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ISSUES

Justice and Safety for All

Today, we say to the prison-industrial-complex that we are going to bring about real criminal justice reform. 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.



Key Points

- End for-profit greed in our criminal justice system, top to bottom by: by banning for-profit prisons and detention centers, ending cash bail, and making prison and jail communications, re-entry, diversion and treatment programs fee-free.
- Ensure due process and right to counsel by vastly increasing funding for public defenders and creating a federal formula to ensure populations have a minimum number of public defenders to meet their needs.
- Cut the national prison population in half and end mass incarceration by abolishing the death penalty, three strikes laws, and mandatory minimum sentences, as well as expanding the use of alternatives to detention
- Transform the way we police communities by end the War on Drugs by legalizing marijuana and expunging past convictions, treating children who interact with the justice system as children, reversing the criminalization of addiction, and ending the reliance on police forces to handle mental health emergencies, homelessness, maintenance violations, and other low-level situations.
- Reform our decrepit prison system, guarantee a "Prisoners Bill of Rights," and ensure a just transition for incarcerated individuals upon their release.
- Reverse the criminalization of communities, end cycles of violence, provide support to survivors of crime, and invest in our communities.
- Ensure law enforcement accountability and robust oversight, including banning the use of facial recognition software for policing.

Details

For most of our history as a country, the United States incarcerated people at about the same rates as other western democracies do today. In the early 1970s we had the same low crime rate as today, but we now have an incarceration rate five times higher. Indeed, America is now the world's leading jailer. We lock up more than 2 million people in America, which is more of our own people than any country on Earth. And that does not include another 5 million people who are under the supervision of the correctional system.

Hundreds of thousands of incarcerated people in America have not been convicted of a crime and are solely in jail because they can't afford their bail. We are criminalizing poverty.

Due to the historical legacy of institutional racism in this country, mass incarceration disproportionately falls on the shoulders of black and brown people in America. In fact, black Americans are incarcerated at five times the rate of white Americans, and even though people use drugs like marijuana at roughly the same rates across all races, black Americans are nearly four times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than white Americans. These disparities pervade every aspect of the criminal justice system. Black Americans, and especially young black men, are more likely to be stopped by the police, subjected to excessive force, arrested, and jailed than whites.

When Bernie is president, we will finally make the deep and structural investments to rebuild the communities that mass incarceration continues to decimate.

We must move away from an overly-punitive approach to public safety and start focusing on how to safeguard our communities, prevent the conditions that lead to arrests, and rehabilitate people who have made mistakes

End Profiteering in Our Criminal Justice System

We must end the practice of corporations profiting off the suffering of incarcerated people and their families. The private prison industry is growing — and so are the horror stories. In Mississippi, the rate of violent assault in private prisons was [two to three times](#) that of publicly-run facilities. At one facility, juveniles as young as [13 years old](#) were common targets of sexual assault. No one should be able to profit from filling our jails and prisons. As has been reported, private prisons also act on their profit incentive by advocating for longer sentences for people convicted of a crime.

Additionally, corporations and police departments rake in billions in fines and fees from disadvantaged communities. The prison phone industry, for example, is a monopoly business worth more than \$1 billion a year, with companies charging sky-high fees for telephone calls that many families can't afford to pay to keep in touch with their loved ones. Today, [1 in 28 children](#) has an incarcerated parent — a fifth of which are under four years old. Children with incarcerated parents tend to do worse in school, experience anxiety and depression, and develop behavioral issues.

Corporations and cities alike rake in hundreds of millions of dollars in fines and fees off the backs of our most vulnerable communities. But it should not be this way. Everyday people who already are struggling to get by should not be made to subsidize the criminal justice system. Right now, a person charged with an offense who cannot afford a lawyer is often charged a public defender fee and levied court costs, even if that person is not convicted of any crime. More than 40 states use driver's license suspension as a means of pressuring people to pay various court fees, which means people cannot drive to work to earn a living. The inability to pay fines or fees also can lead to people spending far more time incarcerated, effectively creating modern-day debtors prisons. Fines and fees for people who cannot afford them are counterproductive, serve no legitimate government interest, and leave already vulnerable people even more vulnerable.

As president, Bernie will:

- Ban for-profit prisons.
- Make prison phone calls and other communications such as video chats free of charge.
- Audit the practices of commissaries and use regulatory authority to end price gouging and exorbitant fees.
- Incentivize states and localities to end police departments' reliance on fines and fees for revenue.
- Remove the profit motive from our re-entry system and diversion, community supervision, or treatment programs, and ensure people leaving incarceration or participating in diversion, community supervision, or treatment programs can do so free of charge.

End Cash Bail

Right now, hundreds of thousands of people without a criminal conviction are in jail simply because they could not afford bail. Young people can spend [hundreds of days](#) in jail, only to be acquitted — yet the severe damage to their lives cannot be undone. This is why Bernie introduced the *No Money Bail Act of 2018* to end cash bail and to end the criminalization of poverty in America.

As president, Bernie will:

- End the use of secured bonds in federal criminal proceedings.

- Provide grants to states to reduce their pretrial detention populations, which are particularly high at the county level, and require states to report on outcomes as a condition of renewing their funding.
- Withhold funding from states that continue the use of cash bail systems.
- Ensure that alternatives to cash bail are not leading to disparities in the system.

Transform the Way We Police Communities

The people who serve our country as police officers deserve our gratitude and respect. As a country, though, we are asking them to do far too much. As human beings, we all share common vulnerabilities, and we all share basic needs to live a stable and dignified life.

In America, we have not made the necessary investments to secure a strong enough social fabric to ensure that people's basic needs are met. So, in lieu of addressing problems directly, we ask police officers to address every societal issue that results from the tears in the fabric, whether it be mental illness, addiction, homelessness, or poverty. We ask these overstressed police officers to fill roles they are not trained or equipped for — doubling as social workers, conflict negotiators, and medical responders. Last year, more police officers died of suicide than in the line of duty. We need to shift our emphasis toward solving problems in ways that don't rely on policing and incarceration as a first option by supporting alternative strategies to make individuals and communities safer and healthier.

In other ways, we must hold our police and sheriff's departments to a higher standard. And we must end harmful policing practices like racial profiling, stop and frisk, oppressive "broken windows" policing, and the militarization of police forces — all of which actively undermine public safety and community trust in law enforcement. Widespread use of excessive force, including deadly shootings of unarmed civilians, undermine the integrity of and public trust in the police. Violence and brutality of any kind, particularly at the hands of the police meant to protect and serve our communities, must not be tolerated.

Ensure Law Enforcement Accountability and Robust Oversight

- Rescind former Attorney General Jeff Sessions' guidance on consent decrees.
- Revitalize the use of Department of Justice investigations, consent decrees, and federal lawsuits to address systemic constitutional violations by police departments.
- Ensure accountability, strict guidelines and independent oversight for all federal funds used by police departments.
- End federal programs that provide military equipment to local police forces.
- Create a federally managed database of police use of deadly force.
- Provide grants for states and cities to establish civilian oversight agencies with enforceable accountability mechanisms.
- Establish federal standards for the use of body cameras, including establishing third-party agencies to oversee the storage and release of police videos.
- Mandate criminal liability for civil rights violations resulting from police misconduct.
- Limit the use of "qualified immunity" to address the lack of criminal liability for civil rights violations resulting from police misconduct.
- Conduct a U.S. Attorney General's investigation whenever someone is killed in police custody.
- Establish a federal no-call policy, including a registry of disreputable federal law enforcement officers, so testimony from untrustworthy sources does not lead to criminal convictions. Provide financial support to pilot local and state level no-call lists.
- Ban the use of facial recognition software for policing.

Provide More Support to Police Officers and Create A Robust Non-Law Enforcement Alternative Response System

- Establish national standards for use of force by police that emphasize de-escalation.
- Require and fund police officer training on implicit bias (to include biases based on race, gender, sexual orientation and identity,

religion, ethnicity and class), cultural competency, de-escalation, crisis intervention, adolescent development, and how to interact with people with mental and physical disabilities. We will ensure that training is conducted in a meaningful way with strict independent oversight and enforceable guidelines.

- Ban the practice of any law enforcement agency benefiting from civil asset forfeiture. Limit or eliminate federal criminal justice funding for any state or locality that does not comply.
- Provide funding to states and municipalities to create civilian corps of unarmed first responders, such as social workers, EMTs, and trained mental health professionals, who can handle order maintenance violations, mental health emergencies, and low-level conflicts outside the criminal justice system, freeing police officers to concentrate on the most serious crimes.
- Incentivize access to counseling and mental health services for officers.
- Diversify police forces and academies and incentivize officers to live and work in the communities they serve.

Ensuring All Americans Due Process

The criminal justice system is rigged. The United States has a criminal justice system that is built to put the profit interests of billion-dollar industries like the bail bondsman over the interests of everyday, working people. It's time to tell the bail industry, and the private prison industry, and the private probation industry, and anyone who profits from incarceration, that we are going to put the well-being of the people first. But that's not enough. The size of your bank account too often determines the quality of representation that a person will receive. If you cannot afford to pay fines and fees associated with criminal justice involvement, you can end up in a spiraling cycle of debt, with a suspended driver's license, or even locked up in a modern debtor's prison. We need a system that works equally well for the workers and the wealthy.

Right to Counsel

In 1963, the Supreme Court decided [Gideon v. Wainwright](#), guaranteeing all felony defendants counsel, yet today 90 to 95 percent of criminal cases are [decided](#) by a plea deal, too often without the defendant playing an active role.

Across the United States, [more than 80 percent](#) of felony defendants cannot afford a privately retained lawyer and have to rely on state-administered public defenders or court-appointed counsel. Yet in states across the country, public defenders have far too many clients and too few resources to offer adequate representation. Despite the often heroic efforts of public defenders and other appointed counsel, the workload makes it impossible to provide the quality of representation that each defendant deserves.

77 percent of black Americans and 73 percent of Latinos in state prisons had a [public defender](#) or court-appointed counsel, yet 75 percent of county-based public defender offices have [exceeded](#) the maximum recommended limit of cases received per attorney.

America must not be a country where only the rich enjoy the protections of the Fifth Amendment. We must not have a court system that offers "the best justice money can buy." We must guarantee all Americans their Sixth Amendment rights.

As president, Bernie will:

- Invest \$14 billion in federal funding for indigent defense annually, triple what is currently spent at all levels on indigent defense.
- After a review of current salaries and workload, set a minimum starting salary for all public defenders.
- Create and set a national formula to assure populations have a minimum number of public defenders to assure full access to constitutional right to due process.
- Establish federal guidelines and goals for a right to counsel, including policies that reduce the number of cases overall.
- Create a federal agency to provide support and oversight for state public defense services.
- Authorize the Department of Justice to take legal action against jurisdictions that are not meeting their Sixth Amendment obligations.
- Cancel all existing student debt and cancel any future student debt for public defenders through the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

Ensure Accountability and Fairness in Prosecution

Prosecutors today have undue discretion in deciding which cases will be charged, and they are largely protected from liability when they

break the rules.

They also have an advantage in plea bargaining cases. People in jail without financial sources are more likely to plead guilty than fight the case. And they are more likely to receive harsher penalties than those who aren't detained. The [vast majority of cases](#) — 97 percent of federal cases and 94 percent of state cases — end in plea agreements. We must ensure that our system is fair and that prosecutors are accountable.

As president, Bernie will:

- Rescind former Attorney General Jeff Sessions' orders on prosecutorial discretion and low-level offenses.
- Appoint an Attorney General committed to public safety and creating a more just and humane criminal justice system.
- Limit "absolute immunity" for prosecutors, which is used to shield wrongdoers from liability.
- End the practice of jailing material witnesses.
- Place a moratorium on the use of the algorithmic risk assessment tools in the criminal justice system until an audit is completed. We must ensure these tools do not have any implicit biases that lead to unjust or excessive sentences.

Ending Mass Incarceration and Excessive Sentencing

Today, the United States imprisons people at a higher rate than any other nation, in no small part due to extremely harsh sentencing policies and the War on Drugs. But mass incarceration has not made us any safer or reduced drug use and addiction. On the contrary, it has cost lives and diverted resources that could be used to prevent crime through social investment.

We must end the War on Drugs that has disproportionately affected black and brown people.

The U.S. [ranks highest](#) in incarceration rates among Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, twice as much as Turkey, which has the second-highest rate of incarceration.

Capital punishment has failed to reduce violent crime and is disproportionately apportioned to the poor and black and brown people. It has also cost innocent lives. According to the [Equal Justice Initiative](#), for every nine people executed in this country since the reinstatement of capital punishment, one innocent person on death row has been identified and exonerated.

As president, Bernie will:

- Abolish the death penalty.
- Reverse the Trump administration's guidance on the use of death penalty drugs with the goal of ending the death penalty at the state level.
- Stop excessive sentencing with the goal of cutting the incarcerated population in half.
- End mandatory sentencing minimums.
- Reinstatement a federal parole system and end truth-in-sentencing. People serving long sentences will undergo a "second look" process to make sure their sentence is still appropriate.
- End "three strikes" laws. No one should spend their life behind bars for committing minor crimes, even if they commit several of them.
- Invigorate and expand the compassionate release process so that people with disabilities, the sick and elderly are transitioned out of incarceration whenever possible.
- Expand the use of sentencing alternatives, including community supervision and publicly funded halfway houses. This includes funding state-based pilot programs to establish alternatives to incarceration, including models based on restorative justice and free access to treatment and social services.
- Revitalize the executive clemency process by creating an independent clemency board removed from the Department of Justice and placed in White House.
- Stop the criminalization of homelessness and spend nearly \$32 billion over five years to end homelessness. This includes doubling

McKinney-Vento homelessness assistance grants to build permanent supportive housing, and \$500 million to provide outreach to homeless people to help connect them to available services. In the first year of this plan, 25,000 Housing Trust Fund units will be prioritized for housing the homeless.

End the War on Drugs and Stop Criminalizing Addiction

The disastrous policies that make up the War on Drugs have not reduced drug use and violent crime. We must use effective therapeutic, not punitive, solutions to address drug addiction.

As president, Bernie will:

- Legalize marijuana and vacate and expunge past marijuana convictions, and ensure that revenue from legal marijuana is reinvested in communities hit hardest by the War on Drugs.
- Provide people struggling with addiction with the health care they need by guaranteeing health care — including inpatient and outpatient substance abuse and mental health services with no copayments or deductibles — to all people as a right, not a privilege, through a Medicare-for-all, single-payer program.
- Decriminalize possession of buprenorphine, which helps to treat opioid addiction, and ensure that first responders carry naloxone to prevent overdoses.
- Legalize safe injection sites and needle exchanges around the country, and support pilot programs for supervised injection sites, which have shown to substantially reduce drug overdose deaths.
- Raise the threshold for when drug charges are federalized, as federal charges carry longer sentences.
- Work with states to fund and pursue innovative overdose prevention initiatives.
- Institute a full review of the current sentencing guidelines and end the sentencing disparity between crack and cocaine.

Treat Children Like Children

We must end the school-to-prison pipeline. 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 and getting caught up in the juvenile justice system. Black and brown students and students with disabilities are more likely to be subjected to exclusionary discipline measures than their peers. 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.

As president, Bernie will:

- Ban the prosecution of children under the age of 18 in adult courts.
- Work to ensure that all juvenile facilities are designed for rehabilitation and growth.
- Ensure youth are not jailed or imprisoned for misdemeanor offenses.
- Ensure juveniles are not be housed in adult prisons.
- End solitary confinement for youth.
- Abolish long mandatory minimum sentences and life-without-parole sentences for youth.
- 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.
- End the use of juvenile fees.
- 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.

Reform Our Decrepit Prison System to Make Jails and Prisons More Humane

Incarceration should always be a last resort, but when it is necessary, the conditions of confinement should be safe, humane, and designed for rehabilitation. Yet, too often, jails are violent and deeply destabilizing places. They not only fail to prepare people to reintegrate into society, they affirmatively make people more traumatized, sick, and vulnerable.

America's prisons are hotbeds of human rights violations, torture, sexual assault, and wrongful imprisonment. Prisoners are being crammed into overcrowded cells and made to live in unsanitary conditions. They are not getting the medical attention they need and are being forced to work as modern-day indentured servants while corporations rake in profits. We must put an end to this barbarism and respect the rights of all human beings and treat them with basic dignity.

As president, Bernie will:

Enact a Prisoner Bill of Rights that guarantees:

- Ending solitary confinement. Solitary confinement is a form of torture and unconstitutional, plain and simple.
- Access to free medical care in prisons and jails, including professional and evidence-based substance abuse and trauma-informed mental health treatment.
- Incarcerated trans people have access to all the health care they need.
- Access to free educational and vocational training. This includes ending the ban on Pell Grants for all incarcerated people without any exceptions.
- Living wages and safe working conditions, including maximum work hours, for all incarcerated people for their labor.
- The right to vote. All voting-age Americans must have the right and meaningful access to vote, whether they are incarcerated or not. We will re-enfranchise the right to vote to the millions of Americans who have had their vote taken away by a felony conviction.
- Ending prison gerrymandering, ensuring incarcerated people are counted in their communities, not where they are incarcerated.
- Establishment of an Office of Prisoner Civil Rights and Civil Liberties within the Department of Justice to investigate civil rights complaints from incarcerated individuals and provide independent oversight to make sure that prisoners are housed in safe, healthy, environments.
- Protection from sexual abuse and harassment, including mandatory federal prosecution of prison staff who engage in such misconduct.
- Access to their families — including unlimited visits, phone calls, and video calls.
- A determination for the most appropriate setting for people with disabilities and safe, accessible conditions for people with disabilities in prisons and jails.

Ensure a Just Transition Post-Release

This year, three-quarters of a million people will return home from prison and millions more from jails. Most of them will face enormous barriers that make successful re-entry nearly impossible. We must put an end to employment discrimination and eliminate barriers to training and education. Once someone has served their time they should not be excluded from social programs, public housing, medical care, and the right to vote and serve on juries.

As president, Bernie will:

- Make expungement broadly available.
- Remove legal and regulatory barriers and facilitate access to services so that people returning home from jail or prison can build a stable and productive life.

- Create a federal agency responsible for monitoring re-entry.
- “Ban the box” by removing questions regarding conviction histories from job and other applications.
- Enact fair chance licensing reform to remove unfair restrictions on occupational licensure based on criminal history.
- Increase funding for re-entering youth programs. We will also pass a massive youth jobs program to provide jobs and job-training opportunities for disadvantaged young Americans who face high unemployment rates.
- Guarantee safe, decent, affordable housing.
- Remove the profit motive from our re-entry system and diversion, community supervision, or treatment programs, and ensure people leaving incarceration or participating in diversion, community supervision, or treatment programs can do so free of charge.
- Guarantee jobs and free job training at trade schools and apprenticeship programs.

End Cycles of Violence and Provide Support to Survivors of Crime

America has a crisis of both too much punishment and too little accountability. Despite popular assumptions that victims of crime only support long sentences and prison expansion, a national [survey](#) of crime survivors revealed that what people harmed by crimes want most is to ensure that they are not harmed again and that no one else will be harmed either. By a significant margin, crime survivors prefer fairer prison sentences, greater investments in crime prevention, rehabilitation, schools and education, and mental health and drug treatment.

Crime survivors also want 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.

When Bernie is in the White House, he will:

Stop The Cycle of Violence by Prioritizing the Most Serious Offenses

- Focus law enforcement resources to dramatically increase the solve rate of the most serious offenses, such as shootings, homicides, and sexual assaults.
- Fund Cure Violence and similar proven effective violence interruption models to stop violent incidents before they begin.
- Fund programs for people who are at serious risk of being either the perpetrator or victim of gun violence, provide non-law enforcement-led services including job training and placement assistance, education, and help covering basic needs such as housing, food, and transportation.
- Provide funding to end the national rape kit backlog and institute new rules requiring that rape kits be tested and that victims are provided with updates on the status of their rape kits.
- Address gender-based violence on college campuses by reversing Education Secretary Betsy DeVos’ decision to weaken Title IX protections. We will protect and enforce Title IX.

Provide Adequate Support to Crime Survivors

- Prevent and address sex trafficking with “safe harbor” policies that treat trafficked persons involved in illegal activities such as prostitution as victims rather than criminals, and that offer legal and financial support for victims.
- Funding 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 the Violence Against Women Act.

- Provide housing assistance and paid leave for victims of sexual assault.
- Expand non-police interventions for domestic violence, including a national help hotline and state-funded, long-term counseling.

Reverse the Criminalization of Disability

According to the Department of Justice, one in five inmates in prisons are people with a cognitive disability, while another one in five inmates have a serious mental illness. Instead of incarceration, we should be providing people with disabilities with the services and supports they need to stay in the community, including mental health care and home and community-based services. Not only is it the right thing to do, but it costs significantly less to provide someone with the necessary supports and services to stay in the community than it does to incarcerate them.

Reversing Criminalization

- All too often, people with disabilities, especially people of color with disabilities, face violence from law enforcement. This requires more than just training — it requires accountability. Approximately [half of all people who die in police-involved shootings have a disability](#). In order to protect the rights of people with disabilities, we intend to make discriminatory law enforcement interactions with people with disabilities a major enforcement priority of the Civil Rights Division.
- Recognizing the humanitarian crisis in our country created by the incarceration of people with mental illness, we will use the Supreme Court's *Olmstead* decision to challenge states that have failed to adequately support the voluntary, community-based mental health services that can divert people with mental illness from ending up in the criminal justice system.
- Bar criminal charges for school-based behavior that would not otherwise be criminal and invest in school nurses, counselors, teachers, teaching assistants, and small class sizes to address disciplinary issues. We will ensure every school has the necessary school counselors and wrap-around services by providing \$5 billion annually to expand the sustainable community school model.
- Work with teachers, school administrators, and the disability rights movement to end restraint and seclusion discipline in schools.
- Invigorate and expand the compassionate release process so that people with disabilities are transitioned out of incarceration whenever possible.
- Invest in diversion programs as alternatives to the court and prison system for people with disabilities and ensure those people have the community-based supports and services they need.
- Stop the criminalization of homelessness and spend over \$25 billion over the next five years to end homelessness. This includes doubling McKinney-Vento homelessness assistance grants to build permanent supportive housing, and \$500 million to provide outreach to homeless people to help connect them to available services. In the first year of this plan, 25,000 Housing Trust Fund units will be prioritized for housing the homeless.
- Create an Office of Disability in the DOJ focused on coordinating these efforts, including the reduction of incarcerated people with disabilities, reducing recidivism and guaranteeing a just re-entry for people with disabilities, and ensuring every aspect of our criminal justice system is ADA compliant.

Investing in Community Living

- Guarantee mental health care to people with disabilities as a human right, including all the supports and services needed to stay in the community. Mental health care, under Medicare for All, will be free at the point of service, with no copayments or deductibles which can be a barrier to treatment. The plan will also provide home- and community-based long-term services and supports to all and cover prescription drugs.
- Train, recruit, and increase the number of mental health providers to provide culturally competent care in underserved communities.
- Guarantee that people with disabilities have safe, accessible, and integrated affordable housing.
- People with disabilities deserve jobs that pay a living wage. It's time to end the subminimum wage and guarantee truly integrated employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Triple Title I funding, expand the IDEA, and make other major investments in public K-12 education as outlined in the [Thurgood Marshall](#)

[Plan for Public Education and Educators](#). Crucially, the plan will provide mandatory funding to ensure that the federal government provides at least 50 percent of the funding for IDEA and guarantee children with disabilities an equal right to high-quality education by enforcing the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- Guarantee tuition- and debt-free public colleges, universities, trade schools, and apprenticeship programs and the end equity gap in higher education attainment for people with disabilities by ensuring all our students get the help they need so they are ready for college and receive the support they need when they are in college.
- Increase educational opportunities for persons with disabilities, including an expansion in career and technical education opportunities to prepare students for good-paying community employment.

Investing in Our Communities

Today, we spend billions of dollars on jails and prisons — including \$38 million a day detaining people awaiting trial—but too often do not make the investments while neglecting the upfront services and infrastructure that communities need to thrive. We know that a lack of quality education deficiencies in our education system can play a major role in mass incarceration. For example, in places like South Carolina, we spend twice as much on incarcerating people than we do on educating them.

We also know that we have a racial economic disparity within the broader economic disparity in America. Black Americans currently have ten cents for every dollar white Americans have. Latinx Americans currently have thirteen cents for every dollar white Americans have. 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.

Prison is not a solution for social problems. We need to address the deeper structural problems that give rise to crime, such as joblessness, income inequality, lack of education, and untreated substance abuse.

As president, Bernie will:

- Enact a federal jobs guarantee to provide good jobs at a living wage revitalizing and taking care of the community.
- Pass a \$15 minimum wage.
- Guarantee mental health care to people with disabilities as a human right, including all the supports and services needed needed to stay in the community. Mental health care, under Medicare for All, will be free at the point of service, with no copayments or deductibles which can be a barrier to treatment.
- Provide people struggling with addiction the health care they need by guaranteeing health care, which includes inpatient and outpatient substance abuse and mental health services with no copayments or deductibles, to all people as a right, not a privilege, through a Medicare-for-all, single-payer program.
- Provide transportation benefits to and from health services for those who need it. We will invest in our health care workforce and infrastructure to ensure that all communities have access to these services.
- Enact paid family leave, so people can take time off from work to help themselves or a family member as they go through treatment.
- Ensure that people who interacted with the justice system are still able to get the rehabilitation services they need and are able to find housing and employment.
- Triple Title I funding, expand the IDEA, invest in afterschool programs, and make other major investments in public K-12 education as outlined in our [Thurgood Marshall Plan for Public Education and Educators](#). This plan will expand the sustainable community school model which will fund trauma-informed care and services in schools, especially those schools which have been impacted by the War on Drugs, immigration raids, and shootings.
- End the exploitative practices of payday lenders and ensure all Americans have access to basic financial services through the Post Office, and capping interest rates on consumer loans and credit cards at 15 percent across all financial institutions. States will be empowered to cap rates even lower than 15 percent.
- Tie Department of Transportation funding to integration and improving commuting in urban centers, and restore the TIGER program to focus on public transportation.

- Create a \$10 billion grant program within the Minority Business Development Agency to provide grants to entrepreneurs of color.
- Pass the WATER Act to create a \$35 billion annual fund to remove and replace lead pipes in communities throughout the country.
- Ensure federal resources are focused on the Americans who need it most — often as a result of structural disadvantage. We will implement the 10-20-30 approach to federal investments which focuses substantial federal resources on distressed communities that have high levels of poverty.

SIGN UP

This is *your* movement.

Bernie is counting on all of us to continue fighting for our progressive agenda. There is only one way we will transform this country – and that is together.

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