and in April invoked the War Powers Resolution to cut off U.S. support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen. “We’re not going to invest in never-ending wars,” he has said.

During a July interview with *Pod Save America,*  Sanders offered sharp criticisms of Israel under Benjamin Netanyahu, and said that he would “absolutely” considering cutting American aid to Israel in order to force the nation to behave differently. “You have an extreme right-wing government with many racist tendencies,” he said of the nation under Netanyahu, adding that “our policy cannot just be pro-Israel, pro-Israel, pro-Israel; it has got to be pro-region working with all of the people, all of the countries in that area.”

#### ****Free College****

Sanders pushed the call for free college to the fore in his 2016 campaign, and continues to champion the policy in 2020. He has called for free public college tuition, with the federal government covering 67 percent of this cost and states the remaining 33 percent. His plan seeks to “fully fund” historically black colleges and universities — financed by a transaction fee for Wall Street trades on stocks, bonds, and derivatives. Sanders is proposing to use the same Wall Street tax to fund a debt jubilee, wiping out all $1.6 trillion in outstanding student loans. “If we could bail out Wall Street, we sure as hell can #CancelStudentDebt,” he tweeted after announcing his new debt relief legislation in June.

#### ****Guns****

Sanders has been slow to evolve on gun control. He voted for the NRA-backed 2005 bill that made most gun makers immune from accountability for misuse of their weapons, sparking the reckless marketing of military-style weapons. During his 2016 campaign, Sanders cited his concern for mom-and-pop gun shops to justify his vote. In his announcement speech for his 2020 run, Sanders sounded more like a conventional progressive: “I’m running for president because we must end the epidemic of gun violence in this country,” he said. “We need to take on the NRA, expand background checks, end the gun-show loophole, and ban the sale and distribution of assault weapons.”

#### ****Immigration****

Sanders speaks about immigration in more conservative terms than some 2020 competitors. “What we need is comprehensive immigration reform,” he said stumping in Iowa. “If you open the borders, my God, there’s a lot of poverty in this world, and you’re going to have people from all over the world. And I don’t think that’s something that we can do at this point. Can’t do it. So that is not my position.”

#### ****Legal Weed****

Sanders supports the Marijuana Justice Act, which would remove marijuana from the Controlled Substances Act, meaning it would no longer be federally prohibited and legality would be left up to the states. The act would also invest at least $500 million a year in communities hardest hit by the Drug War and withhold federal Department of Justice funding from states that enforce their own pot laws unequally.

He ratcheted up his rhetoric on the issue during an appearance on the Joe Rogan Experience in August, saying that, if elected, he would use an executive order to remove marijuana from the list of Schedule I narcotics, which also includes heroin. “That is insane,” he told Rogan. “Heroin is a killer drug. You can argue the plusses and minuses of marijuana, but marijuana ain’t heroin. So we have to end that and that’s what I will do as president of the United States. I believe we can do that through executive order and I will do that.”

#### ****Criminal Justice Reform****

Sanders voted for the 1994 Crime Bill, placing him in company with Joe Biden. Today he wants to end the drug war, including by legalizing marijuana. Sanders also seeks to end cash bail, mandatory minimums, private prisons, and the death penalty.

He elaborated on his position during a July appearance on “Black Coffee” with Marc Lamont Hill. “My preferred solution,” Sanders said, “is … focusing a very substantial amount of federal money on distressed communities in America, which in most cases, not all, will be African-American communities. That means paying attention and rebuilding schools; making sure the young people who are graduating high school are not falling through the cracks — that they have the job training or the ability to go to college; making sure there is decent housing and that the environment in those communities is adequate; and making sure everybody has health care.”

#### Taking on Wall Street

Sanders uses a Wall Street transaction tax to fund free college. With Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Sanders also has a proposal to cap all interest rates for credit cards and other consumer lenders at 15 percent.

**Democratic Presidential Candidate #5: Pete Buttigieg**

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#### Resume: Mayor of South Bend, Indiana, January 2012-present; Democratic nominee for State Treasurer of Indiana, 2010

#### Age: 37

#### ****Medicare-for-All****

Buttigieg has said a single-payer health care system is the “right place for us to head as a country,” but doesn’t think a Medicare-for-All model necessitates the elimination of the private insurance industry. “If we want to make Medicare available to everybody, whether it’s as a public option to buy in or simply establishing that as how the payer structure works in this country, that’s going to be the center of gravity,” he told ABC in February. “The bottom line is that we need to make sure every American is able to get health care.” Buttigieg has described his plan as “Medicare for All Who Want It,” which would serve as a “pathway” toward Medicare-for-All.

#### ****Foreign Policy****

In June, Buttigieg delivered a foreign policy-focused speech at the Indiana University at Bloomington in which he laid out several proposals, including repealing and replacing the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF), which essentially gives the president unilateral authority to wage war, and withholding taxpayer money from Israel if it annexes the West Bank. Though he supports Israel, Buttigieg noted that a “supporter of Israel may also oppose the policies of the Israeli right-wing government,” and that he is seeing “increasingly disturbing signs that the Netanyahu government is turning away from peace.”

The Afghanistan veteran has also called for an end to “endless wars,” and criticized both parties for failing to develop an adequate approach to international relations. “Since the election of the current president, the United States hardly has a foreign policy at all,” he said. “And lest that seem like a partisan jab, I should acknowledge that for the better part of my lifetime, it has been difficult to identify a consistent foreign policy in the Democratic Party either.”

“We need a strategy,” he added. “Not just to deal with individual threats, rivalries, and opportunities, but to manage global trends that will define the balance of this half-century in which my generation will live the majority of our lives.”

#### Free College

Buttigieg bucked with some progressives in April when he seemed to oppose tuition-free college while speaking to students at Northeastern University. “Americans who have a college degree earn more than Americans who don’t. As a progressive, I have a hard time getting my head around the idea of a majority who earn less because they didn’t go to college subsidizing a minority who earn more because they did,” he said. The previous month, he told *Vice* that he believes “there should be a comprehensive strategy,” but that he isn’t “wedded” to any specific approach to tackling the student debt crisis, such as debt cancelation.

In May, he clarified his own strategy by releasing his higher education policy on his website. His plan calls for debt-free public college, as well as an increase in Pell Grants and more support for Historically Black Colleges and Universities  and Minority-Serving Institutions. Buttigieg has also said he would expand the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, which, as the name implies, offers loan forgiveness in exchange for public service.

#### Guns

Buttigieg supports universal background checks, and is a member of the bipartisan group Mayors Against Illegal Guns. After the New Zealand mosque shooting in March, he called for military-style assault weapons to be banned, along with the establishment of a national gun licensing system, and the closure of the “boyfriend loophole,” which allows some domestic abusers to purchase guns so long as they were not married to the victim.

#### Immigration

Buttigieg supports the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. He has also called for comprehensive immigration reform that would “end the backlogs in our lawful immigration and asylum processes.”

#### ****Legal Weed****

Buttigieg supports the legalization of marijuana, and has said that he first learned about white male privilege when he was caught with a jointby a police officer in college but wasn’t arrested for it. “A lot of people probably had the exact same experience…and would not have slept in their own beds that night — and maybe would have been derailed in their college career because of it,” he said.

#### Criminal Justice Reform

At the National Action Network convention in April, Buttigieg said he opposed solitary confinement. “As we work to end mandatory minimums for nonviolent offenses, as we work to put an end to prolonged solitary confinement, which is a form of torture, here too we must be intentional about fixing disparities that have strong and deeply unfair racial consequences,” he said.

At the same conference, he argued the death penalty should be abolished. “Speaking of sentencing disparities, it is time to face the simple fact that capital punishment as seen in America has always been a discriminatory practice and we would be a fairer and safer country when we join the ranks of modern nations who have abolished the death penalty.”

Buttigieg has also called for the elimination of the private prison industry, reforming pre-trial detention and cash bail, and incentivizing the reduction of mass incarceration.

#### ****National Service****

In July, Buttigieg rolled out a plan for a new national service program that would build a network of one million national service participants by 2026. Dubbed “A New Call to Service,” the plan would bolster existing programs like AmeriCrops and the Peace Corps, as well as creating new, similar programs, such as a Climate Corps, and a national service program centered around mental health. Buttigieg’s campaign has said the program would cost $20 billion over 10 years. “Shaping a new generation bonded by the experience of serving will not only deliver good work, but also help repair the social fabric in our nation,” Buttigieg tweeted.

**Democratic Presidential Candidate #6: Cory Booker**

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#### ****Resume:** U.S. Senator, October 2013-present;**

#### **Mayor of Newark, New Jersey, July 2006-October 2013**

#### ****Age:** 50**

#### ****Medicare-for-All****

Booker supports it. “Our broken health care system costs too much, is unsustainable, inefficient, unequal and unjust,” he tweeted in March. “No one living in the richest country in the world should die or go bankrupt because they can’t afford quality care. We need Medicare for all.”

#### ****Foreign Policy****

Foreign policy has not been a centerpiece of Booker’s campaign so far, but as a member of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee he has spoken out against the Trump administration’s shadow war in Syria and against arm deals with Saudi Arabia. He backed the Iran nuclear deal and condemned Trump’s decision to pull out of it as “an abdication of American leadership.”

#### ****Free College****

Booker has introduced legislation to make college debt-free. The bill would match state-level investments in higher ed with federal dollars so that students don’t have to take on debt to get a degree.

#### ****Guns****

Booker’s plan is one of the more ambitious in the field. It calls for universal background checks and mandatory gun licenses to purchase a firearm, ratcheting up federal regulations of gun manufacturers (including giving the Consumer Product Safety Commission the power to oversee the industry), closing the “gun-show loophole,” and more.

**Immigration**

In July, Booker unveiled a plan aimed at fixing America’s immigration system that includes a promise to “shut down inhumane facilities and require all facilities to meet the highest standards” on his first day in office. The plan also calls for expanding protections for DACA, expanding the availability of legal counseling for migrants seeking asylum, reforming Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection, appointing a special envoy to the North Triangle countries (Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador) producing many of the migrants traveling to the southern border, reversing immigration policies put in place by the Trump administration, and more. “We’re going to stop the criminalization of immigration and go back to the system as it was before [Trump] was president,” Booker said on MSNBC. “It was a civil system which shows evidence-based models of having a better standard for protecting our country, for evaluating legitimate asylum claims, and not violating people’s human rights.”

As a senator, he’s been a vocal critic of the Trump administration’s immigration crackdown. He supports Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), co-sponsored a bill to reunite separated immigrant families, and introduced legislation to curtail the practice of detaining immigrants who were picked up by ICE or Border Patrol for extended periods of time.

#### ****Legal Weed****

Booker has introduced the Marijuana Justice Act, a sweeping bill that would legalize marijuana at the federal level, and invest billions in communities hardest hit by the drug war while expunging criminal records. “It’s not enough to just legalize marijuana at the federal level — we should also expunge records of those who have served their time, and reinvest in communities hardest hit by the failed War on Drugs — which has really been a war on people,” Booker tweeted in February.

#### ****Criminal Justice Reform****

Booker has led within the Democratic Party on criminal justice reform. He helped pass the First Step Act, which freed thousands of inmates sentenced to prison for drug-related offenses. He then introduced the Next Step Act to scale back mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent drug offenses, ban employers from asking prospective hires about their criminal history until late in the interview process, and improve training for law enforcement officers on racial bias issues.

In June, Booker unveiled what he calls his “Restoring Justice Initiative,” which is centered around a pledge to “immediately start the clemency process for more than 17,000 individuals who are there due to the failed War on Drugs.” A month later, he introduced legislation aimed at giving a “second look” to prisoners both by allowing those who have been behind bars for 10 years to have their sentence reexamined, and by allowing prisoners over 50 to petition for their release, putting the onus on the government to give a reason why they should remain incarcerated.

**Democratic Presidential Candidate #7: Julian Castro**



#### Resume: Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, July 2014-January 2017; Mayor of San Antonio, June 2009-July 2014

#### Age: 45

#### ****Medicare-for-All****

Castro supports it in theory, although he has yet to lay out the specifics of what his plan would look like. “7 million Americans have lost health insurance under this President,” he tweeted in response to Trump’s State of the Union address in February. “Bad deal. We need Medicare for All now — everybody counts in this country, and everyone should get good health care when they need it.”

#### ****Foreign Policy****

Castro said little about foreign policy in his 2020 announcement speech. He has criticized Trump’s America First agenda and defended the post-World War II Western alliance. “The first thing that I would do if I were president with regard to our relationships around the world is to strengthen them, because those alliances have helped keep us safe,” he said in January.

#### ****Free College****

In May, Castro unveiled his “People First Education” plan, which includes tuition-free public college, community college, and vocational school, as well as government-funded universal pre-K. Castro also wants to help relieve student debt. His plan holds that if an American with outstanding student loans is earning less than 250 percent of the federal poverty line, they do not have to make loan payments. The plan also offers partial loan forgiveness for those “who qualify for and receive means tested federal assistance such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or Medicaid for any three years within a five year period.”

As mayor of San Antonio, Castro helped launch Café College, a hub for college prep, application, and guidance services for high school students.

#### ****Guns****

Following the August shootings in El Paso and Dayton that left 31 dead, Castro unveiled a plan to combat white nationalism and gun violence. The plan calls for domestic terrorism investigations to be rebalanced so appropriate attention is given to white nationalist terror; the creation of a White House Initiative on Disarming Hate, as well as other programs to combat hate; and several gun control measures, including ending the gun show loophole, enacting universal background checks, requiring a license to purchase any firearms, renewing a ban on assault weapons, and more. “Now is our moment to decide what kind of country we want to be,” Castro wrote. “We can be paralyzed by fear of extremism and cower before the corporate gun lobby, or we can combat white supremacist terrorism directly and end the gun violence epidemic that has plagued our nation for too long. There is a movement in America to change our gun safety laws and fight for our future.”

#### ****Immigration****

Immigration is one of the signature issues of Castro’s campaign. His “People First” immigration policy would break up ICE and shift its enforcement and removal powers to the Justice Department. It would create a pathway to citizenship for DREAMers, as well as for people with Temporary Protected Status and undocumented residents. It would also rescind Trump’s Muslim ban and “effectively end” the practice of detaining refugees who present themselves at the border. And it would establish a “21st-century Marshall Plan” for Central America to re-establish stability in the region.

One of the signature moments of the opening night of the first Democratic debates came when Castro squared off against Beto O’Rourke over whether to decriminalize illegal border crossings by repealing Section 1325 of the Immigration and Nationality Act. Castro argued in favor of axing it. “My plan … includes getting rid of Section 1325 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, to go back to the way we used to treat this when somebody comes across the border, not to criminalize desperation, to treat that as a civil violation,” he said. “Here’s why it’s important. We see all of this horrendous family separation. They use that law, Section 1325, to justify under the law separating little children from their families.”

**Legal Weed**

Castro wants to legalize weed and regulate it. “It’s not enough just to say we want to #LegalizeIt,” he tweeted in April. “We will also regulate it, taking best practices of states that have successfully legalized marijuana. And while we’re at it, we’ll expunge the records of folks who’ve been incarcerated for using it.”

#### ****Criminal Justice Reform****

In June, Castro released his “People First Policing Plan,” which aims to “end over-aggressive policing and combat racially discriminatory policing,” “hold police accountable,” and “start the healing process between communities and law enforcement.” The plan would involve limiting the use of deadly force, demilitarizing the police, de-prioritizing minor offenses, mandating several new training programs, and more. “Far too many lives have been tragically cut short at the hands of a broken police system,” Castro wrote on Twitter. “I’m proud to put forward my #PeopleFirst Policing plan to begin to heal the divide between police departments and the communities they serve.”

**Democratic Presidential Candidate #8: Amy Klobuchar**



**Resume:** U.S. Senator, January 2007-present;   
County Attorney of Hennepin County, Minnesota, January 1999-January 2007

**Age:** 59

#### ****Medicare-for-All****

Klobuchar sees Medicare-for-All as a “possibility in the future,” but says she’s focused on more immediately achievable results. The Minnesota senator feels the path to universal health care begins by expanding the Affordable Care Act to include a public option — specifically allowing insurance customers on state exchanges to buy into Medicaid, the program that currently serves the disadvantaged. Klobuchar also wants to lift the ban on drug importation and to force Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices. In addition, Klobuchar has called for a $100 billion investment in mental health and substance abuse treatment, paid for in part by a tax on opioid producers.

In July, Klobuchar released a plan specifically targeted at bolstering care for senior citizens. The plan would take on chronic conditions like Alzheimer’s through investing in research and increasing the availability of care; expand access to mental health treatment and other forms of health care; lower the cost of prescription dugs; expand programs related to retirement security; and more.

#### ****Foreign Policy****

Klobuchar has decried Trump’s “foreign policy by tweet.” She voted with Republicans in a resolution of disapproval when Trump announced a precipitous withdrawal of American troops from Syria and Afghanistan.

#### ****Free College****

Klobuchar does not support free public-college tuition, suggesting that it would take a “magic genie” to be able to afford such a policy. “I am not for free four-year college for all, no,” she said at a CNN town hall in February. Klobuchar does support free community college, better refinancing options for student debt, and an expansion of Pell grants.

#### ****Guns****

Klobuchar supports an assault weapons ban, universal background checks, and closing the “boyfriend loophole,” which allows some domestic abusers to purchase guns so long as they were not married to the victim. She has said she balances her support of gun control against the interests of her sportsmen relatives, asking: “Would this hurt my Uncle Dick in the deer stand?”

#### ****Immigration****

Klobuchar supports a pathway to citizenship for most undocumented immigrants and an increase in legal immigration. She calls for reform, rather than abolition, of ICE.

#### ****Legal Weed****

Klobuchar supports the STATES Act, which would normalize the status quo on marijuana by exempting pot-legal states from federal enforcement under the Controlled Substances Act. “I support the legalization of marijuana,” she said in February, “and believe that states should have the right to determine the best approach to marijuana within their borders.” Unlike many of her 2020 rivals in the Senate, Klobuchar has not signed onto the Marijuana Justice Act, which would legalize cannabis at the federal level and invest in communities hardest hit by the drug war.

#### ****Criminal Justice Reform****

A former prosecutor who declined to file charges against nearly two dozen officers who killed suspects, Klobuchar wrote in an op-ed for CNN that “we have finally started to acknowledge that there is racism in our criminal justice system and that we need to take action to fight it.” She has proposed creating a federal clemency advisory board, and appointing a White House post, outside of the Department of Justice, to shape policies on criminal justice reform.

**Democratic Presidential Candidate #9: Andrew Yang**

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#### Resume: Founder of Venture for America

#### Age: 44

#### ****Medicare-for-All****

Yang has endorsed Medicare-for-All, focusing on the potential to control costs, expand coverage, and the benefits of ending job lock by Americans who stick with employers just to maintain their benefits. “Being tied to an employer so that you don’t lose your healthcare prevents economic mobility,” his website reads. “It’s important that people feel free to seek out new opportunities, and our current employee-provided healthcare system prevents that.”

#### ****Foreign Policy****

“My first principles concerning foreign policy are restraint and judgment— we should be very judicious about projecting force and have clear goals that we know we can accomplish,” Yang’s website reads. “If I send young men and women into harm’s way, they will know that vital national interests are at stake and there is a clear plan for them to achieve their goal in a reasonable time frame.”

#### ****Free College****

Yang wants to make community colleges and vocational training accessible. He vows to “work to fund community colleges to a point where they can provide free (or drastically reduced) tuition to anyone from the community,” with an emphasis on technology training and partnerships with local employers.

#### ****Guns****

Yang proposes a tiered licensing system for gun owners like those the DMV requires for auto drivers vs. truck drivers. He’d require background checks and gun locks for all levels. Anyone seeking a semi-automatic weapon or an assault rifle would have to complete more rigorous safety training and intrusive background checks.

#### ****Immigration****

Yang wants to heighten border security and provide ways for undocumented immigrants to normalize their status. His website outlines a drive to create a “new tier of long-term permanent residency for anyone who has been here illegally for a substantial amount of time so that they can come out of the shadows and enter the formal economy and become full members of the community” with a chance to become a citizen after 18 years. He has said he will “deport any undocumented immigrant who doesn’t proactively enroll in the program.”

#### ****Legal Weed****

Yang wants the “full legalization of marijuana” at the federal level, removing it from the Controlled Substances Act. “I’m for full legalization of marijuana. I would go a step further and on 4/20, 2021, exactly 2 years from today, I would pardon everyone who’s in jail for a low-level, non-violent marijuana offense and I would high five them on their way out of jail.”

#### ****Criminal Justice Reform****

Yang wants to remove the threat of jail time for users of opioids, as countries like Portugal have done. “We need to decriminalize the possession and use of small amounts of opioids,” his website reads. Yang also wants to be tough on Wall Street criminals and believes that “financial crimes should be treated the same way as any other crime,” and that “those perpetrating it should go to jail, and their punishment should reflect the amount of damage they’ve done to the economy and individuals they’ve defrauded.”

#### Universal Basic Income

Yang’s most famous proposal is quite simple. He wants to pay every American adult a basic income — branded a Freedom Dividend — of $1,000 a month. The checks would be financed by a European-style Value Added Tax (paid on every business transaction, up and down the supply chain). Yang is promoting universal basic income as a way to insulate America from the impending job loss and dislocation caused by automation and artificial intelligence. As many as one third of current American jobs are vulnerable to being automated by 2030.

Some progressives are troubled, however, by the fact that the Freedom Dividend is meant to displace traditional social welfare programs, not add to them. Beneficiaries would have to choose between their current food stamps or disability check and the $1,000 in monthly cash.