



## **A NATIONAL AGENDA FOR Black Girls**

### **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**

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## 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?

One of my campaign themes is “belonging”—assuring that all Americans, regardless of gender identity, race, sexual identity or any other factor feel a part of the campaign and, more importantly, are supported in their self-expression and identity by American society. This translates into some specific policy initiatives, from supporting the Equality Act and creating Health Equity Zones to ensure that health disparities are intentionally tackled—such as the high rate of attempted suicide among Black and LGBTQ+ youth—to making sure that transgender youth receive the health care they need.

I am proud that almost 30% of my campaign team identifies as LGBTQ+ and 40% are people of color, and we have prioritized outreach to learn more about needs and priorities of LGBTQ+, including transgender and nonconfirming Black youth. Through my own conversations on the campaign, as well as outreach from my team—from my National Youth Engagement Director to diverse policy team—we have listened and held community meetings with youth of color in cities like Phoenix, New Orleans, and Los Angeles to better understand the needs across the country.

As President, I will continue this engagement. This includes reinstating the White House Council on Women and Girls to ensure that gender equity is at the forefront of policy priorities at home and abroad, and that every policy is analyzed with a gender and racial lens. It also includes having a liaison to the LGBTQ+ community working in the White House and ensuring that every federal agency has an Office or Director of LGBTQ Affairs. This will guarantee that the community’s priorities and challenges are being heard, especially from the most vulnerable and marginalized members of the LGBTQ+ community.

It will also be crucial to ensure that women, people of color, and LGBTQ+ voices are included in my administration. At least 50% of my Cabinet and judicial appointments will be women, and we won't just be asking LGBTQ+ people to contribute to work relating specifically to our community. Rather, we will ensure that across the spectrum of policymaking and government, LGBTQ+ Americans can contribute by bringing their full selves to the table.

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

I strongly support the Black Girl Bill of Rights. It is long overdue to, as a nation, unequivocally support the rights and privileges of Black girls and women. We must be bold and intentional about how we reverse racism and sexism and ensure that everyone can access and enjoy all the opportunities that America offers--especially women of color.

I'm the first to say that I don't have the lived experience of being treated differently because of the color of my skin. I have not had the experience of feeling eyes on me as I walk through a mall or a neighborhood, just because of what I look like, or the experience that so many women of color have going into a hospital and not being believed when they described they are in pain. The next best thing I can do is to listen to those who have. That is part of my campaign. I am proud that 40% of our staff are people of color, and I at least 50% of my Cabinet and judicial appointments will be women, including women of color.

This is the promise I will make: that I will surround myself with people who will let me know when I don't get it as we pursue the goals and vision of making the Black Girl Bill of Rights a reality. I promise that I will always show up, I will always listen, I will always learn, and your voices will be elevated and empowered in my White House, just as they are in my campaign.

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?

All students, including every Black girl around the country, deserve to reach their potential, regardless of background. To do so, we must ensure that all public schools are equipped with the resources, capacity, and workforce to become the best places to teach and to learn. I will do this by investing in an equitable public education system through a massive increase in federal resources for students at Title I schools. I will increase federal investments and incentivize state and local investments in middle school, high school, and college programs to increase readiness and competitiveness for Black students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and fields of growing employment opportunities, especially health professions, software, finance, and alternative energy.

In addition, I will focus federal resources on increasing educator pay in Title I schools so that we are paying teachers in a way that reflects their value in our society. I will also implement new transparency policies to build a teaching workforce that reflects the diversity of the student body and our country as a whole. In addition, I will expand access to high-quality job training and postsecondary educational opportunities, including certificate and associate degree programs. And I will invest up to \$5 billion over the next decade to create a national network to double the number of apprenticeships and increase access to other earn-and-learn opportunities.

4. Black 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?

My administration will break the school-to-prison pipeline because zero-tolerance school discipline policies disproportionately impact students of color and reduce their instruction time. I will help schools and districts eliminate disciplinary policies that impact instructional time in the classroom based on non-violent behavior. I will also implement new policies that support restorative justice disciplinary policies and track data around school discipline to ensure there are no disparities in how and how often students of color and students with disabilities are punished.

5. Do you believe police officers belong in schools?

Too often students'--and particularly students of color--first encounter with our juvenile justice system happens at school. I believe that we need to focus our resources on investing in school mental health, climate, and safety, as well as restorative discipline policies that help break the school-to-prison pipeline that disproportionately impacts students of color. We need to invest in the whole child and make sure that the efforts that schools are using to secure their campuses are not doing more harm than good.

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?

To make our public schools drivers of equity, we must end school discipline policies that disproportionately impact students of color. My administration will reinstate Obama-era guidance around the need to address discipline disparities under Title VI. And we would invest in the Office of Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education so that we can support schools to work toward safe and supportive school cultures for all students.

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?

My administration would reverse policy changes that currently restrict the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) from looking beyond individual complaints of discrimination to understanding systemic issues that may be in place. This would include calling for increasing funding to OCR to ensure cases can be investigated and resolved quickly to ensure justice for all students.

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?

Democracy means protecting voting rights so every eligible voter has a voice, including people of color, women, and young people. Voters must not be denied their rights because of badly run elections or because some people on one side think it's better if fewer citizens are able to vote.

That's why I propose a 21st Century Voting Rights Act that will use every resource of the federal government to end all types of voter suppression, expand voting access, and create a democracy where the rights of each citizen no longer depend on the color of their skin, the community they live in, or for whom they want to vote. Registration must be made easier, by

automatically registering eligible voters, allowing online and same-day registration, and making registration portable within states. Voting must be made easier and more accessible by allowing early voting and vote-by-mail, making Election Day a national holiday, and by setting and enforcing standards for poll workers and the distribution of voting machines.

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.)?

I will also restore voting rights for the formerly incarcerated and authorize a new preclearance procedure under the Voting Rights Act to enable the federal government to block racist voting laws before they take effect. We need to create and enforce standards for voter roll maintenance to stop discriminatory voter purges, neutralize the effects of restrictive voter ID bills by allowing people to vote with a sworn written statement of identity, and increase and enforce criminal penalties for people who try to interfere with a person's right to vote.

My administration will also address discriminatory racial gerrymandering and partisan gerrymandering—which often has the same effect—by ensuring that Congressional redistricting is conducted by independent, statewide commissions using fair and non-discriminatory redistricting rules. Our system should allow voters to choose who will represent them, not allow representatives to choose their voters.

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?

I vow to uphold women's right to privacy and ensure that abortion is safe, accessible, and affordable as part of comprehensive reproductive care. Under Medicare for All Who Want It, I will guarantee contraception coverage and cover all family planning methods with no cost sharing, including long-acting reversible contraception, such as intrauterine devices (IUDs), and ensure that people are allowed to obtain a year's supply of their preferred form of birth control. My bottom line is that reproductive health care decisions—whether it's about choosing birth control, planning a pregnancy, having an abortion, or preventing STIs—should be an individual decision made by a woman in consultation with her doctor.

As President, my legislative priority will be to remove restrictions and risks to these decisions, to stop dictating to doctors what they can or cannot discuss with their patients, and to provide every woman in the country with access to reproductive health services and information, regardless of her ability to pay, where she works, where she lives, or the type of insurance that she has.

To make this happen, I will fight to repeal the Hyde Amendment, end Medicaid work requirements, and pass bills that include provisions to address implicit bias and racism in health care settings. I will prioritize rolling back the current administration's gag and refusal of care rules, which disproportionately impact women of color's ability to access reproductive health services, including safe and legal abortion. Finally, I will guarantee universal health care coverage to close gaps in uninsured rates for Black women of all ages and incomes.

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?

I strongly believe that every young person in the U.S. deserves to have a sexual education program that is science-based, medically accurate, complete, age-, developmentally- and culturally-appropriate.

The health, educational, and economic benefits of delaying pregnancy beyond adolescence are well established. Young people must be prepared to understand their own bodies, their sexual orientation, how to develop healthy relationships and make the connection between planning their families and lifelong health. While abstinence plays an important role in preventing pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases (STIs), abstinence-only programs that ignore family planning methods and STI prevention do little for the 41% of high school students who have already had their first sexual experience.

Further, sexual and reproductive health education programs must shift from focusing solely on preventing pregnancy and STIs to ones that include discussions about body image, gender identity, sexual-orientation, HIV prevention, consent, relationship violence, and exploitation.

When I am President, my administration will:

- **Protect and expand Federal funding for medically accurate, evidence-based comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education in schools** [e.g Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program (TPPR) and Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP)], while cutting funding for abstinence-only programs.
- **Work with the Department of Education to facilitate the use of evidence-based curriculum** in schools that incorporate consent, relationship violence, exploitation and trafficking, as well as sexual orientation, gender identity and other LGBTQI topics.
- **Work with states** to pass legislation (such as the Health Youth Act), that requires K-12 school-based comprehensive sexuality education, focuses on skill-building, and prohibits discrimination of marginalized youth.
- **Support the Real Education for Health Youth Act (REHYA) bill**, a legislation introduced in Congress that mandates evidence-based and comprehensive sex education and requires program grantees to include content on sexual, physical, social and emotional development, decision making, overall well-being and gender equity, and provides funding to train sex educators.
- **Provide grants (through the CDC) to state and education agencies** as well as community based organizations to implement evidence-based model programs that target specific communities such as foster children and black youth.

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?

In the United States, Black women die from maternal complications at triple the rate of white women, are over 40% more likely to die from breast cancer than white women, and account for over 60% of new HIV cases, despite making up 13 percent of the population. These poor health outcomes are profoundly shaped by institutionalized racism and gender discrimination, not just at the doctor's office or in the emergency room, but in all political, economic, and social structures in our country. As President, achieving health equity will be a national priority, as I share in my [health equity plan](#). In addition, my [Women's Agenda for the 21st Century](#) shares my approach to end the maternal mortality crisis and my [plan for LGBTQ+ Americans](#) commits to ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2030, which disproportionately affects gay and bisexual

Black and Latino men, and transgender women.

The commitment to ending health disparities must come from the highest level, and I pledge to hold all federal health programs and policies explicitly accountable for their impact on these disparities. I also know it will have the greatest impact when led by those closest to the ground. Accordingly, I will mobilize and invest in communities to address the disparities most pressing to them. As equity solutions must be grounded in sound data, I will increase investment in public health data collection to systematically measure and highlight health disparities everywhere they exist, and encourage payment reforms that reduce race-based disparities in our hospitals and clinics. My administration will also fund and develop new initiatives to combat implicit bias among our public health workforce, and expand the training and professional development of Black and other minority clinicians and researchers.

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?

To support women's right to live free from violence, harassment, and discrimination, and to secure safe communities for women and families, I will:

- Train every public school student in consent and bystander intervention to change the culture of sexual harassment and discrimination.
- Combat rising online harassment of women and girls.
- Reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.
- Strengthen anti-discrimination protections against gender- and sexual identity-based discrimination by passing the Equality Act.
- Pursue gun control reforms that close the Boyfriend Loophole and improve safety for women and families.
- Create a Presidential Commission to investigate child sex abuse in the United States.
- Empower women to reach their full potential in college through strong Title IX protections.
- Address violence against Native American Women by pushing Congress for a statutory *Oliphant* fix and appointing a commission dedicated to the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women.
- Change the culture of harassment and discrimination that disproportionately targets women, trans women, and women of color.
- Treat workplace violence like the safety issue it is, and guarantee that every worker—regardless of the size of their company—is protected from workplace sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination. This includes empowering workers to file formal complaints about sexual harassment and other discrimination and banning forced arbitration clauses that deny women their right to challenge workplace harassment and other discrimination in court.

For more information, my plan to combat sexual violence and harassment is [here](#).

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

In my women's agenda, "[Building Power](#)", I commit to putting \$10 billion into ending workplace sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination against women by investing in both accountability for employers and perpetrators, and oversight and prevention that protects

women. Right now, the system places the burden on those who have experienced discrimination to advocate for change—often at risk of retaliation. As a result, up to 90% of discrimination never gets reported. I will fund oversight and prevention efforts that make it the responsibility of employers—not employees—to maintain safe and equitable work environments.

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

When women are an equal part of decision-making, better decisions are made and a culture of safety and safety can be realized. Women are 51% of the American population, but are shut out of leadership positions in government and beyond—meaning that decisions about their health care, economic opportunities, and communities are made by male-dominated state legislatures and a U.S. Congress with three men for every one woman. Women of color are particularly underrepresented, holding fewer than one in ten seats in Congress.

Women are missing on the staff level as well: no president has ever appointed a Cabinet with equal numbers of women and men. I understand that policy only works when it's informed by diverse experiences, and that representation matters not just at the highest levels of government, but throughout the public and private sectors. I am committed to fielding a full team of America's most talented leaders and pushing the private sector to do the same.

To see that commitment through as President, I will:

- Nominate a Cabinet that is at least 50% women. It will be a priority for me to nominate a gender- and racially-diverse Cabinet to ensure meaningful representation across federal agencies and throughout the federal government. I will challenge governors, mayors, and county executives to do the same.
- Nominate at least 50% women for judicial appointments and prioritize diversity in all Presidential appointments across federal agencies, commissions, and boards.
- Accelerate ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.
- Reinstate the White House Council on Women and Girls.
- Break down barriers to women running for public office by implementing a small-dollar matching system for federal elections.
- Use presidential appointments to commissions, boards, and other honorary positions to create a ripple effect for diversity.

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?

I will reinstate a humane enforcement policy at the border. I will end the disastrous Remain in Mexico and metering programs, end for-profit detention, and expand the availability of bond and other tools to dramatically reduce immigration detention—including the Family Case Management Program. I will push for settlements in lawsuits involving victims of Trump's abusive immigration policies and re-engage with regional partners on solutions to the humanitarian crises in Central America and Venezuela.

I'm also proposing that, upon first arrival at the border, asylum seekers and other migrants will be sent to Health and Human Services (HHS)-run facilities rather than CBP processing centers. These facilities will be maintained by personnel trained in health, trauma-informed care, and

emergency aid; be equipped for overnight accommodations; and prioritize safety of the migrants.

I'm also with the many security and border experts who say a multi-billion-dollar wall from sea to shining sea is no answer to strengthening our national security either externally or internally. Border security that truly addresses our national needs must be a combination of technological, physical and human resources, and we must base spending on border structures based on where and how that best fits in to a holistic approach – not on presidential bombast.

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

I will immediately end family separation and expedite reunification of those families who remain separated. My administration will re-establish enforcement priorities so that ICE and CBP are not wasting valuable resources tearing apart families and communities for no discernable public safety benefit.

We also need proper oversight of our enforcement agencies and an accounting for the wrongdoing perpetrated by the current administration. My administration will conduct a thorough investigation into ICE and CBP and hold anyone found to have violated the rights of immigrants or people advocating on behalf of immigrants to account. We will also determine whether certain responsibilities of the agencies ought to be transferred to different agencies.

We need to update our list of removable offenses. The list is extensive, outdated, overly harsh, and inconsistent with criminal justice reforms. Many of the offenses identified as priorities are drug crimes or misdemeanors. Mirroring disproportionate racist enforcement in our criminal justice system, Black immigrants are disproportionately detained and deported on criminal grounds. If someone is a genuine public safety threat, they certainly will receive due process and face removal, but the current list does not serve this interest and should be changed. Its changes should apply retroactively so that offenses that previously made someone removable would not continue to have that effect.

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

We must create a pathway to citizenship for the approximately 11 million undocumented people living here, as well as institute temporary protections for Dreamers, parents of Dreamers, and TPS and DED holders while we wait for legislation to pass. That we have not yet gotten this done shows us how broken our democracy is. That is why my first priority is to fix our democracy. After that, we can pass legislation that affects the will of the American people, who widely support a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants who are already part of communities. Additionally, I propose that we dramatically reduce immigration detention, which was never meant to be punitive, so that it is only used in extremely limited circumstances and that vulnerable populations, including LGBTQ+ people, pregnant women, and children, are safe and cared for.