

Beto O'Rourke



“I think the much tougher but far more important work to do is to lead with diplomacy, holding the card of military involvement as the last resort. Unfortunately, for far too long, we’ve led militarily and then tried belatedly to follow that up with diplomacy.” — Representative Robert O’Rourke

At a Glance

Beto O’Rourke is a former U.S. Congressman who gained notoriety at the national level after a valiant, but unsuccessful, campaign to represent the state of Texas in the U.S. Senate. In defeat, [he received more votes](#) than any Democratic candidate for Senate in Texas history.

During his time in the [U.S. House of Representatives](#), O’Rourke served on the House Armed Services Committee and the Subcommittees on Emerging Threats and Capabilities as well as Strategic Enforcement.

O’Rourke has [stated](#) that U.S. foreign policy should be to “[f]ind a way to work with allies and partners and in some cases with our enemies.” You can find his thoughts, comments, and plans on issues of war and peace below.

Ending Endless Wars

- O’Rourke maintains the need for congressional authorization to declare and end wars, [arguing](#), “This country has completely forgotten its constitutional responsibility to lawfully declare and end these wars, as prescribed in the first article of the U.S. Constitution.”
- He [vowed](#) that “[a]s President, I will end our “forever wars,” repair our strained relationships with our traditional allies, and make the decision to put our service members in harm’s way only when absolutely necessary.”

- He has [committed to](#) withdrawing all troops from Afghanistan by end of first term, adding, “Working with our allies and partners, I will phase troop withdrawal to minimize known risks, while at the same time doing what we can to ensure a sustainable peace, including prioritizing participation by Afghan women in the peace process and reintegrating former fighters into the new Afghan society.”
 - He [called](#) for accountability regarding Saudi Arabia, specifically for their involvement in Yemen and their role in the murder of reporter Jamal Khashoggi.
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Nuclear Weapons

- In his [announcement speech](#), O’Rourke listed the pursuit of nuclear disarmament needs to be among the priorities of the next administration.
 - While in Congress, he [opposed an amendment](#) that would limit funding for the implementation of the New START Treaty.
 - He [voted to remove](#) language from the defense spending bill that would prevent the dismantling of retired nuclear warheads.
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Iran

- O’Rourke [has accused](#) the Trump administration of “gunning for war with Iran,” [warned that](#) we “have someone in Bolton, who has publicly said that he wants regime change in Iran,” and [reaffirmed](#) the need for Congressional debate on issues of war and peace.
- He was a vocal supporter of the Iran Nuclear Deal, [stating](#) that, “without firing a single shot, without sacrificing the life of a single U.S. service member, it was able to stop the country of Iran from pursuing nuclear weapons.”
- He [argued](#) that while the Iran Nuclear Deal was “imperfect” it was the “best path to keep Iran from having nuclear weapons” and stated that if elected, he would rejoin the agreement.

Pentagon Spending & Diplomatic Funding

- [O'Rourke has proposed](#) an alternative way of funding U.S. war efforts. In his proposal, whenever the U.S. enters into a new war a "war tax" would be put in place to help fund it. This tax would have progressive rates with homes that make \$200,000+ paying \$1,000 and homes making \$30,000 or less paying only \$25 a year.

Korean Peninsula

- [O'Rourke stated](#) that he would be willing to consider all diplomatic options, including economic sanctions, to avoid war and further nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Israel/Palestine

- O'Rourke was one of only eight members of the U.S. House of Representatives to [vote against](#) the funding of Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system. The bill passed the House by a margin of 395-8.
- [He called](#) the U.S. – Israel relationship "One of the most important relationships we have on this planet," but goes on to say that the relationship must "be able to transcend a prime minister who is racist," referring to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.
- He condemned President Trump's 2018 decision to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, [calling it](#), "absolutely unnecessarily provocative," but recently ruled out moving the embassy back to Tel Aviv if elected.