



## **A National Agenda for Black Girls**

*A Project of Girls for Gender Equity*

### **Presidential Candidate Questionnaire**

#### **ABOUT GIRLS FOR GENDER EQUITY**

Girls for Gender Equity (GGE) is an intergenerational organization committed to the physical, psychological, social and economic development of girls and women, particularly cisgender and transgender girls and gender non-conforming/non-binary (GNC/NB) youth of color. Through direct service, policy & organizing, and culture change, GGE encourages communities to remove systemic barriers and create opportunities for girls and women to live self-determined lives. GGE works to create the conditions for cis and trans girls and young women and GNC/NB youth of color to lead strategies to solve the injustices they face. We ultimately believe in and work toward a world where they are free.

#### **ABOUT A NATIONAL AGENDA FOR BLACK GIRLS**

As we approach the 2020 election, GGE is centering the needs of cis and trans Black girls and GNC Black youth. [A National Agenda for Black Girls](#) is a collaborative project engaging organizations across the United States who are committed to the well-being of Black girls.

Black girls, like all communities, are not a monolith. We recognize and center the full spectrum of gender identity of Black young people, including cis and trans Black girls, and all young people who have experienced Black girlhood. We recognize in doing gender and racial justice work that by bringing Black girls and Black young people along the gender spectrum from margin to center, we are actively working to liberate and uplift all experiences of Black girlhood and femmehood, acknowledging that language is constantly evolving.

GGE has convened a national [steering committee](#) of youth activists from partner organizations across the country collaboratively developed the list of questions outlined below and align with the six national policy priorities that speak to their needs.

The six national policy priorities are the following:

- ❖ Passing a national Black Girl Bill of Rights
- ❖ Expanding education justice and opportunity, specifically ending school pushout
- ❖ Expanding democracy for young people
- ❖ Healing, well-being and reproductive justice
- ❖ Ending sexual and gender-based violence and building cultures of consent
- ❖ Immigrant and racial justice

## CAMPAIGN CONTACT INFORMATION

Name:	Senator Bernie Sanders
Campaign Point of Contact:	Analilia Mejia
Campaign Point of Contact Email:	xxxxxxxxx
Campaign Point of Contact Phone:	xxx-xxx-xxxx
Campaign Address:	
Campaign Website:	<a href="https://berniesanders.com/">https://berniesanders.com/</a>
Candidate Twitter:	@BernieSanders
Candidate Facebook:	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/berniesanders/">https://www.facebook.com/berniesanders/</a>
Candidate Instagram:	@BernieSanders

## INSTRUCTIONS

Please complete answers to all questions (250-word limit per question) by the close of business on Friday, February 28, 2020. Your responses to the questions below are considered on the record and will be made available on our website. After your completion of the presidential questionnaire, we will offer the opportunity to engage each presidential candidate in a Twitter digital townhall where you will have the opportunity to speak to the policy platforms uplifted in this project.

### 1. How will you and your campaign engage with and prioritize the needs of cisgender (cis) and transgender (trans) Black girls and gender nonconforming (GNC) Black youth?

Bernie believes that we must transform this country into a nation that affirms the value of Black girls and Black GNC/NB youth.

Whether it's a broken immigration and criminal justice system, or massive 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's what we must do, and that is what we will do.

The only way we achieve our goals is through a political revolution and social awakening – where millions of people get involved in the political process and reclaim our democracy by having the courage to take on the powerful corporate interests whose greed is destroying the social and economic fabric of our country and call to question structural and systemic racism that denies people of color, but particularly black people and women the freedom to fully thrive.

The movement we're building focuses on engagement of women and girls, the LGBTQ+ community, communities of color, working and middle class, and young people to make sure they have a voice on issues that directly affect their lives.

Bernie's working to build a multi-racial, multi-generational, working class movement for racial, social and economic justice that will bring millions of people together and transform our country so it works for all of us. We're collaborating closely with racial justice activists and communities of color across the country to build that movement for justice. Bernie believes in policies that are of, by, and for the communities impacted by them. When we're in the White House, we'll work alongside Girls for Gender Equity to deliver long overdue justice for historically marginalized communities.

**2. Do you support the Black Girl Bill of Rights? If so, how will your administration seek to ensure these rights for Black girls?**

A Sanders Administration will change the balance of power in this country so that people who have often been ignored or silenced have an elevated voice and representative role in American society. Bernie believes people have the right to receive a quality education in a safe and nurturing environment, the right to lead lives where they can be fully and totally themselves without fear of violence or discrimination, the right to control their own body, and the right to quality health care.

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

Together, we'll put policies in place that end environmental racism, guarantee the the right to quality health care, the right to as much education as one needs to succeed in our society, the right to a good job that pays a living wage, the right to affordable housing, and more.

In order to build the movement we need to bring about the change we deserve, Bernie imagines working closely with your organization to engage and motivate voters to fight for economic, social and racial justice - not just to win the presidency, but to help movements for justice all across the country. We'd collaborate closely to bring volunteers and activists together. Your organization believes in a transformative agenda, and we'd look forward to working together on advancing our shared ideals.

**3. Black girls are more likely to attend schools that are poorly funded or funded at inequitable rates; how will your administration work to ensure Black girls have all of the resources they need to learn?**

In 2016, school districts serving mostly students of color received \$23 billion less funding than mostly white schools, even though they serve the same total number of students. In America, the quality of a child's education should not and cannot depend on their zip code or the color of their skin. Bernie's plan calls for a transformative investment in our children, our teachers and educational support staff, and our schools and a fundamental re-thinking of the unjust and inequitable funding of our public education system.

Bernie will establish a national per-pupil spending floor to ensure that urban, rural, affluent, and low-income school districts receive more equitable and fair funding. He'll Triple Title I funding to ensure at-risk schools get the funding they need. He'll provide \$50 billion over a decade for sustainable community schools to provide a holistic, full-service approach to learning and the wellbeing of our young people. And he will provide \$50 billion over ten years to substantially expand access to summer and after-school programs, teen centers and tutoring. He'll provide free, universal school meals year-round.

Bernie will provide \$5 billion annually for career and technical education to give our students the skills they need to thrive once they graduate. He'll build on the Strength in Diversity Act to increase, not cut, federal funding for community-driven strategies to desegregate schools.

And he'll ensure every teacher is paid at least \$60,000 a year and empower teachers to provide a teacher-supported curriculum that gives students the best possible education.

**4. Blacks girls experience disproportionate rates of school exclusion, school-based arrests, and surveillance. How will you enhance and protect the civil rights of Black girls in school?**

Due to implicit racial bias, Black students, even in preschool, are nearly four times as likely to be suspended as Whites, putting them at greater risk of falling behind and getting caught up in the juvenile justice system. Black students and students with disabilities are more likely to be subjected to exclusionary discipline measures than their peers of the same age. When a child is pushed out of school they lose instructional time and are more likely to become involved with the juvenile and adult justice systems. Bernie will end the school-to-prison pipeline.

Bernie will address disciplinary practices in schools that disproportionately affect Black and Brown children. He'll fully fund the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights and remove current protocols that allow for arbitrary dismissal of complaints. He'll decriminalize truancy for all youth and their parents. He'll eliminate federal incentives for schools to implement zero-tolerance policies. We'll eliminate criminal charges for school-based disciplinary behavior that would not otherwise be criminal and invest in school nurses, counselors, teachers, teaching assistants, and small class sizes to address disciplinary issues. This includes ensuring every school has the necessary school counselors and wrap-around services by providing \$50 billion over the next decade to expand the sustainable community school model. Bernie will make transformative investments in our children, our teachers and our schools and fundamentally rethink the unjust and inequitable funding of our public education system.

## **5. Do you believe police officers belong in schools?**

We must end the school-to-prison pipeline. Instead of more police officers in schools, we're going to have mentors and counselors in schools. We need to invest in jobs and education for our kids, not more jails and incarceration. Under a Sanders administration, we will:

- Address disciplinary practices in schools that disproportionately affect Black and Brown children.
- Eliminate criminal charges for school-based disciplinary behavior that would not otherwise be criminal and invest in school nurses, counselors, teachers, teaching assistants, and small class sizes to address disciplinary issues.
- Ensure every school has the necessary school counselors and wrap-around services by providing \$5 billion annually to expand the sustainable community school model.
- Decriminalize truancy for all youth and their parents.

- Eliminate federal incentives for schools to implement zero-tolerance policies.
- Invest in local youth diversion programs as alternatives to the court and prison system.
- Work with teachers, school administrators, and the disability rights movement to end restraint and seclusion discipline in schools.
- Establish a dedicated fund to create and expand teacher-training programs at HBCUs, minority-serving institutions (MSIs) and tribal colleges and universities to increase educator diversity.
- Fully fund the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights and remove current protocols that allow for arbitrary dismissal of complaints.

**6. In December 2019, Representative Ayanna Pressley introduced a bill titled, The End School PUSHOUT Act, directly addressing the racial and gender biased experiences Black girls and girls of color are having in school. This bill acknowledges that Black girls deserve schools and learning environments free from racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, and all things that prohibit school from being a true protective factor for a young person. How will your administration work towards ending School Pushout, also known as School to Confinement Pathways?**

Black students, even in preschool, are nearly four times as likely to be suspended as white students, putting them at greater risk of falling behind, getting caught up in the juvenile justice system. Today, Black girls are over 6 times more likely to face expulsion when compared with white girls.

We must end the school-to-prison pipeline and combat racial discrimination in our schools. As president, Bernie will:

- Eliminate criminal charges for school-based disciplinary behavior that would not otherwise be criminal and invest in school nurses, counselors, teachers, teaching assistants, and small class sizes to address disciplinary issues.
- Ensure every school has the necessary school counselors and wrap-around services by providing \$5 billion annually to expand the sustainable community school model.
- Decriminalize truancy for all youth and their parents.
- Eliminate federal incentives for schools to implement zero-tolerance policies.

- Invest in local youth diversion programs as alternatives to the court and prison system.
- Work with teachers, school administrators, and the disability rights movement to end restraint and seclusion discipline in schools.
- Triple Title I funding to ensure at-risk schools get the funding they need and end funding penalties for schools that attempt to desegregate.
- Establish a dedicated fund to create and expand teacher-training programs at HBCUs, minority-serving institutions (MSIs) and tribal colleges and universities to increase educator diversity.
- Fully fund the Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights and remove current protocols that allow for arbitrary dismissal of complaints.

**7. The United States Department of Education plays a significant role in setting education policy and protecting the civil rights of students all over the country. How will you re-establish the protections afforded to students in school, and ensure that the Office of Civil Rights can enforce the existing protections for young people?**

65 years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, many U.S. schools remain unacceptably segregated. Some 300 school districts are currently under desegregation orders and the Supreme Court has curtailed the government’s power to address them. Under Betsy DeVos, the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights has outrageously “scaled back” civil rights investigations and dismissed hundreds of them in short order.

When Bernie is in the White House, we will combat racial discrimination and school segregation, and we will re-establish and expand protections for our young people. As President, Bernie Sanders will:

- Build on the Strength in Diversity Act to increase, not cut, federal funding for community-driven strategies to desegregate schools.
- Triple Title I funding to ensure at-risk schools get the funding they need and end funding penalties for schools that attempt to desegregate.

- Execute and enforce desegregation orders and appoint federal judges who will enforce the 1964 Civil Rights Act in school systems.
- Address disciplinary practices in schools that disproportionately affect Black and Brown children.
- Establish a dedicated fund to create and expand teacher-training programs at HBCUs, minority-serving institutions (MSIs) and tribal colleges and universities to increase educator diversity.
- Fully fund the Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights and remove current protocols that allow for arbitrary dismissal of complaints.
- Fund school transportation to help integration, ending the absurd prohibitions in place.
- Increase funding for public magnet schools to \$1 billion annually to help integrate our schools.
- Increase access to English as a Second Language instruction.

**8. How will your administration work to remove barriers to voting for people of color, women, and young people, particularly those who have not yet reached voting age?**

When Bernie is in the White House, we’ll end voter suppression and protect the right to vote for all African Americans above the age of 18. Voter suppression continues to play a huge role in silencing the political voices of African Americans. Bernie will protect our Democracy by restoring and expanding the Voting Rights Act, re-enfranchising the right to vote to the 1 in 13 African-Americans who have had their vote taken away by a felony conviction—including those currently incarcerated, establishing secure automatic voter registration, end voter suppression and gerrymandering, abolish burdensome voter ID laws, expand early voting and absentee voting, and make Election Day a national holiday.

**9. How will your administration work to undo the voting barriers that exist for Black people (voter roll purges, new ID laws, felony disenfranchisement, etc.)?**

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.

Bernie believes that every American, regardless of income, race, identity, or background must have the freedom to exercise their constitutional right to vote. To make sure every

vote counts, we will Bernie will restore and expand the Voting Rights Act. He will also:

- Secure automatic voter registration for every American over 18.
- End racist voter suppression and partisan gerrymandering.
- Re-enfranchise the millions of Americans who have had their right to vote taken away by a felony conviction, including those currently incarcerated, as voting is a fundamental American right.
- Ending prison gerrymandering, ensuring incarcerated people are counted in their communities, not where they are incarcerated.
- Abolish burdensome voter ID laws.
- Make Election Day a national holiday.
- Abolish the Electoral College.
- Expand early voting and also make absentee voting easier.
- Ensure voting is accessible to people with disabilities.

**10. There are growing state-level attacks on reproductive rights, including potential challenges to *Roe v. Wade*. What will you do to protect reproductive rights?**

Bernie has been fighting to protect a woman's right to choose his entire career. A President, Bernie will enact Medicare for All to guarantee health care as a human right to all. Under his Medicare for All program, the Hyde Amendment is fully repealed, and comprehensive reproductive health coverage is provided to all, free at the point of service, including contraceptives and the availability of a safe and legal abortion. When Bernie is President, he will fully fund Planned Parenthood, Title X, and other initiatives that protect women's health, access to contraception, and the availability of a safe and legal abortion.

**11. Many Black girls attend schools in states that do not offer comprehensive sexual health education, which is an important tool for preventing sexual violence and developing the overall health and wellness of young people. What will your administration do to ensure federal funding for sexual health education?**

When sexual health is an intrinsic part of human life, we should not run away from it. We should explain biology and sexuality to our kids on a factual basis. It's important that we reject abstinence-only education and support what the American people want: sex education in our schools that provides young people with accurate, comprehensive

information about sex that will make them safer. That's why, when Bernie is President, we will fully fund sex education and ban abstinence only sex education. We will also appoint a Secretary of Health and Human Services who will prioritize ensuring comprehensive, scientifically-based sexual health education in our schools.

**12. Studies have shown that Black women, even when we control for education and income, face higher rates of postpartum mortality, in part due to racism in healthcare. What will your administration do to address this issue?**

A Bernie Sanders Administration will end the long-standing racial disparities that exist within America's health care system and workforce. Far too many Black Americans have died as a result of these injustices and there is no time to wait for racial justice and health care for all.

We'll address the fact that in the U.S., black women are three and a half times more likely to die from pregnancy than white women. The research from experts is clear: to solve our maternal mortality crisis, we need to address uninsurance. When Bernie is in the White House, he'll enact Medicare for All, which will guarantee health care, including quality maternal health care, as a human right to everyone in America, free at the point of service.

When we are in the White House, we'll address point-of-care discrimination due to provider bias and unequal resources for marginalized communities. We will address the need for more black doctors, more black dentists, more black nurses, and more black mental health providers who can provide the care that is so desperately needed in their communities.

We'll significantly expand the National Health Service Corps, Community Health Centers, and Teaching Health Centers to bring more doctors and nurses of color to underserved areas. We will increase the number of nurses, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants and allowing them to practice at the top of their license in order to increase the number of practitioners of color to provide culturally competent care in the communities they serve.

**13. Since the #MeToo Movement has become a part of the international conversation, many survivors have come forward to say that they've experienced gender-based violence at the hands of their employers, teachers, peers, police, clergy, and more. What will your administration do to prevent sexual violence in communities?**

Sexual violence is an epidemic. Bernie will do everything we can to end sexual violence and harassment once and for all and empower survivors. Together, we will:

- Protect women and students from harassment, discrimination, and violence in educational institutions by protecting and enforcing Title IX.
- Sign into law the BE HEARD ACT, to expand and strengthen our anti-harassment and discrimination laws and ensure individuals have access to justice.
- Pass the Military Justice Improvement Act to ensure survivors of rape and sexual assault in the military have a fair and independent system outside the chain of command to report these types of crimes.
- Fund sex trafficking research and prevention programs that include early identification of vulnerable populations, like foster children and youth in transition, as well as Native American women.
- Immediately reauthorize and expand the Violence Against Women Act.
- Enact comprehensive criminal justice reform to ensure our police departments adopt policies that ensure safe and fairer interactions with transgender people, especially transgender women of color who are often targeted by police unfairly.
- Institute training programs and oversight to prohibit abuse of women and promote compliance with fair policies.
- Provide housing assistance and paid leave for victims of sexual assault, as well as ban for profit prisons where the rate of sexual assault is in some cases 2-3 times higher than that of publicly run facilities.
- Pass the Equality Act to ensure LGBTQ+ individuals are protected from harassment.
- Undo Trump's attack on the Equal Opportunity Commission.

**14. What will your administration do to ensure that federal funding is allocated for survivors of sexual violence?**

When Bernie is president, he will provide survivors the support they need and deserve to get back on their feet, like trauma and recovery services to help stop cycles of violence and crime. Roughly half of all sexual assault victims lose their jobs or are forced to quit their jobs. In the United States, about two-thirds of those injured from intimate partner violence, predominantly women, do not receive medical care. Of all domestic

violence victims who need housing, more than half do not receive this help, and about 40 percent of them become homeless at some point in their lives.

To provide justice and support to crime survivors, and to interrupt the cycle of violence so that there are fewer crime victims in the future, requires a realignment of policing priorities and deep investments to get survivors the support that they need. That includes immediately reauthorize and expand the Violence Against Women Act, providing housing assistance and paid leave for survivors of sexual assault, and enacting a federal jobs guarantee so no one feels trapped in their workplace to support themselves.

And we will guarantee survivors have access to trauma-informed mental health care through Medicare for All.

**15. What will you do within your administration to ensure that your office is a space of safety and maintains a culture consent?**

As President, Bernie will work to ensure every person, especially women, feel safe and empowered in their place of employment. A Sanders White House will be a welcoming, safe, and comfortable place for every single person working in our office. Our presidential campaign has implemented the strongest workplace protections, including implementing a safe process to report sexual harassment and assault and mandating sexual harassment training as condition for employment.

Bernie will do everything he can to protect all workers from workplace harassment and discrimination. Bernie will sign into law the BE HEARD Act, to expand and strengthen our anti-harrasment and discrimination laws and ensure individuals have access to justice. This legislation will work to create harassment-free workplaces, and crack down on companies that fail to address harassment and discrimination in the workplace. He will pass the Equality Act to ensure LGBTQ+ individuals are protected from harassment.

Bernie knows that one of the most important things we can do to stop workplace harassment and discrimination is to make it easier for workers to join unions to protect workers from exploitation and violations of labor laws. Bernie is proud to be running the first presidential campaign to unionize.

When Bernie is President, he will pass his Workplace Democracy plan, the most comprehensive pro-union plan of any candidate. His plan lays out a strategy to double union membership within his first term in office.

**16. We have all seen headlines of migrant people being held in detention camps along the southern U.S. border and being subjected to horrific conditions. What will your**

## **administration do to end the criminalization of migrants and free the people being held in camps along the southern border?**

Bernie believes crossing the border should be a civil, not a criminal, offense. He believes that no human being is illegal, and we should not treat families who travel thousands of miles to escape violence and misery as criminals. The criminalization of border crossings does not serve public interest or safety, wastes valuable government resources and taxpayer dollars, and has been utilized by President Trump to rip families apart and cage children. When Bernie is president, he will decriminalize and demilitarize the border, and establish a humane review process for those arriving at the border.

He will also close private detention centers on day one and connect detainees to legal counsel medical services, and work opportunities. We will work with Congress to pass the Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act, introduced by Rep. Pramila Jayapal, which will virtually end detention entirely for asylum seekers, caregivers, families, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable persons, requiring release on recognizance or alternatives to detention.

Bernie will stop treating immigration as a national security threat by restructuring the dysfunctional Department of Homeland Security to break up ICE and CBP, returning their functions to the Department of Justice and the Department of Treasury, where they belong. He will decouple local law enforcement from draconian immigration enforcement. We will ensure all personnel at the border are trained for a humanitarian mission, and ensure all facilities used to temporarily house migrants meet strict standards with access to medical treatment, legal counsel, educational opportunities, and hygienic conditions.

## **17. Black immigrants are disproportionately deported in this country. What will your administration do to stop deportations and keep families together?**

There are some 575,000 Black undocumented immigrants in this country. We must fundamentally reform our broken immigration system and enact a humane policy at the border and in the interior, rooted in civil and human rights.

By criminalizing immigration, we have worsened the effects of mass incarceration and racial disparities in our broken criminal justice system. Black immigrants make up 5 percent of the undocumented population but account for 20 percent of those facing removal on criminal grounds. Tying local law enforcement to immigration enforcement perpetuates racial biases in policing, where black and brown people are stopped, harassed, and arrested at higher rates than white people. We must decouple local law enforcement and immigration, leaving the proper authorities to carry out their respective missions. As President, Bernie will:

- Repeal the racist 1996 immigration laws.

- Repeal three- and ten-year bars.
  - End permanent deportation.
  - End expedited removal.
  - End mandatory detention.
  - Restore case-by-case discretion for immigration judges.
  - Restore the definition of “aggravated felony” to its initial intent, violent crimes and serious drug trafficking.
  - End the “Constitution-free zone” within 100 miles of the border.
- End the Priority Enforcement Program (PEP), the 287(g) program, Secure Communities, the Criminal Alien Program and other programs that turn local law enforcement into immigration officers.
- Reinstatement and expansion of DACA and defer action for those who have lived in the United States for more than five years.
- Reverse President Trump’s attempts to end Temporary Protected Status agreements and extend TPS designations until a permanent solution is reached.

**18. What will your administration do to change our unjust immigration system?**

Trump has terrorized immigrant communities in America. This community desperately needs relief and support, and Bernie will not wait to take action. On day one of his administration, Bernie will undo all of Trump’s executive actions to demonize and harm immigrants, and will immediately:

- Place a moratorium on deportations until a thorough audit of current and past practices and policies is complete and end terrorizing ICE raids.
- Reinstatement and expansion of the DACA program to extend protections to undocumented youth and their parents.
- Defer action for undocumented immigrants who have been in the United States for more than 5 years.
- Convene a summit of Latin American leaders and develop actionable steps to stabilize the region.
- Expand and authorize support for immigrants at the border to ensure access to social workers, community groups, and legal aid.
- Close private detention centers and connect detained immigrants to sponsors and supports.
- Allow all asylum seekers to make their claims in the United States, to qualified asylum officials.

- End “zero tolerance” policies and handle border crossings as a civil, not criminal, matter.

In his first 100 days, Bernie will submit humane immigration reform to Congress that includes:

- A broad, inclusive path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented in the United States.
- Breaking up ICE and CBP and redistributing their functions outside DHS.
- Ending the exploitation of immigrant workers and ensure immigrant workers in the U.S. are protected by law.
- Fully funding and staffing independent immigration courts and guaranteeing a right to counsel.