



Meet the PINOs: “Progressive In Name Only”

These Members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus Often Act More Like Corporate Centrists—And Many Deserve Primary Challenges

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Introduction

In the fall of 2021, as progressive and corporate Democrats battled over the infrastructure and “Build Back Better” bills, the Congressional Progressive Caucus reached its zenith in power and profile—at one key stage pledging to withhold 60 votes from infrastructure legislation until Speaker Pelosi ensured that Build Back Better would also move forward. Led by Rep. Pramila Jayapal, the caucus wielded its greatest clout as a progressive bloc since its inception in 1991.

But when it came time to “hold the line” by voting No on the infrastructure bill—progressives’ final leverage to force votes on Build Back Better—only six members (the “Squad” plus Reps. Cori Bush and Jamaal Bowman) stayed true to their pledge. The caucus’ newfound power and its limits raise important questions. How can one of Congress’ biggest caucuses—comprised of 94 representatives, one non-voting delegate, and one senator—lack the power to force passage of a modest social safety-net package already sliced nearly in half by two corporate Democratic senators? Going forward, how can the caucus solidify and focus its power to advance transformative and urgently needed policies like universal healthcare, a Green New Deal, a truly livable minimum wage, a wealth tax, and a sensible downsizing of America’s runaway militarism?

For starters, the caucus could ensure that its members are committed to the CPC’s agenda. The caucus says it “strongly supports a Green New Deal to take immediate, necessary steps to protect current and future generations from the deadly impact of climate change”—so shouldn’t its members support this fundamental change? The caucus adds, “we’re fighting to pass the Medicare for All Act to guarantee health care to all people living in the United States”—so, shouldn’t caucus members join this urgent fight?

Caucus chair Jayapal has taken several steps in this direction, enacting new rules that “every CPC member must vote in accordance with positions that two-thirds of the caucus has agreed to adopt.” But there’s a loophole, as *HuffPost* reported: members are “allowed to vote out of step with these caucus positions one-third of the time.”

Our examination of key votes, campaign donations, congressional testimony, and other records shows that many members of the caucus are “progressives in name only”—PINOs. On core progressive policies like Medicare for All and the Green New Deal, cutting military spending, robust civil liberties, and more, these caucus members function more like corporate centrists—opposing significant challenges to the status quo and protecting corporate power along with endless war.

Several of these PINOs refused to cosponsor a resolution from Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez calling for a Green New Deal; failed to cosponsor Rep. Jayapal’s Medicare for All legislation; voted for huge unnecessary military spending increases; and opposed amendments by Reps. Mark Pocan and Ocasio-Cortez for a modest 10 percent reduction in the

military budget (a proposal which, in Bernie Sanders' Senate version last year, would have redirected \$74 billion to poor and working-class communities).

Weighing factors including votes, the political hue of members' districts (e.g., red, blue, or purple), and length of service in Congress—see Methodology below—we identified six especially problematic PINOs who are not living up to their progressive pretenses: Reps. Madeleine Dean (PA-4), Donald Norcross (NJ-1), Joe Morelle (NY-25), Jimmy Panetta (CA-20), Brenda Lawrence (MI-14), and Lisa Blunt Rochester (DE-at large).

With “progressives” like these, we might ask, who needs corporate centrist Democrats? How will we ever get Medicare for All, a bold and transformative Green New Deal, or less militaristic foreign policy when so-called “progressives” oppose these changes? If politicians claim they are “progressive,” constituents should insist their actions match their rhetoric.

It's worth noting that all the PINOs in our report voted for a \$15 minimum wage and support abortion rights, LGBTQ+ equality, and voting rights legislation. The Democratic congressmembers featured here are not as conservative as the NRA-allied, abortion rights-opposing Henry Cuellar, or Build Back Better obstructionist Josh Gottheimer, or others that RootsAction skewered in our 2019 “Bad Blues” report for stifling progress on many fronts. They may not be “DINOs,” but these PINOs fall far short of what today's moment requires—political courage and boldness to fight for major climate action, universal healthcare, a scaled-back military, and a far more equitable tax structure that redresses today's extreme income inequality.

Disturbingly, 16 CPC members are also part of the ideologically corporatist New Democrat Coalition, which insists that “the center of gravity within the Democratic Party is moderate.” The NDC proclaims it is “committed to pro-economic growth, pro-innovation, and fiscally responsible policies...seeking to bridge the gap between left and right by challenging outmoded partisan approaches to governing.” In sharp contrast to the Green New Deal, in 2019 the NDC promoted its “market-oriented” emissions plan emphasizing carbon pricing and business incentives.

One wonders, for instance, why Rep. Hakeem Jeffries is a Progressive Caucus member while launching (along with conservative Democrat Gottheimer) a Team Blue PAC aimed at opposing primary challenges to Democrats—widely viewed as targeting progressive challengers akin to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Jamaal Bowman, both of whom unseated longtime establishment Democrats.

Sometimes, even the most progressive members of Congress need a push. In August 2021, RootsAction obtained a “Dear Colleague” letter that leading CPC members Pocan and Barbara Lee were circulating that encouraged the House Armed Services Committee chair, Adam Smith, and others to approve President Biden's even-bigger-than-Trump's military budget, rather than increasing it even further. With help from RootsAction, constituents urged Pocan and Lee to “stop pre-compromising,” and instead push for military spending cuts.

In 2019, the Progressive Caucus endorsed 22 incumbents for reelection, including Donald Norcross and Joe Morelle, both among our top PINOs. The political landscape could shift in some districts as states finalize their congressional redistricting maps, particularly in states

controlled by Republicans. Redistricting may impact whether various PINOs identified in this report are ripe for progressive primary challenges in 2022 and beyond.

Beyond any horserace politics, larger questions require attention: Under Jayapal's more rigorous leadership, will the caucus now hold its members to a higher standard? Could this principled focus give progressives more power to create change? Will new progressive challengers arise to push PINOs to shape up or ship out?

(Links to all legislation and letters are at the end of this report, in Methodology.)

Our “Top” Six: Will a Strong Progressive Please Primary These PINOs Soon?

Madeleine Dean (PA-4. D+9): 100 percent disagreement.

Representing a Democratic-leaning district in southeastern Pennsylvania, mostly in suburbs of Philadelphia, Dean is the only CPC member who scored a full 100 percent wrong on core progressive issues in our review. Now in her second term, Rep. Dean has already disappointed some of her supporters, including labor activists demanding she take stronger stands on healthcare.

Dean avoided supporting Medicare for All, stating on her reelection campaign website: “Every person deserves to be able to have access to affordable, quality, and comprehensive healthcare. ... Madeleine wants to continue working in Congress to support universal healthcare that is economically balanced to fulfill the promise that our government made in 2010.” Reform that is “economically balanced”? It seems Dean ignored extensive research showing that Medicare for All could save lives and up to \$450 billion a year.

At a 2019 public forum in Philadelphia for area members of Congress, Dean was booed by Democratic activists when she explained her opposition to Medicare for All. In April 2021, healthcare workers and unions picketed Dean's district office to protest her inaction on even a temporary expansion of Medicare to cover everyone during the pandemic. David McMahon, a delegate for the Montgomery County Central Labor Council, said: “when it comes to healthcare reform she lets Big Business do all the talking. We couldn't even get her to meet with us on the Healthcare Emergency Guarantee Act in the middle of a pandemic.”

Rep. Dean took \$77,500 in campaign donations from the insurance industry sector in 2020, and another \$40,300 from the pharmaceuticals and health products sector.

Union activists weren't the only disappointed Dean supporters. Journalist Dave Lindorff wrote a scathing piece on Dean after getting a meager response from her office on a basic civil liberties issue; Dean sits on the House Judiciary Committee.

Dean has failed to support either of the Green New Deal measures from Reps. Ocasio-Cortez and Cori Bush. At the Philadelphia forum in 2019, Dean told the crowd of Democratic activists that while she supports the idea of a Green New Deal, she wouldn't co-sponsor it. In her reelection campaign, Dean touted more tepid "legislation that transforms our country into a climate-forward and clean energy powerhouse." (While Dean has joined many progressives in supporting the THRIVE Act, which has some elements of the Green New Deal, she backed it a full month after 44 of her colleagues had cosponsored the bill.)

In foreign policy, Dean signed the March 2021 congressional letter (backed by 70 Republicans and 70 Democrats) aimed at slowing the Biden administration's efforts to reestablish an Iran nuclear deal—a letter organized by the Israel-can-do-no-wrong lobby, AIPAC. In 2020 and 2021, she voted against amendments to reduce military spending.

Donald Norcross (NJ-1. D+11): 90 percent disagreement.

Donald Norcross, in Congress since 2014, may be best known as the brother of South Jersey power broker and insurance-industry executive George Norcross. According to an investigation by ProPublica and WNYC, the Norcross brothers joined forces when Donald was a state senator to push through a 2013 state tax plan that reaped "at least" \$1.1 billion for George's powerful insurance brokerage and connected business partners and charities. Norcross represents a heavily Democratic congressional district that includes the impoverished city of Camden and New Jersey suburbs of Philadelphia.

On March 17, 2021, as Rep. Jayapal introduced her Medicare for All bill, Norcross tweeted promisingly: "The United States is the richest country in the world, but millions of Americans still can't afford health care. #MedicareForAll will change that—it's time for a bold change." Yet at year's end, Norcross still has not co-sponsored the legislation in either of the last two sessions of Congress. A coalition of progressive New Jersey groups has urged Norcross to match his words with action. Norcross raked in \$82,000 from the insurance industry sector in the 2020 election cycle.

While Norcross supported the COVID-vaccine waiver, he has often failed to back progressive priorities. Norcross has not co-sponsored either Green New Deal measure, and he voted for legislation in 2018 to boost natural gas exports.

Norcross, whose congressional website features an aircraft carrier in fully armed military posture, sits on the House Armed Services Committee and has proved a reliable Yes for military spending increases—"fighting to ensure our military is ready to meet any challenge, at home or abroad," as his website puts it. He was one of 70 Democrats who signed the letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken undermining an Iran nuclear deal. He voted against both military

budget-cut amendments and voted for massive military budget increases in 2020 and 2021. Norcross chairs the Tactical Air and Land Forces Subcommittee and serves on the Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee. He voted last year to reauthorize warrantless government surveillance powers, after voting to expand those powers in 2018.

In an interview with Defense News, asked about his “Buy American” push for military manufacturing, Norcross responded: “The Chinese are very focused on trying to have a boot on the throat of America so that it can cut off some of those critical supplies.” Norcross also heaped praise on Israel’s Iron Dome, calling it “a purely defensive system that safeguards lives.” According to research by the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, Norcross has received more than \$52,000 worth of trips to Israel paid for by “pro-Israel” groups allied with AIPAC.

Despite his dubious record on many core issues, Norcross received the endorsement of the Progressive Caucus in his 2020 reelection bid, and is the caucus’ vice chair for labor; yet he also is a member of the corporatist New Democrat Coalition. Norcross is being challenged in 2022 by Mario DeSantis, who supports universal single-payer healthcare and Pentagon budget cuts, among other progressive priorities opposed by Norcross.

Jimmy Panetta (CA-20. D+23): 80 percent disagreement.

Following in his father’s footsteps, Jimmy Panetta represents the same Central California Coast district—overwhelmingly Democratic—that elected Leon Panetta for nine terms (formerly the state’s 16th then 17th Congressional District). Panetta seems to have inherited his father’s hawkish tendencies, voting to reauthorize the misnamed USA Freedom Act, backing military spending increases, and opposing Rep. Pocan’s and AOC’s modest attempts to rein in the military budget. Panetta also signed the letter undermining a renewed Iran nuclear deal.

Panetta received credit from the Progressive Caucus for urging Biden and Pelosi to go “big and bold” on infrastructure and Build Back Better—but when push came to shove, Panetta was not among the 22 Democrats who at a key moment in late September pledged to oppose BIF unless it was packaged in a vote with BBB.

Panetta receives substantial corporate campaign donations, including from top contributors Blue Cross/Blue Shield, the USA Rice Federation, Honeywell International, Morgan Stanley, and the American Hospital Association.

Panetta is one of 16 CPC members who is part of the corporate-allied New Democrat Coalition. In 2020, Panetta faced his first progressive primary challenge, from Adam Bolaños Scow, who roundly criticized the congressman’s corporate campaign donations (\$550,000 from corporate PACs in that cycle) and his refusal to support a fracking ban.

Joe Morelle (NY-25. D+8): 80 percent disagreement.

Elected in 2018 to replace the late Democratic Rep. Louise Slaughter, Joe Morelle represents New York's 25th District, centered in Rochester. This strongly Democratic district cast a 60 percent vote for Biden in the 2020 general election (and 59 percent for Morelle's reelection).

When the CPC endorsed Morelle for reelection in 2019, it called him "a true champion of the progressive values CPC stands for." Unfortunately, on a host of key progressive values, Morelle has often acted more like a corporate centrist. Though Morelle supported the COVID-vaccine trade waiver, he has not sided with progressive leadership on much else.

Morelle failed to cosponsor AOC's Green New Deal resolution or Cori Bush's Green New Deal for Cities. When asked about his position, Morelle told the nonprofit 500 Women Scientists, "While I do not support the Green New Deal in its entirety, I support many of its proposals, including transitioning our economy away from fossil fuel dependence." (Morelle did cosponsor the THRIVE Act.)

Despite declaring on his campaign website that "universal access to health care is a fundamental human right," Morelle has not backed Jayapal's Medicare for All legislation. In a 2019 congressional hearing on the bill, Morelle raised "concerns" about "disruptions in the marketplace," and the taxes and costs associated with transitioning to Medicare for All. The insurance industry sector is Morelle's top campaign donor (followed by lobbyists and real estate). At the hearing, universal healthcare activist Ady Barkan responded to Morelle, "We pay for far more expensive things like wars of choice. We can afford to do this. We just need to decide to make it happen. It is a political challenge, not an economic one."

While questioning the costs of Medicare for All, Morelle voted in favor of big military spending increases which, as a member of the House Armed Services Committee, he was "proud to have helped craft." He voted against both Rep. Pocan's and AOC's amendments to cut Pentagon spending by 10 percent, and voted to reauthorize warrantless government surveillance powers last year. He signed the AIPAC-organized letter to Blinken attempting to impede restoration of an Iran nuclear deal.

Lisa Blunt Rochester (DE-at-large. D+6): 80 percent disagreement.

Lisa Blunt Rochester has served as Delaware's lone congresswoman since 2017, after filling the seat vacated by Democratic Gov. John Carney; she made history as the first African-American and first woman elected to Congress from Delaware. While Delaware is a blue state (D+6, choosing Biden by 58 percent in 2020), Blunt Rochester has consistently been one of the most conservative members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

Heralded as an "emerging player" in congressional healthcare policy, Blunt Rochester has not supported Jayapal's Medicare for All legislation. Notably, Blue Cross/Blue Shield is among her top campaign contributors this cycle. In 2018, the insurance industry sector was Blunt Rochester's top campaign funder, donating \$105,226.

Blunt Rochester also failed to support either Green New Deal measure, and did not back the COVID-vaccine TRIPS waiver push. In 2020 and 2021, Blunt Rochester voted against 10 percent “defense” budget cuts, while voting for military spending hikes. She also voted last year to reauthorize government surveillance powers, and voted to expand those powers in 2018. According to the Open Secrets website, she receives substantial campaign donations from “defense/aerospace,” pharmaceuticals, “pro-Israel,” and oil and gas sectors.

Strikingly, Blunt Rochester was one of only two Progressive Caucus members who voted with Republicans in 2018 to weaken banking regulations in the Dodd-Frank Act, the Democrats’ fairly limited 2010 Wall Street reform law.

Brenda Lawrence (MI-14. D+29): 75 percent disagreement.

Lawrence has served in Congress since 2014, representing Detroit and surrounding areas. She supported Keith Ellison for DNC chair in 2017, saying, “he’s progressive.” Yet despite representing Michigan’s most Democratic district—a shade bluer than Rashida Tlaib’s district—Lawrence scored 75 percent wrong on progressive legislation, failing to cosponsor either Green New Deal measure, while backing military spending increases and opposing Rep. Pocan’s modest 10 percent military reduction in 2020 (though she favored a nearly identical measure this year).

In 2019, Lawrence was confronted by constituents at a local union hall about her position on a Green New Deal. “When asked whether she supported the Green New Deal, she hedged,” according to a report by Michigan Left: “I do support the *concept* of it, but it’s a theory, it’s a philosophy.” The Detroit Coalition for a Green New Deal—which includes Rep. Tlaib, Sunrise Michigan, Southeast Michigan Jobs With Justice, and other worker and environmental groups—has unsuccessfully pressured Lawrence to change her tune on the Green New Deal.

Lawrence failed to cosponsor or support Rep. Jayapal’s Paycheck Recovery Act to help small businesses hurt by COVID-19. Lawrence signed the March 2021 AIPAC-organized letter undercutting efforts to revive an Iran nuclear deal—and voted to reauthorize the USA Freedom Act, which further expands the surveillance state and diminishes civil liberties. Given all this, it’s no surprise that Lawrence is also a member of the New Democrat Coalition.

On the Bubble: Three PINOs in Swing Districts

Some PINOs with dismally centrist status-quo records represent swing districts where they may face serious challenges from Republicans. We urge them to embrace progressive policies that have broad popular support and that address the critical needs of people and the planet. District-level pressure on these representatives to take more progressive populist

stands—and not be cowed by corporate and conservative interests—would benefit their constituents, as well as their re-election chances.

Steven Horsford (NV-4. D+1): 90 percent disagreement.

First elected to represent Nevada’s 4th—a swing district spanning rural south-central Nevada and portions of Las Vegas—in 2013, Horsford is the Silver State’s first African American to serve in Congress. Despite joining the CPC, Horsford has been far more of a centrist in Congress, and rated among the worst in our assessment, parting ways with progressive leaders 90 percent of the time. He is also a member of the corporatist New Democrat Coalition.

On Medicare for All, Horsford not only failed to support Jayapal’s bill, but has repeatedly spoken out against the idea, echoing insurance-industry talking points. In 2019, Horsford told Nevada journalists, erroneously, that Medicare for All would be “taking healthcare away from people that have it now.” He added, “Who’s going to pay for all that? Every one of us is taxpayers.” Yet like many Democratic colleagues, including a minority of CPC members, Horsford doesn’t raise these fiscal concerns when it comes to increasing military spending; he opposed amendments in both 2020 and 2021 that would have modestly trimmed the bloated military budget.

Horsford has also “pushed back on the Green New Deal, saying it was a distraction from pursuing actual policy,” the *Nevada Independent* reported. In his opposition, he emphasized “that we stay centered on growing the American workforce,” a false “jobs versus environment” wedge. Horsford, who sits on the budget, natural resources, and ways and means committees, receives major campaign funding from corporate interests, including the securities and real estate industries.

Darren Soto (FL-9. D+3): 80 percent disagreement.

Now in his third term in office, Soto has proven to be far from progressive while reliably in the corporate centrist wing of Democrats. It’s no surprise that Soto is also a member of New Democrat Coalition, as well as the Problem Solvers Caucus, launched by conservative Democrat Josh Gottheimer and Republican Brian Fitzpatrick, which pledges “to find bipartisan solutions” on issues including healthcare. Soto failed to cosponsor either Green New Deal measure, backed military spending increases, signed the AIPAC letter undermining a renewed nuclear deal with Iran, and supported the USA Freedom Act which has rolled back civil liberties protections.

Soto has a troublesome record of claiming progressive positions while taking contradictory actions. Despite having been a member of the congressional Medicare for All caucus, Soto has so far failed to cosponsor Jayapal’s Medicare for All bill. On his campaign website in 2019, Soto stated, “I support Medicare for All.” We found that Soto has

violated his pledge not to accept fossil fuel industry money by taking substantial campaign donations from Duke Energy, a top greenhouse gas emitter. Soto's other top campaign donors include the real estate and insurance industries.

Andy Kim (NJ-3. R+3): 80 percent disagreement.

Elected in 2018 and reelected by a nearly 8 percent margin in 2020, Andy Kim represents central New Jersey's 3rd Congressional District, considered a swing district, which Trump won in 2016 and virtually tied with Biden in 2020. A former national security adviser in the Obama administration, Kim has rarely supported progressive priorities despite his CPC membership.

Kim has consistently leaned corporate centrist, and hasn't co-sponsored Medicare for All legislation or the Green New Deal measures. He signed onto the bipartisan letter to obstruct the Biden administration's push to revive an Iran nuclear deal. Meanwhile, Kim did not join the majority of House Democrats signing a letter encouraging the Biden administration to support waiving of international trade rules to facilitate distribution of COVID-19 vaccines around the globe.

While Kim voted against legislation to reauthorize warrantless government surveillance powers in 2020, he voted against both Rep. Pocan's and Ocasio-Cortez's measures to trim the Pentagon budget by 10 percent and voted for bloated military budgets in 2020 and 2021.

Dishonorable Mention

A disturbing number of other CPC members scored badly on core progressive issues, ranging from 50 percent to 70 percent disagreement with CPC leadership and stalwart caucus members. Our "dishonorable mention" roll call of CPC members includes:

Sylvia Garcia (TX-29. D+19): 70 percent disagreement. Representing this heavily Democratic and Latino/a district curling around East Houston, Garcia has performed more like a corporate centrist than a progressive. The two-term congresswoman failed to sponsor Medicare for All or either Green New Deal measure, backed military spending increases, and supported the USA Freedom Act reauthorization undermining civil liberties. Last March, some of her constituents urged Garcia to step up and support the Green New Deal. Her top campaign donors include the oil and gas industry and the commercial bank sector.

Dwight Evans (PA-3. D+41): 65 percent disagreement. Despite representing the nation's most Democratic district, according to the Cook Political Report, an area spanning West and North Philadelphia made up of 55 percent Black voters, Evans has proven to be a centrist. In Congress

since 2016, he has failed to sponsor Jayapal’s Medicare for All bill even though he has been a member of the Medicare for All caucus, and despite tweeting that he is a “staunch supporter” (a post he has since deleted). Evans also failed to sponsor either Green New Deal measure, backed military spending hikes, and failed to sign the COVID-19 waiver letter to enable greater global access to vaccines. Evans’ top campaign funding source is the insurance industry. Evans is being challenged in 2022 by Alexandra Hunt, a public health researcher and progressive who supports Medicare for All and the Green New Deal.

Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA-40. D+31): 60 percent disagreement. Representing one of the nation’s most Democratic and Latino/a districts (likely to be altered by redistricting) since 1992, Roybal-Allard has functioned as more of a centrist than a progressive. She failed to sponsor either Green New Deal measure, while backing more military spending increases and the USA Freedom Act reauthorization curtailing civil liberties protections. Roybal-Allard also signed the bipartisan letter organized by AIPAC to undercut efforts to renew an Iran nuclear deal. Roybal-Allard has two progressive challengers in 2022.

Mary Gay Scanlon (PA-5. D+13): 60 percent disagreement. In a solidly Democratic district in southeastern Pennsylvania, Scanlon failed to sponsor Medicare for All or either Green New Deal bill yet supported military spending increases and the USA Freedom Act reauthorization. Scanlon’s failure to support Jayapal’s Medicare for All bill seems to contradict her 2018 campaign statement that she “supports universal healthcare, and a transition to Medicare For All.”

Lois Frankel (FL-21. D+8): 60 percent disagreement. Despite her reputation as a progressive, Frankel has a centrist record on several core issues. The five-term congresswoman from South Florida signed the letter undermining a diplomatic renewal of an Iran nuclear deal and backed the USA Freedom Act reauthorization and rising military budgets (though she deserves credit for supporting both Pocan and Ocasio-Cortez’s amendments for 10 percent military cuts). Frankel, who has personal investments in top greenhouse gas emitters Duke Energy and Dominion Energy, has failed to cosponsor the Green New Deal (and also has not supported the THRIVE Act, seen as a more modest GND).

Mike Levin (CA-49. D+4): 60 percent disagreement. While Levin has some progressive credentials and support in northern coastal San Diego County, the two-term congressman has acted like a centrist on major issues, including his support for record military spending increases and the USA Freedom Act reauthorization’s rollback of civil liberties. Levin touted his success in securing \$105 million in the 2020 military budget for construction at Camp Pendleton. Levin also signed the AIPAC letter undermining efforts to revive an Iran nuclear deal, while failing to sign the COVID-19 waiver letter to expand global access to vaccines.

Matt Cartwright (PA-8, R+5): 60 percent disagreement. It's no small feat these days for a Democrat to win a Republican district. And Cartwright, who represents Scranton and northeast Pennsylvania, has sponsored Medicare for All and signed the letter calling for a COVID-19 waiver enabling greater worldwide vaccine production. But the five-term congressman has failed to support either Green New Deal bill, has backed runaway military spending increases, and did not sponsor Jayapal's Paycheck Recovery Act to aid small businesses hammered by the pandemic.

On Our Radar

As progressive Democrats seek to expand their influence in Congress, we're keeping our eyes on other Progressive Caucus members whose records are not very progressive on some critical issues. These members diverged from the Progressive Caucus position and leadership at least half the time in our review, making it even more difficult to pass vital reforms legislation or trim back military spending. Leading this pack are Reps. Brad Sherman (CA-30), Veronica Escobar (TX-16), and Andre Carson (IN-7). Each departed from the caucus leadership 55 percent of the time in our review. Each voted for record military spending increases beyond those requested by President Biden (though Escobar and Carson supported AOC's 10 percent military cut amendment). Each backed the USA Freedom Act reauthorization. Sherman and Escobar signed the AIPAC letter undercutting a renewed Iran nuclear deal. (Sherman is being challenged in the 2022 primary by progressive [Shervin Aazami](#).)

Five other caucus members, all from strongly Democratic districts, were out of step 50 percent of the time on pivotal progressive issues: Hakeem Jeffries (NY-8), Rosa DeLauro (CT-3), Alma Adams (NC-12), Linda Sanchez (CA-38), and Ruben Gallego (AZ-7). While some of them have provided strong progressive leadership on various issues, they all backed hikes in already-bloated military spending and disappointed on several critical progressive measures.

Methodology:

Our assessment is carefully researched. We selected nine actionable policy items—legislation and sign-on letters—and examined the actions (or inactions) of every member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. We awarded a demerit point each time the member's position diverged from a dozen progressive stalwarts, including CPC leadership and others. We awarded another demerit point to members who are part of the New Democrat Coalition, a red flag apt to compromise their progressive commitment. (Half a demerit point was awarded for voting No on each of two nearly identical amendments cutting the military budget; and half a demerit point each for voting Yes on two military spending increases, in 2020 and 2021.)

To assess CPC members' progressive commitment, we examined votes and positions on the following issues:

- Green New Deal: Rep. Ocasio-Cortez' House Resolution 332. (1 demerit point for failure to cosponsor)
- Green New Deal for Cities: Rep. Cori Bush's HR 2644. (1 point for failure to cosponsor)
- Medicare for All: Rep. Jayapal's HR 1976. (1 point for failure to cosponsor)
- COVID-19 TRIPS waiver letter, April 2021, to allow "equitable access" to vaccines worldwide. (1 point for not signing)
- Bipartisan March 2021 letter aimed at undermining the Biden administration's efforts to revive an Iran nuclear deal—a letter orchestrated by the hawkish pro-Israel lobby, AIPAC. (1 point for signing)
- USA Freedom Act Reauthorization, March 2020: HR 6172, which failed to curtail serious civil liberties abrogations remaining from the Patriot Act. (1 point for voting Yes)
- National Defense Authorization Act of 2020: HR 6395, which, as *The Military Times* reported, "provides billions more in equipment purchases than the White House requested and all but assures steady growth in military spending next year." (.5 point for voting Yes)
- National Defense Authorization Act of 2021, HR 4350: This bill, under President Biden and Democratic-controlled Congress, further increased military spending. (.5 point for voting Yes)
- Roll Call 148 to amend HR 6395, July 2020: Amendment by Rep. Pocan to reduce military spending by 10 percent. (.5 point for voting No)
- Roll Call 284 to amend HR 4350, September 2021: Rep. Ocasio-Cortez 10 percent military cut amendment to HR 4350. (.5 point for voting No)
- Paycheck Recovery Act, HR 6918: Rep. Jayapal's May 2020 bill to provide economic relief to small businesses battered by COVID-19 recession. (1 point for failing to cosponsor)