

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES RESPOND TO QUESTIONS ABOUT DIRECT CARE WORKFORCE



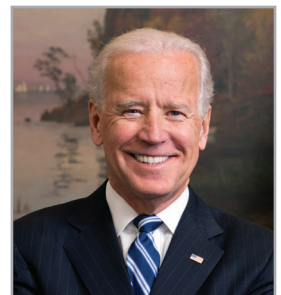
QUESTIONS ASKED

1. Raising wages would substantially improve the quality of life for those in direct care and those they serve by helping to bring stability to the workforce. What is your plan to ensure those in direct care receive a wage consistent with the importance of the work they perform?
2. In Iowa, direct care workers face many challenges with six in ten direct care workers leaving the field each year, yet the need for direct care workers is growing every day as our population ages and people with disabilities and aging Iowans prefer living in their own homes with assistance, over institutional care. If elected, how will you address issues faced by Iowa's direct care workers?
3. Why should I, as a direct care worker or someone who relies on direct care workers in Iowa, caucus for you in February?

We were unable to include candidates who: 1) dropped out of the race at the time of this publication; 2) did not respond to our request; 3) entered the race too late for inclusion before the deadline. All candidates were asked for comment with the exception of Mayor Bloomberg and Governor Patrick due to late entry into the race.

Former Vice President Joe Biden (Democrat)

1. For me, health care is personal. When my son Beau was diagnosed with Stage 4 glioblastoma, he lived for 18 months knowing that he was going to die. I can't imagine what would have been done if it weren't for the hospice workers. You understand what it means to love and care for your neighbor as yourself. Hospice, as you all know, is a family. It's a place where love, support, and dignity are afforded to all and for anyone who has seen a loved one go through their final days, they can tell you nothing is more important than that. If there are any angels in heaven, they are caregivers and they're not getting paid enough. Our country's direct care workers should not have to get a second job to pay household bills. No one should work a full-time job and live in poverty. It's wrong. My plan to ensure those in direct care receive a wage consistent with the importance of the work they perform is securing a \$15 minimum wage for all workers, including direct care workers who care for our aging and sick. Every worker deserves to earn enough to live a middle-class lifestyle, provide for their family, save for retirement, and send their kids to college. I helped get state and local increases to the minimum wage across the finish line –including in New York State and Los Angeles, and as president I will do the same to increase the federal minimum wage to \$15. And, I will index it to the median workers' wage so that minimum wage workers no longer fall behind. [My plans promote the following:] Ensuring that direct care workers are included in federal labor and employment law, so that they finally receive the same



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rights and protections that all workers have. The Obama-Biden Administration extended long overdue overtime and minimum wage protections to 2 million home care workers. As president, I will codify these protections into law and build on them, including by ensuring direct care workers have the right to organize and collectively bargain. And, I will create pathways to make it easier for direct care workers to come together to have a voice in the workplace, including by reinstating the Obama-Biden rule, which the Trump Administration has since reversed, making it easier for independent- provider home care workers to join a union by allowing states to deduct their dues from their paychecks, and by signing into law the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights, to establish a wage board for domestic workers. Partnering with health care workers to accelerate the testing and deployment of innovative solutions, including new models of upskilling, which improve quality of care and increase wages for low-wage health care workers. Fighting to defend and build upon the Affordable Care Act to ensure every American, including direct care workers, has access to quality, affordable health care. My plan takes a number of steps to build on Obamacare, including allowing Americans who are uninsured or who don't like their coverage to buy into a Medicare-like public option. My plan also increases premium tax credits so more people will have lower premiums and lower deductibles. I also believe that Medicaid plays an absolutely critical role in our health care system and it must be protected and strongly funded going forward. As president, I will fight all efforts to undermine it - such as work requirements and other tactics to reduce enrollment.

2. Direct care work is uniquely challenging and as you know, the turnover rate is high. Our direct care workers must get the support they need to stay in their field, and thrive. My dad had an expression, he said "Joey, a job is worth a lot more than a paycheck, it's about your dignity, it's about your respect, it's about your role in the community, it's about being able to look your kid in the eye and say, "honey, it's gonna be okay." Too many people can't do that anymore. As president, I will ensure that direct care workers are treated with the dignity they deserve. I will secure passage of legislation, including the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights, to make these jobs more fair and safe, especially for women of color and immigrants who make up a disproportionate share of the direct care workforce. I'll provide direct care workers with the same rights and protections all other workers receive, including protections from discrimination and harassment. And, I'll ensure fair scheduling practices, paid sick leave to take care of themselves and their own loved ones, and a voice in the workplace through a wage and standards board. I will also protect Medicaid to ensure its beneficiaries can access home- and community- based long-term care when they want it, and that home care workers get paid a good wage. Medicaid pays for more long-term care than any other insurer in the country. In fact, roughly 6 in 10 individuals residing in nursing homes are enrolled in Medicaid, including many older Americans. Yet, the Trump Administration is reportedly considering a plan to cut Medicaid funding by turning it into a block grant. And Republican leadership in states like Iowa, where Medicaid has been privatized with devastating results for some of its most vulnerable residents, are not fulfilling their obligations under the program. The Biden Plan will protect Medicaid funding and make sure the program gives those on Medicaid who need long-term care the flexibility to choose home- and community-based care. In addition, the Biden Administration won't let states skirt their duties under Medicaid and will take enforcement action against any state that allows profiteering to get in the way of Medicaid beneficiaries' health. And, I will increase affordable in-person and online training opportunities for direct care workers. For many direct care workers this is more than a job, it is a vocation and labor of love. Our system should include opportunities to develop in the field with supervisory positions and other mechanisms to advance, so that they can increase their capacity to serve and increase their wages. I will provide two years of community college or other high-quality training program without debt and will invest \$50 billion to create and support partnerships between high schools, community colleges, employers, unions, and other workers to identify in-demand knowledge and skills in a community, like direct care, to develop or modernize training programs. And I will partner directly with the health care workforce to accelerate the testing and deployment of innovative solutions, including new models of upskilling, which improve quality of care and increase wages for low-wage health care workers. Finally, a Biden administration will focus on efforts to recruit and retain more Americans to join the direct care worker sector. I can't imagine where I would be without the care workers who supported my family.

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3. The community of Iowa's direct care workers should caucus for me because I am the only candidate in this race who can – on day one – bring our country back together and unite us all after the damage that has been inflicted upon us by Donald Trump and his administration. I believe we are in a battle for the soul of this nation. The American creed of decency, honor, integrity and kindness towards our neighbors has been lost. We have to earn and defend our democracy. We have to choose hope over fear and truth over lies. We have to reset our democracy, repair our relations with our allies and lead the world by the power of our example, rather than the example of our power. Health care is personal to me. Weeks before I was sworn in to the United States Senate, I got a phone call saying my wife and daughter had just been killed in a tractor trailer accident. My two boys were hospitalized for a long time. And, when my mother's health was fading in her 90s and when my son Beau was battling cancer – my family had the support and compassion from amazing care professionals. Their kindness is something I will forever be grateful for, and will never forget. I mean this sincerely, using an expression of my moms, "you all do God's work." And, for those of you who worry about making sure your family gets the care they deserve, I make you a commitment. I will protect your right to health care as if you were my own family. I don't know how I would have reacted if in Beau's last months, the insurance company came along and said we cannot cover you anymore. I know that no one in this country should have to lay in bed at night staring at the ceiling wondering, "what will I do if she gets breast cancer?" or "if he has a heart attack?" "Will I go bankrupt?" I know there is no peace of mind if you cannot afford to care for a sick child or a family member because of a pre-existing condition, because you've reached a point where your health insurer says "no more," or because you have to make a decision between putting food on the table and going to the doctor or providing the family with the care they need. I believe that every American has a right to the peace of mind that comes with knowing they have access to affordable, quality health care. The next president faces a monumental task — get our country back on track after four years of failed, disastrous leadership from Donald Trump. More than any other candidate in this race, I have the on-the-job experience, the trusted relationships with our allies around the world, and the progressive record of legislative and White House accomplishment needed to move our country forward and restore our standing in the world. As president, I'll work every day for you and your family. I hope you'll do me the honor of caucusing for me in Iowa on February 3, 2020.

Mayor Pete Buttigieg (Democrat)

1. I will deliver a \$15 minimum wage by 2025, which will benefit over 30 million workers. By raising the federal minimum wage to \$15, we can start taking steps to ensure that our economy works for all workers. We also need to index the federal minimum wage to median wage growth, so that moving forward both, workers and employers know with certainty what it will be in the years to come, without repeatedly having to go back to Congress. I will leverage the federal government as the primary financier of long-term care to set a wage floor for workers providing services under Medicaid contracts. I will also enforce wage and hour protections for home care workers. Home care workers only recently became protected under the Federal Labor Standards Act in 2013, when the Department of Labor issued the Home Care Final Rule. The exclusion of this workforce, which is largely female and majority people of color, is inseparable from the history of caregiving being "female" and considered "domestic" in nature. My Department of Labor will ensure that all rules and policies that protect domestic workers are fairly enforced.
2. To ensure we have enough qualified workers to meet the care needs of our aging population, we must invest in workforce growth, stabilization, and training. Doing so will improve work environment and pay for direct care workers, reduce the burden on unpaid family caregivers, improve care outcomes for seniors and persons with disabilities, and provide an economic boost to low-income communities in rural and urban areas alike. To grow the direct care workforce, beyond increasing the minimum wage to \$15/hour, I will expand funding for competency-based Long-Term Care Registered Apprenticeships programs; provide federal grants for states to create online



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matching service registries and online job boards that match consumers to caregivers based on location, availability, skills, and preferences; and create a national program to remove barriers to consumer directed service models, which expand the labor pool by encouraging consumers to recruit from their own network for friends, family, and community members. To continue to raise standards, I will also create a National Direct Care Workforce Standards Board composed of direct care workers and their representatives, providers, and consumers and consumer advocacy groups, to advise the Department of Labor and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on direct care workforce issues, including rate setting recommendations, compensation and benefits, training and credentialing, recruitment, and turnover. As President, I will ensure that these workers, such as direct care workers and domestic workers, who have been excluded by labor and employment law, are protected by it. I will also push for strong and expanded overtime protections, paid family leave for all workers, and paid sick leave protections that do not leave out independent contractors or workers at small businesses. I will also immediately reverse the 2019 CMS Medicaid Reassignment Rule, which threatens the viability of home care unions by making it much more difficult to collect union dues. Unions representing home care workers are on the vanguard of improving job quality, quality of care, and training standards.

3. I have seen firsthand the difference that caregivers can make in the lives of those who require long-term care, including my own family members. I am deeply committed to supporting direct care workers. In addition to improving the quality of direct care jobs and increasing the size of the workforce, I will also invest in training and workforce development. I understand that direct care work is physically and mentally demanding. It requires emotional sensitivity and specialized skills. Caregivers have to be able to communicate effectively, observe and assess situations, problem solve, and provide comfort and emotional support to people who may otherwise be isolated.

If we are to care adequately for the aging population – 8 out of 10 of whom have at least one chronic care condition, and nearly half of whom have at least two – and persons with disabilities, we must provide appropriate training to our direct care workforce. Training reduces turnover, improves job satisfaction, and creates stronger bonds between caregivers in the workforce. For those receiving care, training the direct care workforce improves quality of care and strengthens health outcomes, and reductions in hospitalization and emergency room visits lower costs for all of us. My plan to invest in training and workforce development for direct care workers includes establishing national training standards, dedicating federal funds to provide paid training for all direct care roles (including pre-service training and continuing education), and piloting Advanced Direct Care Worker training programs. I am focused not only on expanding the rights of all workers, including direct care workers, as outlined in my A New Rising Tide plan, but also on ensuring that employers who break the law are actually punished. Too often, employers feel empowered to exploit workers and flout rules and regulations because they know they'll never be held accountable. That's why my plan doesn't just expand labor and employment protections to workers who have not had those protections before; it beefs up enforcement funding and increases the penalties for employers who break the law. It is not enough just to declare that workers have rights. We have to fight for them and ensure that they get what they deserve.

Former Representative John Delaney (Democrat)

1. My universal health care plan, BetterCare, will offer higher reimbursement rates than the current Medicaid payments for Home and Community-Based Services. This increased funding will support higher wages and better training for direct care workers, which will reduce turnover and lead to a higher standard of care.
2. Our health care system needs to provide for seniors and people with disabilities who prefer to receive care at home, and we can't do that without supporting direct care



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workers. A larger, better paid, and better trained workforce of direct care workers will be able to cope with the increasing demand for home health services that will come as our population ages.

3. As a former entrepreneur and a former Member of Congress, I am the only candidate in the race who has real, practical experience in the health care industry and with health care as a matter of public policy. I am committed to fixing the problems in our current system, and I have real plans to address runaway health care costs and achieve universal coverage in a way that improves the quality of care and does not put hospitals and other providers, particularly those in rural areas, at risk of closure.

Senator Amy Klobuchar (Democrat)

1. I believe it is time for us to have a minimum wage that reflects our values. I am a strong supporter of raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 and committed to expanding benefits and increasing wages for our direct care workers, whose pay should be consistent with their extraordinary service.
2. I believe we must invest in and address shortages in our long-term care workforce. I am committed to increasing wages, expanding benefits, improving job conditions and promoting other recruitment and retention policies, especially in rural communities facing workforce challenges. I will support training for long-term care workers and new loan forgiveness programs for in-demand occupations that includes our long-term care workers. When it comes to ensuring all people should have a fair shot in today's economy, I will also invest in quality child care, overhaul our country's housing policy, provide paid family leave, reduce the costs of health care and prescription drugs, help Americans save for retirement, and stand up for the right to organize and collectively bargain.
3. I have seen firsthand the extraordinary service of our direct care workers. My dad is 91 and is in assisted living in the memory care unit. It is thanks to the terrific direct care workers that he is receiving the support he needs. I believe we need to show our direct care workers the same extraordinary dedication and commitment that they show in their work every day serving our seniors and people living with disabilities. That's why I have released a bold plan to support our seniors and maintain a world class direct care workforce by investing in our workers and helping offset the costs of care. As President, I will stand up for our nation's direct care workers and those who rely on them. Read Senator Klobuchar's seniors plan here: <https://medium.com/@AmyforAmerica/senator-klobuchars-plan-for-seniors-efce83143761>



Senator Bernie Sanders (Democrat)

1. I believe we have a moral obligation to ensure those who dedicate their careers to caring for others deserve to have their wages substantially raised and ensure they are guaranteed workplace protections. I have spent my entire career fighting for workers' rights. I understand the importance of paying workers the wages they deserve. Direct care workers deserve to live in dignity and security, and must be paid a living wage. That is why, when I am President, we will enact a Domestic Workers Bill of Rights to ensure our care workers are afforded a living wage and a safe working environment. Under a Sanders Administration, we will pass inclusive labor protection laws for domestic workers, who have historically been intentionally excluded to allow the exploitation of disproportionately minority and immigrant workers. This means providing domestic workers with strong protections for collective bargaining, workers' rights, workplace



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safety, and fair scheduling, regardless of immigration status, and that they have the information and tools they need to act on these rights and protections. When we are in the White House, we will also guarantee free direct care training programs through public colleges, trade schools, and apprenticeship programs to help train the workforce we need. And we will we guarantee direct care workers high-quality health care under Medicare for All. And when I am in the White House, we will provide both our direct care workers guaranteed vacation leave, sick leave, and family and medical leave. I will create a sectoral collective bargaining system with wage boards to set minimum standards across industries, including for direct care workers. When I am president, I will work with the trade union movement to establish a sectoral collective bargaining system that will work to set wages, benefits and hours across entire industries, not just employer-by-employer. In addition, under this plan all cities, counties, and other local jurisdictions will have the freedom to go beyond our national standards and establish their own minimum wage laws and guarantee other minimum standards for workers. We will create an economy and a government that works for direct care workers.

2. In order to guarantee home and community based services and supports as a right to all, we need to ensure direct care work is good-paying work with strong workplace protections. We need 7.8 million home health and personal care aides by 2026 to meet our nation's needs. This national problem deserves a national response. In order to meet the growing demand, we will enact a domestic workers bill of rights to ensure our care workers are afforded a living wage and a safe working environment. When we are in the White House, we will pass inclusive labor protection laws for domestic workers, who have historically been intentionally excluded to allow the exploitation of disproportionately minority and immigrant workers. This means providing direct care workers with strong protections for collective bargaining, workers' rights, workplace safety, and fair scheduling, regardless of immigration status, and that they have the information and tools they need to act on these rights and protections. We will guarantee free direct care training programs through public colleges, trade schools, and apprenticeship programs to help train the workforce we need. Direct care workers, who are overwhelmingly women – in particular, women of color and immigrants, too often do not receive health insurance through their employment. We will guarantee them high-quality health care under my Medicare-for-All, single payer health insurance system. And we will provide both our direct care workers guaranteed vacation leave, sick leave, and family and medical leave.
3. I believe that as a nation, we have a responsibility to ensure that all Americans have the support and services they need to survive and thrive and that the people who provide those supports and services and well-paid for the care they provide. As president, I will ensure direct care workers are guaranteed a living wage, bargaining rights, and health care. Having well-paid, well-trained, and well-rested direct care workers is a cornerstone of any just, humane health care system. Under a Sanders Administration, together we will pass Medicare for All and a Domestic Bill of Rights so that direct care workers and those who rely on them can live with dignity and security. Currently, over 700,000 Americans are forced to wait for Medicaid home and community-based services, while many others are not even able to get on the waiting list due to draconian asset and income restrictions. Under Medicare for All, health care will be guaranteed as a right, including fully covering home and community based services and supports for seniors and people with disabilities. The program will also provide transportation to and from health services for those who need it. At the present time, Medicare does not cover the long-term care that seniors and people with disabilities need. Bernie believes that no family should be forced to sell their belongings, spend their entire life savings, or live in poverty in order to get the help they need to remain healthy and at home. Nor should seniors and people with disabilities be forced to spend years on waiting lists to access home and community-based services, forcing them to choose between going without needed care or being forced into an institutionalized setting against their will. Under Medicare for All, if people with disabilities and seniors want to remain at home and receive the supports and services to do so, they will have that choice. These services will be available when people need them, without waitlists, asset and income restrictions, and other barriers

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Senator Elizabeth Warren (Democrat)



1. I will partner with Congress, use bold executive action, and leverage the federal procurement process to pursue the most progressive and comprehensive agenda for workers since the New Deal. That starts with fighting to pass the Raise the Wage Act, which increases the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour for all workers, including tipped workers, direct care workers, and workers with disabilities, and indexes the minimum wage to median wage growth. I will also work with home care workers and their advocates to ensure equal treatment for them under our labor laws. That includes guaranteeing that all home care workers can join a union or other worker organization, creating training and certificate programs to address safety, and enforcing adequate federal nursing home staff minimum requirements. And my administration will reverse a cynical Trump-era rule that prevents home care workers that work with Medicaid beneficiaries from using paycheck deductions for health insurance contributions and union dues. Twenty-eight states – including Iowa – currently have “right to work” laws, which prohibit unions and employers from agreeing that any employee who benefits from a union contract should have to pay dues to support the union. These state laws deprive union treasuries of funds needed to represent workers, bargain contracts, and organize new workers, and are associated with significantly lower wages for workers. I’ve led the fight to repeal the federal law that permits states to pass these anti-worker laws, and enacting that change will be a top priority of mine as president. I will also fight to enact the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act to ensure that public employees can organize and bargain collectively in every state, including Iowa.
2. Direct care workers provide essential support to seniors and people with disabilities to help them lead meaningful, productive, and independent lives. But direct care workers are leaving the field due to short staffing, low wages, poor benefits, and a lack of educational opportunities. Medicare for All will ensure comprehensive health care coverage for all Americans, including for long-term services and supports, allowing more people to benefit from these programs. My plan to empower American workers also commits to securing equal treatment for home health care workers under our labor laws. I will make sure we expand our health care workforce by investing more resources in building the pipeline of health professionals in rural areas. That means dramatically scaling up apprenticeship programs to support partnerships between unions, high schools, community colleges, and a wide array of health care professionals – including direct care workers – to build a health care workforce that is rooted in the community. And my plan to cancel student loans for 42 million Americans and make two-year and four-year public college and technical school free will help direct care workers access the educational opportunities they need.
3. This campaign isn’t about me--it’s about identifying what’s broken, letting the American people know we have serious plans to fix it, and then building a grassroots movement to win in 2020 and make the change that’s needed come January 2021. Movements have changed the course of American history -- and it’s going to take a grassroots movement to change it again. But I can’t make change on my own. We will work together to make it clear that government is working for a thinner and thinner slice at the top and we need big, structural change to make it work for everyone else. We will stand up for what’s right and lay out our plans to fix what’s broken. We will talk to every American and get them to the polls. And I can’t imagine getting the job done without you.

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