

Boston DSA Candidate Questionnaire 2020

Candidates for both state and federal office during the 2020 election cycle may seek the endorsement of Boston DSA by completing this questionnaire. Completion is necessary but not sufficient condition for endorsement. Final decisions on endorsement will be made by the membership of Boston DSA as a whole.

All candidates will receive notification of our review of your questionnaire and we will be accepting questionnaires on a rolling basis.

Unless otherwise specified, responses to these questions will be publicly posted. Please answer the questions to the best of your ability, and if you have any questions contact electoral@bostondsa.org.

Word document will be made available upon request.

Translations and accommodations will be made available upon request.

Section 1. Candidate Information

What is your name? (and how is it pronounced)

Ihssane Leckey (eh-san)

What is your personal story? Why are you seeking this office?

When I arrived in the United States, 15 years ago, as a young woman from Morocco, I had already experienced many of the struggles people face when a nation lacks economic equity and social justice:

My uncle was persecuted and tortured by a government that didn't want him to speak up. My father was a teacher who died in his 50s because he had to sacrifice paying for his own medications to care for our family. My brother struggled with homelessness because of his mental illness. I survived sexual and domestic violence, had to choose an underground abortion, and knew the price of not staying silent.

But I persevered, worked hard and dreamt of a better life.

I am running for Congress as a progressive Democrat in Massachusetts' 4th Congressional District — a working class district whose struggles are the same struggles I've faced — and overcome.

When I first came to the United States I worked long hours, for little pay, and with no healthcare coverage, as a service industry and childcare worker. My husband and I lived in places unfit for human habitation — which we still struggled to afford.

I was determined, however, to attend college and I took out student loans to make my dreams a reality.

By the time the 2008 financial crisis was winding down, I was working as a Federal Reserve special examiner, and became committed to justice for all.

My job was to push back against the largest banks to keep our economy safe. I witnessed corrupt and complacent politicians unwilling to hold these banks accountable, jeopardizing our homes, jobs, and communities.

In Congress, I will fight for the working class, and do everything in my power to ensure a Green New Deal, Medicare For All, to protect women's rights, and provide universal free education.

My unique experience as a regulator will be instrumental in leading direct oversight over bailout funds to corporations and banks during the Covid 19 pandemic. As a Representative of District 4, I would make sure that workers' needs and rights are not overshadowed by those of big businesses.

I am running for office now because I believe that real change is possible and necessary. My campaign will raise the voices and needs of our communities — especially those of underserved and working class residents, from Fall River to Brookline — in the halls of Congress.

I will work with a sense of urgency to build a society where one job guarantees a living wage, and where clean water and food, housing, healthcare, and quality education are rights for all of us, not just those who can afford them.

What movements are you connected to in your community, and what is your level of involvement with them?

I am personally a member of the Boston DSA and the Metrowest DSA. I've been organizing with local chapters of Sunrise, 350, and other environmental groups - I hosted phone banks to push Congressman Joe Kennedy to publicly support the Green New Deal. I've signed No Fossil Fuel pledges, and will continue to work with groups to host (virtual) town halls about the Green New Deal in the district during the campaign.

I also organized phone banks with National Nurses United, Healthcare Now, and constituents to push Congressman Kennedy to sign on to the national bill. Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, we were planning on helping grow our movement by working with local groups to host community conversations on healthcare, education, housing, environmental, and income justice. We have been hosting FB Live conversations on these issues with national and local guests since the outbreak.

How do you differ from your opponents in this race? (if any)

I believe we need more people in policy-making positions who have suffered directly from unjust policies, and who have a sense of urgency about improving the quality of life for all people. I believe my experience as an immigrant, a young mother, as someone who has struggled to pay bills and faced housing discrimination, and as a Wall Street regulator who has experience holding big banks accountable gives me unique insight into how to make our political and economic system work for all of us. I believe my expert knowledge on financial regulation and vision for economic justice will be a unique asset in Congress.

When Donald Trump was elected, like millions of Americans, I was appalled by his Muslim Ban, corruption, attacks on women, and abuse of immigrants and refugees. I also saw how the Trump administration was undermining the work of the Federal Reserve to again give big banks an opportunity to gamble with our economy and pensions. So, I started organizing full-time for a Green New Deal, single-payer Medicare for All, a green homes guarantee, reproductive justice, universal childcare, and free education. As an organizer, I learned quickly that too many of our members of Congress lack a sense of urgency to push for meaningful change, so I decided to challenge my Congressman, not wait for an open seat.

Any additional information about you we should know?

Campaign Information

What is your website?

<http://ihssane.org/> .

What office are you seeking?

U.S. Representative for Massachusetts's 4th Congressional District

Describe the district you're running to represent.

In many ways, Massachusetts 4th Congressional District represents our fragmented society. The northern part of the district, including several Boston suburbs, contain some of the richest parts of the Commonwealth while the southern part of the district, comprised of deindustrialized cities like Fall River, contains some of the poorest parts of the Commonwealth. Part of the mission of my campaign is to tackle inequality and create a just society for all, and for that reason I am running a campaign to lift up the economically disenfranchised and marginalized people in my district and bring them back into the political process. For too long, the people in the southern part of my district have been ignored by their representatives; as a candidate I have made it my priority to seek out and center my neighbors that have been denied a voice in the past. We are organizing to build solidarity across, racial, ethnic, denominational, and class lines to build a people-powered campaign and movement that will deliver equitably for all of our people.

What is the best method to contact you? (will not be made public)

[answered and redacted]

Who is your campaign manager, and how can we reach them? (will not be made public)

[answered and redacted]

What is your fundraising goal? (will not be made public)

[answered and redacted]

What groups will you refuse money from? (e.g., developers, police unions, health care lobbyists & executives, fossil fuel executives & lobbyists...)

I will not accept money, either during my campaign or in office, from any corporate PACs, fossil fuel executives/lobbyists, or healthcare and pharmaceutical industry executives/lobbyists.

What is your win number? (will not be made public)

[answered and redacted]

How many doors will you knock? (will not be made public)

[answered and redacted]

What efforts are you making to include the voices of marginalized communities in your campaign?

As an organizer myself, it is particularly important to me to include people doing the work in their communities in our campaign, and I plan to continue to hold community and round table events where we prioritize front line communities. With 34 cities and towns in the district, it is essential that I have relationships with people who truly understand the needs in their communities, and can bring those constituent concerns to guide legislation.

Any additional information about your campaign setup we should know?

Relationship with DSA

Are you a socialist?

[candidate left this question unanswered]

Are you a member of DSA?

Yes

Are you running as a Democratic Socialist? (even if using the Democratic party's ballot line)?

[candidate left this question unanswered]

Are you willing to share your campaign data (including VAN/CRM) with DSA?

Yes

If elected, will you agree to accountability meetings with DSA? Will you be a voice for our movement in your office?

Yes

Anything else we should know about how you plan to interact with DSA during and after the campaign?

To the first question, I am a Democratic Socialist I am willing to run as a Democratic Socialist, even if using the Democratic Party's ballot line As a DSA member running as a democratic socialist, I intend to use my office to organize voters, organizations, and progressive voices across Massachusetts and the country. I will continue to have a close working relationship with DSA chapters across my district and state and will work in Congress to amplify the voices and priorities of our movement.

General Questions

Do you support:

Bernie Sanders for president? Have you publicly endorsed?

Yes

The human right to free abortion on demand?

Yes

The abolishment of private prisons, ending cash bail, and ending the prison-industrial complex?

Yes

The demilitarization of the police?

Yes

The nationalization and public ownership of utilities including energy?

Yes

Housing for all, and ending homelessness?

Yes

The ending of the Israeli oppression of the Palestinian people, including

supporting the BDS (Boycott Divestment Sanctions) movement?

Yes

The welfare of sex workers, including but not limited to full decriminalization?

Yes

The elimination of Pay-as-you-go legislation?

Yes

If necessary, please elaborate on any of your answers above. Also, is there any additional information you would like to share?

In my race, I was the only candidate to endorse Senator Sanders, and endorsed him in advance of Super Tuesday. I support the ending of Israeli oppression of the Palestinian people, including supporting the BDS (Boycott Divestment Sanctions) movement, but do not support sanctions.

US Congress Questions

If running for a state office, you may skip this section.

Will you be a co-sponsor of Bernie Sanders' Medicare for All bill (S.1129) and the

nationalization of healthcare?

Yes

Will you be a co-sponsor of Ilhan Omar's Housing For All bill (H.5244), including national rent control and guaranteeing a right to housing?

Yes

Will you be a co-sponsor of Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez's Green New Deal bill (H.Res.109), and the banning of new fossil fuel infrastructure?

Yes

Do you support the abolishment of ICE and the Department of Homeland Security?

Yes

Will you be a co-sponsor of Ayanna Pressley's The People's Justice Guarantee (H.702)?

Yes

Will you vote against increases to the defense budget?

Yes

Do you support a pathway to full citizenship for all undocumented immigrants living in the United States?

Yes

Do you support the full withdrawal of US military personnel from Iraq and Afghanistan?

Yes

Do you support the ending of arm sales to Saudi Arabia?

Yes

Will you be an advocate for the full denuclearization of the US military?

Yes

What are your thoughts on the commission to study and develop reparation proposals for African-Americans (HR.40) and would you be a co-sponsor?

Fully and equitably reckoning with the legacy of slavery remains the great unfinished work of our nation and a moral imperative. If we as a nation want to be serious about addressing systemic racism, the economic disenfranchisement of African Americans, racial health disparities, and a broken and racist criminal legal system, reparations must be on the table. I would be proud to cosponsor H.R. 40 to create a commission to study and develop a major proposal for providing reparations to the descendants of slaves.

The Bush, Obama, and Trump administrations have all conducted war crimes ranging from drone strikes on US civilians to the use of depleted uranium. How would you hold past administrations accountable and what policies would you advocate to stop such atrocities?

The United States is not above or exempted from international law, and for far too long administrations of both parties have operated extralegally overseas with impunity. The result has been an illegal unilateral invasion of Iraq, a horrific drone campaign waged by the United States in dozens of nations across the globe, disastrous regime change policies in Libya and Honduras, and thousands of civilian deaths. As Congresswoman, I will first lead the effort to reassert Congress's authority over the power to make war to stop the reckless international action of the executive branch. In this capacity, I will build support in the House to repeal the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) that has been used as a blank check for endless American intervention in the Middle East. I will also champion efforts to assert the War Powers Act, such as the effort spearheaded recently by Sen. Sanders, to end American involvement in the Saudi-led War in Yemen, the international American drone campaign, and our continued occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan.

I will also introduce legislation to establish a 9/11-style, independent commission to study war crimes and violations of international law committed by past administrations and make recommendations for legal action and additional legislative action to hold those responsible accountable. I will also support legislation requiring the United States to become a signatory of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

What should the United States immigration policy be?

The United States current immigration system is broken, dysfunctional, racist and cruel. I am running for Congress to change this system and pass humane, equitable, and compassionate immigration policies that end the dehumanization of immigrants in our country. I believe that the United States should decriminalize border crossings and reform our immigration courts to eliminate the backlog of asylum cases and end the abhorrent practice of family separation and immigrant detention at the border and across the country, including the administration's Remain in Mexico program. In addition, Congress should pass a permanent pathway to citizenship for all undocumented immigrants as well as automatic naturalization for legal permanent residents of the United States.

I also believe that the United States must reaffirm our commitment to the resettlement of refugees, including people displaced by the impacts of climate change, by undoing the Trump era cuts to refugee resettlement and by substantially increasing the resettlement cap above the Obama era

levels. I will also advocate for the elimination of the national quota system that unfairly penalizes prospective immigrants from countries like China and India to prioritize family reunification. And finally, we must fundamentally transform our racist and brutal immigration enforcement policies. In Congress I will fight to abolish the redundant and wasteful Department of Homeland Security, ICE and CBP.

If necessary, please elaborate on any of your answers above. Also, is there any additional information you would like to share?

An extensive list of my policy positions and additional information on my platform can be found on my website, ihssane.org, under the issues tab.

Final Thoughts

Is there anything else we should know about you or your campaign?

For too long, the working class in my district have been underrepresented. Their voices have been sold to the same big banks I regulated. They have been forced into debt to benefit the super rich, then were left to face bankruptcy, and lose lives. For the first time in generations, they have a shot at electing someone who understands their hurt and pain, who has lived it, and who has been fighting for them relentlessly. The working class in my district are immigrants, refugees, frontline workers, single moms, people of color, low income families, builders, nurses, caretakers and more, who have been denied economic opportunity and prosperity. The water they drink and the air they breath make them sick, yet the richest few in the district get to decide who will be next in line to benefit the pharma and fossil fuel industries, and serve the stock market and the shareholders. The working class of my district need a seat at the table and a voice that speaks for them and delivers, not just another politician to use them as a prop. They need our movement to help make a life with dignity a reality for all.

What else should we have asked you in this questionnaire?

One of the major focuses of my adult life and my campaign has been reducing the outrageous level

of income and wealth inequality in the United States. As a member of Congress, I will champion numerous policies aimed at reducing economic inequality including: instituting a truly progressive tax code under which corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share passing Medicare for All raising the minimum wage to at least \$15/hour, and tying it to cost of living enacting national rent control democratizing our economy by expanding collective bargaining rights, making it easier for workers to unionize, and encouraging the development of worker owned co-ops creating a universal, free, high-quality childcare system, universal pre-K, free school meals, and a child allowance for families

Any other feedback you would like to leave about this questionnaire?

Thank you for the opportunity to apply for the Boston DSA endorsement. My campaign does not take a dime from corporate PACs or lobbyists. We are proud to be people-powered.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire!