

Elizabeth Warren's Response to the Action For Opportunity Survey

1) What are the top five specific ways that you, as President, would increase economic opportunity for low-income Americans and decrease poverty, hunger, and homelessness?

Over the years, America's middle class has been deliberately hollowed out. And for families of color, the path to economic security has been even tougher and steeper. We need to make big structural change to rebuild our economy so that it works for everyone – and all of my plans aim to do just that.

(1) Universal Child Care: In the wealthiest country on the planet, access to affordable and high-quality child care and early education should be a right, not a privilege reserved for the rich. That's why I'm proposing a bold new Universal Child Care and Early Learning plan. My plan will guarantee high-quality child care and early education for every child in America from birth to school age. It will be free for millions of American families, and affordable for everyone. This is the kind of big, structural change we need to produce an economy that works for everyone – and we can pay for it with my Ultra-Millionaire Tax, a wealth tax on the richest 0.1% of Americans. You can read more about my plan [here](#).

(2) Student Loan Debt Cancellation and Universal Free Public College: Student loan debt is crushing millions of families and acting as an anchor on our economy. My plan for broad student debt cancellation will: cancel some student loan debt for more than 95% of the nearly 45 million Americans who have it; wipe out student loan debt entirely for more than 75% of the Americans with that debt; substantially increase wealth for Black and Latinx families and reduce both the Black-White and Latinx-White wealth gaps; and provide an enormous middle-class stimulus that will boost economic growth, increase home purchases, and fuel a new wave of small business formation.

We must also ensure that we never have another student debt crisis again by recognizing that a public college education is like a public K-12 education — a basic public good that should be available to everyone with free tuition and zero debt at graduation. My plan for universal free college will: give every American the opportunity to attend a two-year or four-year public college without paying a dime in tuition or fees; make free college truly universal — not just in theory, but in practice — by making higher education of all kinds more inclusive and available to every single American, especially lower-income, Black, and Latinx students, without the need to take on debt to cover costs; invest an additional \$100 billion over the next ten years in Pell Grants — and expand who is eligible for a Grant — to make sure lower-income and middle-class students have a better chance of graduating without debt; and establish a minimum \$50 billion fund for Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority-Serving Institutions. We can pay for all of this by asking the top 0.1% of Americans to pitch in two-cents on every dollar of net worth above \$50 million and six-cents on every dollar of net worth over \$1 billion. You can read more about my plan [here](#).

(3) Public K-12 Education: I believe in America's public schools. And I believe that every kid in America should have the same access to a high-quality public education - no matter where they live, the color of their skin, or how much money their parents make. With my two-cent wealth tax we can make a series of legislative and administrative changes to achieve five objectives: fund schools adequately and equitably so that all students have access to a great public education; renew the fight against segregation and discrimination in our schools; provide a warm, safe, and nurturing school climate for all our kids; treat teachers and staff like the professionals they are;

and stop the privatization and corruption of our public education system. As part of my plan, I will push to cancel all existing student meal debt and increase federal funding to school meals programs so that students everywhere get free breakfast and lunch. And to meaningfully address student food insecurity and hunger, I will direct my Department of Education to work with schools to look for ways to provide dinner, and meals over weekends and throughout long holidays, to students who need it. You can read more about my plan to provide a great public school education for every student [here](#).

(4) Affordable Housing: We also need to tackle our affordable housing crisis head on — with big, comprehensive solutions that match the size of the problems we have. My American Housing and Economic Mobility Act would build or rehabilitate 3.2 million units over the next decade, bringing down rental costs by 10 percent and creating 1.5 million new jobs — all paid for by returning the estate tax thresholds to their levels at the end of the George W. Bush administration and instituting more progressive rates above those thresholds. My housing bill also takes a first step toward addressing historical discrimination against communities of color by creating a first-of-its-kind down-payment assistance program for first-time homebuyers who live in formerly redlined neighborhoods or communities that were segregated by law and are still currently low-income. I'll also strengthen the Fair Housing Act by prohibiting housing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, and the source of one's income, like a housing voucher. And my bill invests \$2 billion to support borrowers still underwater because of the financial crisis so they can build more economic security. You can read more about my plan to provide safe and affordable housing [here](#).

And I will expand on these efforts by [protecting and empower renters](#). A full-time, minimum-wage worker can't afford a two-bedroom apartment anywhere in the nation. Gentrification is displacing communities of color, rising rents are crushing millions of families, and landlords are exploiting their power over tenants. As president, I'll protect and uphold the rights of tenants, including preventing unjust eviction and discrimination, and fight exploitation by corporate landlords. My administration will also tackle the growing cost of rent and invest in safe, healthy, and green public housing.

(5) Medicare for All: I spent my career studying why so many hard-working middle class families were going broke. Today, in 2019, in the United States of America, the wealthiest nation in the history of the world, inadequate health coverage is crushing the finances and ruining the lives of tens of millions of American families. I'm running for president based on a radical idea — calling out what's broken and speaking plainly about how to fix it.

Health care is a human right, and we need a system that reflects our values. That system is Medicare for All. Under my plan, Medicare for All will cover every single person in the United States and return \$11 trillion to American families without raising middle-class taxes one penny. Medicare for All will cover the full list of benefits outlined in the Medicare for All Act, including long-term care, audio, vision, dental, and mental health benefits. Everybody gets the doctors and the treatments they need, when they need them. No more restrictive provider networks, no more insurance companies denying coverage for prescribed treatments, and no more going broke over medical bills. In my transition to Medicare for All, I will pass a budget reconciliation bill within my first 100 days that will immediately offer coverage at no cost to every kid under the age of 18 and anybody making at or below 200% of the federal poverty level (about \$51,000 for a family of four) — including individuals who should be on Medicaid, but live in states that refused to expand their programs. And no later than my third year in office, I will fight to pass legislation to complete the transition to the Medicare for All system by the end of my first term in office, integrating everyone into a unified system with zero premiums, copays, and deductibles. You can read more about my plans for Medicare for All [here](#) and [here](#).

These are just a few of my plans to create real opportunity for all Americans. There are many more -- from pursuing an [agenda of economic patriotism](#) to strengthening our communities by [rethinking public safety](#) to reduce mass incarceration and [ending gun violence](#) , to [investing in rural America](#), to transitioning to [100% clean energy for America](#), to [Medicare for All](#) , and [empowering American workers and raising wages](#).

2) What is your single greatest concrete career accomplishment to date that has increased economic opportunity for low-income Americans and/or decreased poverty, hunger, and homelessness?

I spent a lot of my career studying how financial firms make money. I documented how they were getting rich slipping tricks and traps into credit card contracts that confused families and stuck them with never-ending debts. By the early 2000s, home mortgages had become so complex and dangerous that they had a one in five chance of costing a family their home. But the government wasn't there for American families: instead, the regulators were in the pocket of the big banks. In fact, the bank regulators were so deep in the pocket of the big banks that they let big banks sell so many of these mortgages that they crashed our entire economy. That's what happened in 2008.

In the wake of the crisis, I had an idea for an agency. This agency would have one job: protect the American people from financial traps and discriminatory practices. It would crack down on the scams that target poor and minority neighborhoods, stop the little tricks and the big tricks, ensure families going through foreclosure were treated fairly, make credit agreements simpler, and more. Some people thought this was a great idea for structural change. But a lot of people told me not even to try it. They warned me that special interests would fight me -- the big banks, lobbyists, the Republicans, even some of the Democrats -- and that I'd never get it passed.

But it was the right thing to do. So I took on Wall Street CEOs and armies of lawyers and lobbyists. We got organized and fought back and created the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. President Obama signed that agency into law in 2010, and I spent nearly a year setting up the new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. To date, the CFPB has forced financial institutions to return more than \$12 billion directly to people they cheated, putting money back in the hands of hard working Americans. Big structural change is hard, but it's proof that we can make government work for the people.

3) As President, how would you staff and structure the development, leadership, and daily management of your economic opportunity, poverty, hunger, and homelessness initiatives in your White House, Cabinet, and Administration?

A central goal of my campaign is rooting out corruption in our government so that it can serve the interests of everyone, not just the interests of billionaires, lobbyists, and big corporations. And I've long maintained that personnel is policy. That's why we need people who've demonstrated that they can hold the big corporations and other institutions accountable. From creating a federal workforce that reflects the diversity of America all the way up through senior leadership, to increasing the racial, gender, and professional diversity of the federal judiciary and Federal Reserve, and making sure workers, consumers, environmentalists, small farmers, and rural areas have a voice in trade negotiations, I'll work to make sure our government works for everybody. I will appoint people to my administration, including the NLRB, who have a

history of fighting for workers and are committed to fighting for workers' rights. I've also committed to nominating a public school teacher as my Secretary of Education and a labor leader as my Secretary of Labor.

My [anti-corruption plan](#) -- the most sweeping set of anti-corruption reforms since Watergate -- restores public integrity to make sure public servants actually serve the public. Today, our public integrity rules are far too lax. Too many public officials can easily leverage public service for personal gain. And the ability to walk around government with obvious and direct personal financial conflicts reduces public faith in honest officials. To fix this, we need a total rewrite of our ethics laws. I'll end self-dealing in the White House by applying conflict of interest laws to the president and vice president. I'll force senior government officials to divest from privately-owned assets that could present conflicts of interest, and completely ban the practice of government officials trading individual stocks while in office. I'll close and padlock the revolving door between government and industry, and I'll shut down a raft of additional shady practices that provide opportunities for government officials to serve their own financial interests. I believe we can root out corruption in Washington, and I believe we must make big, structural changes that will once again restore our trust in government by showing that it can work for all of us. And when I'm president, that's exactly what I'll do.