



## **2022 Candidate Questionnaire**

### **U.S. House of Representatives**

Candidate Name: Junaid Ahmed

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Office for which you are running: U.S. House of Representatives - Illinois' 8th Congressional District

Date of Election: 6/28/2022

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Progressive Democrats of America (PDA) was founded in 2004 to transform the Democratic Party and our country. We seek to build a party and government controlled by citizens, not corporate elites—with policies that serve the broad public interest, not just private interests. As a grassroots PAC, PDA operates inside the Democratic Party, and outside in movements for peace and justice.

## **The Congressional Progressive Caucus**

**Do you pledge, if elected to this office, to immediately join the Congressional Progressive Caucus?**

**Yes**

No

Comment? (50 word limit)

I ideologically align with the goals of the CPC and will immediately join the caucus to build the coalition power we need in Congress to pass bold legislation.

## **Lobbyist**

**Do you pledge, if elected to this office, to NOT become a paid lobbyist for at least 5 years after you leave Congress?**

**Yes**

No

Comment? (50 word limit)

The revolving door in Washington is undemocratic and only allows corporations and special interests to continue to leverage their influence in our government. I pledge to not become a paid lobbyist after leaving Congress.

## **PDA Issues**

PDA focuses on fundamental issues of concern to voters. The questions are grouped, but all issues are equally important. Your answers to the questions below will be used to help determine whether to endorse you in the race for this office.

## **Notice to Candidate**

**The questions below refer to legislation introduced by bill number in the 116<sup>th</sup> and 117<sup>th</sup> Congress. Unless noted, bill numbers refer to the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress. By checking YES as your answer, you pledge that, if elected, you will immediately co-sponsor the reintroduced version of these bills in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress.**

## **Healthcare**

***Millions of Americans have no reliable access to healthcare and millions more have inadequate or overly expensive coverage. Despite spending twice as much as other developed nations on healthcare, our system performs poorly. Private U.S. insurance gatekeepers soak up one-third of expenditures. Pharmaceutical interests overcharge Americans by avoiding price competition.***

**H.R.1976** Medicare for All Act of 2021  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Pramila Jayapal

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

Healthcare is a human right, not a privilege. I will immediately co-sponsor Medicare for All once in Congress and will work with the entire CPC and aligned organizations to build the political and people power needed to pass it.

**H.R.2234** EACH Act of 2021 (To ensure affordable abortion coverage and care for every person)  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Barbara Lee

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

Yes, abortion — along with all other reproductive healthcare services — is healthcare and healthcare is a human right. I will immediately cosponsor this bill and be a vocal advocate against any attempts to restrict access to abortions.

**H.R.2071** Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2021  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Peter Welch

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

**H.R.804** FAMILY Act  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Rosa DeLauro

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

## War and Peace/Foreign Policy

***Terrorism should be treated as a crime, not as a pretext for war and global military expansion. Nuclear weapons are too dangerous to serve the strategic interests of any country and must be abolished. Initiatives to promote peace, disarmament, and the rule of international law will allow the U.S. military budget to return to the 1998 peacetime level. We must bring our troops home to their families and redirect wasteful military spending to reinvest in America.***

**H.R.1111** Department of Peacebuilding Act of 2021  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Barbara Lee

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

Yes, I support this bill and any other bill that establishes peace as our number one focus, not war and destruction.

**H.R.256** Repeal of the Authorization for Use of Military Force

**Sponsor:** Rep. Barbara Lee

**Status:** Passed the House on June 17, 2021, with a vote of 268-1651; awaiting action in the Senate. Do you support this legislation?

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

Yes, the broad powers given to the president after 9/11 has allowed endless wars and destruction to continue without the appropriate oversight of Congress.

**H.R.669** Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act of 2021

**Sponsor:** Rep. Ted Lieu

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

Yes, Congressional oversight of any acts of war are extremely important to prevent any rash, uncalculated decisions that cause death.

**H.R.2590** Defending the Human Rights of Palestinian Children and Families Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act

**Sponsor:** Rep. Betty McCollum

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

US taxpayer funds shouldn't be used by the Israeli government to imprison and torture Palestinian children, steal and destroy Palestinian homes and property, or further annex and steal Palestinian land.

**H.Res.496** Affirming that all Americans have the right to participate in boycotts in pursuit of civil and human rights at home and abroad, as protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution (116<sup>th</sup> Congress)

**Sponsor:** Rep. Ilhan Omar, Rep. Rashida Tlaib, Rep. John Lewis (dec.)

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

Everyone in our country has the right to exercise all of their freedoms, including boycotts in pursuit of civil and human rights at home and abroad.

## The Defense Spending Reduction Caucus

**Do you pledge, if elected to this office, to join the Defense Spending Reduction Caucus, launched by Reps. Mark Pocan and Barbara Lee last year?**

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)



## Climate Emergency/The Environment

***Environmental degradation and global warming/climate change threaten human civilization, constituting a climate emergency. Science conclusively demonstrates that global warming results from human activity. Greed and corporate power dominate U.S. policy, imposing a nearsighted focus on short-term profits instead of serving the welfare of future generations of Americans.***

**H.Res.332** Recognizing the Duty of the Federal Government to Create a Green New Deal  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

The Green New Deal recognizes the urgency and scale of the crisis we're in, and centers good-paying union jobs to invest in America's workforce. I will gladly cosponsor this bill.

**H.R.794** Climate Emergency Act of 2021  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Earl Blumenauer

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

**H.R.2184** End Oil and Gas Tax Subsidies Act of 2021  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Earl Blumenauer

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

**H.R.2242** End Polluter Welfare Act of 2021  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Ilhan Omar

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

Giving handouts to the corporations polluting our planet is an unthinkable act. I fully support this bill and any effort to close loopholes and handouts to fossil fuel companies.

**H.R.1845** American High-Speed Rail Act  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Seth Moulton

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

Yes, but only if the high-speed rail production is done in line with the environmental standards of a Green New Deal and jobs created from this bill are good-paying union jobs.

## Election Integrity

***Big-money domination threatens our election system. Incumbents are unfairly insulated by district gerrymandering. Voters face political and racial obstacles to voting and getting their votes counted. Digital voting systems and internet voting are vulnerable to error and manipulation and defy verification. Only an auditable paper ballot can protect our right to vote.***

**H.R.2301** Automatic Voter Registration Act  
**Sponsor:** Rep. David Cicilline

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

I support any piece of legislation, including this AVR bill, that eliminates barriers for people to exercise their fundamental right to vote.

**H.R.1** For the People Act (passed House 116<sup>th</sup> Congress and 117<sup>th</sup> Congress)  
**Sponsor:** Rep. John Sarbanes  
**Status:** Passed the House on 3/3/2021 with a vote of 220-210. Failed to reach cloture in the Senate. Do you support this legislation?

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

**H.R.4** John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act (116<sup>th</sup> Congress)  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Terri Sewell  
**Status:** Passed the House 228-187 on 12/09/2019. It has not yet been re-introduced in the 117<sup>th</sup> House, as Sewell is holding off on re-introduction in order to compile evidence about the on-going wave of Voting Rights violations occurring in many states. Do you support this legislation?

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

## Economic and Social Justice

***The enormous wealth disparity between the top 1 percent and the rest of America is an unsustainable economic and social injustice. PDA supports an economic recovery that employs all those willing and able, that houses all those needing shelter, and that imposes the cost based on the ability to pay.***

**H.R.603** Raise the Wage Act of 2021  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

I support all aspects of this bill, including raising the subminimum wages for tipped workers and disabled workers. Everyone deserves a living wage so they can thrive, not just survive.

**H.R.1808** Assault Weapons Ban of 2021  
**Sponsor:** Rep. David Cicilline

**Yes**

No                      Comment? (50 word limit)

**H.R.842**                      Protecting the Right to Organize Act of 2021  
**Sponsor:**                      Rep. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott

**Yes**

No                      Comment? (50 word limit)

Protecting workers and the right to organize is fundamental. When I'm in Congress, I will push our party to make this a top priority until it's passed.

**H.R.2923**                      Inclusive Prosperity Act of 2019 (116<sup>th</sup> Congress)  
**Sponsor:**                      Rep. Barbara Lee

**Yes**

No                      Comment? (50 word limit)

**H.R.3760**                      Domestic Workers Bill of Rights Act of 2019 (116<sup>th</sup> Congress)  
**Sponsor:**                      Rep. Pramila Jayapal

**Yes**

No                      Comment? (50 word limit)

Domestic workers are essential workers. We must ensure they have basic protections by closing the loopholes that exclude them from federal labor and civil rights laws.

## Emergency Aid for Natural Disasters

**The climate change-intensified natural disasters of recent years have laid bare the federal government's responses as both politicized and racist. How would you identify and legislatively fix underlying structural flaws in federal disaster relief and preparedness funding to ensure more timely, equitable, and effective federal responses to future events? (No more than 250 words)**

- Bring the floor up — deeply invest in communities that are at-risk of climate disasters and have been historically underinvested in, specifically black, brown, indigenous, and rural communities.
- I'm not an expert on this, so I will listen to climate experts on how we can mitigate further destruction and consult with community leaders and advocates to direct us on what needs to get done
- Pass a Green New Deal to modernize infrastructure so that is green and climate resilient
- Invest heavily at the federal level in emergency response and preparedness
- The FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds projects that help mitigate damage from future disasters. Increase investment in the program to ensure communities



that are rebuilt after disasters strike have necessary resources to build back stronger than before the disaster.

- Amend the Stafford Act to ensure that the Federal Emergency Management Agency is empowered to ensure that recovery and rebuilding efforts make affected communities stronger than they were before the disaster so they are more resilient to the next disaster.

## Corporate Rule

***Big corporations and banks dominate our political process, spending billions to lobby for programs against the public interest, and to privatize public services for profit. This influence erodes the middle class, destroys vital services, increases poverty, and undermines our nation. Congress must work to return our government to the people, improve services, stand up to corporate lobbyists, and stop the privatization of public services. We need a Constitutional Amendment to establish that corporations are not people and that money does not equal speech.***

**H.J.Res.1** Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to contributions and expenditures intended to affect elections

**Sponsor:** Rep. Ted Deutch

**Yes**

No

Comment? (50 word limit)

Elections should not be free-for-alls that benefit whoever has the most money in the bank. I support this bill and any legislation that protects our democracy from corporate and special interest spending, and makes our government actually work for everyday people.

**H.R.1996** Secure and Fair Enforcement (SAFE) Banking Act of 2021

**Sponsor:** Rep. Earl Perlmutter

**Yes**

No

Comment? (50 word limit)

## Mass Incarceration/Criminal Justice Reform

***The United States houses 25 percent of the world's inmates despite having only 5 percent of the world's population. The prison industrial complex has a vested interest in keeping people locked up, and the growth of private, for-profit prisons has placed incarceration beyond public view. Administration of justice system is prejudiced against the poor and minorities.***

**H.R.1280** George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021

**Sponsor:** Rep. Karen Bass

**Status:** Passed the House on 3/3/2021 with a vote of 220-212 Awaiting action in the Senate.  
Do you support this legislation?

**Yes**

No

Comment? (50 word limit)



We must take every step we can to reduce police violence against people of color, particularly Black people, in this country. I support this bill and any bill that works to accomplish that goal.

**H.R.994** Justice Is Not For Sale Act of 2021  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Raul Grijalva

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

Our inhumane criminal legal system has prioritized profit over justice for too long. I support all legislation that dismantles our racist, broken criminal legal system, including this bill to stop governments working with private prison companies and end immigrant family detention.

**H.R.4339** End Racial Profiling Act of 2019 (116th Congress)  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

**H.R.128** RAISE Act of 2021-Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support and Education  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

## Equality/Equity Issues

***The belief in equality, including religious equality, is a part of the founding documents of our nation and an important part of our national identity. Equality still has not been achieved by most groups in this country. We hope and expect that our endorsed candidates will sponsor, co-sponsor, and/or support legislation that furthers the reach of equity to any and all groups seeking equal status.***

**H.Con.Res.19** Urging the Establishment of a United States Commission on Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Barbara Lee

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

For us to move forward as a nation, we must reckon with our past. I believe this bill is one of the most important steps in this process, and I fully support it.

**H.R.40** Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Shelia Jackson Lee

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

I support all advancements towards reparations for both African Americans, including this bill, as well as any bill that advances reparations for Indigenous peoples in this country.

**H.J.Res.17** Removing the deadline for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment

**Sponsor:** Rep. Jackie Speier

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

**H.R.7** Paycheck Fairness Act

**Sponsor:** Rep. Rosa DeLauro

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

I support any efforts to close the gender pay gap as well as make our country more equitable for women, particularly women of color who suffer the most from pay disparities.

**H.R.5** The Equality Act

**Sponsor:** Rep. David Cicilline

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

LGBTQ+ rights are human rights. We need to codify the Equality Act and ensure that LGBTQ+ folks across the country have basic rights and protections that everyone else does.

## Immigration

***We strongly support Comprehensive Immigration Reform that promotes fairness, equality, labor rights, family unification, integration, a program for legal residency, and a path to citizenship for all undocumented immigrants living in the U.S.***

**H.R.6** American Dream and Promise Act of 2021

**Sponsor:** Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

A pathway to citizenship should be one of the biggest legislative priorities of Democrats. I fully support this bill and would prioritize this in Congress.

**H.R.2920** American Families United Act

**Sponsor:** Rep. Veronica Escobar

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

**H.R.2222** Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act of 2021

**Sponsor:** Rep. Pramila Jayapal

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

I support this bill and the New Way Forward Act, which includes parts of this bill but goes even further to decriminalize our immigration system.

## Higher Education

***U.S education beyond K-12 is unaffordable for a majority of Americans. Securitization of student debt has placed students at the mercy of corporate predators. Minorities are denied equal access to education. Our education system must be accessible and affordable to all.***

**H.R.2730** College For All Act of 2021  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Pramila Jayapal

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

Education is a right. I believe this bill is one of the most important bills of our lifetime. We must make education accessible and affordable to everyone.

**H.R.3027** Student Loan Borrowers' Bill of Rights Act of 2019 (116<sup>th</sup> Congress)  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Frederica Wilson

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

**H.R.3448** Student Debt Cancellation Act of 2019 (116<sup>th</sup> Congress)  
**Sponsor:** Rep. Ilhan Omar

**Yes** No Comment? (50 word limit)

As someone who has dealt personally with the burden of student loans in this country, I fully support Rep. Omar's bill to cancel all student debt in this country, as well as reform our education system so that it's more affordable, accessible, and equitable.

## Hunger, Housing, Healthcare = Human Rights

Do you consider food, housing, and healthcare to be human rights?

If so, please explain briefly your proposals to ensure that all people in the United States will be guaranteed these human rights? (100 word limit)

Yes, I do. To guarantee these as human rights, we must first understand that all of the issues our communities face are related to each other. For example, your job security affects the roof over your head which affects your ability to access food which impacts your health and your safety. We must tackle these issues with bold, systemic change. I will fight for bold, systemic change that tackles the root causes of these issues, beginning with Medicare for All and Housing for All legislation, and addressing food insecurity by substantially increasing federal investments in food assistance programs.



# General Campaign Information

Please provide us with information in the sections provided below about your campaign:

- **Your campaign plan with some *detail***

November-December will be community canvassing, friend to friend & constituency organizing. January - March will be petition signing. April - May will be persuasion. June will be GOTV. The field team will analyze the most progressive precincts and prioritize them with events. Throughout the campaign, we will be tabling, door knocking, phonebanking, text banking and more. The 8th district has had only 10% voter participation in a midterm primary out of 440,000 eligible voters. Bernie won this district in 2016 so we know that a progressive message will resonate with the majority of this district's voters. Many non-voters feel disconnected from the political process and we want to bring them in by speaking to the needs of the working class and the large BIPOC population so they are empowered to vote their voice. We recently received our new district boundaries and so we will be further analyzing the data and planning accordingly.

**Your capacity to raise the necessary capital to fund the campaign,**

Our campaign is one of the top-funded progressive challengers in this entire cycle. At the end of Q3 2021, we raised over \$500,000 since our launch in February. All of our campaign contributions are from grassroots donors — we don't accept any contributions from corporate PACs or special interests. Our fundraising plan projects us raising \$3 million total by election day next year.

**Evidence of grassroots support**

We have received endorsements from several grassroots progressive organizations in the district. Schaumburg Area Progressives, Progressives of Kane County and West Suburban Chapter of Democratic Socialists of America. These groups have shown their support by sending volunteers to our events, donating and promoting our campaign within their networks. With 8 months till our primary we already have well over 100 passionate volunteers signed up to work on our campaign. The 8th district has a strong progressive activist base that has been instrumental in getting our campaign off the ground.

**Your campaign staff currently in place**

Finance Director: Eva Putzova, 2020 Congressional candidate in AZ-01

Field Directors: Sheila Rawat, Elisa Devlin

Communications Director: Steven Piasecki, experienced communications expert with years of campaign and non-profit experience

Advisors: Peter D'Alessandro, Former Bernie Iowa and Illinois Advisor, and Roger Ouelette, Bernie Sanders' Comms Director in Iowa

Outreach: John Kokoris, 9 years in local elected government and elected library trustee, and Suhaib Khan, experienced non-profit strategy analyst



**Signature of Candidate**

11/9/2021

**Date**

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. We believe that an informed electorate is the greatest assurance of a strong democracy.**