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To Be the Party of the Working Class, We Need More Working Class Leaders in Congress

Justice Democrats launches 5th cycle of candidate recruitment in open seats and blue districts

After the 119th Congress was sworn in earlier this month and the country awaits the second presidential inauguration of Donald Trump, [Justice Democrats](#) officially launched its candidate recruitment efforts in all 50 states, seeking nominations of everyday, working class people to run for Congress after a cycle of unprecedented spending from the billionaire class and right-wing Super PACs in democratic primaries. The leading progressive electoral organization that helped recruit and elect members of the Squad to Congress, will recruit the next generation of primary challengers in Democratic primaries in open seats and blue districts against Democratic incumbents who are out-of-touch with their constituents.

The launch and the need to usher in a new working class-led era in the Democratic Party was detailed by Executive Director Alexandra Rojas and Communications Director Usamah Andrabi in a new op-ed in TK this morning.

“To be the party of the working class, we need more working class leaders in power,” **said Alexandra Rojas, Executive Director of Justice Democrats.** “Leaders like the elected Justice Democrats in Congress have shown us another way of doing politics is possible and represent the promise of uniting our fractured nation into a multiracial democracy where everyone thrives and no one is left behind.

“It’s time to end the era of career politicians and the corrupt campaign finance laws that keep them in power. Our mission is clear: we must usher in a new generation in the Democratic Party, led for and by the working class, to take on billionaires and corporate power. The Democratic Party can only win back working class voters with real, working class leaders and Justice Democrats is proud to continue to recruit them to run for Congress.”

Last cycle had more billionaire money than ever before – [just 150 billionaire families spent nearly \\$2 billion to get their preferred candidates elected and win a Republican trifecta in the federal government.](#) AIPAC, Wall Street-backed Crypto, and their billionaire donors banded together to spend nearly half a billion dollars in our elections—[over \\$30 million in just two House primaries](#) to defeat two of the most working class members of Congress, former nurse Cori Bush and former middle school principal Jamaal Bowman. As a result, the 119th Congress is one of the oldest and least working class Congresses ever. The average age of a House member this Congress is over 57, nearly one in three are 65 and over (including Jamaal Bowman’s replacement), while only one in six people in the United States are 65 or older. In fact, House

members are twice as likely to be over 70 than they are to have student loan debt—while a quarter of all US adults under 40 have student loan debt. Last Congress ended with fewer than 2% of members of Congress coming from working class backgrounds, this Congress will be even smaller.

Unfortunately, Democratic leadership and a majority of Democratic members in Congress refuse to take the moment of self-reflection November's election results demands. In a presidential election that served as a clear referendum on the status quo with [voters who make less than \\$100,000 and no college degree](#) increasingly leaving the Party – it signalled that neither party in America was willing to stand up to big business or billionaires.

Until Party leadership leads the way to take big money out of politics, ends the billionaire influence over our elections and policies, and puts the needs of working class people back at the center of its agenda, voters will see its populist platitudes as lip service. Justice Democrats will continue to lead the charge to show that with working class voices in Congress, we can fight for universal healthcare, create millions of union jobs, end taxpayer funding for endless wars and genocide abroad, and lower costs for everyday people nationwide.

Justice Democrats started in 2017 under the first Trump administration and have become the leading progressive electoral organization recruiting working-class candidates to Congress. Over the last four cycles, they recruited and helped elect members of the Squad including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Jamal Bowman, Cori Bush, and Summer Lee. In the organization's first cycle, they received over 12,000 nominations from across the country and since forming have been a part of successfully unseating five 15+ year incumbents (collectively they served 108 years in office).

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