



Andrew Yang on the campaign trail

# Humanity First

## An Interview with Andrew Yang

**EDITORS' NOTE** Andrew Yang ([yang2020.com](http://yang2020.com)) is an author and entrepreneur who, in 2011, founded Venture for America, a non-profit that created thousands of jobs in Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Baltimore and other cities throughout the country. In his book, *The War on Normal People*, he explains the mounting crisis of the automation of labor and makes the case for the Freedom Dividend, a Universal Basic Income of \$1,000 a month for every American, along with hundreds of other policies to put Humanity First. Yang was named a Presidential Ambassador of Entrepreneurship by the White House under the Obama administration and a Champion of Change for his work with Venture for America. He is running for President in 2020 to bring his vision for a trickle-up economy, investing in American families, to the White House.

### What interested you in running for President and made you feel it was the right time to enter the race?

I'm a numbers guy, so when Trump won in 2016, I looked at the data, and what I saw was that the more industrial robots in a district, the stronger the move to Trump. The truth is that we automated away 4 million manufacturing jobs, and we're about to do the same to call center workers, retail, food service/prep, and truck-driving jobs. We're in the middle of the greatest economic and technical change in our country's history, and our leaders are asleep at the wheel. We need to implement big changes in order to put Humanity First.

I'm a parent and a patriot. I have two sons, one of whom has autism. I took a look at the country I was going to leave them, and it was not something I was willing to accept. That's why I'm running for President in 2020.

### What do you see as the state of the Democratic Party today and how critical is it for the party to connect with mainstream, independent voters?

Not a lot of other Democrats will say it, but Donald Trump is our president today because he got a lot of the problems right, but his solutions are garbage and nonsense. He wants to turn the clock back, when in reality we have to evolve and find a new way forward.

The Democratic Party needs to focus less on Donald Trump and more on addressing the problems that got him elected. Every minute we're talking about him is a minute that would be better spent presenting solutions to the American people.

### Will you provide an overview of your policies and the key priorities for your campaign?

The assumptions of the 20th Century are breaking down as technological change happens faster and faster. This is causing trust in institutions to break down as our systems work for fewer and fewer people. We need to find 21st Century solutions to these problems and reevaluate the way our country works so that we place human value over economic value.

The primary way I propose we do this is through a Freedom Dividend of \$1,000/month for every American adult, no strings attached. It's been championed since the beginning of our country by Thomas Paine, and Martin Luther King, Jr. was championing it at the time of his assassination.

Additionally, we need to change the way we measure the economy to reflect our values and what we actually care about - things like childhood success metrics, freedom from substance abuse, health and life expectancy, and environmental sustainability.

### With the current political environment and gridlock and partisanship in Washington D.C., how do you plan to change the culture and drive action?

A study called Hidden Tribes investigated the views of Americans and found that fewer than 15 percent fell into the ideological extremes. Most people fall into what the study calls the Exhausted Majority - a group that feels forgotten in the public debate and desires compromise.

In short, the partisan and ideological fighting doesn't represent the views of a majority of Americans.

I'm not a politician, I'm an entrepreneur and problem-solver. I don't have decades of time in Washington; I have decades of creating jobs in this country. When you're running a business, you have to focus on actually solving the problems on the ground and need to listen to the facts.

I believe that I can break the gridlock in Washington D.C. in part because I can work

with just about anyone who wants to solve problems, and people sense that. My team will be pragmatic and ideologically diverse. I'm glad to say that Americans on every part of the political spectrum already support my campaign. I'm one of only two Democratic candidates who 10+ percent of Trump voters say they would support. I'm building a coalition of disaffected Trump voters, independents, libertarians, and conservatives, as well as Democrats and progressives. What holds this group together is their desire to focus on building a country that we can be proud of. It's not left, not right, but forward, and that's the direction we need to take our country.

### What do you see as the advantages of having a business background and business expertise in serving as President?

Founding and running Venture for America allowed me to connect with communities all across the U.S., helping me to see firsthand the true 21st century problems American cities are facing. Working with young people to help create jobs and start companies revealed to me the economic challenges occurring across our country - jobs are disappearing, Americans are working harder for less, and the success of our economy is measured in ways that do not take into account the quality of life of our people.

### Electability is a key factor of many voting in the Democratic primary. What do you tell voters about your strength and advantages in defeating President Trump?

I'm the clear choice to beat Donald Trump in 2020 because I'm laser focused on the issues that got him elected in 2016. We need to build an economy that works for all Americans by making the biggest companies pay their fair share. This message is breaking through party lines, as we're seeing disaffected Trump voters and libertarians join with Democrats and progressives in supporting the new way forward I'm proposing.

### You seem to be truly enjoying the process of running for President and meeting Americans across the country. Are you really having that much fun?

Not only have I been having a ton of fun, I've learned a great deal from this process. Many of my views and policies have been shaped and informed by the Americans I've met on the trail, and I've only become more confident that the issues I'm focusing on are the issues Americans care about the most. ●