



 DATA FOR *PROGRESS*

# **GREEN NEW DEAL SCORECARD RETROSPECTIVE**

November 2019

# OVERVIEW

Since we launched our Green New Deal scorecard, Democratic candidates — moderates and progressives alike — have released plans that leverage more ambitious emissions targets, a broader array of federal policy tools, and more robust jobs and justice programs.



**From our first scorecard in June to now, we have seen:**

**+97%**

increase in median score, from 15.5 to 30.5 of 48

**+59%**

increase in average federal direct investment

**+8**

candidates aligned with Data For Progress emissions targets

**11**

current Democratic candidates reach Thorough or Very Thorough scores, up from 4 in the first scorecard

## **How we scored the plans:**

*Data For Progress devised a Green New Deal scorecard identifying 48 components of a Green New Deal. Candidates got half credit for Green New Deal concepts that they acknowledged, but did not lay out a clear policies or actions to address, and full credit for those that they had policy prescriptions for in their plan; however, these scores did not consider the merits of any particular policy mechanism. For instance, if one candidate asserted his or her intent to invest DOE funds into advanced nuclear research, while another outlined a plan to phase out existing nuclear entirely, both would receive full credit. Moreover, we could only assess qualitatively how the elements of plans worked together cohesively. These scores were tallied to give us a sense of the overall thoroughness of the plan:*

**Very Incomplete = 0 - 12**

**Incomplete = 12.5 - 24**

**Thorough = 24.5 - 36**

**Very Thorough = 36.5 - 48**

# BUILDING A GREEN NEW DEAL SCORECARD

*A Green New Deal posits that the next few years of decision-making in Washington will have dramatic consequences for the future of our nation, species and planet.*

IPCC scientists agree that, to have the best chance to limit global warming to 1.5C, we need to rapidly transition to a net-zero emissions society by no later than 2050. The stakes of the 2020 election could not be higher, and Democratic voters, activists, and leaders deserve to understand which candidates are taking a Green New Deal seriously — not just providing lip-service. Data For Progress argued as much in a February op-ed, when we [challenged 2020 candidates](#) to bring forth detailed, comprehensive plans for a Green New Deal.

To measure candidates' commitment, Data For Progress identified 48 elements of a Green New Deal that candidates should address in their platforms. We believe reasonable people can disagree on which of these elements should be prioritized and which policy approaches are best, so we designed a system of comparison that considers only whether a candidate acknowledges or addresses each component of a Green New Deal. The scorecard reflects our belief that every progressive candidate must provide a thoughtful and thorough plan — and be accountable to that plan — as part of their presidential duty to prioritize equitable and ambitious climate action.



## EVOLUTION OF PRESIDENTIAL CLIMATE PLANS

*In the three months since Data for Progress launched this project, Democrats' plans have grown closer to the Data For Progress rubric, with the median score of the field moving from Incomplete (15.5/48 points) to Thorough (30.5/48 points).*

Since June, candidates have increasingly aligned with Data for Progress emissions targets, strengthened commitments to justice, and included robust jobs programs. Some candidates used the scorecard to promote their own candidate's Green New Deal chops and publications like [The Guardian](#) and [HuffPost](#) turned to Data for Progress to provide side-by-side comparisons of climate platforms. A number of elements that were glossed over in early platforms, ranging from broad principles like energy democracy to more technical climate details like refrigerant abatement, have been consistently included in more recent presidential plans.

The emergence of thorough presidential climate plans is, in large part, a testament to the power of the youth climate movement. But it also underscores growing concern about climate change, the impact that a single candidate — Jay Inslee — had on the race, as well as the successful intervention of the Green New Deal into Democratic politics. The Sunrise Movement's push for a climate debate, championed by Inslee, Warren, and other Democratic contenders, ultimately led to multiple televised climate town halls and prompted every serious candidate to release a detailed climate agenda.

From the publication of our blueprint for a Green New Deal in September 2018, Data for Progress has worked to align candidates and the party behind a progressive climate vision. While the campaign is far from over, the Green New Deal has, empirically, made an indelible mark on Democratic candidates — and when you compare the 2020 field to climate plans released by Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders and Martin O’Malley during the 2016 campaign, the shift appears even more stark.

	<b>Original Scorecard</b> <i>(June 2019)</i>	<b>Second Scorecard</b> <i>(July 2019)</i>	<b>Current Scorecard</b> <i>(September 2019)*</i>
<b>Plans Above “Very Incomplete”</b>	7 (58% of plans released)	9 (60% of plans released)	17 (85% of plans released)
<b>Median Score (/48)</b>	Incomplete (15.5)	Incomplete (19.9)	Thorough (30.5)
<b>Top Performers</b>	Jay Inslee (42) Joe Biden (28) Elizabeth Warren (26)	Jay Inslee (44) Joe Biden (30.5) Tom Steyer (29.5)	Bernie Sanders (45) Tom Steyer (41.5) Cory Booker (41)
<b>Candidates Aligned with All Emissions Targets<sup>a</sup></b>	2	4	10
<b>Candidates with Strong Justice Standards<sup>b</sup></b>	2	3	7
<b>Candidates with Robust Jobs Programs<sup>c</sup></b>	3	4	8
<b>Average Federal Direct Investment Over 10 Years</b> <i>(among candidates who had released plans)</i>	\$2.2 trillion	\$2.4 trillion	\$3.5 trillion
<b>Average Jobs Commitment</b> <i>(among candidates who had released plans)</i>	7.3 million	6.0 million	8.1 million

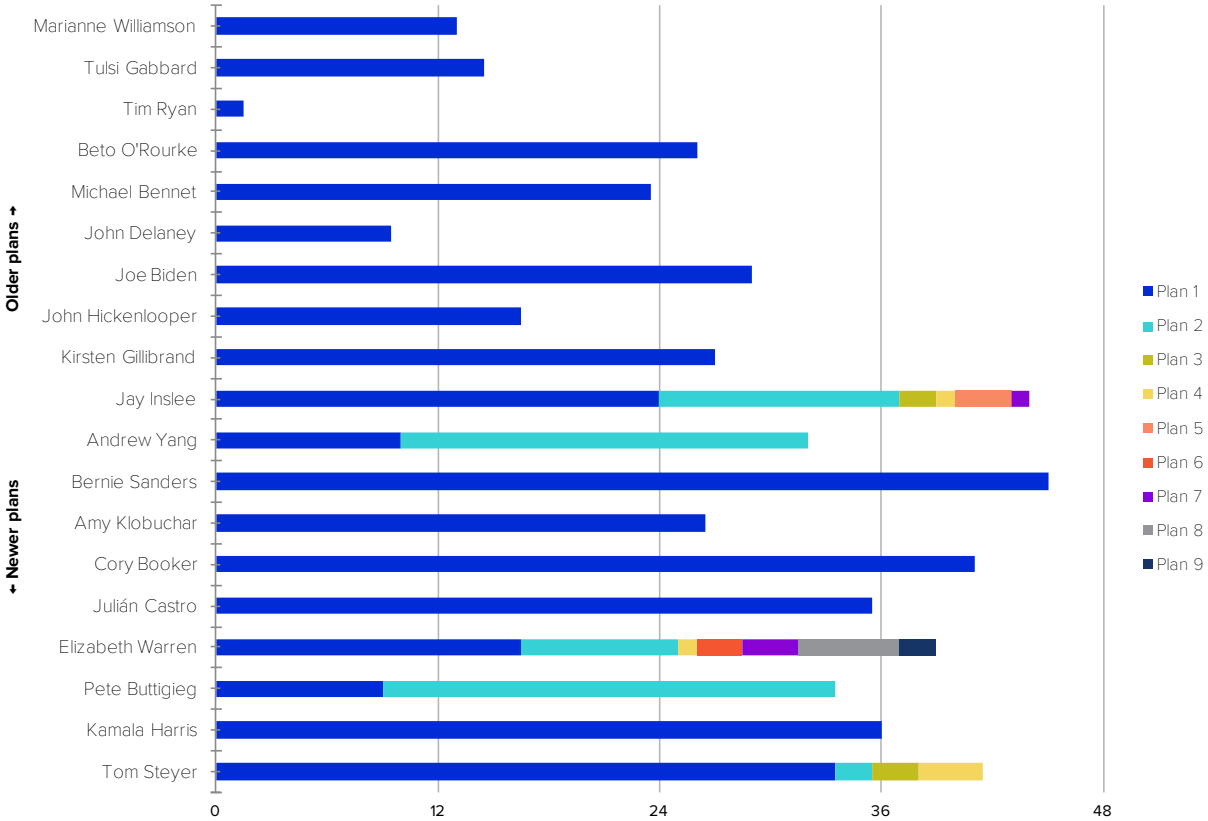
\* All scores are current as of September 27, 2019. Calculations include all plans released, regardless of whether the candidate has since dropped out, for the purposes for fair comparison.

<sup>a</sup> Received full credit for *Electricity Sources & Emissions, Energy Sector Sources & Emissions, and Economy-Wide Emissions Target*

<sup>b</sup> Received full credit for *Job Quality Standards and Environmental & Social Justice Standards*

<sup>c</sup> Received full credit for *Just Transition, Workforce Development, and Local Economic Development*

# CLIMATE PLANS BECAME MORE THOROUGH AS SOME CANDIDATES RELEASED MULTIPLE PIECES OVER TIME



The scorecard confirmed some narratives, but it also revealed surprises. Jay Inslee, running on a climate-first platform, remained the only Very Thorough scorer in the primary. Within two weeks of withdrawing from the race and offering his ideas as “open-source” for the field, four other candidates had achieved that mark.

Joe Biden, criticized for holding moderate climate views, released a Thorough (28/48) climate agenda. Warren, Buttigieg, and Yang earned larger scores over time by releasing plans piecemeal, while Booker, Harris, and Sanders published comprehensive plans just before CNN’s September Climate Town Hall.

Despite each campaign’s approach, our scorecard never changed — the candidates just figured out how to more fully address a Green New Deal.

# HOW HAS CLIMATE AMBITION SHIFTED ACROSS ELECTION CYCLES?

We took a look back at climate plans from Democrats in the 2016 primary to see how they stacked up against our rubric.

A lot has changed since 2016, including new science from the IPCC, the Trump administration’s aggressive environmental rollbacks, and grassroots momentum from groups like the Sunrise Movement, so this is not meant as a knock on prior candidates.

Rather, our analysis shows that the Green New Deal has not only changed the ambition of presidential climate plans, but also expanded the definition of a complete climate agenda to include intersectional social, economic, and environmental issues.

	Hillary Clinton	Bernie Sanders (2016)	Martin O’Malley
<b>Plans</b>	<u>Climate Change</u>	<u>Combating Climate Change to Save the Planet</u>	<u>Climate</u>
<b>DFP Score (/48)</b>	Very Incomplete (9.5)	Incomplete (22)	Incomplete (15.5)
<b>2020 Score Comparison</b>	John Delaney (9.5)	Michael Bennet (23.5)	John Hickenlooper (16.5)

# CENTERING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EJ)

*A Green New Deal demands that we tackle the climate crisis through processes and programs that dismantle our history of environmental racism and the disproportionate threat that fossil fuel use poses to low-income, elderly, and minority communities.*

Since our first GND presidential candidate scorecard, we have seen an increase in the prioritization of just process and policies, as with Elizabeth Warren’s robust [environmental justice plan](#), Bernie Sanders’s [program](#) to promote global climate justice and hold polluters accountable, Tom Steyer’s [Framework for a Justice-Centered Climate Plan](#), Cory Booker’s [EJ Fund](#) proposal, and Kamala Harris’s “[foundation for justice](#),” which includes her Climate Equity Act.

In addition to our [48-component GND rubric](#), we have created a sub-rubric to dig deeper into Democratic candidates’ approach to environmental justice in their climate plans, including rectifying historic environmental damages, establishing democratic and inclusive governance processes, and enacting core climate justice measures. Among the eight contenders polling 2% or higher in our recent [Data for Progress/YouGov poll](#), half have made environmental justice a central pillar of their climate plans, each addressing at least 10 components on our EJ sub-rubric. **Bernie Sanders’s plan thoroughly addresses every component.** If we sum top preferences of Democratic voters, we find that the electorate favors candidates who center EJ issues, reflecting a growing public prioritization of climate policies designed with historic and future justice in mind.

EJ Sub-Rubric	Biden	Buttigieg	Booker	Harris	O’Rourke	Sanders	Warren	Yang
<b>Historic Injustice</b>								
Polluter Liability	•		•	•	•	•	•	
Toxic Waste Cleanup			•	•		•	•	
Clean Water Infrastructure	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Public Green Spaces	•		•	•		•	•	
Equitable & Fossil Fuel-Free International Finance	•	•	•	•	•	•		•
<b>Just Processes</b>								
EJ/Equity Principles	•	•	•	•		•	•	
Stakeholder Participation	•	•		•		•	•	
Prioritization of Women- & Minority-Owned Businesses		•	•			•	•	
Indigenous Rights		•		•		•	•	
<b>Just Policies</b>								
Green Affordable Housing	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Devoted EJ Fund			•	•		•	•	
Climate & Public Health		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Energy Justice			•	•		•	•	•
Frontline Resilience	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
<b>Total (out of 14)</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3.5</b>