

ISSUES

Racial Justice

When we are in the White House, we are going to address not only the disparities of wealth and income that exist overall in our nation, but we will address the racial disparities of wealth and income. We are going to root out institutional racism wherever it exists.



Details

It's time to treat structural racism with the exigency it deserves.

In order to transform this country into a nation that affirms the value of its people of color, we must address the five central types of violence waged against black, brown and indigenous Americans: physical, political, legal, economic and environmental.

Whether it is a broken criminal justice system, or massive disparities in the availability of financial services, or health disparities, or environmental disparities, or educational disparities, our job is to—and we will—create a nation in which all people are treated equally. That is what we must do, and that is what we will do.

Voting Rights and Enfranchisement

In the last decade, more than 30 states have considered voter suppression laws whose clear intent is to disenfranchise people of color. How pathetic and how cowardly is that. Together we will end voter suppression in this country and move to automatic voter registration. We are going to make voting easier, not harder. To protect our democracy, we must:

- Restore the Voting Rights Act.
- Re-enfranchise the right to vote to the 1 in 13 African-Americans who have had their vote taken away by a felony conviction, paid their debt to society, and deserve to have their rights restored.
- Secure automatic voter registration for every American over 18.
- End voter suppression and gerrymandering.
- Abolish burdensome voter ID laws.
- Make Election Day a national holiday.

Criminal Justice

Over the last number of years, we have seen a terrible level of police violence against unarmed people in the minority community: Laquan McDonald, Sandra Bland, Michael Brown, Rekia Boyd, Eric Garner, Walter Scott, Freddie Gray, Jessica Hernandez, Tamir Rice, Jonathan Ferrell, Oscar Grant, Antonio Zambrano-Montes and others. People of color, killed by the police, who should be alive today. We know that African-Americans are twice as likely to be arrested, and almost four times as likely to experience physical force in an encounter with the police.

Today, black men are sentenced to 19% more jail time for committing the exact same crime as white men, and African Americans are jailed at more than five times the rate of whites.

All of this and more is why we are finally going to bring about real criminal justice reform in this country. We are going to end the international embarrassment of having more people in jail than any other country on earth. Instead of spending \$80 billion a year on jails and incarceration, we are going to invest in jobs and education for our young people. No more private prisons and detention centers. No more profiteering from locking people up. No more "war on drugs." No more keeping people in jail because they're too poor to afford cash bail. Real police department reform. When we are in the White House, we will:

- End, once and for all, the destructive "war on drugs," including legalizing marijuana.
- Eliminate private prisons and detention centers.
- End cash bail.
- Abolish the death penalty.
- End all mandatory minimums and reinstate the federal system of parole.
- Seriously reform civil asset forfeitures.
- Bring about major police department reform.

Environmental Justice

The ills of pollution and climate change touch everyone, but tragically, they touch those in poverty more than others. Trump's own EPA has shown that people living in poverty are exposed to more harmful particulate matter in the air, and that people of color are more likely to live near pollution and be exposed to pollutants. According to the EPA report, "results at national, state, and county scales all indicate that non-Whites tend to be burdened disproportionately to Whites." This, too, is unacceptable.

Today, Flint, Michigan, is still without new pipes for clean water, and there are 3,000 other Flint, Michigans, across the country—neighborhoods with lead rates that were double those of Flint during the height of its crisis. Together, we must:

- Enact a Green New Deal not just to save the planet, but to protect our most vulnerable communities. We must end the scourge of environmental racism, and at the same time create green jobs to support and rebuild the local economies of affected communities.
- Protect low-income and minority communities, who are hit first and worst by the causes and impacts of climate change, while also protecting existing energy-sector workers as they transition into clean energy and other jobs.
- Address the inadequate environmental cleanup efforts of Superfund hazardous waste sites in communities of color.
- Stop the exposure of people of color to harmful chemicals, pesticides and other toxins in homes, schools, neighborhoods, and workplaces and challenge faulty assumptions in calculating, assessing, and managing risks, discriminatory zoning and land-use practices and exclusionary policies.
- Enact a Green New Deal to mitigate climate change and focus on building resilience in low-income and minority communities.

Address Healthcare Disparities

Today, the infant mortality rate in black communities is more than double the rate for white communities, and the death rates from cancer and almost every other disease is far higher for blacks. Black women are three and a half times more likely to die from pregnancy than white women. We must:

- End the racial disparities in our health care system—31% of African Americans and 32% of Hispanics struggle paying medical bills compared to 24% of white Americans. We must guarantee health care to all people of color as a right, not a privilege, through a Medicare-for-all, single-payer program and end this inequity.

Economic Justice

Black Americans currently have [ten](#) cents for every dollar white Americans have. Latinx Americans currently have thirteen cents for every dollar white Americans have. This is unacceptable: It's time for America to treat the lives of people of color like they're worth more than change on the dollar.

More than 22% of black Americans and more than 21% of Hispanic Americans are living in poverty compared to 12% of white Americans.

Today redlining prevents businesses owned by people of color from getting loans, and predatory lending results in higher interest rates in low-income communities of color. More than 47% of African Americans are unbanked or underbanked and some 43% of Hispanic families are unbanked or underbanked, whereas 18% of whites are unbanked or underbanked. The massive disparities and discrimination in the availability of financial services must end.

Our campaign is fundamentally dedicated to ending the disparity of wealth, income and power in this country. It's time to bring a systemic approach to systemic racism. Structural problems require structural solutions, and together we can meet that challenge.

Systemic inequities have created innumerable disparities across racial groups from health outcomes, to health insurance rates, education outcomes, college debt rates, and police violence. Bernie is running for president because he believes we're obligated to do more than just acknowledge the problem. He believes in implementing policies that aim to achieve substantive equality now—while the generations alive today can benefit. In a country that is genuinely free, neither one's zip code nor the color of their skin would determine a child's life outcome. Bernie believes our country is morally bound to close the racial wealth divide. In order to do that, we must ensure that people:

- Start treating the racial wealth divide like the crisis it is. We must end the especially pernicious racial wealth divide that exists today in America within the gap between millionaires and the poor, working, and middle classes of all races.
- Guarantee a job to every American. A job guarantee will create good-paying jobs and will create work building much needed infrastructure and providing critical services to communities across the country.
- End redlining practices and other forms of housing discrimination that still exist.
- Make sure every kid, regardless of race or class, receives a quality education.
- End the affordable housing crisis and create a path to wealth building through homeownership.
- Make sure resources are focused on the Americans who need it most -- often as a result of structural disadvantage. Bernie supports the 10-20-30 approach to federal investments which focuses substantial federal resources on distressed communities that have high levels of poverty.
- Support public colleges and HBCUs. We must make public colleges, universities and trade schools, tuition-free—including for the 76% of HBCU students who attend public colleges—and increase public funding for all HBCUs.
- Raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. Black and Latinx workers disproportionately work minimum wage jobs. Raising the minimum wage will increase the wages of 38% of African-American workers and 33% of Latinx workers.
- End the discriminatory practices in our financial services. We must allow every post office to offer basic and affordable banking services and end lending discrimination once and for all.

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