

Muslim magazine editor Amani al-Khatahtbeh announces Congress run

by [Aysha Khan](#) in the [May 6, 2020](#) issue



(AP Photo/Emily Leshner)

Amani al-Khatahtbeh, founder of [Muslim Girl](#), has become the first Muslim woman to run for Congress in New Jersey.

On April 4, al-Khatahtbeh announced her mission “to make democracy happen” by unseating 16-term Democratic incumbent Rep. Frank Pallone, chair

of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, in the state’s Sixth Congressional District.

A New Brunswick native, al-Khatahtbeh studied political science and the Middle East at Rutgers University in the district.

“This moment is a stark reminder that we can no longer wait for incremental change. Our leadership can and must put the health and well-being of working families and the most vulnerable among us front and center,” al-Khatahtbeh said in a statement. “I’m proud to represent a coalition of underrepresented communities in what’s nothing less than a historic fight for our lives.”

Al-Khatahtbeh’s campaign platform prioritizes progressive causes, including Medicare for All, the Green New Deal, student loan cancellation, tuition-free public universities, criminal justice reform, and a federal \$15 minimum wage.

And, thanks to the coronavirus outbreak—which has hospitalized her campaign manager—al-Khatahtbeh’s 2020 campaign ahead of the state’s June primary will be entirely digital.

Al-Khatahtbeh, who is the daughter of Jordanian immigrants, told Bustle that she saw Rep. Ilhan Omar (D., Minn.) and Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D., Mich.) as role models for national leadership and has developed a friendship with both legislators. Ahead of her run, al-Khatahtbeh said, Omar called and gave her an “amazing pep talk.”

“For us, as women of color, once we get in there, we have to open the door for others to follow,” al-Khatahtbeh said. “She told me to expect that some people I counted on are going to let me down, but that [will] be counteracted by people coming out of the woodwork to have my back. That is sure to overpower anything else.” —Religion News Service