

Socialists draft an aggressive new agenda for the Democratic Party



Pictured at left: Democratic congressional candidate Claire Valdez speaks during a Get Out The Vote rally ahead of New York's primary election, Thursday, June 18, 2026, in the Brooklyn borough of New York

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[Claire Valdez](#) used her victory speech Tuesday night in New York's 7th Congressional District to lay down a marker: She vowed to fight to abolish [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#), stand firmly with the transgender community, and push to end the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and [Gaza](#).

It was a preview of what's to come after a primary cycle in which more congressional and down ballot candidates aligned with the [Democratic Socialists of America](#) notched victories.

Their socialist agenda ranges from free healthcare to demilitarizing police forces to amnesty for all illegal immigrants and a wealth tax on America's richest people.

The national DSA doesn't mince words. It describes capitalism as "the cause of violence, unemployment, and a climate crisis that poses an existential threat to life on earth," labels the Democratic Party "center-right" and "controlled by its elite donor class," and accuses party leaders of "supporting Israel's genocide in [Gaza](#)."

Ms. Valdez was one of three Democratic Socialists of America-backed candidates who won New York City congressional primaries, positioning the group to wield more influence over Democratic Party policy — even as many establishment Democrats warn the DSA's platform is a political dead end outside deep-blue enclaves.

Their wins come roughly a year after democratic socialist [Zohran Mamdani](#) shocked the political world by toppling former Gov. Andrew Cuomo with a platform of free buses, free childcare, city-run grocery stores, and rent stabilization. And they follow last week's

victory by [Janeese Lewis George](#) - a self-described democratic socialist — in the District of Columbia mayoral primary, where she ran on resisting federal intervention, expanding universal childcare, building publicly owned social housing, lowering utility bills, and ending cooperation between D.C. police and ICE.

If there's a through line, it's that the DSA's wish list is long — and sweeping.

The group wants Medicare for All with no health care premiums, co-pays or deductibles, including reproductive and gender-affirming care.

It backs offering tuition-free public higher education, eliminating out-of-pocket costs for room and board, and canceling all student loan debt.

On housing, it calls for universal rent control, guaranteed legal representation for tenants, and major public investment in social housing.

The socialist agenda doesn't stop there.

The DSA wants free universal childcare and pre-K, expansive paid family leave, a 32-hour work week with no loss in pay or benefits, and stronger union protections — including easier organizing rules and more funding for the National Labor Relations Board.

On taxes, the group proposes higher rates on the wealthiest earners, for-profit corporations, large inheritances and private colleges and universities, as well as a wealth tax on the ultra-rich.

On climate and energy, the socialists back a Green New Deal with massive public investment to transition away from fossil fuels, guarantees for displaced workers and public ownership of major transportation, energy infrastructure and natural resources.

Its criminal justice platform calls for ending mandatory minimums and cash bail, demilitarizing police departments, and treating drug addiction as a public health issue.

Foreign policy is where the DSA's incoming members sit farthest from the Democratic mainstream.

The group wants an immediate and permanent ceasefire in [Gaza](#), a full cutoff of U.S. military and economic aid to Israel, recognition of the International Criminal Court and International Court of Justice, and an independent Palestinian state. More broadly, it wants to slash the U.S. military budget, close overseas bases, bring troops home and end economic sanctions on countries that “act independently of the United States,” including Cuba, Venezuela, and Iran.

On immigration, the DSA calls for abolishing ICE, demilitarizing the border, ending all deportations, granting immediate amnesty to all immigrants regardless of status, and guaranteeing access to jobs, labor rights, and social services.

And on democracy, the group wants to extend voting rights to noncitizens and people with criminal convictions, grant statehood to Washington, D.C., replace the two-party system with proportional representation, expand the House, end the Senate filibuster, limit the Supreme Court's power of judicial review, and replace the Electoral College with a national popular vote.

Mr. Mamdani signaled that he believes the momentum behind the DSA vision shows no sign of slowing. Speaking at Ms. Valdez's victory party in Brooklyn, he told supporters the movement was only gaining steam.

"A year ago, it was not the end of a political movement — it was the beginning," he said.