**1. What policies and actions do you support to reduce the stigmas of people with disabilities that are barriers to employment, independence and equality?**

We recently celebrated the 29th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Despite the progress we’ve made, we unfortunately still live in a world where people with disabilities have fewer work opportunities and where the civil rights of people with disabilities are not always protected and respected. We must recommit to championing the rights of people with disabilities. As a nation, we have a moral responsibility to ensure that all people with disabilities have their rights protected.

We must guarantee people with disabilities the right to live in the community; truly integrated employment that pays a living wage; affordable, accessible housing; and the right to health care, including mental health care and home and community based services and supports.

Every person with a disability deserves the right to live in the community and have the services and supports they need to pursue the American Dream. This right must be available to all, free of waiting lists and means tests. It is our moral responsibility to make it happen.

When Bernie is in the White House he is committed to having an administration that looks like America to help show every person in America that not only do they belong in the White House that the White House needs them, their experience, knowledge, and advocacy in order to create an America that works for everyone.

As President, Bernie will create a National Office of Disability Coordination focused on coordinating disability policy making to advance the full inclusion of people with disabilities, including ensuring every aspect of our public resources are ADA compliant and that the civil rights of people with disabilities are enforced. This office will be run by a person with a disability.

**2. What is your record on improving the lives of people with disabilities? What have you done to enable people with disabilities to have competitive jobs, meaningful careers or become entrepreneurs?**

Bernie has spent his entire career fighting for disability rights.

Just a few years ago, virtually every Republican and too many Democrats were talking about cutting cost-of-living adjustments for Social Security. Bernie formed the Defending Social Security Caucus in the Senate and worked to form a grassroots coalition representing people with disabilities, senior citizens, veterans, women and organized labor to fight against these cuts. He offered an amendment in opposition to cutting Social Security. It passed the Senate unanimously.

In 2018, Bernie secured a $480 million increase in funding to the Social Security Administration (SSA) in the omnibus appropriations bill to help address the disability benefits backlog. Since 1970, funding to administer Social Security programs has plummeted 34 percent per beneficiary after adjusting for inflation. This has resulted in the loss of more than 10,000 employees, as well as the closure of all rural contact centers and more than 10 percent of all field offices nationwide. About 700,000 people are on the waitlist for SSDI. In 2017, 10,000 Americans died on the waiting list for SSDI. As President, he will protect and expand SSDI and end the massive disability backlog to end wait lists for persons with disabilities to access their earned benefits.

52 percent of Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) recipient households have a person with a disability. As home heating bills skyrocketed in 2008, Bernie led the effort to double funding for LIHEAP. In the years since, he has helped lead the effort against cuts to the program. In 2018, he secured a $250 million increase to the program.

He’s proud to have worked with Representative Jim Clyburn to secure $11 billion for Community Health Centers in the Affordable Care Act, which provide primary care, dental care, low-cost prescription drugs and mental health care to more than 28 million Americans in underserved communities.

He’s fought to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In 2018 he secured a $60 million increase for TRIO and $10 million increase for GEAR UP to help more people with disabilities attend college. As President, he will double funding for the TRIO Programs and increases funding for the GEAR UP Program so more students with disabilities can attend and graduate college with a degree.

Bernie has fought to guarantee people with disabilities jobs that pay a living wage. Bernie believes it’s time to end the subminimum wage and guarantee truly integrated employment opportunities for people with disabilities. He’s introduced legislation to end the subminimum wage that passed the House of Representatives and has more than 30 cosponsors in the Senate.

In 2001, Bernie first introduced legislation to create the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund, based largely on the success of the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund. After a 15-year effort, in 2016, a modest version of Bernie’s legislation became the first new federal affordable housing program funded in several decades which is helping address the shortage of affordable, accessible homes for people with disabilities.

**3. What specific workforce development strategies do you support that will empower youth with disabilities?**

Bernie will guarantee people with truly integrated employment that pays a living wage. He will:

* Expand President Obama’s executive order to make the federal government a model employer for people with disabilities.
* Create equitable hiring standards. We will ensure that all the federal government follows standards and guidelines to ensure the jobs created by the federal government including infrastructure jobs are available to people with disabilities.
* End subminimum wage certificates for individuals with disabilities, raise the minimum wage to a livable wage of at least $15 an hour, and expand grants to ensure employment for workers with disabilities in their communities.
* Enact a federal jobs guarantee that will pay a living wage to all persons with disabilities who want to work through the program.
* Aggressively enforce the provisions under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act and ensure that Federal contractors meet their affirmative action obligations under the law.
* Expand grants to states and municipalities to ensure employment and employment services for workers with disabilities in their communities. Medicare for All will also cover supported employment services, expanding on coverage available in state Medicaid programs.
* We will enact a Green New Deal to create the 20 million jobs needed to solve our climate crisis and make sure that standards and guidelines are in place to ensure the jobs created by investing in infrastructure are jobs available to persons with disabilities.

When Bernie is President, he will increase educational opportunities for persons with disabilities, including an expansion in career and technical education opportunities to prepare students for good-paying community employment. He will cancel all student debt and 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.

He will:

* Increase educational opportunities for persons with disabilities, including spending $50 billion over the next decade to expand career and technical education opportunities to prepare students for good-paying community employment.
* Provide mandatory funding to ensure that the federal government provides at least 50 percent of the funding for IDEA.
* Guarantee children with disabilities an equal right to high-quality education by enforcing the Americans with Disabilities Act.
* Address the shortage in special education teacher recruitment, training opportunities, workload and pay for special education teachers.
* Triple Title I funding to ensure students with disabilities are able to get quality education regardless of the zip code they live in.
* As President, he will double funding for the TRIO Programs and increases funding for the GEAR UP Program so more students with disabilities can attend and graduate college with a degree. By increasing our investment in these programs, we will reach 1.5 million students with disabilities,low-income students, and first-generation students through TRIO programs and more than 100,000 additional students through GEAR UP than the program reaches today.

**4. The jobs of the future will largely require post-secondary education or other credentials. Today 65 percent of students with disabilities complete high school. What policies do you advocate to support the academic and career success of students with disabilities, especially for students from historically marginalized communities and backgrounds?**

Bernie will increase educational opportunities for persons with disabilities, including an expansion in career and technical education opportunities to prepare students for good-paying community employment. He’ll cancel all student debt and 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.

Students with disabilities deserve the same educational opportunities as their non-disabled peers. Unfortunately, too many receive a substandard education that fails to ensure they get a chance to live up to their full potential. Worse still, students with disabilities, especially students of color with disabilities, are often subject to dangerous restraint and seclusion or are funneled into the school to prison pipeline through the inappropriate use of law enforcement within our schools.

From childcare and Pre-K to Higher Education, students with disabilities should have the opportunity to be fully included and access a high-quality education that prepares them for a future of their choosing. As president, Bernie Sanders will:

* Provide universal childcare and early education for all to properly invest in our children’s healthy physical, social, educational, and cognitive development.
* Provide mandatory funding to ensure that the federal government provides at least 50 percent of the funding for special education and additional financial incentives to encourage schools to serve students within the general education classroom.
* Guarantee children with disabilities an equal right to high-quality education by enforcing the Americans with Disabilities Act.
* Increase educational opportunities for persons with disabilities, including an expansion in career and technical education opportunities to prepare students for good-paying community employment.
* Address the shortage in special education teacher recruitment, training opportunities, workload, and pay for special education teachers.
* Triple Title I funding to ensure students with disabilities are able to get quality education regardless of the zip code they live in.
* Ensure our schools are accessible by fully closing the gap in school infrastructure funding to renovate, modernize, and green the nation’s schools.
* Work with teachers, school administrators, and the disability rights movement to end restraint and seclusion in schools.
* Address racial disproportionality in special education services by fully implementing the Obama-era regulations on special education disproportionality.
* Invest in expanding access to Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) for students who need additional communication assistance.
* Ensure that Deaf students have access to American Sign Language and blind students have access to braille literacy.
* Double funding for the TRIO Programs and increases funding for the GEAR UP Program so more low-income students, students with disabilities, and first-generation students can attend and graduate college with a degree. By increasing our investment in these programs, we will reach 1.5 million students through TRIO programs and more than 100,000 additional students through GEAR UP than the program reaches today.

**5. Immigration is a major social, political and workforce development issue. Given questions around the new “public charge” rule that impacts immigrants with disabilities, the challenges faced by English language learners with non-visible disabilities who want to develop their skills and the talent needs of the business community, what is your vision for enabling immigrants to succeed here in America?**

We must live up to our ideals as a nation and make our immigration and citizenship process welcoming, accessible and broad. Bernie will streamline our visa and citizenship system and make it easier to navigate, fully accessible, and broadly inclusive. Bernie will direct the newly created National Office of Disability Coordination to work with agencies to ensure the immigration and citizenship process is fully accessible to people with disabilities. This includes streamlining our visa and citizenship system and making it easier to navigate, fully accessible, and broadly inclusive. And he will ensure customs and immigration agencies make reasonable accommodations and, where necessary, disability waivers for the English and civics test broadly available and publicized for people with disabilities to access. Bernie will immediately rescind President Trump’s “public charge” rule to deny help and benefits to people based on their immigration status. And we will pass a permanent repeal of the public charge statute, so we do not penalize immigrants who at some point may need to access support programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). We will also pass the Embrace Act introduced by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to ensure immigrants with disabilities get the assistance they need.

**6. People with disabilities are twice as likely to be victims of crime as those without disabilities. This includes the fact that both children and adults with disabilities are more likely to be victims of rape or sexual assault. How would you address these issues?**

We must work to end the epidemic of violence against people with disabilities in this country and support survivors of violent crimes. Bernie will 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.

As President, Bernie will work to stop the cycle of violence against people with disabilities and provide survivors with support. He will:

* 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.
* Prevent and address sex trafficking with “safe harbor” policies that treat trafficked persons involved in illegal activities such as prositution 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.

**7. Today there are more than 750,000 people with disabilities behind bars. Many face serious barriers to reentry when they complete their sentences and return home. What reforms do you support to ensure that returning citizens with disabilities have the resources, skills and mental health support to succeed when they leave incarceration?**

According to the DOJ, 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.

When Bernie is President, he’ll decriminalize disability.

* Recognize 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 make the necessary investments 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.
* 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.
* And we will invest in community living:
	+ Provide 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 without income or asset restrictions or waitlists through Medicare for All.
	+ Guarantee accessible housing to all through Bernie’s Housing for All plan.
	+ Enact a federal jobs guarantee for every worker in this country. The program will provide living- wage jobs integrated in the community to all people with disabilities who want to work through the program.

**8. People with disabilities also are far more likely to suffer from police violence, partially because manifestations of disability can be misunderstood. How would** **you address these issues?**

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.

We will 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, disability, 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.

We will 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.

**9. How would you ensure that people with disabilities have access to healthcare and the benefits they need while enabling them with opportunities to work to the best of their capacities without losing the supports they need to live? This relates to private healthcare as well as SSI, SSDI, Medicare and Medicaid.**

We must guarantee people with disabilities the right to live in the community; truly integrated employment that pays a living wage; affordable, accessible housing; and the right to health care, including mental health care and home and community based services and supports.

Bernie believes every person with a disability deserves the right to live in the community and have the services and supports they need to pursue the American Dream. This right must be available to all, free of waiting lists and means tests. It is our moral responsibility to make it happen.

We will remove barriers and disincentives to work for SSI benefits recipients and eliminate the SSI asset test. It is unacceptable that we force people with disabilities to spend down so they qualify for SSI and force recipients off the program if they see a small sum of money come in that puts them over the asset threshold. When we are in the White House, we will eliminate the asset threshold to ensure people with disabilities get the benefits they need.

Bernie will reverse Trump’s disastrous Social Security Disability Insurance rule on day one of his presidency.

Bernie believes that health care is not a commodity, it is a human right. That is why he will pass Medicare for All which would provide comprehensive health coverage to all with no premiums, deductibles, copayments, or surprise bills.

He will end the institutional bias that forces people with disabilities out of their communities by passing the Disability Integration Act and enacting Medicare for All, guaranteeing home-and community-based services, assistive technologies, and mental health care to all, without waitlists, or asset or income restrictions.

When Bernie is in the White House, we will guarantee health care as a human right by enacting Medicare for All. The plan would:

* Cover prescription drugs, assistive technologies and medical devices.
* Provide transportation for individuals with disabilities to receive the care they need.
* And 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.

**10. What are your thoughts on ensuring that people with disabilities have the option to live in their homes instead of institutions and still have the community attendant supports they need to live? Do you have a plan for affordable housing and to reduce homelessness for people with disabilities?**

Bernie will guarantee the right to community living. He’ll ensure that every person with a disability has access to home and community based services and affordable, accessible housing.

He will end the institutional bias that forces people with disabilities out of their communities by passing the Disability Integration Act and enacting Medicare for All, guaranteeing home-and community-based services and assistive technologies to all who need them, without asset or income restrictions. Medicare for all will also cover doctors appointments, medical procedures, prescription drugs, mental health care, and transportation to receive medical care. In a Sanders’ administration, the Olmstead decision will be vigorously enforced through the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, reversing the Trump Administration’s disgraceful rollback of disability rights enforcement.

Additionally, Bernie will guarantee people with disabilities have safe, accessible, and integrated affordable housing as a right and end housing discrimination by implementing his $2.5 trillion Housing for All plan to end our affordable housing crisis. The plan will:

* Build nearly 10 million permanently affordable, accessible homes to fully close the gap in affordable, accessible housing units.
* Invest nearly $32 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 of the Housing Trust Fund units will be prioritized for housing the homeless.
* Fully fund tenant-based Housing Choice Vouchers, also known as Section 8, and make it a mandatory program for all eligible households. And strengthen the Fair Housing Act and implement a Section 8 non-discrimination law, so that landlords can no longer discriminate against low-income families based on their source of income.
* Invest $180 billion over ten years in sustainable retrofits for public housing through his Green New Deal and $70 billion in his Housing for All plan to repair and modernize public housing including making all public housing accessible and provide access to high-speed broadband for all public housing residents.
* Implement the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule blocked by President Trump’s administration to ensure federal funds promote fair housing.
* Aggressively enforce the Olmstead decision, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act to ensure access to accessible, integrated housing.
* Ensure all new Section 811 housing is fully integrated.Preempt laws that prevent inclusionary zoning and incentivize municipalities to incorporate disability access into their inclusionary zoning requirements.
* End exclusionary and restrictive zoning ordinances with zoning that encourages racial, economic, and disability integration and makes housing more affordable.
* Encourage zoning and development designed to expand and maximize the number of units fully accessible to people with disabilities.

**11. The federal law and benefits system punish people who want to work or whose families want to help them. For example, currently people with disabilities who are on SSI are prohibited of having more than $2,000 liquid assets at any one time. Furthermore, current law limits parents and grandparents to helping their children financially who acquired their disability prior to age 26 but not if they acquire a disability after age 26. What will you do to ensure that people have more options than being forced to choose between access to supports, benefits and service or the opportunity to pursue work, careers and an income?**

It is unacceptable that we force people with disabilities to spend down so they qualify for SSI and force recipients off the program if they see a small sum of money come in that puts them over the asset threshold. When Bernie is in the White House, he will eliminate the asset threshold to ensure people with disabilities get the benefits they need.

He will also remove barriers and disincentives to work for benefits recipients and remove the marriage penalty from benefits.

In addition, Bernie will:

* Protect and expand the Social Security Disability Insurance program and end the massive disability backlog to end wait lists for persons with disabilities to access their earned benefits.
* Expands benefits across-the-board for all Social Security beneficiaries, including SSI. And increase and index the SSI benefit level so that it is equal to 125 percent of the poverty line.
* Eliminate the SSI asset test. It is unacceptable that we force people with disabilities to spend down so they qualify for SSI and force recipients off the program if they see a small sum of money come in that puts them over the asset threshold. When we are in the White House, we will eliminate the asset threshold to ensure people with disabilities get the benefits they need.
* Bring back student benefits for children of deceased workers and workers with disabilities that were eliminated in 1983.
* Combine the Social Security Disability Insurance Trust Fund and the Old Age and Survivors Trust fund to protect benefits.
* Issue a moratorium on all closures of field offices and other SSA offices.
* Remove the marriage penalty from benefits.
* Remove barriers and disincentives to work for benefits recipients.

**12. How would you advance innovations (i.e., assistive technologies, devices) that can help people with disabilities become more successfully employed, productive and independent?**

Bernie understands that we must invest in community living and part of that means investing in research to better allow all members of the disability community to live independently and productively.

He will increase funding for the NIH, including the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.

He will invest in technologies to ensure voting is fully accessible. Bernie will allocate funding for research in accessible mail-in ballot options, such as using systems in place for military and overseas voters. As states expand mail-in options, the same issues in lack of privacy apply, as many mail-in ballots must be handmarked. We must make these mail-in ballot options accessible to all.

He will provide funding for research, development, and testing of new accessible voting technology. Our election infrastructure hasn’t been updated in many cases since 2001, many systems are outdated and being decertified due to security issues. We will also ensure that funding for research and development of new election equipment is not restricted to inaccessible systems so that we can move towards secure, accessible voting equipment that serves all voters.

He will ensure people with disabilities have full access to the internet by:

* Aggressively enforcing the Americans with Disabilities Act to ensure the accessibility of the Internet, cloud-based applications, and internet-connected devices.
* Ensuring full Section 508 compliance, including making sure government agencies can receive ASL video calls from deaf people.
* Ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
* Developing regulations to expand the availability and quality of closed captioning and audio description on internet platforms.
* Reinforcing and expanding the national and state equipment distribution programs  for people with disabilities.
* Reinforcing and expanding the availability and quality of accessible modern telecom services to ensure everyone who needs these services receives them.

At a time when adults with disabilities are twice as likely to lack adequate transportation than adults without disabilities and 560,000 people with disabilities report they do not leave home because of transportation difficulties, we must guarantee safe and accessible transportation to the disability community. With a $300 billion investment in the Green New Deal to build public transit that is affordable, accessible, fast, and resilient, we will increase public transit ridership by 65 percent by 2030. We will ensure that reliable, affordable public transit is accessible for people with disabilities. Through the Green New Deal, we will make massive investments in public research and development to drastically reduce the cost and increase the accessibility of electric vehicles, especially for people with disabilities.

And Bernie believes that as a nation, we have a moral responsibility to ensure that all Americans have the support and services they need to live at home, participate in their community, and to age with dignity and respect. Under Medicare for All, health care will be guaranteed as a right, including assistive technology and home and community based services and supports. The program will also provide transportation to and from health services for those who need it.

**13. What are your plans to ensure that the bureaucracy of the Veterans Administration supports and serves veterans with disabilities? What is your plan to support veterans with disabilities, especially female veterans with disabilities?**

No one who was injured through their military service should be denied benefits because of complicated bureaucracy, period. We have seen too many veterans struggle to get the benefits to which they are rightly entitled. Worse still, veterans who have fought for and won these benefits have them taken away when their health improves. Bernie believes that veterans must be compensated for the disabilities connected to their service without being penalized for working hard to make improvements in their health.

Bernie believes that we must listen to the medical experts when it comes to compensating veterans for injuries and illnesses connected to their military service. As President, Bernie will:

* Improve and simplify the claims process so veterans receive the compensation they have earned quickly, accurately, and without bureaucratic red tape.
* Eliminate the VA benefits backlog. A Bernie Sanders Administration will no longer tolerate over 70,000 veterans having to wait over 125 days for a determination on their benefits and up to 7 years to wait for a decision by a Veterans Law Judge.
* End the disgraceful practice of President Trump and VA Secretary Wilkie, who have willfully chosen to ignore the medical community.
* On his first day in office, Bernie will validate the findings of the Institute of  Medicine (now known as the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine) to make sure veterans exposed to Agent Orange are compensated for bladder cancer and other illnesses. It is absolutely unacceptable that our current President is actively working against our ill and injured veterans, not for them.
* Ensure no future president can do what Trump has done, by changing the law to make the recommendations of medical experts automatic, not reliant on presidential action.
* Expand the list of injuries and illnesses presumed to be connected with military service.
* Include the most commonly associated illnesses and injuries found in veterans from each era, including hearing loss and musculoskeletal injuries, like back and knee injuries.
* Finally include those veterans whose locations and occupations during their service in the military was Classified, righting the wrong that far too many of these veterans have gone without the care they’ve been entitled to simply because the Department of Defense is unwilling to tell the Department of Veterans Affairs needed information.
* Fight for servicemembers exposed to toxic substances.
* Ensure that veterans exposed to toxic substances from asbestos and ionized radiation in World War II to Agent Orange in Vietnam to burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan are compensated for the myriad of diseases associated with these dangerous chemicals. It is absolutely unacceptable that we have exposed our brave military members to these dangerous chemicals and even worse that we then fail to compensate and care for the illnesses they cause.
* Ensure that women veterans will no longer be forced outside the VA system for basic women’s health services, including fertility treatment, abortion care, or specialized cancer treatment and prevention services.

**14. People with disabilities are at extreme risk from climate change. What are your plans to reduce the climate crisis and to create emergency solutions for people with disabilities when disasters strike?**

We must ensure that people with disabilities are provided with the resources they need to adequately prepare for and recover from the increasing number of climate related emergencies. This means everything from ensuring emergency preparation and warnings are accessible to providing extra resources to people with disabilities to ensure full and rapid recovery after a disaster.

As president, Bernie will:

* Ensure justice for people with disabilities to recover from, and prepare for, the climate impacts, by passing the READI ACT and through a $40 billion Climate Justice Resiliency Fund. He will provide frontline and fenceline communities a just transition including real jobs, resilient infrastructure, economic development.
	+ Once the CJRF is established and funded at $40 billion, the EPA, together with a number of other agencies, will conduct a nationwide survey to identify areas with high climate impact vulnerabilities and other socioeconomic factors, public health challenges, and environmental hazards. Each community will then be eligible for funding in order of most vulnerable to least vulnerable.
	+ The interagency council will issue block grants to states, territories, tribes, municipalities, counties, localities, and nonprofit community organizations. The funds will be able to be used for climate resiliency projects, building emergency community centers and shelters with reliable backup power, wetland restoration, abandoned fossil fuel infrastructure and other environmental hazard reclamation; seawalls; community relocation; community evacuation plans and resources for safe and complete evacuation.
	+ Within the CJRF, we will establish an Office of Climate Resiliency for People with Disabilities. The office will be led by people with disabilities to ensure that nationwide, the needs of people with disabilities are consistently addressed during adaptation planning and that those efforts are coordinated throughout the federal government.
* As President, Bernie will ensure the creation and implementation of the Green New Deal is accessible to people with disabilities and non-English speakers. All publications will be in multiple languages, including Braille, and meetings will have language interpreters, including sign language, as appropriate.
* Protect community cohesion. We will amend the Stafford Act to ensure that the Federal Emergency Management Agency is empowered to address this problem specifically to ensure that recovery and rebuilding efforts make affected communities stronger than they were before the disaster so they are more resilient to the next disaster.
* Ensure health benefits in the wake of disasters. Under Medicare for All, benefits will stay with you. Medicaid recipients will no longer have to re-apply for the health benefits they need to survive if they need to relocate due to an emergency.

**15. Are your office, website and events accessible to people with disabilities? Have you identified a process for including people with disabilities in your staff and policy advisors? If yes, please describe.**

Yes, as a campaign that not only understands the inherent value that inclusivity and diversity affords to those fortunate enough to have it, Bernie 2020 continues to strive to ensure that all people are considered as we make critical hires, plan for critical events, work to create the world we want to see, etc. As a campaign, we:

* Work to ensure offices are accessible to those with physical disabilities.
* Have ASL interpreters and ADA seating sections close to the stage, staffed by volunteers to assist with seating and the placement of wheelchairs and other assistance devices.
* Put together a strong benefits program (offering things like an EAP and provide mental health reimbursements for all staff) that focuses on mental health/wellbeing and cognitive disabilities.
* Conducted an[accessibility audit](https://berniesanders.com/accessibility/)to ensure our web materials are accessible.
* Have and will continue to reach out to a diverse group of people with disabilities to gather more information about what else we can be doing, and how we can ensure they are able to come out to support the campaign.
* Work to make sure everyone’s needs are met. Our HR team works with every employee to make sure that we have the appropriate equipment for everyone and work schedules and duties that allow everyone to succeed.