

**Democratic Presidential Candidates’
Positions on Issues of Interest to Veterans**

(Suspended or Abandoned Candidacies at End of List)

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Michael Bennet

U.S. Senator from Colorado since 2009

Announced: May 2, 2019

Home State: Colorado | [Website](#)

Latest Book: The Land of Flickering Lights: Restoring America in an Age of Broken Politics

SUPPORTS

- veteran employment
- Veterans Entrepreneurship Act to waive Express loan program fees making Small Business Administration (SBA) loans less expensive
- medical cannabis for veterans
- exempting Veterans Affairs from federal hiring freeze
- suspension of deportation of family of immigrant service members while serving overseas

ACTIONS

- co-sponsor-Veterans Entrepreneurship Act
- co-sponsor-DREAM Act calling for legal status for immigrant veterans
- opposed military transgender ban
- opposes banning homosexuals in the military

Joe Biden Jr.

Former U.S. Senator and Former Vice President of the United States

Announced: April 25, 2019

Home State: Delaware | [Website](#)

Latest Book: Promise Me, Dad: A Year of Hope, Hardship, and Purpose

WORTH NOTING: While there is considerable - actually more than any other candidate - evidence of Biden's commitment to veteran issues in the past, it is, surprisingly, very difficult to find anything at all on his stand on current veteran issues.

SUPPORTS

- main-pillar-needs of service members, veterans, and families
- very strong support for veterans

ACTIONS

- numerous bills sponsored such as for spousal employment, children, health, and mental health
- supported Walk of America – Walking with the Wounded along with his Wife, a co-sponsor in 2018
- supporting military families through the Biden Foundation

Michael Bloomberg

Former New York Mayor from 2002-2013

Announced: November 25, 2019

Home State: New York | [Website](#)

<https://www.mikebloomberg.com/getting-stuff-done#veterans>

ACTIONS

- created Workforce1, a service to connect job candidates to opportunities throughout New York City, and provided priority job placement and career assistance services to veterans and their spouses
- partnered with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to create Operation Home, a task force to combat veteran homelessness in New York City
- created the first job center just for veterans, staffed by veterans, and an entrepreneurship program to help veterans start and grow businesses
- launched Support Our Troops, a city-run service program to support veterans and troops actively serving our country
- through Bloomberg LP, provided training programs that allow veterans to transition more easily from military careers to the private sector, and encouraged employees actively to recommend veterans for open positions in order to bring veterans into the company and put their leadership skills to work

Cory Booker

Former Mayor of Newark, U.S. Senator from New Jersey since 2013

Announced: February 1, 2019

Home State: New Jersey | [Website](#)

Latest Book: United: Thoughts on Finding Common Ground and Advancing the Common Good

We call ourselves the home of the brave, but we are not doing nearly enough to support and honor our brave veterans. Veterans are disproportionately represented in our criminal justice system and are more likely to experience homelessness. Too often they lack access to the health care services they need and deserve.

AS PRESIDENT, WILL

- fight for veterans' access to health care, education and good-paying jobs
- direct the Small Business Administration to invest more in veteran-owned businesses and entrepreneurship.
- ensure world class health care, including mental health services, that is accessible and easy to navigate.
- pass the Veteran Education and Transfer Extension Act to fill in gaps in veterans' higher education benefits.
- ensure the Veterans Health Administration provides gender-inclusive and accessible services, including access to gynecologists and obstetricians, sexual counselors, therapists, and other medical personnel
- end veteran homelessness through major new investment in evidence-based programs to find, keep safe, and move back into housing anyone in need
- appoint a White House official solely focused on coordinating across federal agencies to cut the suicide rate among veterans

SUPPORTS

- forming National Guard Cyber Protection Team
- incentives to train and hire troops returning home
- exempting Veterans Affairs from federal hiring freeze

Selected Issues from VoteMatch Responses (<https://www.ontheissues.org>)

Legislation

- original cosponsor: Veterans' Access to Care Through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act of 2014 – passed 2014
- introduced: Strengthening Technical Assistance, Resources, and Training to Unleash the Potential of Veterans Act (STARTUP-Vets) – 2015 (Referred to Committee)

Pete Buttigieg

Mayor of South Bend, Indiana, since 2012

Announced: April 14, 2019

Home State: Indiana | [Website](#)

Latest Book: Shortest Way Home: One Mayor's Challenge and a Model for America's Future

SUPPORTS

- increasing veteran engagement with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and enhancing access to mental health and addiction treatment for veterans
- speeding up claims processing
- investing heavily in treating veteran mental health
- increasing investments in suicide prevention for veterans
- expanding the number of mental health and addiction treatment facilities
- increasing access to Telehealth, including Teletherapy and Telepsychiatry, for veterans through the Connected Care pilot program
- increasing access to and quality of care
- supporting veterans as they reintegrate back into our communities

OPPOSES

- privatization of the VA

COMMENTS

20 veterans and active service members die by suicide in the United States each day, and we know that 14 of those veterans were not receiving care from the VA.

Julian Castro

Former U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development

Announced: January 12, 2019

Home State: Texas | [Website](#)

Latest Book: An Unlikely Journey: Waking Up from My American Dream

SUPPORTS

- avoiding foreign entanglements
- re-examining relationship with Saudi Arabia
- direct military intervention in Syria only as last resort
- Iran must accept long-term intrusive nuke inspection

COMMENTS

- no mention regarding veterans on current web site

John Delaney

U.S. Representative from Maryland since 2013

Announced: August 10, 2017

Home State: Maryland | [Website](#)

Latest Book: The Right Answer: How We Can Unify Our Divided Nation

POSITIONS

On Foreign Policy

- \$500M and 3,000 troops to Africa to fight Ebola. (Aug 2014)

On Homeland Security

- supports reducing defense spending (Sep 2012)

On War and Peace

- withdraw military aid from Saudi forces fighting in Yemen (Feb 2019)

On Immigration

- voted to legalize DREAMer immigrants via military service (Jun 2016)

KEY VOTES

- voted for Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistle-blower Protection Act of 2017
- voted against Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act
- voted against VA Accountability First Act of 2017
- voted for VA Accountability First and Appeals Modernization Act of 2016
- voted against Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017
- voted against VA Accountability Act of 2015
- voted against Veterans Benefits Continuing Appropriations Resolution. 2014
- voted for Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013
- voted against Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013

Selected Issues from VoteMatch Responses (<https://www.ontheissues.org>)

Supports

- national service program: military or community service: National service program, plus community & veterans' service

- reducing defense spending
- bringing the troops home from post-9-11 wars
- withdrawing military aid from Saudi forces fighting in Yemen
- debating new Authorization for Use of Military Force
- eliminating nuclear proliferation
- voted for 25 out of 28 military spending bills

Tulsi Gabbard

U.S. Representative from Hawaii since 2013

Announced: January 11, 2019

Home State: Hawaii | [Website](#)

Latest Book: Tulsi Gabbard: Why I Fight: A Soldier in Politics

POSITIONS

On Foreign Policy

- U.S. should focus on fighting terrorism, not regime change (Jan 2017)
- \$500M and 3,000 troops to Africa to fight Ebola.(Jul 2014)

On Homeland Security

- don't cut military budget; fund weapons systems and ABMs (Mar 2019)
- end this new cold war and nuclear arms race (Mar 2019)
- allow transgender Americans in the military (Jan 2019)
- supports reducing defense spending (Sep 2012)

On Immigration

- voted to legalize DREAMer immigrants via military service (Jun 2016)

On War and Peace

- no regime change in Iran; no war in Yemen (Mar 2019)
- no more wars for regime change, like Syria and Afghanistan (Mar 2019)
- U.S. government lied to American people to launch Iraq War (Mar 2019)
- end U.S. support for Saudi-led conflict in Yemen (Jan 2019)
- use military to fight terrorists, not for regime change (May 2017)
- opposes fighting in Afghanistan and Syria; end arms to Saudis (May 2017)
- Iraq was a war we never should have gotten into (Nov 2016)
- end our involvement in Afghanistan (Nov 2012)
- opposes combat operations in Afghanistan (Sep 2012)
- Selected Issues from VoteMatch Responses (<https://www.ontheissues.org>)

SUPPORTS

- reinstating nuclear deal
- engaging in diplomacy and deescalating tensions
- sexual assaults in the military must be exposed and punished
- bringing troops home from Afghanistan; we're no better off than 2001

OPPOSES

- wasteful defense spending
- war with Iran: it would escalate region-wide
- regime-change wars in Syria, Venezuela, Iran

Amy Klobuchar

U.S. Senator from Minnesota since 2007

Announced: February 10, 2019

Home State: Minnesota

GENERAL CAMPAIGN POSITIONS / STATEMENTS

On Homeland Security

- voted for 95% of military spending bills in congress (Mar 2019)
- offer troops care for traumatic brain injury.(Aug 2015)
- our troops need the best equipment and intelligence (Jan 2006)
- voted against cutting \$221M in benefits to Filipinos who served in WWII U.S. Army (Apr 2008)
- voted for requiring FISA court warrant to monitor US-to-foreign calls (Feb 2008)
- voted for removing need for FISA warrant for wiretapping abroad (Aug 2007)
- voted for limiting deployments to 12 months (Jul 2007)
- study and address suicides among veterans.(Apr 2008)
- repeal Don't-Ask-Don't-Tell, and reinstate discharged gays.(Mar 2010)
- exempt Veterans Affairs from federal hiring freeze (Jan 2017)
- restore habeas corpus for detainees in the War on Terror (Jun 2007)

On War and Peace

- supported regime change in Libya; supports Israeli military (Mar 2019)
- keep U.S. military presence in Syria (Feb 2019)
- turn over governance of Iraq to the Iraqis (Aug 2015)
- withdraw combat troops from Iraq on sensible timetable (Aug 2015)
- work together with other countries to solve Iraq problem (Oct 2006)
- Iraq has devolved into a civil war; get US troops out (Oct 2006)
- solution in Iraq is diplomatic, not just military (Oct 2006)
- no permanent military bases in Iraq following transition to Iraqi governance (Oct 2006)
- bring the troops home in a responsible manner (Oct 2006)
- Iraq war has cost \$300B and fomented more terrorism (Oct 2006)
- accountability for the run-up to the Iraq war (Aug 2006)
- supported invading Afghanistan, but not Iraq (Aug 2006)
- voted against designating Iran's Revolutionary Guards as terrorists (Sep 2007)

On Homeland Security

- Voted for National Defense Authorizations Act for Fiscal Year 2008
- supported invading Afghanistan, but not Iraq (Aug 2006)
- declaring English as the official language of the U.S. government
- ensuring veterans get equal support for mental health
- offering troops care for traumatic brain injury
- keeping the troops deployed abroad
- ran nuclear deal was imperfect but made us more safe
- require that Trump consult congress before war with Iran
- military an option in Venezuela, but focus on diplomacy
- standing with our allies, investing in diplomacy
- tackling terrorist groups, and standing up for Israel
- funding and supplying the Syrian rebels

Bernie Sanders

U.S. Senator from Vermont since 2007

Announced: February 19, 2019

Home State: Vermont | [Website](#)

Latest Book: Where We Go from Here: Two Years in the Resistance

SUPPORTS

- fully funding and expanding the VA so that every veteran gets the care that they have earned and deserve
- Post 9/11 GI Bill
- getting veterans compensated faster by improving how compensation claims are processed
- expanding the VA Caregivers Program
- expanding mental health services for veterans
- making comprehensive dental care available to all veterans at the VA
- full funding to expand VA
- improving claims processing

ACTIONS

- National Military Family Assoc. – in GIO Bill
- benefits transferred to military spouses
- founding member Senate Military Caucus and chair 2013 to 2014
- Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act
- Veterean Retraining Assistance Program
- Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)
- received Congressional Award from VFW – 2015

received support from more than 25 Vet organizations

THERE IS TOO MUCH LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY TO REPORT ON HERE
FOR INFORMATION ON LEGISLATIVE BILL PLEASE GO TO

<https://www.congress.gov/member/bernard-sanders/>

Deval Patrick

Governor of Massachusetts from 2005 to 2015

Announced: November 14, 2019

Home State: Massachusetts | [Website](#)

STATEMENTS

- Massachusetts has a proud record as a national leader in veterans services, and we are ranked first in the nation for the services we provide to our veterans and their families, expending twice as many resources per veteran as the next leading state.
- nothing more known or provided by campaign HQ after 3 attempts
- Mark Lilienthal
Volunteer Coordinator
617-367-2006

Tom Steyer

Hedge fund manager and philanthropist

Announced: July 9, 2019

Home State: California | [Website](#)

Latest Book: Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming

The following information drawn from this source

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2019/11/18/military-times-questionnaire-tom-steyer/>

Assessment of state and readiness of the armed forces

- consider a comprehensive proposal to strengthen the military
- identify and secure national public service opportunities within government departments to complement the missions of armed services personnel emphasizing opportunities that focus on pressing economic and social challenges such as assisting veterans and military families
- undo the ban on transgender people in the military
- secure armed forces and military bases against extreme weather through smart infrastructure investments and planning
- eliminate risks to military personnel that arise out of our reliance on fossil fuels by transitioning to a safe and clean economy

U.S. troop presence in Afghanistan, in Syria and Iraq, and In Europe

- withdraw American troops out of Afghanistan within first year in office
- work together, not go-it-alone
- support European allies and work together in concert to get things done

Top personnel-policy problem facing the armed forces today

- commit to establishing strong leadership in the armed forces
- fill remaining positions now vacant
- assure our nation's warriors that their country's leadership is program and mission oriented
- assure them that their safety is tantamount in the decisions leaders make
- honor solemn commitment every American has made to serving our nation
- place trust and faith in our military leadership

To what level increase or decrease Defense Department budget

- support a reduction
- budget should match the scope, scale, and threat faced by the United States today
- requirements and systems to meet them to be developed by the armed services
- sustain technological edge
- sustain deterrence
- consider impact on readiness when evaluating military budget

Suicides in military and among veterans

- urgent public health crisis
- strengthen Department of Veterans Affairs and support military leadership
- our warriors deserve the best — both on the field and when they return home
- expand health services for veterans, including from mental health professionals

Top policy priority involving veterans

- our nation's veterans deserve our respect, our gratitude
- they deserve the solemn pledge from their commander in chief that America will never waver in its commitment to them
- committed to veterans returning to their families and communities and to their long-term well being
- cancel the student loan debt for permanently disabled veterans
- support priorities involving veterans, including homelessness, workforce training, and mental-health treatment

Has pushing veterans health care services into the private sector gone too far?

Would you repeal or alter existing VA community care programs?

- officials have absolutely gone too far— not a policy I will pursue
- access to healthcare a fundamental right for all Americans
- unique healthcare needs of veterans best met through the VA
- build upon success of the VA hospital system, and make necessary investments to ensure system properly resourced and modernized

Elizabeth Warren

U.S. Senator from Massachusetts since 2013

Announced: February 9, 2019

Home State: Massachusetts | [Website](#)

Latest Book: This Fight Is Our Fight: The Battle to Save America's Middle Class
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/11/us/politics/veterans-day-2020-democrats.html>

SUPPORTS

- strong support for veterans
- exempting Department of Veterans Affairs from federal hiring freeze (Jan 2017)
- ending defense contractors' stranglehold on military policy
- unequivocal support for Israel's qualitative military edge
- reducing size of standing army to reduce deficit
- #1 responsibility: protect Americans from terrorism
- military actions that kill civilians may create radicalism
- non-proliferation including disposing of nuclear materials
- no intervention in Yemen; but intervention in Gaza OK
- withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria
- strong sanctions against Iranian nukes, with other countries
- bringing US troops home from Afghanistan
- taking nothing off the table with Iran's nuclear weapon
- getting out of Afghanistan as fast as possible
- requiring Iran to accept long-term intrusive nuclear inspections

ACTIONS

- reform procedures for determinations on disposition of charges and the convening of courts-martial for certain offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice
- bill to add resources to VA for processing
- Veteran Education Empowerment Act

- Voices for Veterans Act
- Veterans Home Loan Choices Act
- Wounded Warrior Service Dog Act
- Veteran Spouses Equal Treatment Act
- Veteran Urgent Access to Mental Healthcare Act
- Veteran Suicide Prevention Act
- Blue Water Navy Vietnam Vets Act

COMMENTS

- difficult to find “Issues” related to veterans on web site

Marianne Williamson

Spiritual teacher, author, lecturer, entrepreneur, and activist

Announced: January 28, 2019

Home State: California | [Website](#)

Latest Book: A Politics of Love: A Handbook for a New American Revolution

The Williamson Administration will (copied from marianne2020.com)

- provide VA with more in-depth understanding of the number of veterans and service members at risk for homelessness; i. e. understanding who is coming home with PTSD, addiction, and other mental health issues and therefore more studies and more research into these topics
- provide more veterans with affordable housing; system that studies the influences that cause homelessness, and that tracks the needs of veterans, morally required
- create a Universal Basic Income: especially constructive for veterans transitioning back to life in the United States
- free community college and student loan amnesty to benefit veterans who went into the armed forces as a way to pay for their education
- making education more affordable will help veterans who want to continue their education
- increased mental-health services for the nation, but particularly for veterans
- create a US Department of Peace; one of the best ways to protect veterans: ensure that there are fewer of them in the future

Andrew Yang

American entrepreneur and founder of Venture for America (VFA)

Announced: November 6, 2017

Home State: New York | [Website](#)

Latest Book: The War on Normal People: The Truth About America's Disappearing Jobs and Why Universal Basic Income is Our Future

SUPPORTS

- modernizing military spending
- redirecting money to “actual threats”
- Investing in, and creating mentor programs for veterans
- providing resources to veteran-run businesses in the form of initial investment, low-cost financing options, and preferential treatment

- providing all other services to increase the stability veterans feel, and ensuring a successful transition to civilian life
- destigmatizing veteran treatment
- increasing funding and reach of crisis lines
- providing free gun safes/storage for all veterans, which has been shown to reduce suicide risk significantly
- establishing a census-like team to research and find all homeless veterans and get them and their information into the VA system
- helping veterans afford housing through financial literacy, assistance in saving up for a down payment or security deposit
- increasing availability of affordable housing options

Democrat Presidential Candidates: Those who have ended their Campaigns

Steve Bullock

Governor of Montana since 2013

Announced: May 14, 2019

Dropped: December 2, 2019

Home State: Montana

Bill de Blasio

Mayor of New York City since 2013

Announced: May 16, 2019

Dropped: September 20, 2019

Home State: New York

Kirsten Gillibrand

U. S. Senator from New York since January 2009

Announced: March 17, 2019

Dropped: August 28, 2019

Home State: New York

Mike Gravel

U. S. Senator from Alaska from 1969 to 1981

Announced: April 8, 2019

Dropped: August 6, 2019

Home State: Alaska

Kamala Harris

U. S. Senator from California since 2017

Announced: January 21, 2019

Dropped: December 3, 2019

Home State: California

John Hickenlooper

Governor of Colorado since 2011

Announced: March 4, 2019

Dropped: August 15, 2019

Home State: Colorado

Jay Inslee

Governor of Washington since 2013

Announced: March 1, 2019

Dropped: August 21, 2019

Home State: Washington

Seth Moulton

U. S. Representative for Massachusetts since 2015

Announced: April 22, 2019

Dropped: August 23, 2019

Home State: Massachusetts

Richard Ojeda

West Virginia State Senator since 2016

Announced: November 11, 2018

Dropped: January 25, 2019

Home State: West Virginia

Beto O'Rourke

Former U. S. Representative for Texas

Announced: March 14, 2019

Dropped: November 1, 2019

Home State: Texas

Tim Ryan

U. S. Representative for Ohio since 2003

Announced: April 4, 2019

Dropped: October 24, 2019

Home State: Ohio

Mark Sanford

Former Governor of South Carolina and former U.S. Representative

Announced: September 9, 2019

Dropped: November 12, 2019

Home State: South Carolina

Joe Sestak

U. S. Representative from Pennsylvania since 2007

Announced: June 22, 2019

Dropped: December 2, 2019

Home State: Pennsylvania

Eric Swalwell

U. S. Representative from California's 15th district since 2013

Announced: April 8, 2019

Dropped: July 9, 2019

Home State: California

Wayne Messam

Mayor of Miramar, Florida since 2015

Announced: March 28, 2019

Suspended: November 20, 2019

Home State: Florida