

## Getting Curious with Jonathan Van Ness & Senator Ed Markey

**JVN** [00:00:00] Welcome to Getting Curious. I'm Jonathan Van Ness and every week I sit down for a 40 minute conversation with a brilliant expert to learn all about something that makes me curious. On today's episode, I'm joined by Massachusetts representative and co-author of the Green New Deal bill, Senator Ed Markey, where I ask him: What's The Green New Deal, and Why Is It The Answer? Welcome to "Getting Curious," this is Jonathan Van Ness. I'm so excited to welcome our guest this week, Senator Ed Markey. How are you doing, Senator?

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:00:28] I'm doing great. You know, we're, we're living in a world of coronavirus. We're living in a world of a criminally negligent president, who is not putting the proper safeguards in place for the American people. And, you know, it's dangerous to have a leader like that. Personally, you know, I'm in good shape, but we have to admit that the country right now is not at all.

**JVN** [00:00:57] Yeah. I mean, I think that is absolutely the case. And you are, you are someone, if you're a listener to this, just to give you a brief intro into who Senator Ed Markey is. You are someone who's spent 37 years in the House of Representatives in the United States Congress, which is incredible. You became the Senator of Massachusetts in 2013 in a Special Election, which I also just think it's interesting. I love a Special Election moment. But now that I think about saying that, sometimes Special Elections happen because of, like, tragic reasons so I strike it from the record, 'cause I can't remember why you had a Special Election in 2013.

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:01:31] I had a special, I had a Special Election because President Obama asked John Kerry, Senator from Massachusetts, to become the Secretary of State. So-.

**JVN** [00:01:41] Oh, that's not a tragedy. That's exciting.

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:01:44] Yeah. So. So John Kerry went off to be Secretary of State, and then I had to run in the Special Election to win the unexpired portion of his term, which was a year and a half, and then to run in 2014 for the full six-year term, which I am in right now, which is, is coming to a conclusion in another six months.

**JVN** [00:02:08] That escaped me that you took over for John Kerry's Senate seat. That's incredible. So you have such a unique position as far as legislatively because you are a congressperson, then you became a Senator. And also, I think it's interesting that you had

to do two elections back-to-back and, but I mean, backing away from your specific career, part of why I wanted to have you on and part of what I am so curious about is the Green New Deal. We have talked about it on this podcast. We've heard about it so much in the news. You are a co-author of the Green New Deal proposal, which you introduced with AOC in February of last year. And I just think it is such an inspiring and good and realistic approach to climate change. And I would love to hear, you know, Senator Bernie Sanders famously said, like "I wrote the damn bill." Well, honey, I want to hear about this, not to call you "honey," but, but honey, I want to hear about this Green New Deal. What does it mean? How does it work? And I just and I also want to just say really briefly before I stop talking. Thank you so much for your service and for your progressive approach and for your ability to make progressive ideals be realistic and be something that we can talk about in the vernacular, in everyday vernacular, which I think is so important in our progressive leaders. And I want to say thank you for that. First of all and then, second of all, what is this Green New Deal?

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:03:30] Well, the Green New Deal is something that Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez and I drafted and introduced in February of 2019. So right after Alexandra got elected in 2018, I called her and I said, let's have lunch. So we had lunch for two and a half hours and we talked about the need for a Green New Deal. We needed some response to 2016 where there wasn't one reporter who asked either Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump a question about climate change. And here was this huge issue, a threat to the whole planet, a threat to our country, a threat to local communities in the United States. An incredible job creation opportunity in, in making and deploying all these technologies that we decided that we would draft the Green New Deal, which we did. It got introduced in February of 2019. Fox News hated it. Trump hated it. There were people even inside the Democratic Party who didn't like it. But what we said was very simply, the planet is dangerously warming.

There are no emergency rooms for our planets. We have to engage in preventative care. Therefore, we have to unleash wind, solar, all electric vehicles, plug in hybrids, battery storage technologies, energy-, efficiency strategies for agriculture, industry, commercial sector, housing, all across the country. And we have to do it with intersectionality. We have to make sure that we do it in a way in which frontline communities are at the front of the line because we know that people of color have always been more exposed to pollution in our country. We always know that poor people are more exposed to, to pollution. And as a result, more exposed to asthmas. And as we know, that makes them more vulnerable for coronavirus. And that's what we're seeing.

So in a lot of ways, the Green New Deal has anticipated this moment, anticipated the moment that we're in right now where people now realize that environmental justice has to

be a part of what we put front and center next year, January of 2021, after Donald Trump, the denier-in-chief. Ultimately, you know, someone who, he doesn't even realize that Mar a Lago is going to turn it tomorrow Mar A Lagoon over the next 15 years. And if he does realize that he says, "I can build a wall around my place," that is his place. But everyone can't do that.

The poorest people, the most vulnerable people, they're going to be the ones who are most impacted. And so the Green New Deal now has triggered young people, the Sunrise Movement, hundreds of thousands of young people all across the country who are up and mobilized, making it their issue. They have become the, the climate army, politically, that has arrived, injecting it into this, this campaign cycle. And I just think that we're doing fabulously well in changing the whole dynamic of the way in which people view this issue. And AOC and I have been able to kind of partner showing that it has to be intergenerational.

We need everyone in this fight. We need everyone who is a part of this effort. And I think that we're on the cusp if we just keep going, keep our energy levels high, of having a huge electoral victory this year and having climate be one of the top issues. And as a result, and "I owe you" politically, next year, that we cash in to say that this fundamental transformation of our energy sector, of the way in which we treat the issues of environmental justice is transformed once and for all.

**JVN** [00:07:43] So essentially for a lot of our younger listeners, the Green New Deal is a slight play on the New Deal, which was a comprehensive economic package that came out after World War Two. And this is, the Green New Deal is like what 2020 needs. I think it's very interesting that this was conceptualized prior to the coronavirus, but coronavirus has laid bare all of, like, you are saying, so many of the reasons why we need something like the Green New Deal. But when we're thinking about it, how does it work? What are the essential kind of cornerstones of what, like, what is the Green New Deal say?

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:08:18] Well, the Green New Deal really calls for us to move with a 10 year mobilization towards a 100 percent clean energy. That's the goal. And we lay it out, basically saying that in the 1960s, there was an effort, a 10 year effort to have a mission to the moon where we would have to invent new metals, invent new technologies, new propulsion systems, bring that mission back from the moon through heat, half the intensity of the sun, and to do so successfully and to complete it within 10 years. Well, the challenge now, is for us to do the same thing in the clean energy sector. We know it's not a technology problem. We know it's a political problem. We know it's always been the oil, the gas, the coal industries that have been blocking this fundamental transformation which is necessary in our country. And so we have to be the leader. We have to show that we are

the technological giant. And, and we can do it. We can do it in every single sector of our economy. And here's the good news. We've gone from having only 2,000 megawatts of solar in our country in 20-, 2008. Not so long ago. And if you think about, while you think about a large nuclear power plant. As being a 1,000 megawatts. So we had 2,000 in solar, actually, in terms of equivalency, probably the equivalent of one nuclear power plant. That's all we had. 2,000 megawatts.

Well, today we're up to 80,000 megawatts of solar. That's what's happened because we started to change the laws under Obama. We started to create more incentives in wind. We've gone from 25,000 megawatts up to, upwards of 125,000 thousand. Did, did the world get windier? No. Did, did the world get sunnier in the last 10 years? No, we just changed the policies. And we have to really just take down all the barriers now in order to have the revolution we want. In 2008, not so long ago, there were only 2,000 all electric vehicles in the United States. 2,000. Now we're up to a million and a half. Elon Musk's company is now worth more than Ford Motor. And so that's how quickly it's all transformed. Every major automotive company is now saying they will have all electric vehicles as well. So we know that we can do it. We just had to accelerate the pace at which it's happening. There was no reason why before 2000-, 2008, all this stuff couldn't have happened. But now we've demonstrated that technologically it's possible. And now we're ready to take off. Now we're ready to just completely explode in job creation.

**JVN** [00:11:29] I was just gonna ask, how does the Green New Deal impact unemployment numbers? I mean, we've had un-, unprecedented unemployment numbers. We've had unprecedented shrinking in our economy under this administration and under, what's happened in the face of coronavirus. So how could the Green New Deal contribute to reducing unemployment? And also, how could it impact the crisis that we're facing in health insurance? Or is that just like a whole other podcast?

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:11:56] Well, back in the 1930s, which is the last time we had unemployment rates at this height. Herbert Hoover ignored the problem somehow or other, some, something magical was going to happen and it never happened in four years of Herbert Hoover, same thing is true with Donald Trump. You have to have a plan. You have to be intentional. You have to say this is what we're going to do. So Franklin Roosevelt, he had a New Deal, wasn't perfect, but he started to put people back to work. Programs like the Works Progress Administration, just employing people. Well, the Green New Deal basically is an answer to the problem of the high unemployment rate that we have in the United States right now. It says, in the energy sector, we're just going to rebuild the entire infrastructure and we're going to do it with new regulatory policies, new tax policies, new incentives, so that, so that millions of people are put to work building all of these new technologies, deploying them all across the country, reducing greenhouse gases

for sure, reducing the threat to the planet, reducing the threat to our own country. But at the same time, putting people back to work. And what we say in, in our Green New Deal resolution is we want to put frontline communities at the front of the line because they're the ones most impacted. We want to make sure that people who are most impacted also get a chance to be at the frontline to get these jobs.

**JVN** [00:13:30] When you were saying earlier, you know, we know people of color are disproportionately impacted by the environmental disparities, that, you know, it's increasing coronavirus. When you said that earlier, I wrote down "red lining." And I think that's a way that in the history of the United States, we had, you know, geographically, people were disproportionately affected to like having airports built next to them. But, and I mean, amongst other things, that's just the first thing that comes up to my mind. But can you explain a little bit in detail and how we know that people of color have been, have been disproportionately affected by environmental injustice and racism?

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:14:04] Thank you. So when I was growing up in a blue collar city, Malden, Massachusetts. It was an immigrant family and my grandmother died. And they had five daughters. My mother was the second oldest. So when your grandmother dies, one of the girls has to stay home. So that was my mother. And so we, I still live in Malden. I still live in the same house that I grew up in. So it's four blocks from the Malden River. And all along the Malden River, coal companies, rubber companies, chemical companies, they just use the Malden River as a dumping ground. And, and my mother would say, "Eddie, whatever you do, don't swim in the Malden River." Because it was black. It had kind of a pre-Jimi Hendrix purple haze on top of it. But when your mother is saying don't swim in the Malden River, you kind of know, you're not growing up on the Mississippi like Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn on these great adventures. Just don't go near our river.

And why is it there? Because it's an industrial city. It's a, it's not a wealthy city. We know that wealthy suburbs are not going to allow their river to have all that pollution dumped into it. They're not going to have huge factories just spouting out smoke and then using the back door to just dump stuff into the ground, into the water, into the air. That's going to happen in poorer communities. It's going to happen in working class communities. And who populates that now, in our country, as, as our, as our population, you know grows? It's Black. It's brown. It's immigrant. It's poorer. And so they are more exposed. And we know statistically that right now they are, they are much more prone to having asthma because of where they live. And as a result, more exposed to coronavirus. So it's just the nature of where political power is in our country. We know that Black and brown people have, breathe different air than suburban white people. Generationally. And then ultimately, it's reflected in life expectancy, exposure to disease. And that's what we actually explicitly talk

about in the Green New Deal. It has to end. We're going to move to a non-polluting source of energy, across the board in our country, and we're going to put those workers at the front of the line to get those jobs. In order to deploy them. So, so I know because I still live four blocks from the Malden River, and through my work and others who have been able to clean it up, it's blue again, there's beautiful green grass on either side. But it wasn't the way it was when I was growing up.

**JVN** [00:16:55] The Trump administration has systematically tried to roll back so many of those protections that the EPA was instating under the Obama administration and has just been making things so much more dangerous. What are some of the ways? Because I learned in an episode of "Queer Eye," we got to work with a girl who worked with the Sunrise Movement, and lived in one of their houses in Philadelphia. And she was explaining to me how, like, there's, you know, certain companies are like, like there's like top 10 companies create, like, some of the most, you know, greenhouse emissions in the world. And what are some of the biggest offenders when it comes to, just offenders in the environmental stuff? And how does the Trump administration bolster their impact to harm the environment?

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:17:38] Well, look, we got to go back 100 years because for 100 years, we've been giving out of our pockets, taxpayers' pockets, tax breaks to the oil industry, to the coal industry, to the natural gas industry. Now, when we say let's have tax breaks for wind and solar, they go, "Oh, that's socialism." But for a hundred years, who's had socialism? You know, the wealthiest industries, the biggest polluting industries, and they use their political power now in the Trump administration to roll back all those regulations that have been put on the books by President Obama, by all the predecessor presidents going back to the dawn of the Environmental Movement in about 1970. So they have a, you know, they have a pass to pollute now. Anything that they wanted to have taken off the books, they went to the EPA and the EPA has written new regulations just to give them pollute-, permission to pollute. And it's across the board. It starts with oil, gas, and coal. Listen to this. A coal lobbyist is now the head of the EPA. An oil lobbyist is now the head of the Department of Energy. An oil lobbyist is now the head of the Department of Interior. That's, that's all you have to know.

**JVN** [00:19:02] All three of those departments are headed by a coal lobbyist? A former coal lobbyist?

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:19:06] Or oil lobbyist. That's right. And so that's, that's the Trump administration in a nutshell. In 2007, I was successful in co-authoring a law, I was the lead Democrat, to, in the House, to increase fuel economy standards, which President Obama used to increase them to 54.5 miles per gallon. And that's still the largest single

reduction in greenhouse gases of any law ever passed, in any country, at any time, to reduce greenhouse gases. Well, Trump has just told his EPA and Department of Transportation, you just roll that rule back. We don't have to make the vehicles we drive more efficient. And why is that important? Well, because we put 70 percent of the oil we consume into vehicles. So if you don't make it more efficient, then you can't reduce greenhouse gases. But if you double the fuel economy standards, which is what that law does, you back out three million, four million barrels of oil a day that we never have to consume, and the greenhouse gases never went up in the atmosphere. So the oil, the oil industry just went to Trump and, and said, give us permission to pollute again. And so they've it rolled back. It's in court right now. It's why we need Joe Biden as President so that we can make sure that these regulations that are on the books don't get rolled back. And we put a whole new group of even stronger regulations on the books for the future.

**JVN** [00:20:38] Because that's part of that administration lawsuit against California for basically saying like, you know, California insisted that, like, all of the car manufacturers there, like adhere to certain standards and, you know, and the Trump administration said those are too aggressive. And then didn't their EPA, like, sue the state of California for being too aggressive on greenhouse and things?

And then, if, which I also think is interesting, because Republicans are supposed to be the party of, like, states rights and like states kind of like governing themselves. And I've always noticed that that's the case unless it comes to like marijuana reform, greenhouse reform, or rights to reproductive autonomy for people's bodies or LGBTQ stuff. So I think that's interesting.

We do need to take a really quick break and then we'll be right back with more Senator Markey, after this. So welcome back to "Getting Curious," this is Jonathan Van Ness. So one thing that I was thinking about, you know, you have been in, in Washington for some time. You know how these things work. I think it's, I find so much difficulty in breaking down the level of news and the level of information that we need to break down in order to make decisions as voters, as consumers, as family members, as people who need healthcare. And it is just, there's so much to sift through. And so I have a couple of things that I want to sift through really quickly. One of them is, just so people understand, because sometimes I do, I feel like I have to remind myself. When we put gas into our car, that is gasoline, which is based from fossil fuels. Right? Like, isn't it, like, fossil fuels that, like, make gas?

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:22:10] That's correct.

**JVN** [00:22:11] And fossil fuels are made from, like, gigantic fossils, from, like, prehistoric, like, trees and bones and stuff that, like, these certain companies use so that they can sell. You know, and there's, like, Middle Eastern fuel, then there's, like, also, like, fuels that we get from like Texas and Oklahoma and, like, all over the world, because there's this big industry that, like, finite companies have controlled for about 150 years. And there's a finite amount of these fossil fuels. So there's a lot of money being put behind, like, who controls it, how we use it, who sets the price. All of that stuff. So when we're talking about 70 percent of fuels that get put into cars and it's fossil fuels and that's like emissions that cause greenhouse gases, that's so hard for people to understand.

But it's, like, this isn't something that, you know, the word "socialism" is being used as a tool to horrify people and scare people, when in reality, like you were just saying, the richest companies in the world, the richest companies in America have always had socialism. Rich people have always had socialism, which, well, we're peeling that back, because there's so many things to understand, I want to ask you, what is, in like three sentences or less, the concept of socialism? Just to explain to people. Because sometimes I think people just literally don't understand.

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:23:21] Well, we call it "Social Security." So the seniors get the help they need, which they never did, before Franklin Delano Roosevelt, to be able to live with some level of Social Security. You know, Medicare. That's a form of social healthcare for seniors in our country. Medicaid. Having public schools. That's a way of saying that everyone, not just the rich kids, get a good education and everyone will kick in. The roads, which we ride on. That's all the community coming together and saying for the social welfare, everyone gets to kick in a little bit. But you have a huge benefit that you're able to derive from it.

So the government is really, you know, the mechanism by which we take all of the common social problems and we say no family can solve it. So we pool our resources in order to solve the problem. Now, when it comes to renewable energy resources, they call it socialism. When it's tax breaks for oil, gas and coal companies, it's the capitalist system working at its best, in order to make sure that we're able to extract all of these fossil fuels. But when we want to use God's gifts, wind and solar, all of a sudden they want to demonize it. And that's all just paid for by the fossil fuel industry. So they keep their monopoly over how energy is generated and they block our ability to be able to take the very same resources and say, no, there are more ways and better ways and cleaner ways and safer ways and healthier ways that we can generate electricity. And we are ready for this revolution. So it's just a game they play when it benefits them, it's capitalism. When it benefits ordinary families, somehow or other, it becomes socialism. And all it is, is just, it's hypocrisy on stilts. You know, when it comes to corporations.



**JVN** [00:25:28] And especially, you know, when it comes to coal, it's like there are jobs that are, have been in coal, but that, those jobs were put there by the fossil fuel industry. And we could also have jobs, more jobs in wind and solar, if the government propped up wind and solar and invested in wind and solar in the way that the government has historically invested in and propped up oil. So there is enough to go around. But also, I think that humans are good-, we can be great. We can be really great things, really great people. But we also can be really selfish. And sometimes I think that when people talk about the environment, it seems like this nascent thing that, like, that's never going to get to me. It will. This is lit-, people are already dying. People are losing their homes. People are losing their health. And it is. I mean, it is a very real threat that everyone is facing. So it's not just this ambivalent thing that's, like, "Oh, the environment." No, this is really real, we're seeing it all across the board.

I do kind of want to bend into, like, one other little baby thing. You have a primary coming up on September 1st, which Massachusetts is like-. This primary season has been such a season and, you know, you are, you are currently in the primary. I think that it's interesting because when we were talking about, you know, interviewing you on this podcast, in the time before this, our team had said, "You know, like, well, you know, we don't need to endorse anyone. We really just want to find out what, you know, he thinks about things," but in doing the research, honey-. Well, not to call you "honey" twice, but I just, I so do endorse you.

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:27:01] Thank you.

**JVN** [00:27:02] And I don't have the fortune of living in Massachusetts, but I do-. You have such-, you have a track record. You have the experience and you have put yourself in so many positions that were not necessarily favorable, but they were the right thing to do. Especially when it comes to environment, which I think is really important. So I just want to say that. But I do want to talk about, you're running a primary, you know, in this, in a time where, you know, you really can't go knock on doors. You're also running against someone who comes from a classic, you know, American political powerhouse.

I feel like in my research this is kind of a microcosm of where we are in the Democratic Party between a more centralized branch and then a more progressive branch and figuring out who is going to be the people making the decisions. And for me, you know, I endorsed Elizabeth Warren in the Presidential primary. I was just kind of, talking about some of the things that I want Joe Biden to be more progressive about when it comes to his marijuana policies. So I think it's important that we always talk about within our policy kind of the

ideologies of, like, where we could go, how we could get there, etc. So, what do you say about all that?

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:28:13] Well, I start with, we, we have to change campaigning. You know, when you're ordinarily campaigning, it's a handshake and a smile. You're out there talking to people. Now, I've got a mask on. People don't even know if you're smiling. You can't shake hands with them. And so that's a different world. So you have to use Zoom. You have to show up at events, but way socially distanced. You can't really have huge crowds. That's Donald Trump. You have to be very, very careful. So we've had to move it over to more of an online presence. And it's amazing, isn't it? How quickly people have just adapted to Zoom. People now include it as part of their life. And on, on this new social media-dominating campaigns platform, my race has taken off because I've been endorsed by the Sierra Club, endorsed by the League of Conservation Voters, by the NRDC, by Planned Parenthood, by NARAL, by the Human Rights Campaign. The LGBTQ community nationally has endorsed me in this race. By Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez, who is right now running an ad in Massachusetts on my behalf to endorse me as part of this incredible progressive revolution that we need in our country.

So for me, it's just incredibly gratifying to see this progressive left have my back in the race because and in many ways, the Green New Deal is the answer. Medicare for All is the answer. Making sure that we have a comprehensive immigration program for all 11 million immigrants in our country. So we keep those workers here because they are essential workers. That's what we've found out. They have to go to work. They can't Zoom to work. So that's part of who I have been in my career. And so all of that energy rallying to my side has created this phenomenal intergenerational campaign. And a lot of it is driven on Twitter. You know, a lot of it is driven on Instagram. I urge people to go to our Twitter account and you can see what is happening over there. But, but it's, it's exciting to me. And we have a lot of momentum.

It's a dead heat to a certain extent. And you're right. It's, it's, it's Congressman Joe Kennedy running against me. But I have all these progressive groups who all have my back because of what I've done and what my agenda for the future is all about. And it's always about the future in campaigns. And when you partnered with AOC, it's the future. It's, that's what we're talking about.

**JVN** [00:31:20] You are on several committees in the Senate that greatly push the progressive agenda forward on the Senate level. So your primary has, you know, a lot of consequences for, you know, our country. Do you want to talk about, what do you see as some of the biggest consequences of your primary?

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:31:43] Well, obviously, the Green New Deal is on the ballot. On the ballot. That's why all the environmental groups are with me and working hard every single day. It's why the Sunrise Movement is with me. This is the moment. If Donald Trump gets four more years, it's like a death sentence to the planet. We know what the answer is. It's a Green New Deal. You know, while we're waiting for a vaccine to be found for coronavirus, we already know what we need to do for climate change. It's to inoculate the planet with wind and solar and all electric vehicles for the United States to invent them, to get it all around the world the way we did with, with iPhones, the way we did with the Internet. We invented it and went around the world and now people in Africa, Asia, South America have these computers in their pockets that have the same power as the Apollo mission. We did it. We can do it again. So that's on the ballot.

And, and so is just this larger vision of what we have to do in our country to transform it, to make sure that it's all inclusive, that everyone, regardless of race, regardless of income, regardless of country of origin, regardless of sexual preference, is allowed to benefit from a, 100 percent of all the protections in the United States Constitution. And so that is what I have always been about. That's what this campaign is about. That's why people are just rallying to my side. By the thousands in Massachusetts. And that's why it's a great honor just to be on with you. Because that's who you are. If, if we go Google "progressivism." You know, in the future, your picture comes up. So I-

**JVN** [00:33:30] We're going to take a really quick break, and we'll be right back with more Senator Markey after this. Welcome back to "Getting Curious." This is Jonathan Van Ness. So I think one thing that has happened in politics, generally speaking, is that, this, I feel like there has been such a big price put on this idea of being right, whereas I really appreciate a leader who can say, I have learned. I've evolved. I would have made a different decision, etc. So that's, that's one piece of my observation.

My other observation is, is that I've learned from interviewing people, specifically this author and woman who I really look up to called Celeste Watkins-Hayes. She's incredible. She wrote a book called "Remaking a Life," and it looks at Black women's experience of living with HIV. And she's just incredible. But one thing she talks about when we're talking about elections is that when you're electing a President, but this really goes for anyone that you're electing, is you're essentially electing a crisis manager because, you know, for you, as a Senator, so many things are coming to, you know, across your desk that are various levels of crisis, whether it's an impeachable offense, whether it's climate justice, whether it's, there's all sorts of really important crisis level things that you're managing.

At the same time, you also are almost, like, it reminds me of when I'm like in a, in a negotiation with one of, you know, my team. If I'm doing a deal with something. It's like I

want someone on my team who's gonna get me the best deal that I can get. Ew, not to sound like Donald Trump, but it's true. But so you want, because everything at the end of the day is kind of a negotiation. And so the Green New Deal is a negotiation. Everything that's legislate-, legislation is essentially a negotiation. You go in with what you want, like the best version of what you want, and then you've got to deal with those dang Tea Party, Ted Cruz people and then you get as good as you can. But that is what legislation is. Is it a version of negotiation. We're going into such an important Presidential election and you want to, it's like, it's like, are we unifying? Are we, what are we doing? So how can we do all this? How can we get everything we want to get? How can we unify everyone and get through this thing?

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:35:38] Well, I think, first of all, Donald Trump is a uniter, and not a divider. He's uniting the Democratic Party, in a way in which has not been united in a long, long time. And, and we have to just keep that unity as we head into January. So that we have a solid position saying that we are going to pass the same level of reforms that FDR did in 1933. It's our FDR moment.

**JVN** [00:36:10] And what is your opponent's position on that?

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:36:14] Well, again, I'm a leader, I have, I have 500 laws that are put on the books over the years, including fuel economy standards, including, you know, finding the cure for Alzheimer's by 2025. That's a program that I put on the books six years ago. It's going to wind up with 25 to 30 billion dollars being spent to find the cure. It's not a mission to the moon, it's a mission to the mind. Fifteen million Baby Boomers are going to have Alzheimer's if we don't find the cure. So that's, that's my program. The 20 million dollar, 25 million dollar is now at the Centers for Disease Control to study the causes of violence in our society. That never happened before. I beat the NRA. I want NRA to stand for "not relevant anymore" in American politics. That's what we have to do.

**JVN** [00:37:03] I like that acronym.

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:37:04] So for me, you know, I lead and deliver on these big issues. And like you're saying, you got to go in there and say, all right, I'm here. We've got to, we got to, we got to do a deal here to get these big things done for the American people. And that's what I've been doing throughout the entirety of my career, including, by the way, my law, which when I was dealing with the big telecommunications companies and trying to create the broadband revolution, which my laws did. I also said we got to put the Internet on the desk of every poor child in America, in school. And that's the law. That's a 54 billion dollar program so far. That in South Central L.A., Harlem, Roxbury, Massachusetts. The Internet is there for kids. And now I'm fighting on the Senate floor to

make sure that we get 4 billion dollars for the 12 million kids who don't have the Internet at home because these schools are not going back in the traditional way and a lot of learning is going to be at home.

And we know who doesn't have the Internet at home. Black, brown, poor, immigrant kids. And it's going to be, it's going to be a homework gap that leads to a learning gap that leads to an opportunity gap. So what, what I do is I lead and deliver. And I use my kind of blue collar background. You know, my father drove a truck. My mother couldn't go to college because her mother died. And I grew up in that same house in Malden. And I could see them struggling with their bills. I can see families all across America struggling with their bills right now. And so I bring that perspective every day. We need, we need to think big. We need to think big because American families need us to think big right now.

**JVN** [00:38:55] So what's your hope for the future of our Democratic Party?

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:39:00] That we come together, on an agenda that matches the moment. That, that we realize that people are losing their healthcare by the millions. And we need to move to Medicare for All. That the planet is dangerously warming and we don't have an option. We have to have a Green New Deal. We have to have a clean energy revolution. That we just have to stop this era where Donald Trump is demonizing Muslims and Mexicans and women of color and immigrants for his own personal benefit, and that we, as the Democrats, we bring the country together. That we show how everyone contributes to the well-being of our country, and that these lawsuits that they keep bringing against the environment, against the LGBTQ community, against vulnerable communities, that just ends. And that we have a country that matches the better angels of our nature. That, that we lift our gaze to the constellation of possibilities for every family. For every state, for our country and for the world. And that we set our path, not not star like, towards that goal.

**JVN** [00:40:31] That's gorgeous. And then also one last question, how can, and, have you ever seen the movie "Erin Brockovich"?

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:40:41] Yes.

**JVN** [00:40:42] OK. So I want you to put on your best Erin Brockovich energy in this answer. OK? How can listeners, succinctly, kind of convince other more centrist members of our Democratic Party to get in on the left a little bit more? How can we coax folks to think bigger? And why is that so important?

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:41:12] Perfect. Erin Brockovich came to realize that she and her family were being exposed to dangerous things, affecting her family. And she said, I'm not going to sit on the sidelines. I'm not going to agonize. I'm going to organize. I'm going to take them on, because that's not being liberal. That's not being conservative. That's just being pragmatic. And healthcare for everyone, is that liberal or conservative? Or is it just pragmatic? You know, ensuring that we have a sustainable environment? Is that liberal or conservative? If the rivers aren't black anymore with a purple haze over them. If polluters aren't able to dump into the ground and then have kids ultimately get leukemia. Is that liberal or conservative? Making sure that everyone gets to benefit from all of the constitutional protections. Is that liberal or conservative, or is that just the United States Constitution? So I think we're getting a good chance right now to make this case to people all across the country.

And Donald Trump is showing what happens when we have reckless, irresponsible leadership that just completely disregards the overall well-being of our country. And I think it's creating a larger sense of family, larger sense of family, of social cohesion that we're going to need in order to fundamentally transform this country. And I think there's a lot of people out in the, in the suburbs right now who is saying this has to end. It's time for the fundamental change we need. I now realize that I can see it because of coronavirus. I can see it because of George Floyd. I can see what's happening in our country. And I'm ready to be part of that, that change that's necessary. And that's what the Democratic Party has to do. To come together in order to put in place those fundamental changes that embody justice, environmental justice, healthcare justice, educational justice, economic justice, racial justice for everyone in our country.

**JVN** [00:43:24] That's gorge. I mean, I, I know we need to wrap. Is there anything else you want to say, honey, because you have a next term that's on the table and we do have, incumbents have been ousted, but a lot of times for a more progressive newcomer and in your case, I just don't think that that's the case.

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:43:44] Well, again. I lead. I deliver. Greenhouse gases, my laws, gun safety, my laws, AI-, find a cure for Alzheimer's, my laws, put the Internet on the desk of every poor child in America or at home, my laws. Making sure that we have an insider trading law that puts Wall Street bad guys behind bars when they, when they hurt ordinary families. That's my law. I have 500 of them. I know how to do it. We're going to need people who know how to do it in 2021, to get it done. And I have done it. And my opponent does not have that kind of a record. He's been in the United States Congress now for 8 years, and he's had plenty of time to demonstrate that capacity to be able to bring fundamental change to our country. I have done it. He has not. And I think that's

really what's going to decide this election, because the progressive left has rallied to my side because they know I know how to get things done.

**JVN** [00:44:48] And ultimately, they know that you will be a more aggressive progressive negotiator on our behalf at the United States Senate. So with that being said, I know you got like, wait no, I have one more question. I know you got to go, but is there, what's like the biggest vote you're doing today? What are doing tomorrow? What's it like to cast a Senate vote? Really quick. Just tell me anything you want to say that we didn't talk to you. Like literally anything for the last, like, minute.

**SENATOR ED MARKEY** [00:45:10] Well, I just voted on another really unqualified person to work at the Dep-, work at the Department of Energy to be the Deputy Energy Secretary. And on that, I was a big thumbs down because it doesn't represent at all the fundamental progressive change we need. In fact, it's just a further look in the world through a rearview mirror way of looking at energy policy in our country. And we just have to end it. We just have to clean up the Department of Energy, EPA. EPA now stands for "Every Polluters Ally." So is the Department of Energy. It's just time to change. And then I just cast that vote, ran over here and jumped on with you, Jonathan. So we could have this incredible chat. And I really have loved being with you.

**JVN** [00:46:08] Well, thank you so much, Senator Ed Markey, for your time. I know you have a lot of important things to do and a lot of important people to virtually see. I hope that you get that one Representative Gohmert, out of there with his Covid ass living in his office, and he has really got to deal with that. That is so crazy. But have a good day, and thank you so much. And be-, be careful. And we're so proud of you.

You've been listening to Getting Curious with me, Jonathan Van Ness. My guest this week was Massachusetts representative and co-author of the Green New Deal bill, Senator Ed Markey. You'll find links to his work in the episode description of whatever you're listening to the show on. Our theme music is "Freak" by Quiñ - thanks to her for letting us use it. If you enjoyed our show, introduce a friend - show them how to subscribe. Follow us on Instagram & Twitter @CuriousWithJVN. Our socials are run and curated by Emily Bossak. Getting Curious is produced by me, Erica Getto, Emily Bossak, Rae Ellis, Chelsea Jacobson, and Colin Anderson, with associate production by Alex Murfey.