

BIDEN-SANDERS UNITY TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

COMBATING THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND PURSUING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Climate change is a global emergency. We have no time to waste in taking action to protect Americans' lives and futures. From Houston, Texas, to Paradise, California; from San Juan, Puerto Rico, to Davenport, Iowa, the last four years have seen record-breaking storms, devastating wildfires, and historic floods. Urban and rural communities alike have suffered tens of billions of dollars in economic losses. Dams have failed catastrophically in Michigan. Neighborhoods have been all but wiped off the map in Florida. Farmers' crops have been drowned in their fields across the Midwest. Thousands of Americans have died. And President Trump still callously and willfully denies the science that explains why so many are suffering.

Like so many crises facing the United States, the impacts of climate change are not evenly distributed in our society or our economy. Communities of color, low-income families, and indigenous communities have long suffered disproportionate and cumulative harm from air pollution, water pollution, and toxic sites. Highways have been built to enforce racial segregation in our cities, with federal dollars and federal policy support. Coal companies have been allowed to reduce or ignore their obligations to fund retirees' promised health care benefits and pensions. From Flint, Michigan, to the Navajo Nation, to Lowndes County, Alabama, millions of Americans have been denied access to clean, safe drinking water and even the most basic wastewater infrastructure. And although the youngest generations of Americans have contributed the least to this calamity, they stand to lose the most as they suffer from the impacts of runaway carbon pollution for decades to come.

Scientists inform us we must achieve net-zero carbon emissions across our economy as quickly as possible in order to avoid the worst consequences of the climate crisis. The United States—and the world—is currently heading well over the remaining carbon budget allowed to achieve that goal.

Democrats believe there is a better way. We can and must build a thriving, equitable, and globally competitive clean energy economy that puts workers and communities first and leaves no one behind. We will help rebuild our economy from the COVID-19 pandemic and President Trump's recession by mobilizing historic, transformative public and private investments to launch a clean energy revolution. We will use federal resources and authorities across all agencies to accelerate development of a clean energy economy and deploy proven clean energy solutions; create millions of family-supporting and union jobs; upgrade and make resilient our energy, water, wastewater, and transportation infrastructure; and develop and manufacture next-generation technologies to address the climate crisis right here in the United States. And we will do all this with an eye to equity, access, benefits, and ownership opportunities for frontline communities—because Democrats believe we must embed environmental justice and climate justice at the heart of our policy and governing agenda.

We will take immediate action to reverse the Trump Administration's dangerous and destructive rollbacks of critical climate and environmental protections. We will rejoin the Paris Climate

Agreement and, on Day One, seek higher ambition from nations around the world, putting the United States back in the position of global leadership where we belong. We will restore protections for irreplaceable public lands and waters, from Bears Ears National Monument to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. We will follow science and the law by reducing harmful methane and carbon pollution from the energy sector.

Democrats will make investments to create millions of family-supporting and union jobs in clean energy generation, energy efficiency, clean transportation, advanced manufacturing, and sustainable agriculture across America. We believe that federal investments in infrastructure should help cut carbon pollution, build resilience and protect communities from the impacts of climate change, promote racial equity and sustainable economic development, and come with livable wages and robust labor protections that empower workers.

All jobs in the clean energy economy should provide an opportunity to join a union. Democrats will restore and protect workers' rights to organize and bargain collectively. We will build a diverse pipeline of talent in the clean energy economy by increasing access to industry-based credentialing programs and registered apprenticeships.

The clean energy economy must represent the diversity of America. We will invest in the education and training of underrepresented groups, including people of color, low-income Americans, women, veterans, people with disabilities, and unemployed energy workers for jobs in clean energy-related industries.

Democrats will also mobilize a diverse new generation of young workers through a corps and cohort challenged to conserve our public lands; deliver new clean energy, including to low-income communities and communities of color; and address the changing climate, including through pre-apprenticeship opportunities, joint labor-management registered apprenticeships for training, and direct-hire programs that put good-paying and union jobs within reach for more Americans.

We agree with scientists and public health experts that the United States—and the world—must achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible, and no later than 2050.

To reach net-zero emissions as rapidly as possible, Democrats commit to eliminating carbon pollution from power plants by 2035 through technology-neutral standards for clean energy and energy efficiency. We will dramatically expand solar and wind energy deployment through community-based and utility-scale systems. Within five years, we will install 500 million solar panels, including eight million solar roofs and community solar energy systems, and 60,000 made-in-America wind turbines.

Democrats believe that any clean energy infrastructure project financed with federal support, including through the tax code, should come with robust wage and labor requirements. We will build a modern electric grid by investing in interstate transmission projects and advanced, 21st century grid technologies to power communities with clean electricity, including federal support to build sustainable and resilient energy grids in rural America and in tribal areas lacking energy infrastructure. We will reduce methane pollution through robust federal standards and targeted

support for repairing and replacing aging distribution systems, which will create hundreds of thousands of jobs, including for the same pipefitters, insulators, and other workers who built the systems in the first place and who know best how to protect our communities from methane pollution.

Democrats will lower families' energy bills by making energy-saving upgrades to up to two million low-income households and affordable and public housing units within five years, creating hundreds of thousands of jobs and promoting safe, healthy and efficient homes. To address the nationwide shortage of affordable housing, we will supercharge investment through the Housing Trust Fund to greatly increase the number of energy-efficient affordable housing units on the market and create jobs. We will address barriers and increase funding for programs that enable energy efficiency improvements for low-income families in urban and rural areas, including through the Weatherization Assistance Program and the Rural Utilities Service.

We will set a bold, national goal of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions for all new buildings by 2030, on the pathway to creating a 100 percent clean building sector. Within five years, we will incentivize tens of billions of dollars in private-sector investment to retrofit four million buildings, including helping local governments save money and cut pollution by weatherizing and upgrading energy systems in hospitals, schools, public housing, and municipal buildings. Democrats will encourage states and cities to adopt energy-efficient building codes and address barriers to energy efficiency upgrades, and leverage the federal footprint to model net-zero and 100 percent clean energy building solutions.

Democrats affirm California's statutory authority under the Clean Air Act to set its own emissions standards for cars and trucks. We will immediately convene California and other states with labor, auto industry, and environmental leaders to inform ambitious executive actions that will enable the United States to lead the way in building a clean, 21st-century transportation system and stronger domestic manufacturing base powered by accessible, high-wage, union jobs. Democrats will move quickly to reestablish strong standards for clean cars and trucks that consider the most recent advances in technology, and accelerate the adoption of zero-emission vehicles in the United States while reclaiming market share for domestically-produced vehicles.

We will reduce harmful air pollution and protect our children's health by transitioning the entire fleet of 500,000 school buses to American-made, zero-emission alternatives within five years. We will lead by example in the public sector by transitioning the 3 million vehicles in the federal, state, and local fleets to zero-emission vehicles. Democrats will additionally support private adoption of affordable low-pollution and zero-emission vehicles by partnering with state and local governments to install at least 500,000 public charging stations from coast to coast. We will increase investments in public transportation, understanding that the United States currently lags behind many other developed countries in the quality and availability of clean, efficient, accessible public transportation. We will recommit America to the task of protecting our citizens from dangerous pollution and work to clean our air, our water, and eliminate toxins emitted from port facilities, which disproportionately harm low-income communities and communities of color.

Democrats believe we can build the clean energy infrastructure of the future using American-made materials. We will support measures to build a clean, equitable, and globally competitive manufacturing sector, including national Buy Clean and Buy America standards to incentivize production of low-carbon building and construction materials, like steel and cement, here in the United States.

Democrats will partner with farmers to make the American agriculture sector the first in the world to achieve net-zero emissions, opening up new sources of income for farmers in the process. We will expand federal programs to help farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners pursue high-productivity, lower-emission, and regenerative agricultural practices in order to help build more resilient, vibrant, local and regional food systems. We will substantially increase investments in voluntary conservation programs, which generate economic and environmental benefits for farmers and their surrounding communities. We will support healthy coastal communities and marine ecosystems to sustain and enhance our economic well-being, including in the fishing, tourism and clean energy industries.

Every American has the right to breathe clean air, drink clean water, and live without fear of exposure to toxic waste. And all Americans should benefit from the clean energy economy—especially those who have been left out and left behind for generations. Democrats will create an environmental justice fund to make historic investments across federal agencies aimed at eliminating legacy pollution, which disproportionately causes illness and premature death in communities of color, low-income communities, and indigenous communities, including protecting children’s health by replacing lead service lines and remediating lead paint in homes and schools; remediating Superfund and other contaminated sites; and ensuring housing and schools have adequate plumbing and safe wastewater disposal systems.

Democrats will work with affected frontline communities to develop a screening and mapping tool to ensure racial and socioeconomic equity in federal climate, energy, and infrastructure programs. We will support locally-driven economic development and commit to directing a significant portion of clean energy and sustainable infrastructure investments to historically marginalized communities to help create local jobs and reduce energy poverty, install clean energy technologies including community solar, build resilience to climate change impacts, expand access to green space and outdoor recreation opportunities, improve public health, and restore ecosystems.

Democrats recognize the historic wrongs that have been perpetrated against Native American tribes and communities, including with respect to infrastructure permitting decisions. We commit to managing federal actions and federal undertakings in a manner that honors the trust responsibility; respects the nation-to-nation relationship and sovereignty of tribes; and protects treaty and other reserved rights, natural and cultural resources, and sacred sites of federally-recognized Indian tribes. We commit to upholding leasing and rights-of-way regulations that strengthen tribal sovereignty and ensure tribal consent on projects involving land in which tribes own even a fractional interest. We additionally commit to creating a more robust and meaningful consultation process that is consistent across all federal agencies. Democrats commit to early and ongoing consultation with tribes to identify and work to appropriately mitigate or address concerns regarding major infrastructure projects.

Already, the impacts of climate change are being felt in communities across the country, and the American people are paying the price. Democrats commit to reducing climate risks and building back better after disasters and climate-fueled catastrophes in a resilient, green and just manner. In doing so, we will prioritize disproportionately exposed, frontline and vulnerable communities and rectify the inequities and inefficiencies of disaster response, including transparent and timely reporting and oversight. We will empower local communities to become more resilient to the impacts of the climate crisis. We will partner with states and local communities to make smart investments to avoid the loss of life and property, prevent flooding, mitigate disaster risks and adapt to costly, growing climate impacts.

Democrats will empower and stand with workers and communities who have put their health and lives on the line and who have been impacted by the changing energy market, including by fighting to protect retirees' health and pension benefits, shoring up the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund, and increasing funding for the Appalachian Regional Commission to support locally-driven economic development priorities. We will hold fossil fuel companies accountable for cleaning up abandoned mine lands, oil and gas wells, and industrial sites, so these facilities no longer pollute local environments and can be safely repurposed to support new economic activity, including in the heart of coal country.

Democrats will support the most historically far reaching public investments, in addition to private sector incentives, for research, development, demonstration, and deployment of next-generation technologies, once again making the United States the world's leader in innovation. We will challenge the best and brightest scientists, innovators, and entrepreneurs in the world to pursue breakthrough opportunities in energy storage, heavy-duty trucking and freight solutions, sustainable aviation fuels, and direct air capture and net-negative emissions technologies. We will advance innovative technologies that create cost-effective pathways for industries to decarbonize, including carbon capture and sequestration that permanently stores greenhouse gases and advanced nuclear that eliminates risks associated with conventional nuclear technology, while ensuring environmental justice and other overburdened communities are protected from increases in cumulative pollution. All of these investments will create jobs for blue-collar workers, including in fenceline communities, help decarbonize American industries, and create valuable new exports to help mitigate climate change around the world.

America's system of national parks and monuments, public lands, and marine protected areas are treasures that should be held in trust for future generations. Democrats will immediately reverse the Trump Administration's harmful rollbacks of protections for national monuments like Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument. Democrats will protect wildlife habitats and biodiversity, slow extinction rates, and grow America's natural carbon sinks by ensuring 30 percent of our lands and waters are conserved by 2030. We support fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund to increase resources for conserving public lands and waters and incentivizing voluntary conservation efforts on private lands.

Finally, Democrats recognize that the United States does not stand alone in the fight against climate change and global environmental degradation. Beyond immediately rejoining the Paris

Climate Agreement, including the Green Climate Fund, and encouraging our partners and allies to increase their ambition to reduce their own carbon pollution, Democrats will work to ratify the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol and move expeditiously to phase out super-polluting hydrofluorocarbons in the United States.

We will restore U.S. global climate leadership by working with world leaders to catalyze increased global investments in clean energy solutions and climate resilience, including to help low-income countries move along a more sustainable development path. Democrats will also ensure that America's service missions abroad, including those through the Peace Corps, Fulbright fellowships, and USAID, expand their calls to action to include reducing carbon pollution, safeguarding vulnerable populations from climate impacts, and ensuring a sustainable planet for all.

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PROTECTING COMMUNITIES BY REFORMING OUR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Our criminal justice system is failing to keep communities safe—and failing to deliver justice. America is the land of the free, and yet more of our people are behind bars, per capita, than anywhere else in the world. Instead of making evidence-based investments in education, jobs, health care, and housing that are proven to keep communities safe and prevent crime from occurring in the first place, our system has criminalized poverty, overpoliced and underserved Black and brown communities, and cut public services. Instead of offering the incarcerated the opportunity to turn their lives around, our prisons are overcrowded and continue to rely on inhumane methods of punishment. Instead of treating those who have served their time as full citizens upon their return to society, too many of our laws continue to punish the formerly incarcerated, erecting barriers to housing, employment, education and voting rights for millions of Americans.

Incarcerated people suffer from serious mental health and substance use disorders at higher rates than the general population. Yet, our country has chosen time and again to criminalize mental illness and substance use, instead of building an equitable and affordable health care system. Black Americans make up 12 percent of the U.S. population, but 33 percent of the prison population. Latinos make up 16 percent of the U.S. population, but 23 percent of the prison population. Yet, our country has chosen time and again to treat people of color more harshly than white Americans, from over-policing to prosecution to sentencing, instead of making investments to build safe, healthy, and thriving communities. We must build a criminal justice system that is grounded in evidence-based practices, not political slogans and sound bites.

Democrats believe we need to overhaul the criminal justice system from top to bottom. Police brutality is a stain on the soul of our nation. It is unacceptable that millions of people in our country have good reason to fear they may lose their lives in a routine traffic stop, or while standing on a street corner, or while playing with a toy in a public park. It is unacceptable that Black parents must have “the talk” with their children, to try to protect them from the very police officers who are supposed to be sworn to protect and serve them. It is unacceptable that more than 1,000 people, a quarter of them Black, are killed by police every year. Democrats also recognize that all too often, systematic cuts to public services have left police officers on the front lines of responding to social challenges for which they have not been trained, from homelessness to mental health crises to the opioid epidemic. We can and must do better for our communities.

Democrats know we can end the era of mass incarceration and dramatically reduce the number of Americans held in jails and prisons while continuing to reduce crime rates, which have fallen steadily from their peak nearly three decades ago. This is the moment to root out systemic racism in our criminal justice system and our society, and reimagine public safety for the benefit of our people and the character of our country.

We must start by preventing people from entering the criminal justice system in the first place. Democrats believe we must break the school-to-prison pipeline that sees children of color arrested in their classrooms for misbehavior that ought to be handled in the principal’s office,

and build a school to opportunity pipeline instead. We support re-issuing federal guidance from the Department of Education and the Department of Justice to prevent the disparate disciplinary treatment of children of color in school and educational settings. Democrats believe every school should have sufficient funding to employ guidance counselors, social workers, or school psychologists to help guarantee age-appropriate and racially equitable student disciplinary practices, rather than turning to police to resolve these issues.

A growing number of states and courts have recognized it is unjust—and unjustifiable—to punish children and teenagers as harshly as adults. We believe that if you aren't old enough to drink, you aren't old enough to be sentenced to life without parole. The federal government will incentivize states to stop incarcerating kids and develop community-based alternatives to prison and detention centers for youth and invest in after-school programs, community centers, and summer jobs to provide opportunities for young people at risk. And Democrats believe that children who do enter the juvenile justice system should be given a true second chance, including by automatically sealing and expunging juvenile records.

Democrats believe we must ensure real accountability for individual and systemic misconduct in our police departments, prevent law enforcement from becoming unnecessarily entangled in the everyday lives of Americans, and reimagine policing for the benefit and safety of the American people. In recent years, some innovative police departments have enacted evidence-based reforms to change their approach: investing in robust training and putting in place—and, even more crucially, enforcing—strong standards governing conflict resolution, de-escalation, and use of force. We must build on these evidence-based approaches and implement them nationwide.

Democrats will establish strict national standards governing the use of force, including permitting deadly force only when necessary and a last resort to prevent an imminent threat to life. We will require immediate application of these standards to all federal law enforcement agencies and condition federal grants on their adoption at the state and local level. We will require officer training in effective nonviolent tactics, appropriate use of force, implicit bias, and peer intervention, both at the academy and on the job. And we will ban racial and religious profiling in law enforcement.

It is past time to end the failed “War on Drugs,” which has imprisoned millions of Americans—disproportionately people of color—and hasn't been effective in reducing drug use. Democrats support policies that will reorient our public safety approach toward prevention, and away from over-policing—including by making evidence-based investments in jobs, housing, education, and the arts that will make our nation fairer, freer, and more prosperous.

Democrats will reinvigorate community policing approaches, so officers on the beat better serve the neighborhoods they work in, and make smart investments to incentivize departments to build effective partnerships with social workers and mental health and substance use counselors to help respond to frontline public health challenges. Body cameras are not a panacea, but Democrats believe they can help improve accountability and transparency; we support their continued use and will promulgate best practices to protect personal privacy. Democrats believe weapons of war have no place on our streets, and will once again limit the sale and transfer of

surplus military weapons to domestic law enforcement agencies—a policy President Trump reversed immediately upon taking office.

We cannot create trust without holding those in power accountable for their actions. Democrats will reinvigorate pattern-or-practice investigations into police misconduct at the Department of Justice, and strengthen them through new subpoena powers and expanded oversight to address systemic misconduct by prosecutors. Far too often, the law has shielded police officers who stand accused of heinous violations of civil and human rights. Democrats support lowering the intent standard for federally prosecuting law enforcement officials for civil rights violations. We will also act to ensure that victims of federal, state, or local law enforcement abuses of power can seek justice through civil litigation by reining in the doctrine of qualified immunity to increase police accountability.

The American people deserve access to timely and accurate data on activities supported by their tax dollars, including policing. We will collect and publish data on the use of force in police departments across the country to promote transparency and accountability. To increase transparency and improve federal, state, and local law enforcement hiring practices, Democrats will also establish a national registry of officers who have been found to have abused their power.

Democrats also support measures to increase diversity among the ranks of police departments, so our law enforcement agencies look more like the communities they serve. And we will seek increased funding for officer health and well-being in police departments across the country, including for personal safety equipment and mental health services.

Substance use disorders are diseases, not a crimes. Democrats believe no one should be in prison solely because they use drugs. Democrats will decriminalize marijuana use and reschedule it through executive action on the federal level. We will support legalization of medical marijuana, and believe states should be able to make their own decisions about recreational use. The Justice Department should not launch federal prosecutions of conduct that is legal at the state level. All past criminal convictions for cannabis use should be automatically expunged. And rather than involving the criminal justice system, Democrats support increased use of drug courts, harm reduction interventions, and treatment diversion programs for those struggling with substance use disorders.

Poverty is not a crime, and it should not be treated as one. Democrats support eliminating the use of cash bail and believe no one should be imprisoned merely for failing to pay fines or fees. Equal justice under the law should not be contingent on the ability to pay for quality legal representation, which is why we support increasing funding for public defenders.

Sentencing decisions should be based on the facts of each case, including the severity of the offense and individuals' circumstances. Democrats support allowing judges to determine appropriate sentences, which is why we will fight to repeal federal mandatory minimums, incentivize states to do the same, and make all sentencing reductions retroactive so judges can reconsider past cases where their hands were tied. We believe it is long past time to end the federal sentencing disparity between crack and powdered cocaine, which has contributed to the

disproportionate imprisonment of people of color. And Democrats continue to support abolishing the death penalty.

Our courts should reflect our country. Democrats will appoint people to the bench who are committed to seeing justice be served, and treating each case on its merits. We will nominate and confirm federal judges who have diverse backgrounds and experiences, including as public defenders, legal aid attorneys, and civil rights lawyers.

Democrats are proud that the Obama-Biden administration commuted the sentences of more than 1,700 people serving unjust sentences following thorough review of their individual cases, and we support the continued use of the President's clemency powers to secure the release of those serving unduly long sentences. We also support establishing an independent clemency board to ensure an appropriate, effective process for using clemency, especially to address systemic racism and other priorities.

Private profit should not motivate the provision of vital public services, including in the criminal justice system. Democrats support ending the use of private prisons and private detention centers, and will take steps to eliminate profiteering from diversion programs, commercial bail, electronic monitoring, prison commissaries, and reentry and treatment programs. We also believe that too many of our jails and prisons subject people to inhumane treatment, and will work to end practices like solitary confinement for adults and juveniles. Prisoners must not be denied access to vital medical care or unnecessarily exposed to disease, as they have been during the COVID-19 pandemic. And Democrats will pursue a holistic approach to rehabilitation, increasing support for programs that provide educational opportunities, including pursuing college degrees, for those in the criminal justice system, both in prison and upon release.

Democrats believe in redemption. We must deepen our commitment to helping those who have served their time re-enter society, earn a good living, and participate in our democracy as the full citizens they are. We will aim to ensure access to transitional housing for returning citizens, support expanded access to mental health and substance use treatment, and will stop the practice of reincarcerating people for technical violations of probation or parole. Democrats support federal and state efforts to "ban the box" and will make it easier for returning citizens to access work opportunities through the Job Corps. The formerly incarcerated should not be blocked from exercising their voting rights or accessing public services, including Pell Grants and nutrition assistance, available to other free citizens of the United States. Continuing to punish a person after they have rejoined our communities is both cruel and counterproductive.

Chiraag Bains, Co-chair
Rep. Bobby Scott, Co-chair
TN State Sen. Raumesh Akbari
SC State Rep. Justin Bamberg
Vanita Gupta
Fmr. Attorney General Eric Holder
Symone Sanders
Stacey Walker

BUILDING A STRONGER, FAIRER ECONOMY

The economy is not working for the American people. In a matter of weeks, the abject failure of President Trump and his Administration to competently respond to the COVID-19 pandemic erased all the job gains made since the Obama-Biden administration pulled the country out of the Great Recession, and plunged the economy into recession once more.

But our economy was fundamentally flawed even before the novel coronavirus sickened millions and killed more than 130,000 Americans. Working families' incomes have been stagnant for decades, while the cost of basic needs—from housing to health care, higher education to child care—keep rising at precipitous rates. Meanwhile, the rich have been capturing a larger and larger share of the economic pie, with incomes for the top 1 percent growing five times faster than those of the bottom 90 percent.

America bills itself as the land of opportunity, but intergenerational mobility has plummeted; children born in the United States are less likely to move up the income ladder than those in Canada, Denmark, or the United Kingdom. Women still earn just 82 cents to every dollar men earn, with even greater disparities for women of color. Wage gaps between Black and white workers at all levels of education have grown wider since 2000. And there is a persistent, pernicious racial wealth gap that holds millions of Americans back, with the typical white household holding 10 times more wealth than the typical Black family.

That's bad for our economy, it's bad for our democracy, and it's bad for the soul of our nation.

That is why Democrats commit to forging a new social and economic contract with the American people—a contract that invests in the people and promotes shared prosperity, not one that benefits only big corporations and the wealthiest few. A new contract that recognizes all Americans have a right to quality, affordable health care. One that affirms housing is a right and not a privilege, and which makes a commitment that no one will be homeless or go hungry in the richest country on earth. A new economic contract that raises wages and restores workers' rights to organize, join a union, and collectively bargain. One that at last supports working families and the middle class by securing equal pay for women, paid family leave for all, and ensuring racial equity. A new economic compact that provides access for all to reliable and affordable banking and financial services. One that treats the formerly incarcerated as the returning citizens they are, and that pulls down the barriers to housing, employment, and the ballot box that for too long have turned even minor infractions into life sentences. A new social and economic compact that at last grapples honestly with America's long and ongoing history of racism and disenfranchisement, of segregation and discrimination, of economic exclusion and political suppression, and invests instead in building equity and mobility for the communities of color and Native American communities who have been left out and left behind for generations.

Democrats stand ready to take immediate, decisive action to pull the economy out of President Trump's recession by investing in infrastructure, care work, clean energy, and small businesses to put tens of millions of Americans to work in good-paying jobs, shoring up state and local budgets to save jobs and protect public health in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and enacting

fundamental reforms to address systemic racism and entrenched income and wealth inequality in our economy and our financial system.

Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic and President Trump's Recession

When we lack competent, experienced, compassionate leaders in government, the American people suffer. That is the situation we find ourselves in with the novel coronavirus. President Trump and his administration missed multiple opportunities to protect the American people from this deadly pathogen. Instead of recognizing the danger and confronting it head on, President Trump lied to the American people about the disease's severity, its transmissibility, and the threat it posed to our economy and our health care system.

Make no mistake: President Trump's abject failure to respond forcefully and capably to the COVID-19 pandemic—his failure to lead—makes him responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of Americans and for the pandemic-induced recession that has followed.

COVID-19 has laid bare deep fault lines in our economy, our society, and our health care system. Black Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and women have suffered disproportionately due to the COVID-19 pandemic and President Trump's recession, and so far have received far less than their fair share of economic relief. Democrats are committed to using every available tool to beat back this pandemic, which continues to sicken thousands and kill hundreds of Americans per day, and to prevent our country from suffering this pain again.

Solving the public health crisis posed by the pandemic is the surest way to get the economy back on track. Countries that have taken aggressive measures to address the COVID-19 pandemic and stop chains of infection from spreading are poised to have stronger, faster recoveries than the United States.

But containing the pandemic won't be enough to repair the damage President Trump has done to our economy and to the American people.

During acute economic downturns, Democrats believe that we must take care of our workforce and aim to keep workers whole. We will reform the current unemployment insurance system to enable more workers to remain attached to their jobs, including by promoting payroll support and work-sharing programs with generous rates of wage replacement and requirements that employers maintain workers' benefit programs. For those workers who do lose their jobs, we will expand the unemployment insurance system to cover more workers, including independent contractors, gig, part-time, and tipped workers, and raise wage replacement rates, which are far too low in many states. Democrats will also make long-overdue investments to upgrade states' technology to make sure that unemployed workers can quickly and efficiently access the benefits they are owed.

To prevent President Trump's recession from becoming a depression, Democrats believe we must act immediately to make ambitious investments that will create jobs. We urgently need to support state and local governments, which are suffering severe budget shortfalls due to declines in tax revenues while being asked to shoulder the burden of COVID-related services and rising unemployment. State and local budget cuts translate quickly into lost jobs in education, health

care, and social services—all fields where we need to be increasing employment to meet the needs of the American people. Democrats will extend significant aid to state and local governments to address these budget shortfalls, and condition state and federal aid on maintaining and expanding public-sector employment, including provisions to protect workers' rights.

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit small businesses especially hard. Democrats support making significant, immediate grants and loans to help small businesses make payroll, pay rent and other costs, and keep their doors open when possible. And we will impose rigorous oversight on big corporations seeking financial assistance to weather the pandemic and the recession, to ensure that federal dollars support keeping workers on payroll, not enriching CEOs or shareholders. Taxpayer money should not be used to pay out dividends, fund stock buybacks or give raises to executives.

Paid sick leave is a necessity even under normal circumstances, but in a pandemic, it's a matter of national security. We will immediately enact robust paid sick leave protections as part of the COVID-19 response for all workers in the economy, including contractors, gig workers, domestic workers, and the self-employed. And Democrats will take immediate action to protect workers on the job where the Trump Administration has neglected them, including by issuing an infectious disease workplace safety standard through the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

As millions of Americans have stayed at home to prevent the spread of the pandemic, it is plain to see that in the 21st century, the Internet is not optional: It is a vital tool for participating in the economy, and all Americans need access to high-speed, affordable broadband service. Democrats will take action to prevent states from blocking municipalities and rural co-ops from building publicly-owned broadband networks, and increase federal support for municipal broadband. We will increase public investment in rural broadband infrastructure and offer low-income Americans subsidies for accessing high-speed internet through the Lifeline program, so children and families can fully participate in school, work, and life from their homes. And Democrats will restore the FCC's clear authority to take strong enforcement action against broadband providers who violate net neutrality principles through blocking, throttling, paid prioritization, or other measures that create artificial scarcity and raise consumer prices for this vital service.

Protecting Workers and Families and Creating Millions of Jobs Across America

Americans deserve an economy that works for everyone—not just for the wealthy and the well-connected. But our system has been rigged against the American people. Democrats believe that it is a moral and an economic imperative that we support working families by rebuilding the American middle class for the 21st century, making sure this time that everyone can make it and thrive, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, age, or ZIP code.

Raising Wages and Promoting Workers' Rights

Democrats will fight to raise wages for working people and improve job quality and security, including by raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour. We know that strong American labor unions help increase wages and job standards for workers across the economy, which is why Democrats will prioritize passing the PRO Act and restoring workers' rights, including the right to launch secondary boycotts. We will repeal so-called "right to work" laws that undermine worker power and lead to lower wages and less protection for workers across the economy. And we will take action to rein in anti-competitive corporate power by rewriting the rules that have undermined workers' ability to advocate for themselves, including non-compete clauses, no-poaching agreements, and contracts that force workers into mandatory arbitration to resolve violations of employment laws.

Democrats will recognize unions with majority sign-up—via so-called "card check" processes—and ban captive audience meetings, which employers use to bully and browbeat workers. We will take action to guarantee that when workers come to the table, they are able to bargain with the employers who actually hold the power, including franchisors, and will direct the National Labor Relations Board to enforce the law by penalizing companies that bargain in bad faith with their workers.

Taxpayer dollars should never flow to employers who steal workers' wages, violate labor laws, or engage in union-busting, and Democrats will guarantee that they won't. We know that when employers feel free to abuse immigrant workers, all workers suffer. That is why we support the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights and the POWER Act, and will enforce wage, hour, health, and safety rules across the economy. And we will strengthen labor rights for the more than 20 million public-sector employees in the United States, including by providing a federal guarantee for public-sector employees to bargain for better pay and benefits and the working conditions they deserve, and vigorously protecting all private-sector workers' right to strike without fear of coercion, interference, and undue delay. We will also establish the federal government's role in promoting and facilitating collective bargaining and helping the parties bring their negotiations to a rapid and successful conclusion, including under the Railway Labor Act, and committing to a high standard for intervening in strikes.

We cannot hope to raise wages without taking on the profound racial biases at work in our employment system. The wage gap between Black workers and white workers is higher today than it was 20 years ago. The misguided and racist federal war on drugs and the systematic criminalization of poverty means that one in three Black men—and one in six Latino men—will spend time in jail or prison at some point in their lives, reducing their lifetime earnings and making it harder to get a job upon release and build family and community resources. It takes a typical Black woman 19 months to earn what a typical white man earns in 12 months—and for a typical Latina, it takes almost two years.

Democrats believe we need to be much more proactive and aggressive in rooting out discrimination in our employment system. We will increase funding to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and increase their authority to initiate directed investigations into civil rights violations and violations of the rights of people with disabilities. Federal contractors

should be required to develop and disclose plans to recruit and promote people of color, women, people with disabilities, and veterans—and be held accountable for delivering.

Enacting Robust Work-Family Policies

The United States is alone among advanced economies in guaranteeing neither paid sick leave nor paid family leave for all workers. This puts excessive burdens on working families, and especially working mothers, even in the best of times, and is catastrophic for public health in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Democrats will implement a high-quality paid family leave system that protects workers from the unfair choice between attending to urgent health or caretaking needs and earning a paycheck. We will fight to ensure all employers provide at least 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave for all workers and family units, to enable new parents to recover from childbirth and bond with their newborns or adopted children and allow all workers to take extended time off to care for themselves or an ailing relative. Democrats will also work to enact universal, high-quality pre-kindergarten programs for 3- and 4-year-olds, and expand the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit to help make child care more affordable, and make significant new investments to increase quality child care options for parents and improve compensation and benefits for child care providers.

We will work to reform the tax code to be more progressive and equitable, and reduce barriers for families who qualify to benefit from targeted tax breaks. Our tax system has been rigged against the American people by big corporations and their lobbyists, and by Republican politicians who dole out breaks to their biggest donors while leaving families to struggle. A guiding principle across our tax agenda is that the wealthiest Americans can shoulder more of the tax burden, including in particular by making investors pay the same tax rates as workers and bringing an end to expensive and unproductive tax loopholes. Corporate tax rates, which were cut sharply by the 2017 Republican tax cut, must be raised, and “supply-side” or “trickle down” tax cuts must be rejected. Estate taxes should also be raised back to the historical norm.

Our program of reform will provide immediate, marked relief for working families, including more generous, refundable tax credits to benefit low- and middle-income families, and easier and more equitable access to tax provisions that help working families build wealth, such as equalizing tax benefits for retirement contributions and providing more accessible tax breaks for homeownership.

In the wealthiest country on earth, it is a moral abomination that any child could ever go to bed hungry. Democrats will increase funding for food assistance programs, including SNAP, WIC, and school meals. We will remove barriers that keep the formerly incarcerated from accessing food assistance.

Investing in the Engines of Job Creation

Democrats believe the COVID-19 pandemic, and President Trump’s recession, demand unprecedented, transformational federal investments to create family-sustaining and union jobs.

We believe that the world's richest nation should have the world's best infrastructure system. That's why we will invest in resilient, sustainable, and inclusive infrastructure. Democrats will launch a clean energy revolution through historic investments in clean energy, clean transportation, energy efficiency, and clean and advanced manufacturing. We will repair our highways, roads, bridges, ports, and airports, and launch our country's second great railroad revolution by investing in high-speed rail. We commit to public transportation as a public good, including ensuring transit jobs are good jobs. We will make sure that every community in America has access to clean, reliable drinking water and safe wastewater systems in their homes. We will modernize our schools and end the digital divide that deprives more than 20 million Americans of access to broadband internet.

Democrats believe more products in our homes, stores, and workplaces should be stamped "Made in America" and will expand support for American manufacturing. We will end policies that incentivize offshoring, and instead accelerate onshoring of critical supply chains, including in medical supplies and pharmaceuticals. We will invest in innovation hubs and government programs to provide small manufacturers with technical and business expertise so they can grow their revenues and their workforces.

Democrats will ensure that all federal projects will prioritize investments in our most treasured resource: the American people. We will provide substantially higher levels of support for programs and institutions that boost economic development in America's most impoverished communities, including through Community Development Financial Institutions.

We will support proven workforce development programs such as registered apprenticeships and community college training partnerships that help workers access higher-paying jobs. We will invest in the caring workforce, including by directing significant funding to state and local governments to retain and hire more teachers, public health professionals, nurses, home care workers, social workers, and other critical positions. Democrats reject any efforts to privatize public-sector jobs, from our schools to the United States Postal Service.

Democrats know that small businesses are among the best job creators in our country. We will significantly boost funding for state small business grant and lending initiatives that create tens of billions of dollars of private-sector investment, especially for small businesses owned by women and people of color. We will increase access to credit for small businesses in low-income and rural areas, including for unbanked or underbanked businesses and minority-owned businesses. And we will increase funding for programs supporting minority-owned businesses, including reversing the Trump Administration's effort to starve the Minority Business Development Agency, improving and expanding Small Business Administration programs that most effectively support Black-owned businesses, and increasing opportunities for Black-owned businesses to obtain or participate in federal contracts.

Democrats will invest in the American heartland and rural communities. We will make it easier for new and beginning farmers, ranchers, and foresters, including returning veterans, to start and grow their operations by expanding USDA ownership and operating loan programs. Recognizing the history of racial discrimination in USDA's core farming programs, Democrats will institute

reforms to ensure USDA takes a more proactive approach to supporting training and resources for farmers of color. We will develop and grow regional food systems to deliver fresh, American-grown produce to schools, hospitals, Department of Defense installations, and other major public institutions, so small and mid-size farmers can stay competitive. We will expand voluntary programs for sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices and invest in expanding bio-based manufacturing. America's farmworkers are essential to our economy, our communities, and our security. We will enforce labor and environmental protections for farmworkers. And Democrats support increasing funding for rural health centers and will offer incentives to increase the number of primary care doctors, nurses, dentists, and mental health and substance use disorder counselors working in rural America.

Putting Homeownership in Reach and Guaranteeing Safe Housing for Every American

Homeownership is at the center of the American Dream—and yet it has never been in reach for all. Decades of red-lining, rising income inequality, and predatory lending practices targeting low-income families and people of color have made homeownership all but impossible for millions of working families. We have a nationwide shortage of affordable housing units, and tens of millions of Americans live in homes that pose risks to their health and safety. Homelessness has reached crisis proportions in a growing number of states, and housing costs that rise faster than wages have put the squeeze on renters in many of our biggest cities.

Housing in America should be stable, accessible, safe, healthy, energy efficient, and, above all, affordable. No one should have to spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing, so families have ample resources left to meet their other needs and save for retirement.

Democrats believe the government should take aggressive steps to increase the supply of housing, especially affordable housing, and address long-standing economic and racial inequities in our housing markets. We will equalize access to affordable credit and improve access to down payment assistance to help families of color, low-income families, and rural buyers purchase homes.

Democrats will supercharge investment in the Housing Trust Fund to greatly expand the number of affordable housing units on the market, reduce home prices, and create jobs. We commit to providing Section 8 housing support for every eligible family. We will make energy efficiency upgrades for millions of low-income households in metropolitan and rural areas, affordable housing units, and public housing units to save families money on their energy bills, create jobs, and provide safe and healthy homes.

Democrats will enact a new Homeowner and Renter Bill of Rights to protect families from abusive lenders and landlords. This new Bill of Rights will prevent mortgage brokers from leading borrowers into loans that cost more than their credit history demands, prevent mortgage servicers from advancing a foreclosure when a homeowner is in the process of receiving a loan modification, and give homeowners opportunities to seek financial redress from mortgage lenders and servicers that violate these protections. And Democrats will provide legal support to fight wrongful evictions.

America's history of using public policy and private lending restrictions to close neighborhoods off to Black families and other people of color is long, painful, and unresolved to this day. The Trump Administration has made matters worse by gutting fair lending and fair housing protections for homeowners. Democrats will vigorously enforce the Fair Housing Act and the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act and hold lenders accountable for discriminatory practices. We will use the federal government to enforce settlements against discriminatory lenders, and require communities to proactively review housing patterns and remedy local policies that have a discriminatory effect. Democrats will give local elected officials tools and resources to combat gentrification, penalize predatory lending practices, and maintain homeownership, including exploring targeted rental relief when exorbitant rent increases force long-term residents from their communities and tackling persistent racial bias in appraisals that contributes to the racial wealth gap.

Democrats are committed to ending homelessness in America. Democrats support a housing-first approach to ending homelessness, because having a stable and safe place to live is essential to helping a person tackle any other challenges they may face, from mental illness to substance use disorders to PTSD. LGBTQ+ youth, especially Black and brown LGBTQ+ youth, too often find themselves on the streets. We will act swiftly to end homelessness among veterans and will enact strong protections for LGBTQ+ people. And we will ensure that 100 percent of returning citizens have access to transitional housing upon reentry from jail or prison.

Leveling the Economic Playing Field

The U.S. economy is rigged against the American people. Six in 10 jobs need some education after high school, but cuts to public colleges and universities and exorbitant tuition costs have left millions of Americans saddled with crippling debt. Americans pay more per capita for health care than any other nation, and yet nearly 30 million people still lack insurance and tens of millions more can hardly afford the costs of medical care. Decades of mass incarceration have decimated Black and brown communities and created long-term economic consequences for millions of families. Our elections should amplify the voices and concerns of the people, not the powerful, but Republicans and their appointees on the Supreme Court have corrupted our campaign finance system to its roots.

Democrats will take decisive action to level the playing field for people of color, working families, women, and others who have been left on the sidelines.

Ensuring Equitable Access to Banking and Financial Services

One in four American households are either unbanked or underbanked, putting them at risk of losing money due to exorbitant fees or usurious interest rates. Democrats will support and encourage Congressional efforts to guarantee affordable, transparent, trustworthy banking services for low- and middle-income families, including bank accounts and real-time payment systems through the Federal Reserve and easily accessible service locations, including postal banking. Democrats will also expand access to credit by creating a public credit reporting agency to provide a non-discriminatory credit reporting alternative to the private agencies, and will require its use by all federal lending programs, including home lending and student loans. And

we will reinvigorate the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to ensure that banks and lenders cannot prey on consumers.

The scars of the financial crisis that triggered the Great Recession are still present in our economy and our society. Banks should never be “too big to fail.” Democrats will work to reverse the over-financialization of the American economy by maintaining and expanding safeguards that separate retail banking institutions from more risky investment operations. We will strengthen and enforce the Obama-Biden Administration’s Dodd-Frank financial reform law to protect American workers from the impacts of future financial crises. And when justified by the law, we will back criminal penalties for reckless executives who illegally gamble with the savings and economic security of their clients and American communities.

Closing the Racial Wealth Gap

The extreme gap in household wealth and income between people of color, especially Black Americans, and white families is hurting our working class and holding our country back. Democrats are committed to a comprehensive agenda to achieve racial equity. That means improving economic mobility for people of color, including by addressing the racial wealth gap.

In addition to expanding access to credit, working to boost homeownership and build more affordable housing, and supporting minority-owned small businesses, Democrats recognize that racial wealth gaps are rooted in longstanding discrimination and unjust policies that continue to depress the economic and social prosperity of people of color. To provide more Americans the right to enjoy the economic and social benefits of wealth-building, we will equalize established pathways for building wealth while exploring innovative approaches to closing racial wealth gaps, including policies that provide seed capital in order to access the economic security of asset ownership.

The Black unemployment rate is persistently higher than the national average, which is why Democrats support making racial equity part of the mandate of the Federal Reserve. Specifically, we will work with Congress to direct the Chair of the Federal Reserve to report on the extent of racial employment and wage gaps, and how the central bank is countering them, in addition to monitoring, reporting on, and responding to macroeconomic conditions in general.

Democrats commit to the important first step of supporting H.R. 40, which would establish a commission to examine how the legacy of 246 years of slavery and another century of Jim Crow segregation continues to impact the economic prospects of Black Americans today, and to recommend remedies.

Building A Fair System of International Trade

For too long, the global trading system has failed to keep its promises to American workers. Too many corporations have rushed to outsource jobs, and too many countries have broken their promises to be honest and transparent partners. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the risks of relying too heavily on global supply chains, as shutdowns and shortages have created chaos for workers and consumers and made our public health response even more challenging. And the

Trump Administration has failed time after time to deliver for the American people on this crucial issue, launching a trade war with China that they have no plan for winning— creating incredible hardship for American farmers and workers in the process.

Democrats will pursue a trade policy that puts workers first. We will negotiate strong and binding standards for labor, human rights, and the environment in the core text of our trade deals, including enforcement, because having fair trade means that no trading partners should be able to capture market share by undermining our product, consumer, environmental, or labor standards. We will eliminate trade and tax policies that promote the offshoring of pharmaceutical manufacturing and raise prices on medications for American patients. We will use all tools at our disposal to take action against countries that manipulate their currencies to get an unfair advantage in international markets. And we will take immediate action to repair the damage President Trump’s reckless policies have done to American farmers, by working with our allies to stand up to China and negotiate from the strongest possible position.

Tackling Runaway Corporate Concentration

Democrats are concerned about the increase in mega-mergers and corporate concentration across a wide range of industries, from hospitals and pharmaceutical companies to agribusiness and retail chains. We will direct federal regulators to review a subset of the mergers and acquisitions that have taken place since President Trump took office, prioritizing the pharmaceutical, health care, and agricultural industries, to assess whether any have increased market concentration, raised consumer prices, demonstrably harmed workers, increased racial inequality, or reduced competition, and assign appropriate remedies. Democrats will direct regulators to consider potential effects of future mergers on the labor market, on low-income and racially marginalized communities, and on racial equity. And as a last resort, regulators should consider breaking up corporations if they find they are using their market power to engage in anti-competitive activities.

Guaranteeing a Secure and Dignified Retirement

Democrats are proud to be the party of Social Security, the most enduring thread in our nation’s social safety net. We will enact policies to make Social Security more progressive, including meaningfully increasing minimum benefit payments, increasing benefits for long-duration beneficiaries, and protecting surviving spouses from benefit cuts. In light of weakened retirement security for unpaid caregivers and caregivers for family members, who sacrifice not only wages but Social Security benefits when they swap paid labor for unpaid care work, Democrats support Social Security reform which better accounts for the challenges facing unpaid caregivers— including incremental reforms to the benefit formula to mitigate the penalty for unpaid care. Democrats will reject every effort to cut, privatize, or weaken Social Security, including attempts to raise the retirement age, diminish benefits by cutting cost-of-living adjustments, or reduce earned benefits. We will put Social Security on a path to solvency and strengthen it in perpetuity.

We will also make it easier to save for retirement beyond core Social Security programs. Democrats will act to protect public and private pensions to ensure workers keep the benefits they have earned. We will eliminate penalties for retirement benefits that unfairly punish

educators and other public-sector workers. And Democrats will equalize the network of retirement saving tax breaks so that working people can build their nest eggs faster, while also providing more equitable access to these accounts through automatic enrollment and relaxed contribution restrictions for unpaid caregivers.

Rep. Karen Bass, Co-chair
Sara Nelson, Co-chair
Jared Bernstein
Darrick Hamilton
Ben Harris
Stephanie Kelton
Lee Saunders
Sonal Shah

PROVIDING A WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION IN EVERY ZIP CODE

The United States today is beset by multiple, overlapping crises, including runaway income and wealth inequality, the worst global pandemic in a century, and the scourge of anti-Black racism. Democrats believe we must meet this moment by making vital investments that will enable our children and future generations to thrive and achieve their full human potential. Education is the key to addressing the challenges before us—to growing our economy, maintaining American competitiveness on the world stage, and building a more just, equitable, civically engaged, and socially conscientious nation. As Democrats, we believe that education is a critical public good—not a commodity—and that it is the government’s responsibility to ensure that every child, everywhere, is able to receive a world-class education that enables them to lead meaningful lives, no matter their race, ZIP code, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or household income.

For too long, we have short-changed our children by underinvesting in our nation’s public schools and in our higher education system. Despite ample research showing that early childhood education can improve outcomes for students for decades to come, we still do not have universal, high-quality pre-K. Despite the decades-long trend that has seen more and more women entering the labor force as breadwinners, it is still far too difficult for families to secure safe and affordable child care services. Our public schools are bedrock community institutions, and yet our educators are underpaid, our classrooms are overstuffed, and our infrastructure has been neglected. Roughly six in 10 jobs require at least some education beyond high school, and yet the ever-rising cost of college tuition and fees leaves higher education out of reach—or saddles students with a lifetime of debt.

The emergency conditions created by the COVID-19 pandemic have vividly demonstrated to parents, students, and educators across the country that there is no sustainable, long-term substitute for high-quality, in-classroom learning. Significant gaps in access to technology, including lack of access to high-speed broadband, have deepened inequities in our educational system for students of color, students with disabilities, and students in rural and under-resourced neighborhoods during this pandemic. We will need increased investments in public education to help students get back on track when public health experts determine it is safe to return to schools.

Democrats believe we can and must do better for our children, our educators, and our country. We are committed to making the investments our students and teachers need to build equity and safeguard humanity in our educational system and guarantee every child can receive a great education. We will support evidence-based programs and pedagogical approaches, including assessments that consider the well-being of the whole student and recognize the range of ways students can demonstrate learning. We will reimagine our education system guided by the stakeholders who know these issues best: young people, educators, parents, and community leaders. Democrats fundamentally believe our education system should prepare all our students—indeed, all of us—for college, careers, and to be informed, engaged citizens of our communities, our country, and our planet.

Guaranteeing Universal Early Childhood Education

Democrats believe that all children across the United States should have access to high-quality early childhood education programs. We will work with states to offer pre-K for all three- and four-year-olds and expand Head Start and Early Head Start. We will drive increased resources to the communities with the highest need, including those with the highest concentrations of low-income students and rural areas, and will strive to support holistic school readiness for Black, Latino, and Native American students in particular. We also will ensure access to critical early childhood programs for students with disabilities and English language learners.

We recognize that learning starts at birth, and the exorbitant costs of safe, quality child care present a significant economic burden to families. Democrats support making child care and dependent tax credits significantly more generous to save working parents thousands of dollars per year on child care costs. We will make major investments designed to make child care affordable, increase quality options for parents, and increase compensation for providers. Democrats also support expanding proven programs for low-income and first-time parents, including home visiting, that can help connect families in need to child care, education, and child development opportunities and improve outcomes for children and parents alike.

Democrats also support raising early childhood standards and providing ongoing professional development for early childhood educators, to ensure that children's academic, social development, behavioral, and cognitive needs are being met. Democrats believe that early childhood educators, like all educators and all workers, should be paid a fair wage and able to organize, join a union, and collectively bargain for better wages, benefits, and working conditions.

Supporting High-Quality K-12 Schools Across America

Each year, the United States spends \$23 billion more on schools in predominantly white districts than in non-white districts. Democrats are committed to closing the school funding gap by tripling Title I funding, which benefits schools that serve low-income students, and incentivizing states to adopt progressive funding formulas that direct resources to the schools that need it most. We will also ensure sustainable, reliable funding for rural schools and the Bureau of Indian Education schools.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has made plain, our public schools are more than places where children learn—they are pillars of our neighborhoods and our society. Democrats believe that no student should ever be shamed over school lunch debt, and support expanding universal free school meal programs. We will also support wraparound health care and nutrition services, before- and after-school programs, adult education classes, and other services by significantly expanding the community school model.

Students should have multiple public school pathways to be able to access the opportunities they deserve. Democrats will work to expand access to career and technical education, magnet schools for science and the arts, International Baccalaureate programs, and early college high schools to offer multiple pathways to meet the diverse needs and interests of America's high

school students. In addition to developing strong literacy, numeracy, and STEM skills, our education system should develop the deep learning and life skills needed to thrive in the 21st century economy, including critical and creative thinking, leadership, and judgment and decision-making.

Charter schools were originally intended to be publicly funded schools with increased flexibility in program design and operations. Democrats believe that education is a public good and should not be saddled with a private profit motive, which is why we will ban for-profit private charter businesses from receiving federal funding. And we recognize the need for more stringent guardrails to ensure charter schools are good stewards of federal education funds. We support measures to increase accountability for charter schools, including by requiring all charter schools to meet the same standards of transparency as traditional public schools, including with regard to civil rights protections, racial equity, admissions practices, disciplinary procedures, and school finances. We will call for conditioning federal funding for new, expanded charter schools or for charter school renewals on a district's review of whether the charter will systematically underserve the neediest students. And Democrats oppose private school vouchers and other policies that divert taxpayer-funded resources away from the public school system.

Democrats are committed to guaranteeing schools are spaces of physical and psychological safety for students and educators alike. Guns have no place in our schools. We disagree strongly with the Trump Administration's dangerous and short-sighted policies to permit teachers to bring firearms into the classroom. Democrats also believe that all schools should have adequate resources to expand school-based health services and hire guidance counselors, social workers, and school psychologists to help support students' mental health needs and social and emotional development. We will end the school-to-prison pipeline, because student behavioral issues should be addressed by educational professionals, not by the criminal justice system. Democrats support reissuing federal guidance to reduce the disparate disciplinary treatment of students of color in school and educational settings. And we will act expeditiously to reinstate Department of Education guidance protecting transgender students' rights under Title IX and make clear that schools shall not discriminate based on LGBTQ status.

It is unacceptable that America's public schools are more racially segregated today than they were when *Brown v. Board of Education* was decided 66 years ago. Democrats support appointing judges who will enforce the Civil Rights Act in schools and will fund magnet schools and school transportation initiatives to help facilitate improved integration. We will also reinvigorate and increase funding for the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights and improve federal data collection on racial segregation in schools. Schools should be safe zones for children and their families, which is why Democrats will protect sensitive locations like schools from immigration enforcement actions and will ensure English language learners receive the support they need to succeed.

Democrats believe in providing equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities. We will fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to provide school districts with additional resources to better serve students with disabilities. Democrats also support aggressive enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act in schools and other settings.

The evidence from nearly two decades of education reforms that hinge on standardized test scores shows clearly that high-stakes annual testing has not led to enough improvement in outcomes for students or for schools, and can lead to discrimination against students, particularly students with disabilities, students of color, low-income students, and English language learners. Democrats will work to end the use of such high-stakes tests and encourage states to develop evidence-based approaches to student assessment that rely on multiple and holistic measures that better represent student achievement.

Educators have always been heroes. The COVID-19 pandemic has made the value that educators provide to children, parents, and the economy obvious as never before to tens of millions of Americans. Public school educators should have the same rights to organize, join a union, and collectively bargain as private sector workers. Democrats will fight to significantly increase pay and benefits for all educators, in order to help recruit, retain, and reward high-quality teachers and support professionals. We will support programs to help introduce high school students to the teaching profession, enable school support staff to climb the professional ladder within schools, and recruit a diverse educational workforce through partnerships with historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving and other minority-supporting institutions, and tribal colleges and universities.

Making Higher Education Affordable and Accessible

Democrats believe that everyone should be able to earn a degree beyond high school, if they choose to, without money standing in the way. That is why we will fight to make public colleges and universities tuition-free for students whose families earn less than \$125,000—roughly 80 percent of the American people. We will double the maximum Pell Grant award for low-income students, and increase federal support for programs that help first-generation college students, students with disabilities, veterans, and other underrepresented groups apply to and complete college.

Historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving, other minority-serving institutions, and tribal colleges and universities serve a disproportionate number of low-income students who might otherwise be unable to access a college degree, and yet these vital institutions are chronically under-resourced. Democrats will work to provide grants to HBCUs, HSIs, MSIs and TCUs to lower costs at those institutions and ensure these essential institutions can continue to thrive in the future.

Democrats support making community colleges tuition-free for all students, including Dreamers. Our nation's network of two-year community colleges provide accessible, high-quality education for students of all ages.

We will increase federal support for services like child care on college campuses, so more students are able to balance the demands of school and family and graduate with degrees. Democrats also support increased funding for wraparound services, including covering the cost of textbooks and fees for low-income students and establishing programs to address campus food insecurity, so students can focus on what matters most: their studies. Democrats will fight to create a federal funding program for higher education, modeled on Title I funding for K-12

schools, that would direct funds to public and nonprofit colleges and universities and minority-serving institutions based on the proportion of low-income students those schools enroll and graduate. We will promote transparency and fairness regarding higher education faculty working conditions, including adjuncts, graduate employees, and full-time lecturers who are often grossly underpaid compared to full professors.

Providing Borrowers Relief From Crushing Student Debt

Student debt is holding millions of Americans back. The COVID-19 pandemic and President Trump's recession are making it harder for those with student loans to make ends meet right now. Democrats will work to authorize up to \$10,000 in student debt relief per borrower to help families weather this crisis.

Beyond that immediate relief, Democrats will also take steps to ease the burden of high monthly student loan payments by pausing monthly billing and stopping interest from accruing on federal student loans for people earning less than \$25,000, and capping payments at no more than 5 percent of discretionary income for those earning more than \$25,000. After 20 years, remaining federal student loan debt should be automatically forgiven. We will empower the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to take action against exploitative lenders and will work with Congress to allow student debt to be discharged during bankruptcy.

Democrats support modernizing and improving the public service loan forgiveness program, including making the enrollment process automatic for people who work in schools, government agencies, and non-profit organizations. We will also make the program more generous by forgiving up to \$10,000 in student debt per year for up to 5 years.

The Trump Administration has let for-profit colleges and universities once again prey upon students with impunity by repealing important protections. Democrats will crack down on predatory for-profit higher education programs, including by issuing requirements that these programs be able to demonstrate their value and effectiveness before becoming eligible for federal student loans. We will call upon the Secretary of Education to use her authority to forgive debt carried by students who were ripped off by predatory schools, including by programs that defrauded students or that misrepresented program offerings or program outcomes, as well as debt held by the permanently disabled. And we will protect veterans and servicemembers from being steered into low-performing for-profit higher education and professional programs.

Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic, and the deep recession that has resulted from the Trump Administration's failure to adequately respond and protect the American people, has created unprecedented challenges for our students, schools, educators, and families.

Democrats support significant increases in emergency funding for school districts and public and nonprofit colleges and universities to offset declines in state and local revenues and secure educators' jobs. In the last recession, steep cuts to public education and higher education led to

tens of thousands of job losses for teachers and school support staff, more crowded classrooms for students, and steep tuition increases at public colleges and universities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also made clear the importance and value of in-classroom instruction. While distance and online learning is an appropriate stop-gap, it cannot become the new normal. Each school district should be supported in determining when distance learning is necessary for protecting public health and student safety. Democrats will fight to expand broadband internet access, particularly in underserved communities and rural areas, to promote equity in emergency distance learning, and will direct the Occupational Health and Safety Administration to develop an emergency temporary standard to protect frontline workers, including educators, from COVID-19. And we will expand national service opportunities that enhance, not supplant, public service workers' careers, and enable AmeriCorps volunteers to earn college credit for the skills they learn during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rep. Marcia Fudge, Co-chair
Heather Gautney, Co-chair
Alejandro Adler
Lily Eskelsen Garcia
Maggie Thompson
Christie Vilsack
Randi Weingarten
Hirokazu Yoshikawa

ACHIEVING UNIVERSAL, AFFORDABLE, QUALITY HEALTH CARE

Democrats have been fighting to achieve universal health care for a century. We are proud to be the party of Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act. Because of the Obama-Biden Administration and the Affordable Care Act, more than 100 million Americans with pre-existing conditions, from heart disease to asthma, are secure in the knowledge that insurance companies can no longer discriminate against them. Women can no longer be charged more than men just because of their gender. And more Americans are able to get health coverage than ever before. Democrats will keep up the fight until all Americans can access secure, affordable, high-quality health insurance—because as Democrats, we recognize that health care is a right.

Unfortunately, at every turn, Democrats' efforts to guarantee health coverage have been met by obstruction and opposition from the Republican Party. It has been Republicans who have embraced junk plans that undermine protections for pre-existing conditions. It was Republican state attorneys general who sued to block Medicaid expansion and Republican governors who refused to extend Medicaid coverage to their citizens, leaving millions of low- and moderate-income Americans, disproportionately people of color, unable to access health coverage. And in the midst of the worst global pandemic in generations—one that has left more than 130,000 Americans dead—the Trump Administration is fighting in court to invalidate the Affordable Care Act and eliminate insurance for tens of millions of people. Overturning the Affordable Care Act remains a central plank of the Republican Party platform. The difference in values between the two parties on this life-or-death issue could not be more stark.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made this difference in values painfully, brutally clear. President Trump has repeatedly downplayed the threat of the coronavirus, bullied governors for enacting life-saving public health measures, and left our frontline health care heroes without the equipment they need to protect themselves and the American people. The burdens of this pandemic have not been borne equally, as communities of color have suffered higher rates of infection and death, and struggled to access life-saving care when they need it most. Our essential workers have been deemed expendable by the President and his Administration.

As Democrats, we say with one voice: No more.

We are going to at last build the health care system the American people have always deserved: One that finally provides universal health care coverage; reduces prescription drug prices, premiums, and out-of-pocket costs; reins in overall health care expenses; and tackles the deep-seated inequities in our health care system. We will build a health care system that is driven by the needs of patients and the people who care for them, instead of the profit motives of big corporations.

Even before the pandemic, our health care system was deeply flawed. The United States spends more per capita on health care than any other advanced economy, and has less to show for it. Entrenched racial disparities in our health system have become front-page news as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disproportionately sickened and killed people of color, and especially Black Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans. Low-income communities and communities of color suffer higher-than-average rates of exposure to air pollution, water

pollution, and toxic chemicals, contributing to lifelong health challenges. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic and President Trump's recession, the uninsurance rate was nearly three times higher for Latinos and nearly twice as high for Black Americans as it was for whites. Some groups of Asian American and Pacific Islanders faced uninsurance rates rivaling those of Black Americans and Latinos, and nearly one in three Native Americans and Alaska Natives was uninsured. Democrats believe we must tackle racial disparities in health care head-on, and end them once and for all—for the sake of our communities, our economy, and each other.

Jobs in the caring economy, from home health aides to nurse assistants, are among the fastest-growing fields in the country. The workers who fill these critically important jobs should be treated with dignity and respect, yet many of these frontline workers—a majority of whom are women and people of color—earn less than \$15 an hour, with paltry or no benefits. Prescription drug prices for essential medicines like insulin and cancer treatments have become obscene due to pharmaceutical companies' market manipulations, secret “pay to delay” deals, and mega-mergers. And it is far too difficult for people to access mental health counseling, substance use treatment, and long-term care in metropolitan and rural areas across the country.

Democrats will always fight to save Americans' lives by making it easier and more affordable to go to the doctor, get prescription medicines, and access preventive testing and treatments. Our policy agenda is designed to produce real results for the American people—not hollow platitudes. As Democrats, we fundamentally believe health care is a right for all, not a privilege for the few.

Responding to the Coronavirus Pandemic

When we do not have competent, experienced, compassionate leaders in government, the American people suffer. That is the situation we find ourselves in with the novel coronavirus. President Trump and his administration missed multiple opportunities to protect the American people from this deadly pathogen. Instead of recognizing the danger and confronting it head on, President Trump lied to the American people about the disease's severity, its transmissibility, and the threat it posed to our economy and our health care system.

Make no mistake: President Trump's abject failure to respond forcefully and capably to the COVID-19 pandemic—his failure to lead—makes him responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of Americans.

COVID-19 has laid bare deep fault lines in our economy, our society, and our health care system. Democrats are committed to using every available tool to beat back this pandemic, which continues to sicken and kill hundreds of Americans per day, and to prevent our country from ever suffering this pain again.

We must start by making COVID-19 testing widely available, convenient, and free to everyone. That includes expanding programs to proactively extend testing services to populations we know are especially vulnerable, including the homeless and those living in nursing homes and long-term care facilities. We must also expand funding so state and local public health departments can hire sufficient staff to adequately conduct contact tracing for everyone who tests positive for

the novel coronavirus. Only through testing, tracing, and targeted quarantining can we hope to fully understand the scope of the pandemic, contain it, and stop it.

In a public health crisis, we all have to rely on each other. That's why Democrats support making COVID-19 testing, treatment, and any eventual vaccines free to everyone, regardless of their wealth or their immigration status. We are all only as safe from this disease as are the most vulnerable among us.

It has always been a crisis that tens of millions of Americans have no or inadequate health insurance—but in a pandemic, it's potentially catastrophic for public health. The current crisis would be even worse without the Affordable Care Act in place. But in the COVID-19 pandemic, Americans need even more help, which is why Democrats will take immediate action to preserve and expand health insurance coverage. In the midst of this pandemic, we will provide direct, increased support to states to enroll eligible adults in Medicaid, have the federal government cover a higher percentage of the bill, and add incentives for states which have not yet expanded Medicaid to do so.

For people who risk losing their insurance coverage if they lose their jobs in this pandemic, Democrats believe the federal government should pick up 100 percent of the tab for COBRA insurance, which keeps people on their employer-sponsored plans. For those who are still unemployed or do not have access to employer-sponsored health care when their COBRA eligibility period expires and are eligible for premium-free coverage, we will take action to automatically roll them over to other coverage options, so they do not experience any gap in health care. We will also re-open the Affordable Care Act marketplaces, even outside of the normal open enrollment season, and expand subsidies to make it easier for people to buy coverage.

Democrats will also make available on the marketplace a platinum-level, federally administered health insurance option with low fees and no deductibles, so that everyone will have access to this high-quality, low-cost plan. Low-income Americans will be automatically enrolled in this federally-administered option at zero cost to them.

We will keep these emergency measures in place until the pandemic ends and unemployment falls significantly. And should the United States find itself in another pandemic or severe economic downturn in the future, these protections will again be made automatically available, so Americans are never again left to fend for themselves in times of crisis.

Democrats are appalled that President Trump failed to act on the advice of Congress to maintain a strong stockpile of critical medical supplies, including personal protective equipment. Those shortages endangered millions of lives, including those of our brave frontline health care workers and other essential workers. Such shortages must never happen again. Democrats will direct the federal government to work with private-sector manufacturers to dramatically scale up the United States' domestic manufacturing capacity for both personal protective equipment and essential medicines.

Reinvesting in Public Health

Democrats believe we must reverse decades of underinvestment in America's public health infrastructure. America must never again be caught asleep at the switch in a global health emergency like the coronavirus pandemic. Democrats believe we must follow the informed advice of scientists and public health experts in addressing the coronavirus pandemic, and will take steps to protect federal scientists from political influence. Democrats will act swiftly to stand up a comprehensive, national public health surveillance program for COVID-19 and future infectious diseases, including recruiting 100,000 contact tracers to help state and local health departments identify people at risk of contracting or spreading the coronavirus.

We will substantially increase funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and for state and local public health departments, many of which suffered deep budget cuts during the Great Recession. We will put automatic triggers in place to ensure that additional federal support to secure affordable health care is immediately put into place—and stays in place—when a pandemic, including COVID-19, or a severe economic crisis threatens our health and security. And we will restore American leadership on global public health by working with our allies and partners around the world, including through the World Health Organization. President Trump's impulsive announcement that he intends to withdraw the United States from the WHO will only make this critical institution weaker and leave Americans unsafe.

Securing Universal Health Care Through a Public Option

Democrats believe we need to protect, strengthen, and build upon our bedrock health care programs, including the Affordable Care Act, Medicare, Medicaid, and the Veterans Affairs system. Private insurers need real competition to ensure they have incentive to provide affordable, quality coverage to every American.

To achieve that objective, we will give all Americans the choice to select a high-quality, affordable public option through the Affordable Care Act marketplace. The public option will provide at least one plan choice without deductibles, will be administered by the traditional Medicare program, not private companies, and will cover all primary care without any co-payments and control costs for other treatments by negotiating prices with doctors and hospitals, just like Medicare does on behalf of older people. The lowest-income Americans not eligible for Medicaid will be automatically enrolled in the public option at no cost to them, although they may choose to opt out at any time. Everyone will be eligible to choose the public option or another Affordable Care Act marketplace plan, even those who currently get insurance through their employers, because Democrats believe working people shouldn't be locked in to expensive or insufficient health care plans when better options are available. To help close the persistent racial gap in insurance rates, Democrats will expand funding for Affordable Care Act outreach and enrollment programs, so every American knows their options for securing quality, affordable coverage.

For the 4.8 million adults who should be eligible for Medicaid, but who live in states where Republican governors have refused to expand the program, Democrats will make the public option available without premiums. And we will enable millions of older workers to choose

between their employer-provided plans, the public option, or enrolling in Medicare when they turn 60, instead of having to wait until they are 65.

Democrats will also empower the states, as laboratories of democracy, to use Affordable Care Act innovation waivers to develop locally tailored approaches to health coverage, including by removing barriers to states that seek to experiment with statewide universal health care approaches.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and President Trump's recession, Democrats will take action to expand coverage to those who need it, including the newly unemployed and the long-uninsured. When the public option becomes law, it will be available on the Affordable Care Act marketplace for all Americans to choose; low-income people not eligible for Medicaid will be automatically enrolled at no cost to them, and may choose to opt out if they wish.

We also know that finally covering every American through the public and private insurance system alone is not enough to guarantee universal access. That is why Democrats support doubling investments in community health centers and rural health clinics, including increased support for dental care, mental health care, and substance use services like medication-assisted treatment. We will enact longer, multi-year funding cycles for these critical health services so they can operate with greater certainty, and will leverage innovative payment options through Medicare and Medicaid to help rural health clinics keep their doors open. We will expand the National Health Service Corps to address critical shortages of health care providers in rural areas, including primary care nurses, dental professionals, and mental health and substance use counselors.

Bringing Down Drug Prices and Taking on the Pharmaceutical Industry

Too many Americans struggle to afford the prescription drugs they need to get or stay healthy. No American should find themselves foregoing or rationing medications because they can't afford to pay—especially when taxpayers' money underwrites the research and development of many prescription drugs in the first place.

Democrats will take aggressive action to ensure that Americans do not pay more for prescription drugs than people in other advanced economies. We will empower Medicare to at last be able to negotiate prescription drug prices for all public and private purchasers—for families and businesses, as well as older Americans—no matter where they get their coverage. We will also ensure and enforce that the price of brand-name and outlier generic drugs cannot rise faster than the inflation rate. We will cap out-of-pocket drug costs for seniors, and ensure that effective treatments for chronic health conditions are available at little or no cost.

For too long, prescription drug companies have gamed the system to justify their price increases by any means available. Democrats will crack down on anti-competitive efforts to manipulate the patent system or collude on prices. And we will eliminate tax breaks for prescription drug advertisements.

Reducing Health Care Costs and Improving Health Care Quality

Health care costs have been increasing for decades, with average premiums for an employer-provided family plan topping \$20,000 last year. And yet Americans suffer from chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and arthritis at higher rates than do people in countries like France, Austria, and Switzerland. Our obesity rate is higher and our life expectancy lower than in other advanced economies. And so many Americans are dying young or in middle age—from suicide, alcoholism, and opioid abuse—that average life expectancy has actually declined in recent years.

Democrats know we can reduce out-of-pocket costs for families while improving the quality of health care for all. We will make it easier for working families to afford high-quality insurance in the Affordable Care Act marketplaces by ensuring that no one pays more than 8.5 percent of their income in premiums and eliminating the cap on subsidies.

Democrats believe that when Americans are in the hospital or an emergency room, they shouldn't have to worry about whether their health care providers are in-network or not, which is why we will outlaw the predatory practice of surprise medical billing. We will work to increase price transparency in the health care system across all payers, and reduce paperwork through uniform medical billing. And we will vigorously use antitrust laws to fight against mega-mergers in the hospital, insurance, and pharmaceutical industries that would raise prices for patients by undermining market competition.

Excessive prescription drug cost-sharing and voids in coverage such as dental, vision, and hearing services can lead to severe health consequences for Medicare patients. Democrats are committed to finding financially sustainable policies to strengthen Medicare and fill coverage voids.

Democrats will support policies that increase the number of primary care practitioners, registered nurses, dentists, and dental therapists, especially in rural and low-income metropolitan areas, so it's easier for every American to access preventive and primary health care.

Expanding Access to Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment

Every American who needs it should be able to access mental health care or substance use treatment, no matter where they live. Democrats will aggressively enforce the federal mental health parity law and ensure that health insurers adequately cover mental health and substance use treatment. We will also invest in training and hiring more mental health providers, substance use counselors, and peer support counselors, including by expanding funding for health clinics, especially in rural areas, and increasing access to these services through Medicaid.

The opioid epidemic has devastated American communities, and the Trump Administration has completely failed in its response, leaving millions of families desperate for help. Democrats will make medication-assisted treatment available to all who need it, and will require publicly supported health clinics to offer medication-assisted treatment for opioid addiction. Democrats recognize that incarcerated people suffer from serious mental health and substance use disorders at higher rates than the general population, which is why we will support expanded access to

mental health care in prisons and for returning citizens. We will ensure no one is incarcerated solely for drug use, and support increased use of drug courts, harm reduction interventions, and treatment diversion programs for those struggling with substance use disorders.

Expanding Long-Term Care Services and Supports

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the vulnerabilities of people who reside in institutional settings, such as nursing homes, and made clear that biases within Medicaid create undue barriers to home- and community-based long term services and supports. Democrats support measures to eliminate state waiting lists for home and community based care, including through a significant expansion of the home care workforce, and will work to develop a broader approach to eliminate the institutional bias within Medicaid. Democrats will also pursue policies to improve nursing home staffing and quality standards, strengthen accreditation processes, and combat corporate abuses in nursing homes. And Democrats are strongly committed to protecting and enforcing the Americans with Disabilities Act and fulfilling the promise of the *Olmstead v. L.C.* decision, which found institutional segregation of people with disabilities to be unconstitutional.

Eliminate Racial, Gender, and Geographic Health Inequities

The national statistics on American health care mask profound disparities in insurance rates, access to primary and specialized care, and health outcomes. Black children are more than twice as likely as white children to suffer from asthma. Latinos, Native Americans, Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders, and Black Americans are diagnosed with diabetes at higher rates than whites. And average life expectancy is almost three years lower for rural Americans compared to those who live in metropolitan areas.

Democrats are committed to eliminating health disparities by race, ethnicity, gender, and geography. We recognize it is not enough to have a commitment: We must have a plan. That is why Democrats will launch a sustained, government-wide effort, with leadership at the highest levels, to eliminate racial, ethnic, gender, and geographic gaps in insurance rates, access to quality care, and health outcomes. That includes tackling the social, economic, and environmental inequities—the social determinants of health like poor housing, hunger, inadequate transportation, mass incarceration, air and water pollution, and gun violence—that contribute to worse health outcomes for low-income Americans and communities of color.

People of color—and particularly Black people and Latinos—are more likely than average to live near heavy polluters, including ports, power plants, and industrial sites. Air pollution contributes to higher rates of asthma, heart disease, premature birth, and low birth weights, among other serious health issues. Democrats will put environmental justice at the center of our climate change and energy policies, and take steps to remedy the legacy of decades of cumulative pollution impacts on frontline communities by creating a new environmental justice fund.

Black women are three to four times more likely than white women to die from complications of pregnancy or childbirth—a stunning disparity that drives the United States' high maternal

mortality rate overall, compared to other advanced economies. Black men are significantly more likely to die from heart disease and stroke than white men. Among Latinos and Asian-American and Pacific Islanders, health disparities vary considerably depending on income and country of origin, particularly for first-generation Americans.

We can and must fix these inequities by expanding coverage, making health care more affordable, and tackling implicit bias in our health care system. Democrats will ensure federal data collection and analysis is adequately funded and designed to allow for disaggregation by race, gender, geography, disability status, and other important variables, so that disparities in health coverage, access, and outcomes can be better understood and addressed.

Native American tribes have for too long been forced to cope with insufficient access to health care and mental health services, nutrition services, and modern infrastructure. Democrats are committed to pursuing environmental justice and climate justice, including for indigenous peoples and communities, and will invest significant new resources in clean water and wastewater infrastructure, clean energy generation and distribution, and sustainable and regenerative agriculture. And we will significantly increase and make mandatory funding for the Indian Health Service as part of our commitment to pursuing strong nation-to-nation relationships and honoring the United States' trust obligations to Native American communities.

Like the majority of Americans, Democrats believe that every woman should be able to access high-quality reproductive health care services, including safe and legal abortion. We will restore federal funding for Planned Parenthood, which provides vital preventive and reproductive health care for millions of women, especially low-income women and women of color, and LGBTQ+ people across the country, including in underserved areas. Democrats oppose and will fight to overturn federal and state laws that create barriers to women's reproductive rights, including repealing the Hyde Amendment, and will work to protect and codify *Roe v. Wade*. We are proud to be the party of the Affordable Care Act, which made prescription contraceptives available free of charge to all women and has helped significantly reduce teen pregnancy rates.

Democrats are committed to ending sexual assault and domestic abuse, and will act swiftly to overcome Republican obstructionism and reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. We will fight to end the epidemic of violence against Native American women by reaffirming the rights of Indian tribes to prosecute those accused of domestic violence and sexual assault on tribal lands, regardless of the perpetrator's race. And Democrats will increase resources to eliminate the national backlog of untested rape kits so that more survivors can see justice be served.

We condemn the Trump Administration's discriminatory actions against the LGBTQ+ community, including the dangerous and unethical regulation allowing doctors, hospitals, and insurance companies to discriminate against patients based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Democrats will reverse this rulemaking and restore nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ people in health insurance. We will also take action to guarantee that LGBTQ+ people have full access to needed health care and resources, including by requiring that federal health plans provide coverage for HIV/AIDS treatment and HIV prevention medications like PrEP and PEP, gender confirmation surgery, and hormone therapy.

We will expand access to health care for people living and working across the United States by extending Affordable Care Act coverage to Dreamers, and working with Congress to lift the five-year waiting period for Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program eligibility for low-income, lawfully present immigrants. Democrats will also immediately halt enforcement of and rescind the Trump Administration’s un-American immigrant wealth test.

Democrats believe that gun violence is a public health crisis. We believe that expanding access to mental health care is key to confronting the epidemic of suicides-by-firearm, including among veterans. Democrats will ensure the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have sufficient resources to study gun violence as a public health issue and support evidence-based programs for preventing gun violence.

Strengthening and Supporting the Health Care Workforce

The COVID-19 pandemic made plain to people across the country that our health care workers are heroes. Our doctors and nurses, our home health workers and physician’s assistants, our public health professionals and nursing home workers, our cleaners and service workers showed up to work every day despite dire shortages of personal protective equipment. Far too many of them have lost their lives to this terrible disease, and untold thousands are suffering the mental and emotional strain of losing far too many patients. And yet, despite the critical role they play in our society and our economy, these frontline workers are often underpaid and lack access to paid sick days, health insurance, and other benefits critical for their own health and the health of patients.

Democrats believe that all jobs in the caring economy must come with family-sustaining wages, good benefits, access to training and professional development, and the ability to join a union and collectively bargain. We believe all employers funded by taxpayer dollars must pay their workers at least \$15 an hour and protect workers’ rights to organize. In fact, Democrats believe these standards should be applied throughout the economy, not just in the health care system.

Although health care jobs are among the fastest-growing in the economy, demand for services still far outstrips supply, especially in primary care. We will invest in community health worker care-forces around the nation proven to prevent, manage and better treat chronic illness now burdening tens of millions of Americans, and empower first-time mothers with nurse home visiting. We will close provider gaps and increase diversity in the health care profession by creating a robust pipeline of talent with career ladders for work advancement. And we will also increase opportunities for community health workers to come from the communities they serve.

Investing in Health Science and Research

Scientific research is at the heart of medicine—and of health care. Democrats want the United States to be at the forefront of scientific research and discovery for the benefit of our people, our economy, and our global competitiveness. We will support increased and sustainable funding for federal health and medical research across agencies, including at the National Cancer Institute and other components of the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality. We will increase the federal

investment in research and development for new medications through the National Institutes of Health, and make sure that there is a return on that investment for taxpayers.

Democrats also support increasing funding for research into health disparities by race, gender, age, geographic area, and socioeconomic status, with a particular focus on how the social determinants of health contribute to differences in health outcomes. Democrats will take steps to increase the diversity of principal investigators receiving federal grants, as well as of participants in federally-supported clinical trials, to improve the quality and applicability of our medical research. We will also build on the foundation of the Obama-Biden Administration's Cancer Moonshot to accelerate research into cancer and cancer treatments.

The Trump Administration's systematic efforts to undermine, discredit, dismiss, fire, disempower, and diminish the contributions of scientists, in health science and other disciplines, have weakened our public institutions, slowed the pace of scientific inquiry, and profoundly damaged America's standing in the world. Democrats will protect the independence and intellectual freedom of scientists, whether they are employed by the federal government or receiving federal grants in support of their research, and take steps to shield our scientific research agencies from future political interference.

Rep. Pramila Jayapal, Co-chair
Vivek Murthy, Co-chair
Donald Berwick
Abdul El-Sayed
Sherry Glied
Mary Kay Henry
Chris Jennings
Rep. Robin Kelly

CREATING A 21ST CENTURY IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

Out of many, we are one. That bedrock American idea has animated our country from its earliest days, inspiring people from every corner of the earth to participate in our great democratic experiment. The Trump Administration has repudiated that idea and abandoned our values as a diverse, compassionate, and welcoming country. Instead of pursuing a sensible, humane, and responsible approach to immigration that strengthens the United States, the Trump Administration has been callous, cruel, and reckless in the extreme. President Trump's immigration policies have made our communities less safe, undermined our economy, and tarnished our image around the world.

This Administration's cruelty and dehumanization of immigrants stretches the imagination and shocks the conscience: forcibly separating families and putting children in cages; deporting veterans who have fought to defend our freedoms; conducting militarized raids on our workplaces; endangering lives by denying COVID-19 testing and treatment based on immigration status, including to essential workers at the forefront of the pandemic response; banning people from traveling to the United States based on their faith or their country of origin; and turning away refugees and asylum seekers fleeing violence and persecution.

Democrats believe America can do better. Indeed, we must.

The truth is that our immigration system was broken long before President Trump came into office, and his departure alone won't fix it. Immigrants are essential to our society and our economy. Immigrants are part of our families. They enrich our culture. They grow our food, care for our loved ones, serve in our armed forces, and provide critical health care services. Immigrants make America stronger. Not only do immigrants support us—immigrants are us. Our families and our communities, our congregations and our schools, our businesses large and small have been built and sustained through the inclusion of immigrants. That's why Democrats commit to building a 21st century immigration system that reflects our values, repairs past harms, heals our communities, rebuilds our economy, and renews our global leadership.

We will start by righting the wrongs of the Trump Administration.

Democrats will rescind President Trump's fabricated "National Emergency," which siphons funding away from our men and women in uniform to construct an unnecessary, wasteful, and ineffective wall on the southern border.

We will immediately terminate the Trump Administration's discriminatory travel and immigration bans that disproportionately impact Muslim and African people, and invite those whose visas have been denied under these xenophobic and un-American policies to re-apply to come to the United States.

We will reinstate, expand, and streamline protections for Dreamers and the parents of American citizen children to keep families together in the communities they have long called home.

Democrats will end the Trump Administration's shameful efforts to close the door to the world's most vulnerable refugees. It's not only the right thing to do—it's the smart thing to do. Admitting refugees helps preserve the stability of America's partners abroad, strengthens our hand in getting other countries to uphold their obligations, grows our economy, and enriches our society.

Democrats believe the United States should be a beacon of hope for those who are suffering violence and injustice, which is why we will protect and expand the existing asylum system and other humanitarian protections. We will reverse Trump Administration policies that prevent victims of gang and domestic violence, as well as LGBTQ+ people who are unsafe in their home countries, from being eligible to apply for asylum. Democrats will end Trump Administration policies that deny protected entry to asylum seekers, put them at great risk, and destabilize our neighbors and the broader region. And we will end prosecution of asylum seekers at the border and policies that force them to apply from "safe third countries," which are far from safe.

Democrats believe that our fight to end systemic racism in our country extends to our immigration system, including the policies at our borders and ports of entry, detention centers, and within immigration law enforcement agencies and their policies and operations.

Democrats believe that in the midst of the worst pandemic in a century and in any future public health crisis, every person in the United States should have access to testing, treatment, rehabilitation, and vaccines, regardless of where they're from, what they look like, how much money they make, or their immigration status. These measures are essential to protect the health of all Americans in the face of a deadly and highly contagious virus. The pandemic doesn't discriminate based on paperwork, and neither should our health care system. That's why Democrats will work to expand access to health care for people living and working across the United States by extending Affordable Care Act coverage to Dreamers, and working with Congress to lift the five-year waiting period for Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program eligibility for low-income, lawfully present immigrants. Democrats will also immediately halt enforcement of and rescind the Trump Administration's un-American immigrant wealth test.

Even as we work to reverse the enormous damage caused by the Trump Administration, we are determined to build a 21st century immigration system that embodies our values, expands economic opportunity for all Americans, and enhances our global competitiveness.

Democrats believe it is long past time to provide a roadmap to citizenship for the millions of undocumented workers who are an essential part of our economy and of the fabric of our nation. We will fast-track this process for those workers who have been essential to the pandemic response and recovery efforts, including health care workers, farmworkers, and others. We will also eliminate unfair barriers to naturalization, reduce application backlogs, and make our immigration processes faster, more efficient, and less costly. These reforms will strengthen our communities, our families, and our country.

Democrats believe family unity should be a guiding principle for our immigration policy. We will prioritize family reunification for children still separated from their families. We support

legislation to treat the spouses and children of green card holders as immediate relatives and end their unfair separation. We will work with Congress to eliminate immigration barriers, such as the 3- and 10-year bars, and remove the 10-year waiting period for waivers to the permanent bars that keep loved ones apart.

We believe we should expand, not reduce, the annual visa cap for victims of sexual trafficking, violence against women and children, and other heinous crimes; ensure that same sex-couples and their children receive equal treatment in the immigration and naturalization systems; reaffirm America's commitment to family-based immigration; and preserve the critical role of diversity preferences in our immigration system. Democrats will ensure that law-abiding individuals with Temporary Protected Status or Deferred Enforced Departure are not sent back to countries where they cannot live safely.

Democrats know that when employers feel free to abuse immigrant workers, all workers suffer. That's why we will hold employers accountable, promote workers' rights, and prioritize the enforcement of labor and employment laws across the economy, including discrimination and sexual harassment protections, wage and hour laws, and health and safety rules. We will prevent employers from taking advantage of immigrant workers by supporting the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights and the Protect Our Workers from Exploitation and Retaliation (POWER) Act.

We will ensure that enforcement mechanisms are humane and consistent with our values and international humanitarian obligations. That's why we will end workplace and community raids. We will protect sensitive locations like our schools, houses of worship, health care facilities, benefits offices, and DMVs from immigration enforcement actions. We will prohibit enforcement actions that deter access to justice at courthouses, end programs that force state and local law enforcement to also be responsible for immigration enforcement, and stop targeting men and women who served in uniform and their families.

We believe detention should be a last resort, not the default. Democrats will prioritize investments in more effective and cost-efficient community-based alternatives to detention. We will end for-profit detention centers and ensure that any facility where migrants are being detained is held to the highest standards of care and guarantees the safety and dignity of families. Detention of children should be restricted to the shortest possible time, with their access to education and proper care ensured.

Democrats will implement robust mechanisms for oversight, accountability, and transparency to ensure immigration agencies abide by our values, the U.S. Constitution, and international law. Democrats believe immigration judges should be able to operate free of inappropriate political influence, and will support steps to make immigration courts more independent. We will demand that leaders of our immigration agencies be Senate-confirmed professionals, and that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) personnel abide by our values and professional, evidence-based standards and are held accountable for any inappropriate, unlawful, or inhumane treatment.

A 21st century immigration system that honors our values is an essential prerequisite not just to recovering from the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, but to strengthening our

democracy and guaranteeing America's long-term economic competitiveness. That's why Democrats believe in improving and increasing opportunities for legal, permanent immigration. Our family, humanitarian, and diversity pathways have contributed immeasurably to the vibrancy and productivity of American society and should continue to be the centerpiece of our immigration system. We also support awarding visas for permanent, employment-based immigration in a way that is responsive to labor market needs. We want to attract and keep talent in this country, which is why Democrats will end the Trump Administration's freeze on green cards for new immigrants and instead pursue a meaningful reform agenda.

Democrats support policies and programs to make it easier for qualified immigrants and their families to become full and equal citizens, including increasing funding for culturally appropriate immigrant inclusion and citizenship services, legal support, English classes and bilingual education, workforce development, and adult education.

Finally, Democrats will address the root causes of migration—violence and insecurity, poverty, pervasive corruption, lack of educational and economic opportunity, and the impacts of climate change. Disciplined American leadership and well-designed assistance programs can help prevent and mitigate the effects of migration crises around the world, from Southeast Asia to Sub-Saharan Africa to Central America. We will support a comprehensive strategy to strengthen security and prosperity in partnership with the people of Central America and the Caribbean and with the support of the international community. And we will renew American diplomacy as our tool of first resort, rebuild our partnerships and alliances, and once again lead the global humanitarian response.

Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard, Co-chair
Marielena Hincapié, Co-chair
Cristóbal Alex
Rep. Veronica Escobar
Marisa Franco
Juan Gonzalez
NV Lt. Gov. Kate Marshall
Javier Valdés

CLIMATE UNITY TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Unity Task Force on Climate Change urges immediate action to reverse the Trump Administration’s dangerous and destructive rollbacks of critical climate and environmental protections. The Unity Task Force recommends rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement and seeking higher ambition on Day One, putting the United States back in the position of global leadership where we belong. The Unity Task Force recommends restoring protections for irreplaceable public lands and waters, from Bears Ears National Monument to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to the Great Lakes. And the Unity Task Force urges that we follow the science—and the law of the land—by using executive action to reduce harmful methane and carbon pollution from the energy sector.

The Unity Task Force believes we can and must build a thriving, equitable, and globally competitive clean energy economy that puts workers and communities first and leaves no one behind. We recommend the mobilization of historic, transformative public and private investments to launch a clean energy revolution that is accessible to and benefits environmental justice communities and communities at the frontlines of climate change impact. We recommend the use of federal funds, resources, and authorities across all agencies to accelerate development of a clean energy economy and deploy proven clean energy solutions with ownership opportunities across environmental justice and frontline climate communities in both rural and urban areas, create millions of family-supporting and union jobs, upgrade and make climate resilient our energy, water, wastewater, and transportation infrastructure, direct significant investments to frontline environmental justice communities, and develop and manufacture next-generation technologies to address the climate crisis here in the United States.

The Unity Task Force urges that we treat climate change like the emergency that it is and answer the crisis with an ambitious, unprecedented, economy-wide mobilization to decarbonize the economy and build a resilient, stronger foundation for the American people.

Fmr. Sec. of State John Kerry, Co-chair
Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Co-chair
Rep. Kathy Castor
Kerry Duggan
Catherine Flowers
Rep. Conor Lamb
Gina McCarthy
Rep. Donald McEachin
Varshini Prakash

The Unity Task Force embraced the following core values to guide our work and recommendations:

- The fierce urgency of now. Our communities are facing worsening disasters in storms, fires, floods, and droughts. To make the severity of the crisis and the benefits of action

tangible to the greatest number of people, we should communicate about the impact of today and tomorrow, not just 2050.

- We value truth. Scientists and experts are clear: we have to launch a national mobilization to build a clean energy economy in the next decade to protect our families, homes and preserve a world for our kids and grandkids. We must act on the timeline that science and justice demand.
- All people have value. All people deserve universal rights and protection regardless of class, age, race, geography, or political party. If we acted accordingly, there would be no such thing as “sacrifice zones” or “Cancer Alleys.” No community would be thought of as disposable. Justice must be at the heart of our response to climate change.
- Hope and opportunity. The climate crisis is an opportunity to improve lived conditions for the American people. We will win by conveying a positive, visionary story about the future of America over the next four years. The American people need someone they can believe in and something to fight *for*, not just against.
- Fairness and equity. For too long African American communities, tribal nations, immigrants and low-income families have been excluded from a clean and safe environment, basic infrastructure, and economic prosperity. We must not repeat the mistakes of the past. Everyone must benefit from the clean energy economy, especially those who have long been left out and left behind.
- Workers and people over profit. We will create jobs that have access to a union, with wages that are family-sustaining. We will ensure that green jobs are not just good for the planet but they’re good for workers too. We will care for our workers, whatever it takes, and leave no one behind.

Jobs/Workforce

The Unity Task Force believes that nothing is more important than building a clean energy economy. At the same time, the Unity Task Force believes we can and must work to ensure that the benefits are widely and fairly shared. The most direct benefits—cleaner air, cleaner water, better health—must accrue to all Americans. So, too, must the *opportunities*—in the form of new jobs, community development, and economic growth—be broadly shared. The Unity Task Force supports investing in the education and training of underrepresented groups, including people of color, low-income individuals, women, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and unemployed energy workers, for jobs in clean energy-related industries. The clean energy field must represent the diversity of America.

Require Strong Worker Standards, Promote Union Jobs

- Empower workers through education, training, and strong labor and health standards, including the right to organize a union, negotiate for higher wages, and better benefits and working conditions.
- Require that all contracts meet Davis-Bacon prevailing wage standards.
- Require the use of project labor agreements or community workforce/benefit agreements to support consistent labor standards, community and worker buy-in across multiple elements of large projects.

- Support manufacturing job creation by subjecting material procurement to Buy America, Buy Clean, and Hire Local policies as conditions in federal investments in clean energy deployment, green manufacturing and sustainable infrastructure.
- We will build a diverse pipeline of talent in the clean energy economy by supporting industry-based credentialing programs and registered apprenticeship programs.
- Adopt scaled-up tax credits for renewable energy projects that meet certain labor standards.

Prioritize a More Diverse, Inclusive Workforce

- Build a more inclusive clean energy workforce that is representative of America and younger workers entering the job market.
- Accelerate EPA’s environmental workforce job training program.
- Develop and expand job training programs for historically marginalized and underrepresented groups modeled after programs like Solar Ready Vets.
- Provide economic empowerment opportunities in the United States through retrofitting public housing infrastructure and to create safe and healthy homes and union jobs.

Use American Made Materials

- Require U.S. made iron, steel, and aluminum to be used for water and clean energy infrastructure.
- Bolster American manufacturing, supply chains, and nature-based solutions for clean energy, energy efficiency and climate-smart agriculture.

Provide Opportunities to the Next Generation of Workers

- Mobilize the next generation of workers—a new corps and cohort challenged to conserve our public lands, deliver new clean energy, and address the changing climate while receiving wages and benefits meeting community labor standards, including through pre-apprenticeship opportunities, joint labor-management registered apprenticeships for training, and direct hire programs that put good-paying and union jobs within reach for more Americans.
- Ensure that America’s service missions abroad, including those through the Peace Corps, Fulbright fellowships, and USAID expand their calls to action to include reducing carbon pollution, safeguarding vulnerable populations from climate impacts, and ensuring a sustainable planet for all.

Empower Energy Communities

The Unity Task Force recommends community-centered, place-based solutions to empower and stand with rural and urban communities and workers impacted by the changing energy market, including policies that support displaced workers, encourage the reclamation and remediation of legacy coal sites and oil and gas wells, fund infrastructure projects and stimulate economic development, and create strong, family-sustaining jobs in safe working conditions. Priorities include:

- Local leadership: Support local leaders in their work to drive transition planning, program development, and implementation.

- Restorative Economic Development: Invest in diverse economic sectors to build resilience, improve public health, restore ecosystems and develop equitable opportunities for all people -- especially those historically marginalized, including Native and Indigenous people and communities of color. Increase Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) funding.
- Workforce and Worker Health: Ensure viable pathways to quality, family-sustaining jobs and develop a support system for all workers affected by the transition from coal. Keep promises made to energy workers through shoring up pensions, Black Lung Disability Trust Fund, health benefits and transition to good paying jobs.
- Reclamation: Require the reclamation and remediation of coal sites to create jobs while restoring land and clean water.
- Infrastructure: Invest in community-driven infrastructure projects -- from roads to schools -- to spur economic growth. Target investments in job-creating clean energy and infrastructure projects in communities in transition.
- Bankruptcy: Protect workers, taxpayers, communities, and the environment during bankruptcies.
- Coordination and Access: Establish a Task Force on Coal and Power Plant Communities, to help access federal investments and leverage private sector investments to help create high-paying union jobs based upon the unique assets of each community. Empower communities by facilitating direct access to federal resources, grounding new federal programs in the places most affected by the energy transition.
- Solidarity for Climate Action: Consider endorsing the Blue Green Alliance's policy for high-quality job creation and retention in their Solidarity for Climate Action publication.

Environmental Justice

The Unity Task Force believes we must embed environmental justice and climate justice at the heart of our policy and governing agenda. The Unity Task Force supports forging a new social contract with the American people that says that everyone has a right to clean air and water and a livable future, regardless of your race, where you live, your political affiliation, or your income.

- Polluter Accountability: The Unity Task Force recommends holding polluters accountable by directing the EPA and Justice Department to pursue cases to the fullest extent permitted by law and, when needed, seek additional legislation to hold corporate executives personally accountable for affecting the health and safety of workers and communities, such as intentionally hiding or distorting material information, including jail time where merited. It is critical that we act to hold corporate polluters responsible for rampant pollution that creates the types of underlying conditions that are contributing to the disproportionate rates of illness and death from COVID-19 among Black Americans.
- Environmental Justice Investment: Create an environmental justice fund that would provide a historic investment across federal agencies to eliminate legacy pollution which disproportionately causes illness and death in rural and urban communities of color, low-income communities, and indigenous communities, including but not limited to remediation of Superfund and other contaminated sites and investments critical to children's health, such as removal of lead paint in housing and schools, the replacement

of lead service lines, and ensuring housing and schools have adequate plumbing and proper waste disposal.

- Local Leadership: Support local leaders in their work to drive transition planning, program development, and implementation. Directly work with environmental justice leaders to develop detailed plans with communities on the frontlines of poverty and pollution to ensure they benefit from the transition. Provide materials in multiple languages to increase accessibility and inclusion.
- Equity Screen: Implement an ‘Equity Screen’ on all major federal spending, policymaking and infrastructure investments, including climate, energy, environmental, housing, and transportation. Map disadvantaged communities where funding should be prioritized.
- Cumulative Impacts: Ensure that project decisions fully reflect on-the-ground realities and cumulative impacts.
- Executive Order: Issue an Executive Order on Climate and Environmental Justice that contains recommendations for specific executive actions to protect and benefit frontline communities.

Ensure Access to Capital in Environmental Justice Communities

Address the challenge of lack of access to credit and capital for many local governments and small businesses owned by and located in environmental justice communities, leading to under-investment and poor governmental service delivery, exposing residents to predatory lending practices, driving disparities in economic growth, health and wealth creation, and contributing to income inequality by:

- Expanding federal tools for investment in marginalized communities and broadening access to capital investment and markets for women- and minority-owned small businesses.
- Strengthening federal procurement standards for local hiring, utilization of women-, veteran-, and minority-owned businesses.
- Building the ability of the federal government to finance infrastructure, including working with states and the private sector to develop an innovative financing mechanism that leverages private sector dollars to maximize investment in the clean energy revolution and environmental justice communities.
- Ensuring that infrastructure investments dedicate a large proportion of support to these communities in deploying or undertaking investments in clean energy, energy efficiency, clean water, clean mobility, environmental remediation, green spaces, green infrastructure and health and safety improvements.

Ensure Clean, Safe, and Affordable Water for All

- Significantly increase funding levels and opportunities for water and wastewater infrastructure investment.
- Get lead out of drinking water in homes and schools. Prioritize grants particularly in low-income communities and provide significant new funding for public schools to deploy water filters, conduct mandatory testing, and remediate lead in drinking water.
- Ensure adequate testing and remediation for widespread per- and polyfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) water contamination, especially in disadvantaged communities.

- Make water bills affordable for low-income and rural Americans through targeted SRF and Rural Utility Service funding for disadvantaged communities.

Electricity Sector

The Unity Task Force recommends accelerating investments in clean electricity generation and transmission, creating millions of good-paying and union jobs in clean energy while cutting pollution and making energy costs cheaper for families.

- Eliminate Carbon Pollution: Eliminate carbon pollution from power plants by 2035 through technology-neutral standards for clean energy and energy efficiency.
- Build Renewable Energy Projects at Historic Levels: Dramatically expand solar and wind energy deployment through community-based and utility-scale systems. Install 500 million solar panels, including eight million solar roofs and community solar energy systems, and 60,000 onshore and offshore wind turbines that are manufactured in America, creating millions of jobs, including hundreds of thousands of union jobs that cannot be outsourced. Break down barriers to clean energy deployment across America and build a modern electric grid that connects communities and powers them with all forms of clean energy.
- Launch Battery Storage and Clean Energy Transmission Line Moonshot: Super charge investment in innovation and deployment of American made battery technology and clean energy transmission lines.
- Improve Transmission Planning: Increase transparency and fairness in power markets for clean energy (FERC). Develop and implement a long-term transmission plan to deliver more renewables.
- Cut Red Tape: Promote fast and easy permitting for rooftop solar and energy retrofits.

Energy Efficiency and Housing

The Unity Task Force recommends increasing investment in energy efficiency across the public and private buildings sectors in order to embrace the opportunity of a lifetime to create millions of good-paying jobs in energy efficiency while making energy costs cheaper for families, businesses, and state and local governments.

- Net-Zero New Buildings by 2030: Net-zero emissions for all new buildings by 2030, on the pathway to a 100% clean building sector.
- Retrofit 4 Million Buildings: Within five years, unlock tens of billions of dollars of private sector funding to retrofit four million buildings; prioritizing hospitals, schools, and municipal buildings.
- Retrofit 2 Million Households: Within five years, make energy saving upgrades to up to two million households and affordable and public housing units creating hundreds of thousands of jobs. Advance appliance and equipment efficiency standards. Expand funding for Rural Utilities Service programs to slash disproportionately high energy burden for low-income rural households and rural communities of color.
- Increase Funding for Retrofits: Expand the Weatherization Assistance Program and LIHEAP, and increasing funding for Rural Utilities Service and Community

Development Block Grant programs that support low-income households in rural and urban communities. Increase funding for DOE's State Energy Program and expand the scope to focus on equitable decarbonization, including through programs and projects focused on reducing energy burden.

- Eliminate Energy Poverty: Develop a national strategy to eliminate energy poverty, including lack of electricity access in rural places, and reduce disparities in energy burden. Commit to implementing the strategy through coordinated energy assistance programs and targeted grants and financing for energy efficiency, electrification, and clean distributed energy resources.
- Streamline Requirements for Unlocking Energy Efficiency Funding: In order to make it easier to access funding and financing for energy efficiency, streamline eligibility requirements across federal low-income energy efficiency funding and financing programs.

Transportation

The Unity Task Force supports measures to greatly reduce greenhouse gas pollution from the transportation sector, create good jobs, including union jobs in EV manufacturing and infrastructure construction in America, and make public transportation more efficient and widely available.

- Strong Standards for Cars and Trucks: Immediately convene California, due to its unique authority, and other states with labor, auto industry, and environmental leaders to inform ambitious actions that will enable the United States to lead the way in building a clean, 21st century vehicle fleet and stronger domestic manufacturing base powered by high-wage, union jobs. Move quickly to reestablish strong standards for clean cars and trucks and the charging infrastructure needed to fuel them that consider the most recent advances in technology, and accelerate the adoption of zero-emission vehicles in the United States while reclaiming market share for domestically-produced vehicles.
- Invest in Clean Cars and Buses: Reduce harmful air pollution and protect our children's health by transitioning the entire fleet of 500,000 school buses to American-made, zero-emission alternatives within five years. Lead by example in the public sector by transitioning the 3 million vehicles in the federal, state, and local fleets to zero-emission vehicles. Support private adoption of affordable low-pollution and zero-emission vehicles by partnering with state and local governments to install at least 500,000 public charging stations from coast to coast. Make charging infrastructure accessible, with strong labor, training and installation standards, through federal grants to states and localities.
- Accelerate the Adoption of Zero Emission Vehicles: Support "cash-for-clunkers" style approaches to incentivize accelerated adoption of zero-emission passenger vehicles. Provide incentives for manufacturers to build new factories or retool existing factories in the United States to assemble zero-emission vehicles or manufacture charging equipment.
- Domestic Transportation Manufacturing: Expand grant programs and/or loan guarantees to U.S. companies, including the Advanced Technology Vehicle Manufacturing (ATVM) program, to construct new or retool existing U.S. facilities to manufacture electric vehicles, including heavy duty trucks, school buses, transit buses, aircraft, and more. Tie

investments to high quality training programs like the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program (EVITP).

- Mass Transit: Encourage states to prioritize allocation of transportation funds for public mass transit, and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and ensure transportation options and infrastructure meet the needs of tribal, rural, and urban communities to fully participate in zero-emissions transport. Make major improvements to public transit and light rail. Preserve and grow the union workforce within the rail, transit and maritime sectors.
- Ports: Upgrade ports to reduce emissions from dirty equipment, including in communities that experience a disproportionate amount of pollution, while preserving the existing workforce and creating new good paying jobs.
- Rail: Invest in high speed passenger and freight rail systems, while reducing pollution, helping connect workers to quality jobs with shorter commutes, and spurring investment in communities more efficiently connected to major metropolitan areas and unlocking new, affordable access for every American.

Manufacturing and R&D

The Unity Task Force supports measures to revitalize American manufacturing, create good-paying and union jobs in our industrial cities, and make them clean energy manufacturing capitals of the world. The Unity Task Force further supports increasing investment into research, development, demonstration, and deployment of advanced clean energy technologies, and manufacturing those technologies here in America.

- Drive Investment in American Made Materials: Build the clean energy infrastructure of the future using American-made materials. Ensure more technological innovations developed with DOE funding are manufactured in the United States.
- National Low-Carbon Manufacturing Strategy: Enact a national strategy to develop a low-carbon manufacturing sector in every state, accelerating cutting-edge technologies and ensuring businesses and workers have access to new technologies and skills, with a major focus on helping small and large manufacturers upgrade their capabilities to have both competitive and low-carbon futures.
- Net-Negative Emissions Moonshot: Launch a Presidential Net-Negative Emissions Moonshot to challenge the best and brightest scientists, innovators, and entrepreneurs in the world to develop innovative technologies to remove significant amounts of carbon from the atmosphere. The United States will invite China, the EU, Israel, Sweden, Canada, the United Kingdom and other countries to be partners in designing breakthrough technologies through the Clean Energy Ministerial's Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage Initiative and Mission Innovation.
- R&D Investments: Invest in R&D to advance innovative technologies that create cost-effective pathways for industries to decarbonize while ensuring environmental justice and other overburdened communities are protected from increases in cumulative pollution, and frontline communities are provided enhanced economic opportunities. For example: CCS that safely and permanently stores greenhouse gases or advanced nuclear that eliminates risks associated with conventional nuclear technology, or concrete production that actually captures and absorbs greenhouse gases into the product, or advanced

technologies to build and power cleaner, more efficient, and cost-effective cars, trucks, buses, trains, ferries, ships and planes, and more.

- R&D innovation: Establish ARPA-C, a new, cross-agency Advanced Research Projects Agency focused on climate. This initiative will target affordable, game-changing technologies to help America achieve our 100% clean energy target, including grid-scale storage; refrigeration and air conditioning using refrigerants with no global warming potential; zero net energy buildings at zero net cost; decarbonizing industrial heat needed to make steel, concrete, and chemicals and reimagining carbon-neutral construction materials; decarbonizing the food and agriculture sector, and leveraging agriculture to remove carbon dioxide from the air and store it in the ground.
- Manufacturing Investments: Provide firms in the industrial sector with access to revolving loan funds, grants, and tax incentives for efficiency upgrades, process changes, and facility retooling. Provide technical assistance for manufacturers to increase efficiency.
- Lead by Example: Launch a federal Buy Clean program by 2022. Use federal procurement of clean energy and clean industrial products with high labor standards to drive growth in good quality manufacturing jobs in the U.S.

Indigenous and Tribal Lands

The Unity Task Force supports steps to significantly strengthen the nation-to-nation relationship between the United States and Native American Tribes, and to increase investment in clean energy, clean water, and wastewater infrastructure for Tribes.

The Unity Task Force recommends the Democratic Party Platform contain the following language:

Democrats recognize the historic wrongs that have been perpetrated against Native American Tribes and communities, including with respect to infrastructure permitting decisions. We commit to managing federal actions and undertakings in a manner that honors the trust responsibility; respects the nation-to-nation relationship and sovereignty of Tribes; and protects treaty and other reserved rights, natural and cultural resources, and sacred sites of federally-recognized Indian tribes. We commit to upholding leasing and rights-of-way regulations in a manner that strengthens tribal sovereignty and ensures tribal consent on projects involving land in which tribes own even a fractional interest. Democrats commit to early and ongoing consultation with tribes to identify and work to appropriately mitigate or address concerns regarding major infrastructure projects.

The Unity Task Force additionally recommends:

- Engage in a Tribal Needs Assessment to meet over five hundred Tribes in the United States where they are and truly understand their needs and how to support them in the energy transition.
- Capital investment in energy grid for indigenous, tribal lands, and any areas of the US that lack energy infrastructure.

Fossil Fuels

The Unity Task Force supports following science and the law to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impacts from fossil fuel production, transportation, and use.

- Regulatory Action: Following science and the law, expeditiously reestablish and revise rules, policies and guidance to ensure sound environmental and natural resource regulations and standards that aggressively reduce conventional and greenhouse gas pollution in all regulated sectors, including the regulation of oil and gas.
- Climate Test: Ensure that all major domestic and international infrastructure projects that require federal approval or receive significant federal funds or financing consider climate change (i.e. apply a climate test) and cumulative impacts, including a full life cycle assessment, and identify and invest in all opportunities to avoid, minimize and mitigate climate impacts, including impacts from fossil fuel infrastructure projects and export terminals.
- Overseas coal financing: End financing for coal projects overseas.
- Repeal fossil fuel Subsidies: Repeal fossil fuel subsidies.
- Decrease Methane Emissions: Significantly reduce methane pollution through robust federal standards and targeted support for repairing and replacing aging distribution systems while creating thousands of new jobs for pipefitters and plumbers, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Agriculture and Carbon Sequestration in the Land Sector

The Unity Task Force understands that floods, droughts, President Trump's failed and reckless trade war, and the COVID-19 pandemic are making it difficult for farmers and people in rural America to earn a good living, pass their farm onto the next generation, and straining farmers' health. At the same time, our ability to solve the climate crisis is dependent on increasing the capability of our natural and working lands to be a greenhouse gas sink.

The Unity Task Force recommends a number of steps to partner with farmers and rural communities to make American agriculture the first in the world to achieve net-zero emissions, giving farmers new sources of income in the process, through:

- Expand federal incentives to help those that choose to transition to high-productivity, lower-emission, and regenerative agricultural practices in order to build a more resilient, equitable, and inclusive food system and rural economy. That includes growing cover crops, increasing soil health and water holding capacity, and conserving marginal farmland. Provide technical assistance to farmers, ranchers, and forest managers to help them to better access government resources.
- Provide opportunities to young farmers and ranchers, including returning veterans, to enter the economy, help farmers make a good living, and promote vibrant regional and local sustainable farm economies.
- To protect rural communities from water and air pollution, including algae blooms and unsafe drinking water, stand up to corporate polluters who harm rural communities.

- Since American farmers and ranchers are being hurt by increasing market concentration, protect small and medium-sized farmers and producers by strengthening enforcement of the Sherman and Clayton Antitrust Acts and the Packers and Stockyards Act.
- Conduct a survey of emissions and natural carbon sequestration from the forestry and agricultural sectors to examine the full potential of carbon sequestration through forest conservation.
- Rebuild regional food infrastructure to ensure that local market infrastructure is in place for family farmers to sell a wider range of products.
- Increase funding for the conservation of forests on private lands.
- Plant over 16 billion new native and non-invasive trees by 2050, on a combination of federal, state, local, tribal, and non-governmental lands, including urgently planting in urban neighborhoods across America, with the priority going to low-income neighborhoods and communities of color.

Adaptation and Resilience

The Unity Task Force recognizes the damages caused by past climate change-influenced disasters and believes the United States must do more to protect communities and help them recover. The Unity Task Force believes we must act to reduce climate risks and, instead of making things as they were, build back better after disasters and climate-fueled catastrophes in a resilient, green and just manner. These are opportunities to create the just, resilient, and zero-emission future we all desire. In doing so, the Unity Task Force recommends prioritizing disproportionately exposed, frontline and vulnerable communities and rectifying the inequities and inefficiencies of disaster response, including transparent and timely reporting and oversight.

- Launch a national resilience program to provide technical assistance to communities and fund resilience projects.
- Build a new resilient infrastructure economy, including creating a new class of well-paying jobs and job training around climate resilient industries.
- Increase funding for equitable and just pre-disaster mitigation and resilient disaster recovery and modernize and incentivize climate risk mitigation.
- Promote climate resilience, and incorporate green infrastructure and other nature-based solutions.
- Reinstate federal flood protection standards.

Parks, Monuments, and Oceans

The Unity Task Force believes America's public lands, waters and wildlife should be held in trust for future generations, not sold off to the highest bidder.

- Conserve natural lands and enhance resilience (commit to conserving 30% of America's lands and waters and at least 30% of oceans). Protect, restore and preserve land, forests, coasts and oceans to provide natural carbon storage and enhanced protection from climate impacts.
- Protect wildlife and their habitats from the threats of climate change, including their ability to move in response to changing conditions.

- Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to safeguard natural areas, water resources, and to provide recreation opportunities to all Americans.

International

The Unity Task Force believes we must reclaim America’s position as the world leader in addressing climate change. We recommend President Biden call for and host an emergency meeting of the world’s major emitters to ensure that all submit and *implement* ambitious enhanced NDCs for COP26 as well as long-term decarbonization strategies to the United Nations, harmonize post-COVID-19 economic recovery around sustainability, and drive government transparency and agreed upon accountability.

In addition, the Unity Task Force recommends:

- Rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement.
- Announcing a more ambitious 2030 Nationally Determined Contribution.
- Ratifying the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol.
- Making climate a diplomatic priority.
- Investing in the Green Climate Fund.
- Recommitting to Mission Innovation and significantly increasing federal clean energy research, development, and demonstration.
- Create a Clean Energy Export and Climate Investment Initiative to promote American clean energy exports and investments around the world.

Reorganization of Government

The Unity Task Force requests the following ideas around organizing the government for climate action be transmitted to the future transition team for consideration:

- Transform the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) into a Council on Climate Action with a broader mandate.
- Create an Office of Climate Mobilization in the White House that reports directly to the President.
- Establish a White House Council of frontline Environmental Justice community and national leaders who would inform the design and execution of climate change laws, policies, and programs.
- Reinstate the cabinet-level interagency council on environmental justice and update the 1994 Executive Order 12898.
- Elevate the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council to report directly to the White House through the interagency council.
- Establish a new Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) within the U.S. Department of Justice to hold corporate polluters accountable.
- Host an Environmental Justice summit within the first 100 days in office.
- Create an inter-agency task force to create a comprehensive, multi-industry, national plan to guarantee support and protection for affected communities and workers.

Environmental Justice Stories

The Unity Task Force would like to communicate the following environmental justice stories to the Biden campaign to help inform campaign communications and policy development:

Cancer Alley: St. James Parish, Louisiana¹

You cannot tell stories of climate change and environmental justice without talking about one of the most polluted regions of the country known as “Cancer Alley.” Along the banks of the Mississippi from Baton Rouge to New Orleans, climate change and COVID-19 are exacerbating a long history of environmental injustices, where pollution from fossil fuel facilities have led to cancer and other public health outcomes in a community of Black and low-income residents. St. James Parish has seven of the ten Census tracts that have the highest cancer risk nation-wide due to stunning rates of pollution, and has also experienced high rates of COVID-19 infections and death.

Hookworm & Raw Sewage in Lowndes County, Alabama²

Climate change is increasing the prevalence of tropical illnesses and diseases of extreme poverty, such as hookworm – a 19th century disease – which is thriving in the South. In Lowndes County, Alabama, children play near raw sewage due to the lack of affordable septic systems, forcing residents to use rudimentary solutions that fail when it rains or floods, as the raw sewage simply re-enters their homes. This county of less than 11,000 had the highest per capita infection rate of COVID-19 in the state in June 2020, and the second highest per capita rate of death.

Climate Gentrification in Little Haiti, Florida³

Long-time residents of Miami’s Little Haiti, a historically low-income and primarily immigrant neighborhood are being displaced from their homes as climate change upends the Miami real estate market. The more affluent residents near the beach seek higher ground, away from what is commonly known as ground zero for the impacts of climate change, due to sea level rise and frequent flooding. Places such as Liberty City and Overtown sit on higher ground from the imminent threat of sea level rise in South Florida, making their communities frontline to a growing wave of climate gentrification by wealthy and powerful developers.

Lead in the Water in Denmark, South Carolina⁴

Residents in the City of Denmark are afraid to drink the water from their taps coming from a 75-year-old system. People drive miles to fill up elsewhere due to broken trust in the system and their government stemming from the use of a controversial chemical – not approved by the EPA and typically used for treating pools, not drinking water – which was discovered in their drinking water.

¹ [Louisiana's 'Cancer Alley' Is Getting Even More Toxic -- But Residents Are Fighting Back](#)
[Opponents of Formosa Plastics Project to Demand Louisiana's St. James Parish Council Rescind Approval](#)

² [Hookworm, a disease of extreme poverty, is thriving in the US south. Why?](#)
[Researchers Find Hookworm Infection Linked to Extreme Poverty in Rural Alabama](#)
[This Woman Advocates For Alabama Residents Exposed To Hookworm](#)

³ Marleine Bastien, executive director of the Family Action Network Movement, FANM. A dynamic leader and activist in the area.
[Little Haiti residents forced from home again as climate change upends Miami real estate](#)

⁴ Deanna Miller Berry, Activist. [Water concerns continue to plague the City of Denmark after controversial chemical taken out of system](#)

Detroit's Zip Code 48217⁵

The most polluted zip code in Michigan – and one of the most polluted in the nation – is 48217, primarily composed of Latino and African-American neighborhoods. There has been an incredible burden on those living there as a result of plants that for years have caused incredibly poor air quality, exacerbating asthma cases and contributing to lung disease, both substantial risk factors for COVID-19.

⁵

https://www.mlive.com/news/detroit/2010/06/must-read_report_detroits_4821.html

<https://www.bridgemi.com/michigan-environment-watch/coronavirus-shutdown-not-yet-helping-air-michigans-most-toxic-zip-code>

CRIMINAL JUSTICE UNITY TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Our criminal justice system is failing to keep communities safe—and failing to deliver justice. America is the land of the free, and yet more of our people are behind bars, per capita, than anywhere else in the world. Instead of making evidence-based investments in education, jobs, health care, and housing that are proven to keep communities safe and prevent crime from occurring in the first place, our system has criminalized poverty, overpoliced and underserved Black and brown communities, and cut public services. Instead of offering the incarcerated the opportunity to turn their lives around, our prisons are overcrowded and continue to rely on inhumane methods of punishment. Instead of treating those who have served their time as full citizens upon their return to society, too many of our laws continue to punish the formerly incarcerated, erecting barriers to housing, employment, and voting rights for millions of Americans.

The Unity Task Force on Criminal Justice Reform recommends policies to overhaul America’s criminal justice system from top to bottom. Our recommendations are based on our conviction that the American people deserve a criminal justice system grounded in evidence-based practices, not political slogans and sound bites. The Task Force is committed to policies that will end the era of mass incarceration while continuing to reduce crime rates; to rooting out systemic racism in our criminal justice system and our society; and to reimagining public safety for the benefit of our people and the character of our country.

Rep. Bobby Scott, Co-chair
Chiraag Bains, Co-chair
TN State Sen. Raumes Akbari
SC State Rep. Justin Bamberg
Vanita Gupta
Fmr. Attorney General Eric Holder
Symone Sanders
Stacey Walker

Policing

Use of Force Guidelines: Create a robust national use of force standard, including that deadly force may be used only when necessary and as a last resort to protect against an imminent threat to life. Issue an executive order requiring federal law enforcement agencies to adhere to these standards, and condition the receipt of federal grants on the adoption of the national standard at the state and local level.

Ban chokeholds: Sign legislation to prohibit all maneuvers that restrict the flow of blood or oxygen to the brain, including chokeholds and carotid holds, deeming the use of such force a federal civil rights violation and conditioning Byrne JAG grants on banning such force.

Racial Profiling: End police racial profiling by passing the End Racial and Religious Profiling Act (ERRPA), part of the Justice in Policing Act.

Civil Asset Forfeiture: Reform civil asset forfeiture to restrict the conditions under which property can be lawfully seized by the government.

Non-Police Responses: Federal funding to create a civilian corps of unarmed first responders such as social workers, EMTs, and trained mental health professionals, who can handle non-violent emergencies including order maintenance violations, mental health emergencies, and low-level conflicts outside the criminal justice system, freeing police officers to concentrate on the most serious crimes. Fund initiatives to partner mental health professionals, substance use disorder experts, social workers, and disability advocates with police departments to respond to calls with police officers to better de-escalate interactions with citizens and when appropriate, to divert individuals to the social services they need.

Weapons of War: Reinstitute and strengthen the Obama-Biden Administration's Executive Order 13688 to prevent the transfer of surplus military controlled weapons and explosives, non-passenger vehicles, armored or weaponized drones, and combat aircraft to law enforcement agencies under the Department of Defense's 1033 Program.

Body Cameras: Support the continued use of body cameras, and require best practices to protect civil rights and personal privacy.

Police Training: Condition federal funds on training in de-escalation, crisis intervention, implicit bias, and peer intervention, both at the academy and on the job.

Community Policing: Condition federal funds on true community-centered engagement across the country.

Police Hiring & Diversity: Prioritize the recruitment, hiring, and retention of candidates that are traditionally underrepresented in law enforcement, so that police departments reflect the diversity of the communities they serve.

Officer Health: Allocate Byrne JAG funding for officer mental health and wellbeing, including personal safety equipment, suicide prevention initiatives, and substance abuse programs.

Law Enforcement Oversight

Oversight of Police Practices: Create a national police systems review commission to analyze policing data, develop best practices, and investigate critical incidents from a systems failure perspective.

National Database: Develop a national database that would cover all police agencies in the United States and its territories, similar to the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training's National Decertification Index, which would compile the names of officers who have been found to have abused their power. The process for publishing an officer's name in the database must ensure access to due process and an opportunity for appeal.

Transparency & Data Collection: Require data collection by federal law enforcement agencies and by grants to state and local agencies, on all core police activities, including police shootings

and deaths in custody, use of force, and stops, searches, and arrests. Data should be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, disability, and other demographic characteristics and made publicly available.

Pattern or Practice Investigations: Reinvigorate pattern-or-practice civil rights investigations under 34 U.S.C. § 12601 to address systemic police misconduct. Provide federal investigators with subpoena power.

Qualified Immunity: Ensure that victims of federal, state, and local law enforcement abuse of power can seek justice through civil litigation by reining in the doctrine of qualified immunity.

Civil Rights Prosecutions: Empower the federal government to hold officers accountable for civil rights violations by lowering the evidentiary intent standard for prosecuting law enforcement officials under 18 U.S.C. § 242.

Immigration Enforcement: Reverse the historic use of 287(g), and similar programs that force local law enforcement to take on the role of immigration enforcement, including by ending all agreements entered into by the Trump Administration.

Prosecution

Task Force on Prosecutorial Discretion: Create a new task force, placed outside of the U.S. Department of Justice, to make recommendations for tackling discrimination and other problems in our justice system that result from arrest and charging decisions.

Pattern-or-Practice Investigations: Expand the Department of Justice's pattern-or-practice investigation authority to address systemic misconduct by prosecutors and to hold state and local jurisdictions accountable for failing to meet their Sixth Amendment obligations.

Federal Prosecutorial Guidelines: Immediately withdraw the Trump Administration's guidance advising prosecutors to pursue the harshest penalties possible, even for low-level offenses. Reinstating the Obama-Biden Administration's Smart on Crime Initiative, and issue new federal guidelines that advise prosecutors not to overcharge cases in order to coerce plea deals, or to pursue harsher sentences in order to penalize citizens for exercising their right to a jury trial. End the Trump Administration's 'Zero Tolerance' immigration enforcement policy by rescinding the Department of Justice (DOJ) memoranda and prioritize the criminal prosecution of human traffickers, smugglers, and others engaged in serious crimes.

Appointing Prosecutors: Appoint people committed to criminal justice reform to key prosecutorial positions, including AG, DAG, and U.S. Attorneys.

Transparency & Data Collection: Direct DOJ to collect data on federal prosecution practices and make it public. Include opening investigations, charging, pretrial detention and release, plea offers, and sentence recommendations. Include data on racial disparities.

Restorative Justice: Launch a federal restorative justice program, and fund pilots in the states.

Support Progressive Prosecutors: Support new state prosecutors through funding and technical support in their efforts to ensure public safety while reducing incarceration.

Forensic Science Commission: Reinstate the Obama-Biden Administration National Commission on Forensic Science, which the Trump Administration disbanded.

Public Defense, Pretrial Release, Bail, Fines, & Fees

End Cash Bail: Withhold funding from states that continue to use cash bail or other pretrial practices that produce racial bias or other forms of discrimination.

End the Criminalization of Poverty: Prohibit federal funding to any state or local jurisdiction that incarcerates for failure to pay fines or fees or suspends driver's licenses for any reason unrelated to public safety, such as inability to pay fines or fees or child support. Provide incentives to states to reform fines and fees and calibrate to the defendant's financial circumstances.

Right to Counsel: Invest in public defenders' offices to ensure citizens' access to quality counsel.

Public Defender Salaries: Address funding and salary parity between public defenders and prosecutors.

Pretrial Detention: Reform the federal bail system to set clear metrics for reducing pretrial detention rates and prohibit risk assessment tools that carry bias.

Fair Sentencing & Reducing Incarceration

Marijuana: Decriminalize marijuana use and legalize marijuana for medical purposes at the federal level. Allow states to make their own decisions about legalizing recreational use. Automatically expunge all past marijuana convictions for use and possession. Lift budget rider blocking DC from taxing and regulating legal marijuana and remove marijuana use from the list of deportable offenses. Encourage states to invest tax revenue from legal marijuana industries to repair damage to Black and brown communities hit hardest by incarceration.

Support Diversion Programs: Reduce criminal penalties for drug possession and support increased use of drug courts and treatment diversion programs instead of incarceration for those struggling with substance use disorders.

Death Penalty: Abolish the death penalty at the federal level, and incentivize states to follow the federal government's example.

Mandatory Minimums: Empower judges to determine appropriate sentences, by fighting to repeal mandatory minimums at the federal level and give states incentives to repeal their mandatory minimums.

Retroactive Reforms: Make all sentencing reforms retroactive to allow for individualized resentencing.

Crack/Cocaine Sentencing Disparity: End the federal crack and powder cocaine disparity in sentences, and make the change retroactive.

Clemency Board: To avoid possible institutional bias and ensure people have a fair and independent evaluation, establish an independent clemency board, composed and staffed by

people with diverse backgrounds. Expand Obama-era criteria for proactive clemency initiative to address individuals serving excess sentences.

Compassionate Release: Reinvigorate compassionate release so that the sick and elderly are transitioned out of incarceration so long as they do not pose a public safety risk.

Appointments: Appoint federal judges who have demonstrated a commitment to criminal justice reform, and who have diverse backgrounds and experiences, including as public defenders, legal aid attorneys, and civil rights lawyers.

Sentence Length and Early Release: Task the U.S. Sentencing Commission with conducting a comprehensive review of existing sentencing guidelines and statutory sentencing ranges, with the goal of generating legislative recommendations, promulgating new guidelines, and issuing formal guidance to reduce unreasonably long sentences and promote rehabilitation. The Commission should make recommendations regarding early release options, including expanding good time credits, reinstating federal parole, and creating a “second look” mechanism permitting federal judges to reevaluate sentences after a certain amount of time served. Any such options should use a systematic, evidence-based approach that reduces risks to public safety, prevents racially disparate implementation, reduces the total number of people under federal custody and supervision, and limits the duration and conditions of supervision.

Prison Reform

Private Prisons & Detention Centers: End the use of private prisons and detention centers, including for immigration offenses.

Hidden Profiteering in Diversion Programs, Phone Calls, Commissaries: End profiteering in diversion programs, commercial bail, and electronic monitoring. Support the passage of legislation to prevent private companies from charging outrageously high fees to make prison calls.

Solitary Confinement: End solitary confinement in all but rare, exceptional cases.

Educational Opportunities: Expand funding for the opportunity to pursue education and skills training (learn to read, earn a GED, pursue a college degree, or learn a new trade) during and after incarceration.

Medical Care: Expand access to medical care for vulnerable prison populations.

Bureau of Prisons Oversight: Create a Bureau of Prisons ombudsman position for people who are incarcerated and their families to make complaints and get prompt redress.

Prison Conditions: Prioritize CRIPA and PREA enforcement.

Prison Closures: Incentivize jail and prison closures as populations decline. Ensure the resources saved are invested directly into those communities that have been most impacted by mass incarceration.

Prison Workers: Abolish forced and exploitative labor in prison. Ensure enforcement of health and safety laws.

Rehabilitation and Reentry

Removing barriers to reentry: Remove restrictions on access to public housing, employment, occupational licenses, driver's licenses, and public benefits. Create a U.S. Reentry Commission to conduct a comprehensive review of barriers to reentry, with the goal of taking executive action and proposing legislation to remove as many as possible. Include recommendations for reforming parole and probation, including preventing reincarceration for technical violations, as well as expungement and sealing of convictions.

Housing: Ensure 100% of formerly incarcerated individuals have housing upon reentry. Begin by expanding funding for transitional housing and directing HUD to only contract with entities open to housing reentrants.

Mental Health & Substance Use Treatment: Expand mental health counseling and substance use treatment for reentrants.

Employment: Expand the Obama Administration's "ban the box" policy. Streamline process for giving individuals on probation or parole for nonviolent offenses access to Job Corps.

Driving Privileges: Wipe out outstanding traffic fines that would prevent reentrants from obtaining a license, if they have been incarcerated for six months or longer (but not for serious driving violations).

Pell Grants: Reinstate Pell Grant eligibility for previously incarcerated individuals.

Voting Rights: Restore the right to vote for all formerly incarcerated individuals.

Juvenile Justice Reform

End the School-to-Prison Pipeline: Stop the practice of arresting children for behavior that ought to be handled in the principal's office. Instead, every school should have sufficient funding to employ guidance counselors, social workers, or school psychologists to help guarantee age-appropriate student disciplinary practices.

Status Offenses: Decriminalize disciplinary offenses like truancy and alcohol use.

Address Disparate Treatment in Schools: Re-issue federal guidance from the Department of Education and the Department of Justice to reduce the disparate disciplinary treatment of children of color in school and educational settings.

Expungement: Condition the receipt of federal funds on the automatic expungement and sealing of juvenile records.

Support Alternatives to Incarceration: Encourage states to shift from incarceration of juveniles to crime prevention. Incentivize states to develop community-based alternatives to prison and detention centers for youth and invest in after-school programs, community centers, and summer jobs to provide opportunities for young people at risk. Condition grants on diversion to community-based programs.

Juvenile Courts: Incentivize states to raise the minimum age at which an individual may be tried in adult court. Encourage the establishment and use of juvenile courts.

Juvenile Sentencing Reform: Abolish life without parole for juveniles.

Juvenile Detention: Prevent juveniles from being incarcerated with adults.

ECONOMY UNITY TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Democrats commit to forging a new economic and social contract with the American people—a contract that works for the people, not just for big corporations and the wealthiest few. A new economic contract that recognizes all Americans have a right to quality, affordable health care. One that recognizes housing is a right and not a privilege, and that no one should be homeless in the richest country on earth. A new economic and social contract that raises wages and restores workers’ rights to organize, join a union, and collectively bargain. One that provides access for all to reliable banking and financial services. A new economic and social contract that at last grapples honestly with America’s long history of racism and disenfranchisement, of segregation and discrimination, and invests in building equity and opportunity for the communities of color who have been left out and left behind for generations.

Rep. Karen Bass, Co-chair
Sara Nelson, Co-chair
Jared Bernstein
Darrick Hamilton
Ben Harris
Stephanie Kelton
Lee Saunders
Sonal Shah

Racial Equity

We need a comprehensive agenda for communities of color with ambition that matches the scale of the challenge and with recognition that race-neutral policies are not a sufficient response to race-based disparities. We need proactive anti-discrimination detection and enforcement. On day one, we are committed to taking anti-racist actions for equity across our institutions, including in the areas of education, climate change, criminal justice, immigration, and health care, among others. We recognize that physical security is a precursor to economic security, and that the over-policing of communities of color, the criminalization of poverty, and historic and ongoing injustices against sovereign Tribal nations contribute to racial gaps in wealth and income. Importantly, too, we recognize the damaging impacts of barriers to generational wealth-building, including the legacy impact of longstanding prejudices in the employment and housing markets, and prioritize closing the racial wealth gap by lowering disparities in employment rates and compensation, health care outcomes, homeownership, and business ownership.

- Enact H.R. 40 as the building block to begin to redress the harms committed against African Americans, including slavery, sharecropping, Jim Crow, redlining, and the deliberate exclusion of Black Americans from the benefits of the New Deal, G.I. Bill, and other wealth-building government programs.
- Tackle racial bias in communities of color, including appraisals and creating a national standard for housing appraisals (see below for details).
- Hold financial institutions accountable for discriminatory practices in the housing market, including criminal and civil penalties as warranted.
- Restore the federal government’s power to enforce settlements against discriminatory lenders through CFPB.

- Roll back Trump Administration policies gutting fair lending and fair housing protections, strongly enforce fair credit reporting laws, and create a new Public Credit Reporting Agency (see below for details).
- Respect Tribal sovereignty and honor the trust responsibility, strengthen the nation-to-nation relationship between the U.S. government and federally recognized tribes and increase federal investment in building economic opportunity for Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians in critical areas, including health care, clean water, education, and clean energy infrastructure.
- Recognize that racial wealth gaps are rooted in longstanding discrimination and unjust policies that continue to depress the economic and social prosperity of people of color. To provide more Americans the right to enjoy the economic and social benefits of wealth-building, equalize established pathways for wealth building while exploring innovative approaches to closing racial wealth gaps—including in particular policies that provide seed capital in order to access the economic security of asset ownership (e.g. baby bonds).
- Ensure equal access to credit and capital by doubling funding for the State Small Business Credit Initiative, improving and expanding the Small Business Administration programs that most effectively support Black-owned and other minority-owned businesses, increasing opportunities for Black-owned businesses to obtain or participate in federal contracts and protecting small and disadvantaged businesses from federal and state contract bundling which often locks out Black-owned and other minority-owned smaller firms from effectively bidding on procurement contracts.
- Remove barriers to re-entry for the formerly incarcerated, including restrictions on access to public housing, employment, occupational licenses, driver's licenses, and public benefits.

Executive Actions:

- Implement the Obama-Biden Administration's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule requiring communities receiving certain federal funding to proactively examine housing patterns and identify and address policies that have discriminatory effects.
- Direct the Department of Housing and Urban Development to direct increased resources to measuring and identifying discrimination in the housing market through such strategies as paired testing and correspondence audits.
- The Federal Reserve should significantly elevate racial equity as part of its mandate by targeting not just the overall unemployment rate but disparate unemployment rate based on race. To do so, language in the Federal Reserve Act should be amended to require the Fed chair, in his or her semiannual report, to report not just on macroeconomic conditions, but on the extent of racial employment and wage gaps, and what the central bank is doing to reduce them.
- Roll back actions by the Trump Administration including restrictions on labor rights, collective bargaining, and unions.

Supporting Families

Raising a family and caring for a newborn, elderly parent, or sick loved-one is essential for the health and well-being of our nation, but it is a difficult task in today's economy. Workers need

and deserve supportive workplace policies, benefits, and tax incentives that give them the best chance of succeeding at work and at home. Policies that are grounded in first supporting working families help grow the middle class and the economy by enabling workers to maximize their professional potential while upholding their family responsibilities.

High quality paid leave: Implement a system of paid leave that protects workers from the unfair choice between attending to urgent health or caretaking needs and earning a paycheck. Provide a minimum of 12 weeks leave with a broad definition of “care” which would apply to all workers and family types. Ensure wage replacement of at least 66% (as proposed in the FAMILY Act) and higher levels of wage replacement for low-income workers.

Child care: Provide child care support for working Americans through universal access to pre-K, increased support for child care, including expanded funding for child care providers and more generous tax credits for parents that are fully refundable. Put in place better supports for workers providing care to children, including higher pay and more supports for training. These actions are needed because child care is an economic issue in terms of infrastructure spending (child care facilities in areas where there are none), ensuring quality jobs, and removing gender/racial inequities.

Expand nutrition programs: No one should be hungry in the wealthiest country on earth. To wipe out hunger, we must increase funding for food assistance programs (SNAP; WIC; USDA school meal/food bank programs); ensure people are not denied benefits due to past interaction with the criminal justice system; and end Trump’s rules regarding work requirements and the public charge rules. Moreover, in recognition of the damaging impacts of stigmatization on receipt of nutritional assistance, charge public agencies with devising innovative approaches to nutrition assistance so that children and families can receive assistance quickly and without stigma. Lower the threshold for Community Eligibility Program participation, ensure that all students receiving reduced price meals get them for free going forward, and extend the SNAP EBT program through the summer.

Change the tax code to further help working families: Reform the tax code to be more progressive and equitable, while also reducing barriers for families who are eligible for benefits from receiving targeted tax breaks. Provide more generous refundable tax credits to benefit low- and middle-income families, including more equitable access to tax provisions that build wealth and support working families.

Labor Unions and Worker Rights

Strong unions defined what it means to live a good life and know you can take care of your family. It is because of workers who organized unions and fought for worker protections. Worker power provides a pathway to the middle class. Today, however, there’s a war on organizing, collective bargaining, unions, and workers. The following proposals will build a stronger, more inclusive nation by strengthening public, private, and federal sector unions and helping all workers bargain successfully for what they deserve.

Union organizing and bargaining: Repeal “right to work,” ensure recognition of unions with majority sign-up, and restore right to secondary boycott. In addition, ban captive audience meetings, and penalize companies that bargain in bad faith.

- Provide a federal guarantee for public sector employees to bargain for better pay and benefits and the working conditions they deserve, and ensure that all private-sector workers' right to strike without fear of coercion, interference, and undue delay is vigorously protected. Further, establish the federal government's role as promoting and facilitating collective bargaining and helping the parties bring their negotiations to a rapid and successful conclusion. Appoint members to the National Labor Relations Board and National Mediation Board who will protect, rather than sabotage, worker organizing, collective bargaining, and legal rights to concerted action including strikes. Ensure a high standard for federal intervention in strikes, including strikes under the RLA.
- Ensure federal dollars do not flow to employers who engage in union-busting activities, participate in wage theft, or violate labor law.

Worker classification and employer accountability: Pass the PRO Act and enforce wage theft and misclassification laws, expand definition of employer to include accountability in franchises.

- Ensure workers can bargain with the employer that actually holds the power, including franchisors, and ensure those employers are accountable for guaranteeing workplace protections. Enact legislation codifying the Browning-Ferris Industries joint employer definition into law, as called for in the PRO Act, and restoring the broad definition of joint employment to wage and hour law.
- Embrace labor market competition by eliminating barriers to mobility and addressing harmful labor market practices that distort the balance of power and create monopsony-like conditions. This includes outlawing unnecessary non-compete clauses, no-poaching agreements, inadequate wage transparency, mandatory arbitration, burdensome occupational licensing restrictions, and excessive concentration of employers in local labor markets.
- Aggressively pursue employers who violate labor laws, participate in wage theft, or cheat on their taxes by intentionally misclassifying employees as independent contractors, applying the “ABC” test.

Ban individual forced arbitration agreements where workers waive their rights to civil action.

EEOC: Strengthen the EEOC through increasing fiscal support; providing EEOC more authority to conduct directed investigations; broaden EEOC’s ability to initiate directed investigations beyond the ADEA and EPA.

- Require employers’ compliance with labor and employment laws be taken into account in determining whether they are sufficiently responsible to be entrusted with federal contracts. And, mandate that contractors publicly disclose plans to recruit and advance people of color, women, people with disabilities, and covered veterans and will increase enforcement efforts, including pursuing debarment where contractors refuse to end discriminatory practices.

Antitrust: Charge antitrust regulators with systematically incorporating broader criteria into their analytical considerations, including in particular the impact of corporate consolidation on the labor market, underserved communities, and racial equity.

End employer exploitation of immigrant workers to strengthen labor rights, bargaining: End workplace raids to ensure that threats based on workers' status do not interfere with their ability to organize and improve their wages and working conditions. In addition to ending workplace raids, sanction employers, not workers.

- Promote workers' rights and prioritize the enforcement of labor and employment laws across the economy, including on discrimination and sexual harassment, wage and hour laws, and health and safety rules.
- Expand protections for undocumented immigrants who report labor violations. When undocumented immigrants are victims of serious crimes and help in the investigation of those crimes, they become eligible for U Visas. Extend these protections to victims of any workplace violations of federal, state, or local labor law by securing passage of the POWER Act. Ensure that workers on temporary visas, including guest teachers, are protected so that they are able to exercise the labor rights to which they are entitled.

Jobs

47 million Americans have so far filed for unemployment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We need to take bold action to rebuild and strengthen our economy and restore jobs for all. In order to ensure that everyone who wants to work has a pathway to employment, the government must enact measures to create jobs and jobs programs like those effectively used during the New Deal, and ensure such programs are inclusive for women and people of color. These programs should focus on lifting wages, expanding public services, strengthening bonds with communities, protecting workers, and building our public, physical, and human infrastructure so the United States is more resilient to future pandemics, climate change-fueled catastrophes, and economic downturns. Transformational federal investment is needed in initiatives such as a clean energy revolution in all sectors of the economy (power, transportation, buildings, agriculture, industry), growing employment and raising wages in the care economy, and American manufacturing and physical infrastructure. We must also support training models, such as registered union apprenticeships, that both provide earnings and directly connect to a job. Federal jobs and federal contracts must meet the highest labor standards for pay, benefits, non-discrimination, safety, health, and workers' rights.

Infrastructure: In all federal investments in infrastructure, including those undertaken both as stimulus and in periods of a growing economy, undertake productive infrastructure projects which prioritize community cohesion, local hiring, and equal access to public benefits. At the same time, develop a procurement system which embraces equal access to federal contracts for minority- and women-owned businesses.

- Support new jobs through an unprecedented investment in public infrastructure, including roads, bridges, transit, rail, ports, airports, waterways, freight, energy, and broadband, and increasing the number of sustainable homes.

- Require the use of project labor agreements or community workforce/benefit agreements to support consistent labor standards, and community and worker buy-in across multiple elements of large projects.
- Support investing in the education and training of underrepresented groups in the construction trades, including people of color, low-income individuals, women, veterans, and people with disabilities.
- Provide economic empowerment through retrofitting public housing infrastructure to create safe and healthy homes and union jobs.
- Substantially expand investment in the National Housing Trust Fund and repair and rehabilitate public housing. (see below for more on housing).
- Support a workforce to retrofit America through public programs that revitalize not only publicly owned buildings, homes and businesses.
- Mobilize the next generation of workers—a new corps and cohort challenged to conserve our public lands, deliver new clean energy, and address the changing climate.
- Invest in the care economy - child care, adult care, elder care.
- In the 21st century, the Internet is not optional: It is a vital tool for participating in the economy, and all Americans need access to high-speed, affordable broadband service.
 - Prevent states from blocking municipalities and rural co-ops from building publicly-owned broadband networks, and increase federal support for municipal broadband.
 - Increase public investment in rural broadband infrastructure and offer low-income Americans subsidies for accessing high-speed internet through the Lifeline program.
 - Restore the FCC's clear authority to take strong enforcement action against broadband providers who violate net neutrality principles through blocking, throttling, paid prioritization, or other measures that create artificial scarcity and raise consumer prices.

Apprenticeships, career and technical education: Support pro-worker, union-led apprenticeships that lead to actual jobs. Expand opportunities for lifetime learning and training through support for proven, effective programs, while simultaneously expanding access and support for community college training programs by making them tuition-free to help direct workers to higher-paying and high-demand jobs.

Health care and caregiving: Expand public and private “caring jobs” in health care, child care, and elder care while increasing compensation, benefits, bargaining power, and training as core requirements for these jobs.

Support expanded federal resources for rural economic development: Pursue a rural economic development strategy that partners with rural communities to invest in their unique assets, with the goal of giving young people more options to live, work, and raise the next generation in rural America. Strengthen the agricultural sector by pursuing a trade policy that works for American farmers, fostering the development of regional food systems, supporting beginning farmers, and re-investing in land grant universities’ agricultural research. In addition, invest in clean energy and rural broadband. The federal government should strengthen enforcement of the Sherman and Clayton Antitrust Acts and the Packers and Stockyards Acts, especially in monopolistic markets, and reform patent laws to protect smaller farmers.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) can reform decades of discriminatory practices that are well documented by numerous lawsuits, congressional hearings, and federal reports, and promote an equitable and inclusive rural and agricultural agenda. Conservative estimates indicate that Black farmers have lost at least hundreds of billions of dollars as a result of USDA's discriminatory actions, while indigenous, Latino, and other marginalized groups have also lost incredible amounts of land, income and wealth. Current policies continue to exacerbate these inequities: white farm owners received the vast majority of the billions of dollars distributed through the Trump administration's trade war bailouts.

We believe that the USDA should take a more proactive and equitable approach to addressing racism with regards to farmers and farmworkers:

- Ensure USDA serves the interests of all farmers and farmworkers.
- Ensure Black, Native American, Latino and Asian American farmers are able to get the resources they need to better run their farms through USDA's Farming Opportunities Training and Outreach Program (FOTO).
- Appoint diverse family farmers to serve in USDA and relevant committees.
- Reform USDA's civil rights investigation process and ensure that the office has independence to do its work.
- Increase capacity of the Economic Research Service to study farmworkers and farmers of color, collect and publish disaggregated data on how much funding reaches farmers of color.
- Allow farmers of color to more easily pass their farms on to their families. Black family owners of heirs' property have been unable to get the credentials that are required to access USDA programs that could help them resolve heirs' property issues.
- Ensure rural residents, particularly in Tribal areas and the Black Belt, receive equal access to government farm programs, including farm management guidance, resources for marketing and conservation, and access to loans and grants.
- Expand labor protections for rural workers, especially farmworkers.

Minority business investment: Ensure equal access to credit and capital, including expanding federal direct and indirect lending programs and doubling the funding for the State Small Business Credit Initiative, expanding and making permanent the New Markets Tax Credit, and doubling Community Development Financial Institutions funding. Improve and expand the Small Business Administration programs that most effectively support minority-owned businesses, especially the Community Advantage Program and Community Express Programs. In addition, increase opportunities for minority-owned businesses to obtain or participate in federal contracts, increase funding for the Minority Business Development Agency budget, and provide people of color who are entrepreneurs with technical assistance.

Unemployment insurance: The state unemployment infrastructure is broken and requires a complete redesign to provide easier access benefits and new models to keep workers connected to jobs. During periods of acute economic downturns, aspire to keep workers whole while also implementing reasonable automatic mechanisms to ensure that workers receive longer-duration benefits in periods of high local labor market distress. Reform the current unemployment insurance system to keep more workers attached to their jobs, including through work-sharing

and payroll support. Expand the system to cover more workers and offer higher wage replacement rates for beneficiaries. Modernize the system and increase coverage and access to ensure that unemployed workers receive their benefits in a timely fashion without undue application burdens. Address inadequate unemployment insurance coverage through broader worker classification that would extend unemployment benefits to previously uncovered workers.

Underserved communities: Provide substantially higher levels of support for programs and institutions that boost economic development in underserved areas. We should initiate a substantial investment in reclamation projects in areas affected by a reduction in extraction of carbon fuels. These new jobs should pay a good wage and full benefits. This can include developing anchor institutions and economic development funds for distressed local economies, and more generously funding established programs, including CDFIs and the EDA.

- Providing robust new funding for economic and community development programs that inject billions into the economies of underserved communities, creating new jobs, and opportunities for local communities to live and thrive, while simultaneously boosting these local economies through spillover effects.
- Public money should be used to support public services that benefit communities, not spent on sweetheart deals for corporations with little to no transparency or accountability. Include provisions in economic and community development incentives that condition receipt of federal incentives on long-term commitments to operating in disadvantaged communities.
- In cases where state and local entities provide tax or other incentives to influence business location decisions as part of local development strategies, any such packages should include both numerical targets for jobs and tax revenues and "claw back" provisions to be implemented when those targets are missed. The federal government will provide funding for technical assistance to state and local entities to ensure they have the requisite technical and legal expertise. Such local development will be more effective in places with relatively high levels of un- and underemployment.

Manufacturing: Commit to a federal policy that expands support for American manufacturing, including removing incentives to offshore, providing technical support for small manufacturers that meet labor and workers' rights standards, building domestic supply chains for critical goods, and supporting federal procurement as a strategy to expand U.S. manufacturing capacity.

- Creating high value-added jobs through onshoring critical supply chains, increasing investment in innovation hubs, expanding assistance to small manufacturers seeking to grow and to link up with global supply chains, and generating new auto jobs through investment in electric vehicle research and production.

Federal hiring and procurement power: Address widespread dislocation in the labor market by expanding public-sector jobs, including those at the federal level and subnational governments supported by federal policy. Ensure that procurement power is used to support and maintain domestic employment by introducing a massive investment in America's economy through an expanded procurement policy that requires federal contractors to offer middle-class wages and strong protections for workers. This will include in particular a large-scale jobs mobilization to

build a resilient, sustainable infrastructure and clean energy future.

- Issue an executive order to prevent companies from receiving federal contracts that outsource jobs overseas, pay workers less than \$15 an hour without benefits, refuse to remain neutral in union organizing efforts, hire workers to replace striking workers, or close businesses after workers vote to unionize.
- Expand investments in public services—such as k-12 education, behavioral health, social services—that will lead to widespread new employment opportunities for American workers.
- Stop the privatization of public sector jobs and strongly discourage private control of public infrastructure.
- Task the Deputy Secretary's office in each federal agency and department with responsibility for monitoring federal contracting and ensuring federal procurement contracts are fair and inclusive, including with respect to minority-owned, women-owned, and veteran-owned businesses.

Trade: Ensure strong and binding labor, environmental, and human rights standards are written into the core text of all trade agreements, eliminate rules in our trade deals that increase the cost of medicines relative to what other advanced economies pay, and commit to eliminate trade and tax policies that promote the offshoring of U.S. pharmaceutical and medical equipment manufacturing.

Housing

The government should take a more proactive approach to addressing housing inequities, especially racial inequities. We believe that it is important that workers have access to affordable housing, do not get pushed out of housing and more importantly are able to afford to live in communities where U.S. government policies purposely excluded their ability to buy homes and rent homes. To do this, we must address:

Gentrification: Ensure families in communities can buy homes, remove barriers of initial capital, and address predatory lending. A core of wealth disparity is the endowment.

- Support creation and expansion of local land banks and community land trusts to convert tax-delinquent and vacant properties into affordable housing or other productive uses.
- Give local officials tools and resources to maintain homeownership, penalize predatory lending, and combat gentrification—including exploring targeted rental relief programs in cases where exorbitant real increases in rent force long-term residents from their communities—while also tackling persistent racial bias in appraisals that contributes to the racial wealth gap.
- To help protect long-time community residents from displacement, support policies aimed at allowing long-duration homeowners to remain in their homes should they so choose. These policies include encouraging localities to impose penalties for absentee homeowners and safeguards against rising property taxes in localities experiencing especially high rates of appreciation.

Affordable housing: Dramatic increases in funding to provide more affordable housing, reduce prices, create jobs using clear labor standards for all federal housing spending, and decarbonize housing.

- Fully fund Section 8 vouchers and make it an entitlement to all of those who are eligible.
- Create good, union jobs in sweeping plan to build, retrofit and decarbonize homes.
- Substantially expand investment in the National Housing Trust Fund to produce and operate affordable rental homes for the lowest-income households.
- Repair and rehabilitate public housing through a major investment in the refurbishment of housing facilities.

Discriminatory practices: Address longstanding discriminatory practices and systemic and ongoing disparities in the housing market through equalizing access to credit, providing down-payment assistance, and eliminating harmful racial biases in the housing market:

- Ensure effective and rigorous enforcement of the Fair Housing Act and the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act. Hold financial institutions accountable for discriminatory practices in the housing market. Restore the federal government’s power to enforce settlements against discriminatory lenders.
- Roll back Trump Administration policies gutting fair lending and fair housing protections for homeowners, including by implementing the Obama-Biden Administration’s Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule requiring communities receiving certain federal funding to proactively examine housing patterns and identify and address policies that have discriminatory effects. The Trump Administration suspended this rule in 2018.
- Reinstate the federal risk-sharing program which has helped secure financing for thousands of affordable rental housing units in partnership with housing finance agencies.
- Provide legal support for low-income individuals seeking to address legal matters related to evictions and foreclosures.
- Eliminate local and state housing regulations that perpetuate discrimination.
- Tackle racial bias that leads to homes in communities of color being assessed by appraisers below their fair value. Establish a national standard for housing appraisals that ensures appraisers have adequate training and a full appreciation for neighborhoods and do not hold implicit biases because of a lack of community understanding, and precondition inclusion as a qualified appraiser on completion of this training.
- Provide emergency funding designed to tackle the homelessness crisis and reform federal housing programs to ensure they take a “housing first” approach to ending homelessness.
- Restore the federal government’s power to enforce settlements against discriminatory lenders through CFPB.
- Protect homeowners and renters from abusive lenders and landlords through a new Homeowner and Renter Bill of Rights. This new Bill of Rights will prevent mortgage brokers from leading borrowers into loans that cost more than appropriate, prevent mortgage servicers from advancing a foreclosure when the homeowner is in the process of receiving a loan modification, give homeowners a private right of action to seek financial redress from mortgage lenders and servicers that violate these protections, and give borrowers the right to a timely notification on the status of their loan modifications and to be able to appeal modification denials.

Retirement

Too many workers do not have access to adequate retirement saving vehicles, and too few older Americans have access to reasonable long-term care options. Ensure a secure retirement by protecting and strengthening Social Security, helping more middle-class families grow their savings, equalizing saving incentives for workers of all races and income levels, and providing access to affordable health care and support.

Social Security: Expand Social Security by:

- Making Social Security more progressive and generous, with meaningful increases in the minimum benefit, a benefit plus-up to all beneficiaries and lifelong workers by adopting CPI-E for Social Security indexing, and higher payments for surviving spouses.
- No social security benefit cuts of any kind including raising retirement age, means-testing of benefits, adverse adjustments to benefit calculator, or through COLA.

Saving for retirement: Address retirement-saving penalties for caregivers, eliminate WEP/GPO which penalize the Social Security benefits of many public workers, and equalize the tax benefits—totaling over \$200 billion per year—for retirement saving,

Pensions: Shore up public and private pensions and help to ensure workers keep their earned benefits by passing legislation that provides a path towards helping distressed plans.

Address unequal access to retirement resources for caregivers: In light of weakened retirement security for unpaid caregivers and caregivers for family members who sacrifice not only wages but Social Security benefits when they swap paid labor for unpaid care work, support Social Security expansion which better accounts for the challenges facing unpaid caregivers and caregivers for family members—including mitigating the benefit formula penalty for unpaid care.

Support older Americans: Pass anti-discrimination legislation, expand the EITC to older workers, and reduce older-American poverty rates by increasing SSI asset limits and increasing the benefit levels, including raising the minimum benefit.

Increase support for caregivers: Expand support for both paid and unpaid caregivers by improving wages, benefits, and working conditions for paid caregivers, while dramatically expanding the caregiving workforce so that more unpaid caregivers can return to the formal labor market. At the same time, increase caregiver access to certain retirement benefits so that being a caregiver does not jeopardize one's future retirement security. Ensure that every family caregiver is able to receive compensation for their labor through self-directed services if that is the preference of the individual with a disability receiving support.

Increase funding for home and community based care: Increase funding to adequately resource existing programs, end waitlists, and create new programs to ensure that older adults have the support they need to remain at home and in their communities, which is where they want to be.

Banking, Federal Investment, Economic Power for All

Access to financial services and postal banking: Serve the unbanked, increase equity and trust: Support and encourage Congressional efforts to expand access to affordable banking, including short and long-term loans and better banking services to communities so they do not have to rely on predatory lenders.

- Fed accounts: Everyone should have an affordable bank account and believe that the Federal Reserve can play that role.
- Real time payments: Federal Reserve should create a real-time payment system, so families and individuals do not have to wait days for their checks to settle.
- Postal banking: Government should provide easily accessible service locations, especially postal banking to make it possible for everyone to access physical banking locations.

Wall Street: Maintain and expand safeguards that separate retail banking institutions from more risky investments. Additionally, strengthen and protect Dodd-Frank provisions to ensure that the harmful impacts of a financial crisis can never again erode the American economy.

Protect consumers from usurious interest rates: Strengthen oversight of consumer lending, including credit cards (as required by Dodd-Frank), through the CFPB and enforce remedies for abusive or deceptive practices. Require transparency on rates charged by ZIP code. Pursue legislative options to limit predatory interest rates on non-residential consumer lending.

Tackle inequities stemming from credit reporting: Create the Public Credit Reporting Agency within the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to provide consumers with a government option that seeks to minimize racial disparities. All federal lending will accept this credit agency and require that this agency be used. This includes, but would not be limited to federal home lending, PLUS loans (parent loans backed by the U.S. government), other loans that are guaranteed by the U.S. government, as well as any employment through federal agencies or for federal contracts.

- The private agencies will also be required to provide their data to the federal credit agency.
- The federal credit agency will also ensure the algorithms used for credit scoring don't have discriminatory impacts, including accepting non-traditional sources of data like rental history and utility bills to ensure credit.

Corporate consolidation: Antitrust regulators should have the power, authority, and budget to conduct a thorough review of mergers and acquisitions.

- Have antitrust regulators conduct a thorough review of all mergers and acquisitions since Trump took office and assess those that have created highly concentrated markets, demonstrably caused harm to workers, raised prices, exacerbated racial inequality or reduced competition. Take steps to hold these companies accountable and derive policies to repair the damage done to working people and to reverse the impact on racial inequity.

Enforcement: The enforcement agencies should test for and assess racial equity as part of their enforcement actions, including EEOC, FTC and CFPB.

We recognize the empirical literature showing that race plays an important role in employment decisions, with negative impacts for workers of color. We believe it is important for government agencies like the EEOC, CFPB and FTC to take a proactive approach to studying the racial impacts of economic decisions and take the necessary proactive enforcement actions to addressing racial discrimination.

The government should use various forms of testing, including paired testing, and conduct more thorough research on employment impacts by race, including by funding robust and transparent social science research on race and differential outcomes in employment, health, education, criminal justice, and other areas through the National Academies. The administration will make this research transparent, target enforcement and hold companies and organizations accountable where disparate treatment is found.

Building a More Progressive Tax System: Use taxes as a tool to address extreme concentrations of income and wealth inequality. As a means of strengthening tax progressivity and paying for investments in U.S. productivity, increase taxes on the wealthiest Americans by limiting unequal and unproductive tax expenditures. In addition, limit the ability of wealthy taxpayers to defer and avoid taxes on income (especially that relate to financial investments), tax liabilities of ultra-large banks to promote financial stability and fund investments in American productivity, and expand payroll taxes on upper-income taxpayers to fund more generous Social Security benefits.

Budgeting

We are committed to a budget process which eliminates biases against certain types of productive investment and provides a broad and inclusive analytical framework when assessing the economic impact of legislation. To help achieve this goal, we recommend the establishment of a commission to study shortcomings in the budget process and provide detailed recommendations. This includes examining scoring practices used by official scorekeepers, such as accounting for uncertainty in official estimates and incorporating assumptions about the extent to which public investment crowds out other economic activity.

The budget process should also be examined to determine whether better evaluating the economic and fiscal impacts of tax expenditures can lead to more efficient, equitable, and productive tax policies. Official scorekeepers should be fully transparent in their methods, including making their forecasting models public (as does the Federal Reserve) and strive to increase the gender, racial, and academic diversity on both their staff and their Panel of Economic Advisors.

COVID-19 Economic Response

The American people deserve an urgent, robust, and professional response to the growing public health and economic crisis caused by the coronavirus outbreak. We will rebuild a government and executive branch that serves the people, listens to science and experts, and works with Congress to provide needed oversight.

Stop and reverse unemployment: Implement an expansive job program to ensure Americans have family-sustaining employment during these difficult times.

- Paycheck Support: Federal grants to support employers should be tied to retaining workers. Retaining jobs also maintains healthcare, retirement benefits, and union rights which primes the economy for a recovery rather than depression.
- Keep workers whole: During periods of acute economic downturns, aspire to keep workers whole by supporting federally-funded short-term compensation programs.
- Support and create public health jobs: Significantly increase spending for jobs related to public health (e.g., jobs tied to testing, PPE, contact tracing, hospitals, essential workers, DPA, etc.)

Help households weather the crisis: Help Americans meet basic needs and mitigate the economic impacts of the downturn by providing direct income support and other forms of support.

- Extend and expand unemployment insurance for workers unable to return to their jobs.
- Provide support for the childcare sector to prevent mass closure of child care providers and ensure families still have childcare options even during the crisis. That means expanding assistance to federal child care centers, individual care providers, and assistance to schools – particularly Title I schools – as well as providing support for remote education and remote activities normally done after-school.
- Expand paid sick leave and family leave and enable 14-day emergency leave for COVID-19-related events/quarantines (and ensure employers do not bear any additional cost for this time away).
- Forbearance for student loans.
- Keep people in their homes during the crisis: institute rent and mortgage assistance for people severely impacted by the crisis who cannot afford their housing payments.

Protect our Workers:

- Ensure that American workers - particularly frontline workers - are kept safe on the job. That means having a Labor Department committed to worker health and safety and increasing the number of OSHA investigators to improve oversight, and working closely with relevant entities (e.g., state occupational safety and health agencies, state and local governments, unions) to ensure comprehensive protections for workers.
- Ensure all frontline workers receive high-quality and appropriate personal protective equipment – and enough of it and appropriate training to use it – so they don't become infected.
- Direct the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to keep frontline workers safe by issuing an Emergency Temporary Standard that requires health care facilities to implement comprehensive infectious disease exposure control plans.
- Ensure workers have access to health care during a public health crisis by:
 - Providing free public health testing, vaccines, and treatment.
 - Cover the cost of COBRA insurance for workers with that option.
 - Reopen the Affordable Care Act marketplaces, even outside of the normal open enrollment season, and expand subsidies to make it easier for people to buy coverage.
 - Automatically enroll people in a public option with an opt-out when an individual's COBRA eligibility expires for those qualifying for free premiums.

- Provide direct, increased support to states to enroll eligible adults in Medicaid, have the federal government cover a higher percentage of the bill, and add incentives for states which have not yet expanded Medicaid to do so.
- Keep these emergency measures in place until the pandemic ends and unemployment falls significantly.
- And should the United States find itself in another pandemic or severe economic downturn in the future, these protections will again be made automatically available, so Americans are never again left to fend for themselves in times of crisis.

EDUCATION UNITY TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

The United States today is beset by multiple, overlapping crises, including runaway income and wealth inequality, the worst global pandemic in a century, and the scourge of anti-Black racism. The members of the Unity Task Force on Education believe we must meet this moment by making vital investments that will enable our children and future generations to thrive and achieve their full human potential. Education is the key to addressing the challenges before us—to growing our economy, maintaining American competitiveness on the world stage, and building a more just, equitable, civically engaged, and socially conscientious nation.

The Unity Task Force takes as a first principle the belief that education is a critical public good—not a commodity—and that it is the government’s responsibility to ensure that every child, everywhere, is able to receive a world-class education that enables them to lead meaningful lives, no matter their race, ZIP code, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or household income.

The Unity Task Force recommends policies to make the critical investments America’s students and teachers need—to build equity and safeguard humanity in our educational system, to promote student well-being, and to guarantee every child, everywhere in our country, can receive a great education. The Task Force’s recommendations are grounded in our support for evidence-based programs and pedagogical approaches to prepare all students for college, career, and to be informed, engaged citizens.

Rep. Marcia Fudge, Co-chair
Heather Gautney, Co-chair
Alejandro Adler
Lily Eskelsen Garcia
Maggie Thompson
Christie Vilsack
Randi Weingarten
Hirokazu Yoshikawa

Early Education and Pre-K

Safe, Affordable Child Care

Every child and family in this nation should have access to a high-quality, comprehensive early learning and care experience so that their children’s social/emotional, cognitive and academic needs are met in safe environments:

- Establish a child care guarantee of grant assistance so that all families can afford to access high-quality, licensed early learning opportunities for young children under age 5 (or kindergarten entry).
- Expand the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC) to provide a fully refundable, advanceable tax credit.

Universal Pre-K

- Provide high-quality, universal pre-kindergarten for all three- and four-year-olds.
- Increase funding for Head Start and Early Head Start (EHS) to ensure all eligible children are served.

Early Childhood Workers

- Ensure that early childhood educators should have the right to organize and collectively bargain.
- Work with higher education institutions to support a career path for early childhood educators to attain early childhood certificates (CDAs), associate and bachelor's degrees, and ongoing job-embedded training and professional development and create a career path for lead teachers in preschool classrooms to have a bachelor's degree in child development and/or early childhood education and assistant teachers to have an associate's degree in child development.

Elementary and Secondary Education

Education Funding

- Triple Title I funding.
- Fully fund IDEA.
- Fully fund the Bureau of Indian Education schools and ensure that all students have equal opportunities.
- Provide reliable funding for public schools, public health, and other essential services in rural communities across the United States.
- Provide financial incentive grants to states willing to increase equity, sufficiency, and fiscal effort in their education finance systems.
- Scale up Career and Technical Education.
- Increase support for public magnet schools, which enroll children of various socio-economic backgrounds, race and academic levels to help integrate schools.
- Increase Title I funding to support Early College High Schools (ECHS)⁶, which provide college-level coursework and increase college access to low-income families and students of color.

Support Culturally Diverse and Dual Language Learners

- Provide additional funding through Title III of ESSA and Title I so more schools can provide dual language instruction, improve access to online learning for English Learners, as well as rigorous coursework, high-quality teachers, appropriate special education and home language services, and integration with the student body.
- Provide training and professional development support for teachers in culturally responsive and multilingual education.

Students with Disabilities /IDEA

- Fully fund IDEA

⁶ ECHS programs support high schoolers to earn an associate's degree or up to two years of college credits, and provide academic and financial advisement. Participation in ECHS is linked with increased high school performance, college enrollment, and college degree attainment.
<https://www.air.org/resource/lasting-benefits-early-college-high-schools>

- Aggressively enforce the *Americans with Disabilities Act* and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* to address both programmatic and architectural barriers.
- Address the shortage in special education teacher recruitment, training opportunities, and workload for special education teachers.
- Require the Secretaries of Education and HHS to develop federal standards for ensuring that all federally funded childcare settings include children with disabilities and do not discriminate on the basis of disability.
- Invest in new technical assistance resources within the Department of Education to support general education teachers in helping children with disabilities develop pre-literacy and literacy skills in general education classrooms.
- Work with teachers, school administrators, and the disability rights movement to end seclusion and prevent and decrease use of physical restraint. (see *Keeping All Students Safe Act*).

Social and Emotional Learning

- Support Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs based on the understanding that the best learning comes from supportive relationships that make learning challenging, engaging, and meaningful.
- Support the six recommendations from the National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development report, "From a Nation at Risk to a Nation at Hope," as well as the action agenda.
- Promote adequate staffing ratio of students to school support staff, including school social workers, psychologists, school counselors, nurses, speech-language pathologists, and others.
- Within the scope of SEL, include life-skills development for student well-being in the following areas: critical thinking, effective communication, creative thinking, mindfulness, socio-emotional literacy, self-management, ethical and moral reasoning, leadership, and judgment & decision making.

Community Schools, After-school Programs and Student Supports

- Embrace and expand the number of community schools: We have seen during the coronavirus pandemic more than ever, the importance of local schools in anchoring community services. We must expand the community school model to help more institutions transition to include wraparound services, afterschool programs and expanded learning time. Principles of community schools include:
 - Increased access to integrated support services by funding more school-based health centers⁷, prevention services, nurses, counselors, psychologists, and social workers to support youth and teachers. Provide at least 1 full-time nurse and mental health professional in every school.

⁷ Can be funded via Title IV Part A, in collaboration with federally qualified health centers, or in partnership with Medicaid. McDaniels, A. (2018). *Building community schools systems: Removing barriers to success in U.S. public schools*. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2018/08/22/454977/building-community-schools-systems/>; New York State Office of Mental Health. (2019). *School and mental health partnerships: Improving school and community outcomes for children and adolescents with emotional and behavioral challenges*. <https://apps.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/Childservice/docs/school-based-mhservices.pdf>.

- Ensure children and families do not go hungry by providing nutritious, locally-sourced food, alleviating school lunch debt, expanding summer EBT, distributing universal free meals throughout the year, and opening food pantries in schools.⁸
 - Engage families and communities by including them in school governance, community planning, and needs assessment. Offer caregivers job training, GED classes, legal aid, and other services.
- Invest in school health care personnel including school nurses, mental health professionals, and counselors. Double the number of mental health care professionals in our schools.
 - Expand funding for afterschool and summer programs, teen centers and tutoring.

Supporting Educators

Compensation/Debt Forgiveness

- Advocate for professional pay for all educators, including increasing teacher salaries to eliminate the teaching penalty. Professional compensation is vital to recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers over time.
- Forgive up to \$50,000 in student loan debt for educators.
- Ensure that school support staff, including education support personnel, paraprofessionals and school related personnel, earn a living wage from their education employer. Increasingly, school support staff are working solely for health and retirement benefits, and their second and third jobs are often the source of take-home pay. This low pay prevents educators from being able to afford to live where they work, which also factors into the high turnover rate.
- Resist programs such as temporary stipends or test score-based bonuses, which can disappear by funding cutbacks or policy changes.
- Support the evaluation of teachers by professionals (who use both formative and summative assessments) rather than student test scores.

Professional Development

- Allocate specific and ample funding for public school districts to implement comprehensive induction programs in Title II of the Every Student Succeeds Act.
- Ensure professional development for all (educators) teachers, principals, and staff, including continuing education and mentorship programs.
- Support principal professional development, following increasing research on principals as key enablers for best learning ecosystems, within and outside the classroom.
- Bolster school district capacity to integrate continuous quality improvement in educator (teacher, principal, and schools staff) professional development and evaluation. Prioritize approaches that link teacher coaching and CQI to holistic learning outcomes, culturally responsive or student-centered pedagogy and project-based, deeper learning.
- Fund a research agenda, including research on the benefits of nontraditional learning environments, to innovate sound pedagogical approaches that promote deeper learning

⁸ This can be done by in partnership with USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Summer Food Service Program and expanding the Farm-to-School program: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cfs/farm-school-grant-program>; <https://www.fns.usda.gov/ops/summer-electronic-benefit-transfer-children-sebtc>

and particularly in life skills development—critical thinking, effective communication, leadership, creative thinking, mindfulness, socio-emotional literacy, self-management, ethical and moral reasoning, judgment & decision making, and leadership.

- Expand the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act to fund training and recruitment of qualified teachers for Native learners who enable culturally tailored learning unique to each tribal nation.

Teacher Preparation

- Support should be given to programs that increase teacher diversity, including: career ladders that help paraprofessionals earn teacher licensure, investment in teacher preparation programs that focus on diversity, access to dual-enrollment classes for high school students that give them an edge in teacher preparation programs, and HBCUs and other minority-serving institutions to recruit and prepare teachers.
- Provide pre-service and continuing education in leadership and school administration for principals and education governance for education leaders.

Rights and Protections

- Support federal legislation extending to public sector employees the same rights to organize and bargain collectively that private sector employees have long enjoyed. Support passage of the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act.

Charter Schools

For us to provide students the opportunities they deserve, they should have multiple public school pathways from neighborhood public schools that have wraparound services (community schools), to schools that focus on career and technical education, to magnet and other themed secondary schools. Charter schools were envisioned to be publicly funded schools with flexibility in program design and operations. The goal was never to undermine the many extraordinary public schools in this country—or to close or make it harder for traditional public schools. Research has shown that, on average, charters are no better or worse than traditional public schools, yet far too many are less fiscally and educationally accountable. Charter does not mean better, and we have learned that there must be guardrails on them if they are to receive federal funds, including:

- Ban for-profit charter schools.
- Initiate a series of reforms regarding parent and community participation in charter governance, accountability and transparency.
- Appoint a federal task force/committee to study the effects of charter schools on public education and make recommendations.
- Require charter schools, charter school authorizers and charter school management companies to abide by the laws and regulations applicable to traditional public schools including transparency on civil rights protections, admissions, discipline procedures and finances.
- Require that federal funding for charter schools in any district be conditioned on a district's review of the financial and academic impact of a new charter school or a charter school that wants to expand on that district or neighborhood. The Department of Education would have the ability to deny federal funding for charter(s) if the district's

analysis shows that it is (1) financially distressed or (2) the charter would systematically under-serve the neediest students.

- Whatever support charter schools get should be matched with an investment in community schools with wraparound services.

Private Schools

- Discontinue funding of the Scholarships for Opportunity and Results (SOAR) Act. This voucher program authorizes the diversion of \$20 million annually to private schools in the District of Columbia; it also offers taxpayers no accountability for the use of the funds and has consistently failed to demonstrate academic effectiveness.
- Prohibit the disbursement of federal funds to organizations or providers that discriminate based on race, sex, religion, disability, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or immigration status.
- Oppose any and all voucher and neo-voucher programs such as Education Savings Accounts and Tax-credit Scholarship programs.

High Stakes Testing

- Eliminate high-stakes standardized tests that unfairly label students. Information from high quality assessment systems should be used to identify where students and schools need extra support and resources, rather than using high-stakes tests to fire teachers; close schools; and implement scripted curricula, rote learning, and a loss of electives.
- Encourage states to adopt and develop a multiple measures approach to assessment, like the New York Performance Standards Consortium and the International Baccalaureate so students can showcase what they know in a variety of ways.
- Fund efforts to study and develop alternatives to current annual assessment systems that still provide information about how well schools are serving groups of students, such as gradespan testing and sampling like the National Assessment of Educational Progress exams and the approach used in OECD countries.
- Leverage the Education Sciences Reform Act to fund the development and implementation of assessment frameworks that:
 - Provide for holistic, deeper learning encompassing social, emotional and academic learning and are responsive to cultural and linguistic diversity— incentivizing states' capacity to develop and use such assessments.
 - Reduce the loss of learning time due to excessive testing, and prioritize assessments and diagnostics that provide teachers the information they need.
 - Consider best international practices.
 - Include formative assessments.

School Safety

- Increase funding for Student Support and Academic Enrichment grants, Title IV-A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA); these grants should not be used to arm educators.
- Promote adequate staffing ratio of students to school support staff, including school social workers, psychologists, school counselors, nurses, speech-language pathologists, and others.

- Expand and increase professional development funding for educators in bullying, mental and behavioral health, cultural competence, restorative practices, and classroom management.
- Add culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogies and evidence-based programming for social-emotional learning to the existing provisions in the Supportive School Climate Act.
- Support expanding Safe Zones around schools so that students do not fear immigration enforcement actions will take place while at school, near school, or on their school commute routes.
- Fully support Title IX's protections against gender discrimination in educational institutions that receive federal funding, including opposing regulatory changes that would discourage reporting of sexual harassment and assault and would create burdensome, complex procedures for resolving complaints.

School Discipline

- Invest in comprehensive transformative and restorative justice practices that ensure the humane treatment of all students.
- Reinstatement of the Department of Education and the Department of Justice's School Discipline Guidance to support states, districts, and schools in developing practices to enhance school climate and ensure that these practices are in compliance with federal law.
- Fully implement the Every Student Succeeds Act, which gives states the option to choose school climate as an indicator of school quality; all states must describe how they will plan to support districts in reducing the use of policies and practices that push students out of school.
- Maintain the U.S. Department of Education's current level of Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) by preserving the existing questions and disaggregation of data by student subgroups, requiring all schools and districts to collect and report the data annually and continuing to make the CRDC accessible to the public.

School Modernization

- Authorize federal assistance for school construction, maintenance, renovation, and repair, such as the Rebuild America's School Act (H.R. 865).
- Direct federal assistance and resources to schools for technology, equipment, accompanying peripherals, and software, including service, maintenance, and training, as well as for expanded broadband Internet access for students and employees. Improve and expand the federal E-rate universal service program to support and increase technology access in public schools.

Higher-Ed Priorities and Proposals

Access/Affordability

- Make public colleges and universities tuition-free for all students whose family incomes are below \$125,000, as well as providing two years of tuition-free community college, including for Dreamers. Recipient institutions would be required to provide transparency and accurate public disclosure of the working conditions of all of their faculty and

professional staff, including numbers, compensation, and the part-time contingent faculty's access to institutional support.

- Double the maximum Pell Grant award.
- Create a “Title I for postsecondary education” to enable colleges and universities to more comprehensively serve the needs of low-income and /or underprepared students. The Biden Administration will establish a new grant program to support under-resourced four-year schools that serve large numbers of Pell-eligible students. This would be similar to Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act, which is designed to improve basic programs and ensure that disadvantaged students receive equal opportunity and access to high-quality instructional opportunities. The money could be used for a variety of purposes including strengthening and broadening instructional opportunities, supporting faculty, including improving faculty working conditions, including part-time and contingent faculty members, and promoting collaboration between colleges and community-based organizations, providing wraparound support services for students, especially veterans, single parents, low-income students, students of color, and students with disabilities who may face unique challenges. Wraparound support services can range from public benefits and additional financial aid to cover textbook and transportation costs that often keep students from staying enrolled, to child care and mental health services, faculty mentoring, tutoring, and peer support groups. Biden will ensure that these funds can be used to help colleges create emergency grant programs for students who experience an unexpected financial challenge that threatens their ability to stay enrolled. Funds would be targeted towards public and non-profit institutions with high enrollments of low-income students.

Faculty and Staff

- Support efforts to recruit and retain diverse faculty and staff. Increase funding for colleges of education in minority-serving institutions to promote preparation and recruitment of Pre-K-12 teachers of color.
- Create incentives for transparency to prompt colleges and universities to make accurate public disclosures about the working conditions of all of their faculty and professional staff, including compensation, numbers, and the part-time contingent faculty's access to institutional support.

Debt/Loan Cancellation

- Forgive up to \$50,000 in student debt for those working in public service (\$10,000 per year).
- COVID-relief: \$10,000 per borrower.
- Cancel student loans through executive action:
 - Public Servants or Teachers (PSLF/TLFP)
 - Borrowers who went to predatory schools: a determination of misrepresentation or fraud made by the Department, State Attorneys General or the courts will trigger automatic loan cancellation.
 - Borrowers with a total or permanent disability
- Forgive all undergraduate tuition-related federal student debt from two- and four-year public colleges and universities for debt-holders earning up to \$125,000, with appropriate

phase-outs to avoid a cliff. This benefit would also apply to individuals holding federal student loans for tuition from private HBCUs and MSIs.

- Individuals making \$25,000 or less per year will not owe any payments on their undergraduate federal student loans and also won't accrue any interest on those loans.
- Those earning more than \$25,000 per year will pay no more than 5% of discretionary income toward payments. After 20 years, the remainder of federal student loans will be forgiven without any tax burden.

Loans Repayment

- End the garnishment of Social Security Benefits to pay federal student loans.
- Allow student loans to be discharged in bankruptcy.
- Ensure loan cancellation will not force borrowers to incur any additional tax liability.
- Enroll borrowers automatically in income-driven repayment programs, so individuals never have to pay more than 5% of their discretionary income towards their loans, and low-income borrowers don't have to pay anything towards their loans. Borrowers in this program will have their debt automatically cancelled after 20 years of repayment.
- Improve PSLF by automating the enrollment process and credit years that borrowers have been working in public service.
- Increase lender accountability to ensure borrowers receive adequate loan training and understanding.
- End federal contracts with loan servicers with a pattern of misleading or mistreating student loan borrowers.

Student Supports

- Invest in wraparound services to ensure more students are able to attend school full-time without financial hardship, and so more students graduate with a degree.
- Increase funding for the TRIO Programs and GEAR UP to increase access to higher education for those who face barriers.
- Pass the Food for Thought Act to address campus food insecurity, after amending it to include both community colleges and public regional comprehensive institutions. This will create a demonstration program to make grants available to colleges so they can provide free meals to food-insecure students.

For-Profit Colleges

- Close the 90/10 loophole that allows for-profit institutions to game the financial aid system and take advantage of student veterans.
- Require for-profits to first prove their value to the U.S. Department of Education before gaining eligibility for federal aid.

HBCUs, MSIs, and Tribal Colleges

- Invest over \$70 billion in HBCUs, TCUs, and MSIs that will train the next generation. Include funding for tuition for low-income and middle class students, including Dreamers.

Civil Rights Enforcement/Student Privacy

- Appoint federal judges who will enforce the *1964 Civil Rights Act* in school systems.
- Improve federal data collection by the Department of Education Office for Civil Rights to better monitor and fix what's broken in our public school system. Increase funding for CRDC. Consider recent National Academy of Sciences report recommendations for metrics of equity of opportunities / inputs.
- A commitment to strengthening efforts to end segregation and discrimination in our schools by reviving and funding the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.
- For-profit companies should not be allowed to take advantage of our schools and kids; we must ban the storing, sharing, and sale of student data.
- Reinstate Department of Education guidance on transgender students' Title IX rights, which was revoked by the Trump Administration, and clarify that federal civil rights law prohibits anti-LGBTQ+ rules.
- Ensure that campuses and law enforcement have the resources to enforce laws that protect against sexual assaults and harassment and restore Obama-era Title IX guidance for sexual assault.
- Provide resources to support mental health services and treatment to all students who need it, including the removal of barriers to obtaining such treatment.
- Provide federal funding for the development and implementation of mental health protocols for all faculty and staff involving students in need of mental health services.

Worker Rights

- Ensure that educators (early childhood, k-12 and higher education, including contingent faculty) have the right to organize and collectively bargain.
- Work with higher education institutions to support a career path for early childhood educators to attain early childhood certificates (CDAs), associate's and bachelor's degrees, and ongoing job-embedded training and professional development and create a career path for lead teachers in preschool classrooms to have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in child development and/or early childhood education and assistant teachers to have a minimum of an associate's degree in child development.
- Support federal legislation extending to public sector employees the same rights to organize and bargain collectively that private sector employees have long enjoyed through passage of the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act.

COVID

- States are facing huge revenue shortfalls, to ensure our schools are fully funded, we need to create new models that go beyond the CARES Act.
- The federal government should ensure funding to maintain supports and services to all students (particularly students with disabilities, English language learners, homeless youth, and others most at risk), secure all educator positions, and preserve face-to-face learning environments that support the health and safety of all - including mental, emotional, physical, and social well-being.
- Provide support to districts to best meet the needs of their students during the crisis and beyond. This includes crafting recovery plans with an equity lens and determining how to

responsibly use remote learning as an emergency tool when necessary and returning to face to face classrooms when conditions allow. Digitize all necessary educational materials and ensure access to hardware, software, and particularly broadband for all students and educators.

- Through the Education Stabilization Fund, provide additional assistance for community colleges to compensate for CARES Act's funding methodology, which uses the number of enrolled Pell Grant recipients to prioritize allocations (many community college students are eligible for Pell Grants, but don't apply for them).
- Ensure that adequate resources are available for personal protective equipment (PPE) for all teachers and faculty, support staff, and other school staff, including custodians, food service workers, technology specialists, and security officers.
- For the duration of the COVID-19 national emergency, cancel monthly federal student loan payments and interest accrual, including commercially held Federal Family Education Loans (FFEL) and Perkins Loans held by institutions of higher education.
- Pass the Pandemic Response and Opportunity Through National Service Act. Ensure any national service opportunities designed to assist during the pandemic enhance and do not supplant any public service workers' careers. Dramatically expand the AmeriCorps program and integrate a prior learning assessment (PLA) component so that skills learned during national service can be awarded college credits, creating a more equitable "gap year."

HEALTH CARE UNITY TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force recognizes that COVID-19 has accelerated the need for affordable, accessible, and equitable health care. Even before the pandemic, too many Americans went bankrupt every year because of out-of-pocket costs, too many seniors had to ration their prescription drugs, and too many Americans went without health care coverage at all. COVID-19 has so far taken over 130,000 American lives, and destroyed even more livelihoods. With nearly a quarter of Americans out of work, the health care challenges Americans faced before the pandemic are even more acute.

It is indisputable that the burden of COVID-19 has not been borne equally. People of color, particularly Black, Latino, and Native Americans, have suffered worst of all. The Task Force also notes that immigrants and their families found themselves locked out of health care when they needed it most, and that people society deemed “essential” were too often treated as expendable.

The Task Force condemns the response of President Trump and the Republican Party, who have responded to the COVID-19 crisis by downplaying the threat of the coronavirus, politicizing life-saving interventions like masks, cutting public health budgets, and scapegoating governors who acted to protect Americans. We are appalled that President Trump left our health care heroes without the personal protective equipment they needed to care for us, failed to use the Defense Production Act to produce much-needed testing supplies, and used the moment of crisis to attack science and promote medical quackery.

We are united in saying “no more,” and urge the Democratic Party to respond by building the health care system Americans have deserved all along. The Task Force recognizes that Democrats have been leading this fight for a century, as the party that delivered Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act. We also recognize that there is more to do to secure health care at last as a human right for all Americans, and are making strong recommendations to that end.

The Task Force recommends Democrats meet this moment by guaranteeing free or low-cost health care coverage for every American, including by expanding Medicaid, subsidizing employer health insurance for people who lose their jobs, and offering a high-quality low or no cost public option available without a deductible and with automatic enrollment for those who qualify throughout the COVID-19 crisis. We also recommend the creation of at least 600,000 good health care jobs that include at least a \$15 an hour minimum wage, benefits, and union rights across the workforce. The Task Force recommends measures to reinvest in and strengthen America’s public health system, starting with an expansion of the contact tracing force to contain the pandemic. The Task Force further recommends policies to remove barriers to and invest in mental health and substance use treatment to take on the mental health consequences of the pandemic.

Republicans have eroded health care coverage and left millions of people stranded without health insurance or with inadequate coverage, and fostered a health care system far too often driven by the profit motives of mega-corporations, rather than the needs of patients and

providers. We emphasize that Democrats' efforts to guarantee health coverage have been met at every turn by obstruction and opposition from the Republican Party. It has been Republicans who have embraced junk plans that undermine pre-existing condition protections. It was Republican state attorneys general who sued to block Medicaid expansion and Republican governors who refused to extend Medicaid coverage to their citizens, leaving millions of low- and moderate-income Americans unable to access health insurance. Overturning the Affordable Care Act remains a central plank of the Republican Party platform. And it is the Trump Administration that is fighting in court to invalidate the Affordable Care Act and eliminate insurance coverage for tens of millions of people. It is the view of the Task Force that the difference in values between the two parties on this life-or-death issue could not be more stark.

The Task Force acknowledges that we cannot secure affordable coverage for American families and taxpayers without containing overall health care costs; lowering prescription drug prices, premiums, and out-of-pocket costs; and tackling the deep-seated inequities in our health care system. The United States spends more per capita on health care than any other advanced economy, and has less to show for it.

The recommendations of the Task Force will confront the cost-challenge confronting Americans head on. Our recommendations include enabling older Americans to enroll in Medicare when they turn 60, and expanding coverage for all Americans through a variety of mechanisms. We therefore support policies to ensure that Americans do not pay more for prescription drugs than people in other advanced economies, including standing up to the pharmaceutical industry's profiteering, empowering Medicare to negotiate prescription drug costs with manufacturers on behalf of public and private purchasers, and applying those federal savings to lower health insurance premiums and cost-sharing as well as reinvesting in research and development. We also recommend establishing a high-quality, federally-administered public option to provide long overdue competition and choice and allowing Americans dissatisfied with their employer-provided plan to choose this option. Finally, the Task Force recommends aggressively using antitrust laws to fight against mega-mergers in the hospital, insurance, and pharmaceutical industries that raise prices for patients by undermining market competition. These and other cost cutting and value improving initiatives will allow the United States to invest in other areas, including long-term services and supports to elders and Americans with disabilities.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, entrenched racial disparities in our health system were evident. But COVID-19 has shone a bright light on these disparities, disproportionately sickening and killing people of color, and especially Black Americans. Low-income communities and communities of color suffer higher rates of exposure to air pollution, water pollution, and toxic chemicals, contributing to lifelong health challenges that made them especially vulnerable to COVID-19. Jobs in the caring economy, from home health aides to nurse assistants, are among the fastest-growing fields in the country, and many of these frontline workers—a majority of whom are women and people of color—earn much less than \$15 an hour, with paltry or no benefits. Prescription drug prices for essential medicines like insulin and cancer treatments have become obscene due to pharmaceutical company manipulation. And it is far too difficult for people to access mental health counseling, substance use treatment, and long-term care in metropolitan and rural areas across the country.

The Task Force recommends in the strongest possible terms that Democrats commit to ending health inequities by race, ethnicity, gender, and geography through a sustained, federal effort, led by President Biden, that engages the whole of the government to solve health inequities that have long plagued us, including those that emerge from social determinants of health like inadequate housing, hunger, mass incarceration, and gun violence. Our recommendations in this area include doubling funding for federally qualified health centers that are on the frontlines of serving the most vulnerable communities; significantly increasing funding for the Indian Health Service, rural health care systems, and the National Health Service Corps; and empowering and training a larger and more diverse workforce that can effectively engage with all communities. To ensure that people living and working across the country have health care access, the Task Force recommends extending Affordable Care Act coverage to DACA recipients, allowing undocumented immigrants to purchase unsubsidized coverage in the ACA marketplaces, and working with Congress to lift the five-year waiting period for low-income lawfully present immigrants for Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program eligibility. The Task Force strongly opposes federal and state laws that create barriers to women’s reproductive rights, and recommends repeal of the Hyde Amendment and codification of *Roe v. Wade*.

As a Task Force and as Democrats, we fundamentally believe health care is a right for all, not a privilege for the few. That is why we will also remove barriers to allow states to access federal funds to implement models that move toward universal health care. Below, we expand on these plans and others that will ensure a more accessible, affordable, and equitable health care system in America.

Rep. Pramila Jayapal, Co-chair
Vivek Murthy, Co-chair
Donald Berwick
Abdul El-Sayed
Sherry Glied
Mary Kay Henry
Chris Jennings
Rep. Robin Kelly

Crisis Coverage

The Task Force believes it has always been a crisis that tens of millions of Americans have no or inadequate health insurance—but in a pandemic, it’s potentially catastrophic for public health. That is why the Task Force recommends immediate action to preserve and expand access to high-quality, low-cost health care during the COVID-19 pandemic and in future health and economic crises.

In the midst of this pandemic and until the economy has strengthened and unemployment rates have fallen, the Task Force recommends:

Health Emergency Automatic Supports

- Guarantee free public health testing, vaccines, and treatment measures to everyone.
- Ensure mandatory 90-day special enrollment period with financing support for navigators and marketing to help reach diverse populations in a culturally competent manner.
- Increase direct support to states to enroll and keep eligible adults in Medicaid, have the federal government cover a higher percentage of the bill, and add incentives for states that have not yet expanded Medicaid to do so.
- Ensure ACA plans are affordable
 - Provide unprecedented premium subsidies linked to highest platinum level plan
 - Provide free premiums up to 200% FPL
 - Eliminate 400% FPL subsidy cliff and guarantee that no-one pays more than 8.5% of income in premiums
- Ensure automatic access to the public option—administered by Medicare and not by commercial insurance companies—once it is put in place. Include the choice of a no-deductible option.
- Provide automatic prospective enrollment to the public option (once it is in place) with opt-out among those <200% FPL (zero premium population) and for those enrolled in any social safety net program for low-income Americans, such as SNAP and TANF
- Provide 100% COBRA coverage
- Lock in Medicaid FMAP 12% increase
- Require State Maintenance of Effort (MOE) for current Medicaid eligibles
- Institute Federal emergency trigger on; trigger off with achieving health and economic index (e.g., based on unemployment rate)
- Automatic enrollment onto public option with an opt-out when an individual’s COBRA eligibility expires for those qualifying for free premiums
- Make these forms of expanded coverage automatically available in future public health crises or severe economic downturns, to ensure that Americans are never again left without health coverage to fend for themselves in times of crisis.

Coverage & Cost

The Task Force recommends a number of measures to achieve universal, high-quality, affordable health care in the United States and to control overall health care costs, including:

Medicare, Marketplace and Public Option Improvements

- Expand Medicare coverage by enabling older Americans to enroll beginning at age 60.
- Excessive prescription drug cost-sharing and voids in coverage such as dental, vision, and hearing services can lead to severe health consequences for Medicare patients. Democrats are committed to finding financially sustainable policies to modernize and strengthen Medicare and fill coverage voids.
- Establish a high-quality public option plan, administered by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, not commercial insurers
 - Require public option to provide a no-deductible choice
 - Ensure that the public option plan will be the default plan for states that have yet to expand Medicaid
 - Provide opportunity in the public option to designate a specific primary care provider

- Institute automatic enrollment in the public option with zero premium and an opt-out for those enrolled in any social safety net program for low income Americans, such as SNAP and TANF
- Democrats will empower the states, as laboratories of democracy, to use Affordable Care Act innovation waivers to develop locally tailored approaches to health coverage, including by removing barriers to states that seek to experiment with statewide universal health care approaches.
- Affordable Care Act marketplace
 - Untether health care from employment by repealing the “firewall” blocking employee access to the marketplace, including the public option.
 - Increase tax subsidy to ensure greater affordability through lower premiums and cost-sharing linked to gold plan.
 - Eliminate the 400% FPL subsidy cliff that precludes individuals with income just over \$50,000 a year from getting any assistance to lower the cost of their premium.
 - Expand outreach and enrollment for most vulnerable communities through increasing investment in culturally competent marketing and navigators
 - Ensure “no wrong door” enrollment processes, to help individuals and families easily find the public or marketplace insurance programs and subsidies that they are eligible for, no matter where they first come for assistance.
 - Provide free or low-cost prescription drugs proven effective in treating for chronic illness (i.e., adopt a “Value-Based Insurance Design” benefit)
 - Ensure that during any pandemic or public health crisis such as COVID-19, health coverage is available to everyone for testing, treatment, medical services, rehabilitation, and that vaccines are available free of charge, regardless of immigration or economic status. During the course of their diagnosis and treatment, clarify that patients with COVID-19 or COVID-19 symptoms should have coverage for other health services. And provide authority to immigrant detention centers to modify detention practices to protect their health, including use of alternatives to detention, in order to protect the health of those detained, the staff at detention facilities, and the surrounding communities.

Rural Health

- Double investment in community health centers (CHCs)
- Provide explicit 5-year authorization for Community Health Centers and National Health Service Corps
- Provide for rural health alternative demonstration projects, including new financing models, for community-based, integrated care systems

System-Wide Comprehensive Cost Containment Actions

- Aggressively enforce antitrust laws against costly consolidation and price increases
- Establish transparent all-payer pricing database
- Establish uniform electronic billing practices
- Establish a public-private national project to improve patient safety
- Increase encouragement and support for alternative payment models:
 - Encourage accountable payment in the public option and Medicare

- Expand competitive bidding under CMS
- Expand and improve opportunities for Accountable Care Organizations

Prescription Drugs

The Task Force concludes that prescription drug prices, which dwarf the prices paid by citizens of other advanced economies, unfairly and unsustainably burden American consumers, businesses, labor, taxpayers, and public and private health plans. Excessive medication costs increase premiums, co-pays and deductibles, putting the cost of prescription drugs out of reach for millions of Americans. Pharmaceutical profits, even during the current COVID-19 pandemic, continue to soar. The Task Force censures pharmaceutical companies that direct such profits to underwriting the costs of CEO compensation packages, direct-to-consumer ads, and countless lobbyists working to block competition and drug price negotiation, instead of to research and development for innovative, breakthrough drug therapies. The Task Force believes it is time to act to constrain drug prices and reinvest savings by lowering premiums, reducing cost-sharing, and improving public investments in biomedical research.

Rein in Prescription Drug Costs and Retain a Commitment to Innovation:

Medicare Negotiates Prescription Drug Prices for All Americans

- Defang the outrageous negotiation ban
- Direct the Medicare program to target excessively priced prescription drugs that face little or no competition
- Create an independent review board to evaluate value, attribute the federal contribution through publicly sponsored R&D, and recommend price parameters for prescription drugs
- Empower the HHS Secretary to negotiate prices that are capped to a level associated with average OECD median prices
- Limit cost inflation for all brand name drugs and abusively priced generics to the consumer price inflation rate
- Enforce negotiation and associated price limits through tax penalties
- Apply and enforce negotiated prices to all purchasers

Fighting Industry Efforts to Block Competition

- End “Pay-for-Delay” deals and provide the FTC resources for aggressive enforcement
- Use antitrust authority to challenge mergers that lessen generic competition
- Direct the National Academy of Medicine to document cost impact and develop policies to overcome abusive practices such as patent thickets, evergreening, and product hopping
- Allow individuals to import high-quality and safe prescription drugs
- Support policies to develop manufacturer approval and distribution of generics

Securing Value for Taxpayer Investment in Pharmaceuticals

- Prohibit the continued taxpayer underwriting of pharmaceutical advertising
- Expand academic detailing programs: disseminate unbiased, evidence-based information on new drugs to clinicians

- Direct the National Academy of Medicine to evaluate the value of research and make a recommendation on whether that should be used for price negotiation, revenue-sharing, or another shared benefit

Securing Prescription Drug Savings to Advance Health Care Priorities

Lowering Premiums

- The moderation of prescription drug prices and inflation limits lower overall health spending and associated premiums of public and private health plans

Improving Benefits

- Reduce the cap on out-of-pocket drug spending in Medicare
- Redesign the Medicare VBID benefit to provide free or low-cost Rx drugs of proven benefit for chronic illness

Investing in R&D and Innovation:

- Increase investment in the National Institutes of Health as well as research and design to spur innovation in the pharmaceutical industry

Workforce

The Task Force recommends the Biden Administration create health workforce jobs across the health care sector, and take strong and substantive steps to improve the quality of existing jobs within the sector. It is the view of the Task Force that as a result of these actions, Americans will have greater access to higher quality health care services and American workers will have better jobs.

Workers' Rights:

Consistent with and expanding on the Biden platform around workers' rights:

- Any employer in this sector funded by taxpayer dollars must pay at least \$15 an hour and offer benefits.
- Any employer funded by taxpayer dollars must allow workers to join together in a union and collectively bargain so that they can truly improve their lives, their communities and the care they deliver.
- We should work to align rules and conditions of participation in public programs to these standards.
- Address corporate abuses by implementing and reinforcing ACA provisions for improved ownership transparency and revenue and cost reporting information in nursing homes and other health care organizations.

Recommendations to Build the Health Workforce:

Long-Term Services and Supports – at least 600,000 workers:

- Increase the current home care workforce by at least 600,000 at positions that pay at least \$30,000 annually and offer benefits.

- Eliminate current home care waiting lists of 800,000 nationwide.
- Improve nursing home quality by fully funding and strengthening federal and state accreditation processes. Require nursing homes to hire staff as needed to meet these quality standards.
- Expand LTSS worker training programs for entry-level and ladder jobs, including expanding the existing Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training grant program.
- The COVID-19 crisis exposed the vulnerabilities of people who reside in institutional settings such as nursing homes. It also unveiled the ugly reality that the Medicaid program has an institutional bias, and creates barriers to home- and community-based long-term services and supports. We need to enact policies to eliminate the waiting list for these services at the state level, and work to develop a broader approach to finally eliminate the institutional bias within the program. This will be part of an unprecedented investment in promoting and rewarding home- and community-based caregiving jobs that not only provide essential care but dignity and a care ladder for this essential workforce.
- As a first step toward realigning our system of care for people needing long-term services and supports, authorize new, large scale, CMMI-funded 4-year demonstration program to test innovative models of post-acute care and LTSS delivery (for example, models that incorporate telemedicine, or offer housing or nutrition benefits), that employ substantial numbers of new LTSS workers. The demonstration programs could also extend benefits to clients who were at risk of qualifying for Medicaid (including those above current Medicaid thresholds).

Mental Health and Substance Use:

The Task Force recognizes that for too long, Americans have suffered without the mental health support that they need, leading to despair, self-medication, and an opioid crisis that has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. As a result, average U.S. life expectancy has declined for the first time in generations. The Task Force believes these deaths are avoidable, and proposes strong measures to address them, including eliminating barriers to mental health treatment in federally qualified health centers and in primary care practices, as well as reducing current barriers to receipt of medication assisted therapy.

Mental Health Workforce:

- Provide training for peer support counselors and addiction counselors and increase access to these services in Medicaid.
- Hire school counselors and improve access to school counseling services.
- Expand nurse home visiting and similar programs to all high-risk, low-income, first-time mothers.
- Expand CCBHCs and FQHCs, especially in rural areas, and require these to offer medication-assisted treatment.

Community Health Workers and Public Health Workforce:

- Double the community health workforce through expanded training and credentialing, data collecting, tracking, and reimbursement.
- Community health workers will be drawn from the community, will focus on primary care and effectively prevent, manage, and help treat physical and mental chronic illness.

- Increase the scope of practice of community health workers commensurate with their skills and training.

Other Workforce Recommendations:

- Eliminate barriers that make it challenging for physicians and non-physician professionals to prescribe medication-assisted treatment.
- Align Medicare and Medicaid GME financing rules to better meet workforce goals.
- Expand programs that aim to increase the diversity of the health care workforce, at all levels, including through hiring, training, and promotions, including by increasing Title VII and Title VIII funding.
- Increase funding for the National Health Service Corps, with a focus on primary care specialties and those providing mental health and substance use treatment and dental care in rural areas.
- Establish an “Office of Primary Care” within the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality, increase support to HRSA’s Bureau of Primary Care, and set forth national goals to increase access to high-quality primary health care, particularly in underserved areas and for underserved populations.
- Increase cultural competency training.

Equity and Health Disparities

The Task Force is committed to health equity and to eliminating health disparities that continue to account for disproportionate death and disease among people of color, women, LGBTQ+ people, and rural Americans.

The Task Force recognizes that disparities exist across many dimensions of American life, including the persistent differences in morbidity and mortality that have been aggravated by the COVID-19 epidemic. Reducing these disparities will require attention to issues of health care access, provider supply, treatment differences, and care coordination. The Task Force acknowledges that the widespread effects of structural and institutional racism require attention to determinants of health that fall outside the boundaries of the health care system. We recognize that addressing health care is only the first step—to fully eliminate health disparities we will need to fix deep inequities across many systems, including education; water, transit, energy, information, and recreation infrastructure in urban and rural communities; residential segregation; housing and food insecurity; environmental protection; financial access, labor market opportunities, criminal justice and the legal system, immigration, and political equity. We need to focus on inequities beyond the clinic and hospital walls in the spaces in which Americans live, learn, work, pray, and play. The work of ending health inequities in America will require a whole-of-government approach to embed health in all policy areas that must be coordinated from the White House and the Oval Office itself, with deep investment and continuing accountability for every government agency to take part in eliminating health inequities and other disparities based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, wealth, and geography.

The Task Force believes that a unified Democratic Party must embrace and endorse the commitment of achieving equity and eliminating disparities for people of color. The Task Force

recommends President Biden sign an executive order directing all relevant federal departments and agencies, under the coordination of the Domestic Policy and National Economic Council Directors and with the direct oversight of the President, to actively engage in a reporting and policy execution process supported by cross-government resource reallocation and new investments to advance equity and eliminate disparities in the United States for every category of essential support necessary for individual achievement, including but not limited to health and health care. Each designated office will:

- Document all major disparities of supports and status that currently exist amongst people of color;
- Establish a unified data-driven baseline that gives the President and the public a starting point to measure improvement over time, and track and report status frequently over time;
- Detail statutory, regulatory, and implementation barriers that stand in the way to eliminate or overcome barriers to progress;
- Identify policies that are necessary to address inequities and disparities with financing requirements;
- Set realistic goals and timetables for short, intermediate and ultimate success;
- Issue data-driven progress reports to DPC/NEC every six months throughout the Administration that are consolidated and summarized for the President's review and consideration;
- Assist in the prioritization and execution of recommendations for the President;
- Report back on a semi-annual basis on progress of achieving improvement goals, utilizing improved and unified data; and
- Provide explicit rationale for any delay that documents barriers and implications; and
- Convey specific recommendations to stay on track for achieving stated goals of the President.

Tackling Inequities in Public Health and Health Care

Within the public health and health care system, the Task Force recommends a number of critical interventions to address health inequalities, including:

Reinvest in Public Health: As the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated, the American public health system is underfunded, understaffed, and out-of-date. We recommend a major investment in public health. In particular, funding should support grants to state and local health departments and partners that promote more rapid response to crises, such as the emergence of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases, and improve cohesion and coordination across social programs toward health equity goals and addressing social determinants of health.

- Invest in at least 100,000 workers into the public health system and increase funding of the public health system to \$50/person/year (increasing funding by \$10 billion annually, including the CDC)
- Develop equity-driven CDC, state, and local public health grants
- Recommit to membership in and funding of the World Health Organization
- Reestablish the White House Pandemic Response Unit and invest in CDC's Global Health Security Agenda

Expand Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Clinics and Invest in Safety Net Providers: FQHCs are critical resources for providing Americans in underserved communities regular access to primary health care and social services support. The Task Force recommends doubling funding for FQHCs in underserved communities (urban and rural), extending the funding cycle from 2 years to 5 years, and equipping FQHCs with the ability to deliver medication-assisted therapy for opioid addiction treatment and provide comprehensive mental health services, as well as increasing support and capacity for oral health care services across these critical points of care. The Task Force believes we must also invest in and support hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, and social service providers in low-income urban and rural communities, while holding all accountable to translating support into services, rather than a bottom line.

Invest in Community Health Workers: Community Health Workers are among the most versatile, community-oriented, and evidence-supported personnel and are a critical health care resource, a cement that holds the bricks of the health care system together. Had community health workers been funded at scale, they would have been an invaluable resource during the COVID-19 pandemic, including as contact-tracers. The Task Force recommends expanding the CHW force and focusing on training and supporting CHWs from within the urban and rural communities they serve.

Expand the Diversity and Cultural Competence of Our Health Care Workforce: The Task Force believes America's health care workforce should represent the diversity of our country. Toward this end, we recommend investments in recruiting, training, and supporting providers of color, including investing in health training grants at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and for students of color, and addressing specific mentoring and training obstacles faced by students of color. Providers and researchers of all backgrounds should receive thorough training in implicit bias, cultural competency, and medical ethics.

Invest in Native American Health: The Task Force recognizes the historic wrongs that have been perpetrated against Native American tribes and communities, including chronic underinvestment in tribal health care. The Task Force is firmly committed to policies that respect the nation-to-nation relationship and sovereignty of tribes and to honoring the United States' trust responsibilities. This includes significantly increasing and making mandatory funding for the Indian Health Service, which is enshrined in treaties between the United States and sovereign tribal nations. The Task Force further recommends increasing recruitment and training of indigenous health care workers and investing in water infrastructure, nutrition access, and health care resources for tribal communities.

Improve Environmental Justice as a Precondition to Better Health: Clean air and potable water are human rights. But the health burden of environmental threats, like air and water pollution, fall disproportionately on communities of color and low-income Americans. Improving health means improving the quality of our environment and addressing environmental racism.

Expand Health Care Access for Immigrants: The Task Force recognizes that all Americans suffer as a result of immigrants' exclusion from the health care system. The Task Force acknowledges

we will never fully address this issue until we pass and enact a 21st century immigration system, and this is and must be a priority. In the interim, the Task Force recommends that emergency services are provided and access to adequately funded community health centers is assured. To ensure that people living and working across the country have health care access, the Task Force recommends extending Affordable Care Act coverage to DACA recipients, allowing undocumented immigrants to purchase unsubsidized coverage in the ACA marketplaces, and working with Congress to lift the five-year waiting period for low-income lawfully present immigrants for Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program eligibility. The Task Force further recommends rescinding the “public charge rule” that imposes an un-American wealth test and prevents immigrants from accessing health care services for which they are eligible. During a public health crisis, we will provide authority to immigrant detention centers to modify detention practices to protect their health, including use of alternatives to detention, in order to protect the health of those detained, the staff at detention facilities, and the surrounding communities

Commit to LGBTQIA+ Health: The Task Force condemns and recommends immediately reversing the Trump Administration’s discriminatory actions against the LGBTQ community, including the dangerous and unethical regulation allowing doctors, hospitals, and insurance companies to discriminate against patients based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. We also recommend enacting policies to guarantee that LGBTQ people have full access to needed health care and resources, including by requiring that federal health plans provide coverage for HIV/AIDS treatment and HIV prevention medications like PrEP and PEP, gender confirmation surgery, and hormone therapy.

Implement Recommendations from the AHRQ National Health Care Quality and Disparities Survey: The Task Force believes we must fix the problems that we measure. The recommendations contained in the AHRQ National Health Care Quality and Disparities Report should be analyzed to identify progress or setbacks on key health equity goals and guide directives for each federal agency to close funding gaps. Funding for research to solve inequities should be prioritized by the National Institutes of Health, HRSA, AHRQ, CDC, and other health research funding agencies. Findings from this research should be used to fund specific projects to close these gaps through federal, state, and local agencies and their partners.

End the Gun Violence Epidemic: Nearly 40,000 Americans die every year from gun violence. The Task Force believes gun violence in this nation is a public health crisis and must be treated as such. There continues to be insufficient research on effective gun prevention policies, which is why the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention must have the resources it needs to study gun violence as a public health issue.

End the Opioid Epidemic: The opioid epidemic remains a national epidemic, devastating rural communities. The Task Force believes we must end the epidemic by holding pharmaceutical corporations accountable, increasing access to medication-assisted therapy across rural, urban, and suburban communities, improving medical and behavioral supports for incarcerated people and better assisting their re-entry into communities, increasing access to life-saving treatments, investing in harm reduction strategies, and fully funding research on current and future interventions.

Target Hunger and Homelessness: Food insecurity and homelessness are among the most devastating social determinants of health in America. The Task Force recommends leveraging the full power of HHS and partner agencies, as well as state and local partners, to end them during the Biden Administration.

IMMIGRATION UNITY TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Out of many, we are one. That bedrock American idea has animated our country from its earliest days, inspiring people from every corner of the earth to participate in our great democratic experiment. The Trump Administration has repudiated that idea and abandoned our values as a diverse, compassionate, and welcoming country. Instead of pursuing a sensible, humane, and responsible approach to immigration that strengthens the United States, the Trump Administration has been callous, cruel, and reckless in the extreme. President Trump's immigration policies have made our communities less safe, undermined our economy, and tarnished our image around the world.

This Administration's cruelty and dehumanization of immigrants stretches the imagination and shocks the conscience: forcibly separating families and putting children in cages; deporting veterans who have fought to defend our freedoms; conducting militarized raids on our workplaces; endangering lives by denying COVID-19 testing and treatment based on immigration status, including to essential workers at the forefront of the pandemic response; banning people from traveling to the United States based on their faith or their country of origin; and turning away refugees and asylum seekers fleeing violence and persecution.

President Trump has used immigration to divide Americans, not to unite us as one. He has called Mexican immigrants rapists, murderers, and drug dealers; said our Black immigrant communities come from "shithole countries," enacted immigration and travel bans targeting Muslims and Arabs, and tried to dismantle family-based visas which disproportionately impact Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Democrats believe America can do better. Indeed, we must. We will work with Congress to reform our immigration system to provide a roadmap to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented, prioritize family unity, provide a fair and just system that helps grow and enhance our economy, safeguard our security, and restore our cherished values. And we will renew disciplined American leadership to help mitigate and address the root causes of migration around the world, from Southeast Asia to Sub-Saharan Africa to Central America.

Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard, Co-chair
Marielena Hincapié, Co-chair
Cristóbal Alex
Rep. Veronica Escobar
Marisa Franco
Juan Gonzalez
NV Lt. Gov. Kate Marshall
Javier Valdés

Undoing the Harms of the Trump Administration and Righting the Wrongs

Undoing The Harms of the Trump Administration:

- Maintain Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and support the American Dream and Promise Act; streamline applications for deferred action or humanitarian

relief and expand accessibility to this discretionary relief, including expanding the eligibility guidelines and narrowing the disqualification guidelines.

- Immediately terminate the Trump Administration's discriminatory travel and immigration bans that have had disproportionate impact on Muslim and African people, and invite visa re-application for individuals from these countries.
- Take urgent action to undo the Trump Administration's unilateral executive orders on immigration, including abuses implemented during the pandemic. Uphold our commitment to offer refuge to asylum seekers, consistent with public health practices during the pandemic.
- Enact a 100-day moratorium on deportations of people already in the United States while conducting a full-scale study on current practices to develop recommendations for transforming enforcement policies and practices at ICE and CBP.
- Direct DHS's Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties to undertake a review of the Trump Administration's immigration policies and provide recommendations for redress. Direct the Inspectors General (OIG) to conduct an investigation into immigration enforcement spending, detention determinations, detention conditions and practices, including whether there are policies that discriminate against black and brown immigrants and other instances of racial, ethnic, religious, and LGBTQ+ bias.
- Immediately halt enforcement of and rescind the Trump administration's new public charge regulations, which have racial underpinnings and undermine critical access to public benefits and resources. Eliminate the Trump Administration's expansion of the public charge regulations applicable to both DHS and DOS (and other related agency rules), and work with Congress to ensure that antiquated immigration laws are not used to discriminate against immigrants based on their wealth, race, country of origin, language abilities, or disability status. Work with Congress and through executive action to ensure that the public charge determination is not used to deter access to essential public benefits, healthcare services and other key resources.
- End the Trump Administration's 'Zero Tolerance' policy by rescinding the Department of Justice (DOJ) memoranda and prioritize the criminal prosecution of human traffickers, smugglers, and others engaged in serious crimes. Ensure respect for the facts and circumstances of individual cases and end indiscriminate prosecutions, including of asylum seekers. End mass prosecutions of individuals who cross the border without regard to the facts and circumstances of their cases, through practices like Operation Streamline, that deny individuals their right to a fair hearing and due process.
- Re-establish asylum procedures at the border, reversing nearly a dozen Trump policies that have effectively closed the U.S. asylum system, including:
 - End the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) also known as "Remain in Mexico" and other policies that effectively deny protection and due process to asylum seekers.
 - Establish a humane, expeditious process to enable migrants who have been returned to Mexico to make asylum claims.
 - End the Asylum Cooperative Agreements the U.S. has signed with Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala.
 - Establish an effective and fair process for asylum, end prosecution of asylum seekers at the border, and ensure inappropriate convictions under the Trump Administration do not create a barrier for asylum seekers.

- Roll back “performance” quotas for immigration judges.
- End the abuse and politicization of the denaturalization process, by eliminating offices created by the Trump Administration to denaturalize citizens and make sure this extraordinary power is used only in the most egregious cases.
- End the “National Emergency” designation that redirects congressionally appropriated funds for the Department of Defense to build a wall along the southern border.

Righting The Wrongs:

- Ensure that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) personnel abide by professional standards and are held accountable for inhumane and unlawful treatment. Reallocate existing agency resources for training and demand transparency in, and independent oversight over, ICE and CBP’s activities. Appoint responsible, Senate-confirmed professionals to lead these agencies, who answer directly to the president. Implement robust mechanisms for oversight, accountability, and transparency to ensure immigration agencies are abiding by a value-based immigration system, the U.S. constitution, and international law.
- Reverse the Trump Administration's politicization of immigration courts and work toward making immigration courts more independent, and free from influence and interference, including through the consideration of Article I designation.
- Call for the repeal of the laws that chill the reporting of domestic violence incidents and other crimes.
- Reinstate as appropriate Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) for vulnerable populations who cannot find safety in their countries ripped apart by violence or disaster.

Building a 21st Century Immigration System

Pathway to Citizenship:

- Create a roadmap to citizenship for the nearly 11 million people who have been living in and strengthening our country for years. Eliminate unfair barriers to naturalization and reduce the citizenship backlog; reject unreasonable application fees, which make it impossible for families to stay together.
- Support legislation to provide legal status and fast-track access to green cards, with an eventual path to citizenship, to agricultural workers based on prior agricultural work history.
- Fast-track legal status for undocumented workers who have been essential to the pandemic response and recovery efforts, including health care workers and farmworkers.
- Reaffirm America’s commitment to diversity by preserving preferences for diversity in the current system, and reduce procedural hurdles and financial burdens of applications for diversity visas. Pursue legislative reform to provide a pathway to citizenship for TPS and Deferred Enforcement Departure (DED) holders who have been in the United States for an extended period of time.
- Work with Congress to eliminate immigration barriers, such as the 3- and 10-year bars, and remove the 10-year waiting period for waivers to the permanent bars that keep U.S. citizens separated from their families.

Keeping Families Together:

- Reaffirm family migration as a cornerstone of U.S. immigration policy.
- Prioritize family reunification, including by eliminating family-based green card backlogs and reforming the system to speed up family-based visas. Expand ability for approved applicants to receive temporary nonimmigrant visas until permanent visas are processed.
- Ensure the equal treatment of same-sex couples and their children in the application of all federal programs, services, and benefits—including in immigration and naturalization.
- Support legislation treating the spouses and children of green card holders as immediate relatives, and allow parents to bring minor children with them at the time they immigrate.
- In order to ensure reunification of children separated from their families, permit parents who were deported without their children to reopen their cases and be reunited with their children.

Reform of Immigration Departments and Agencies:

- Create an Ombudsman for Immigration and Border Enforcement, consistent with the Homeland Security Improvement Act, who would establish a complaint process; identify chronic issues; field internal/external complaints; and report findings annually to the Secretary and Congress.
- Establish a Border Oversight Panel, as well as Border Community Liaisons in each Border Patrol Sector.
- Ensure that the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) division within DHS has the authority to investigate issues within the agency and can protect people that come forward.
- Protect immigration judges' rights to unionize by halting Trump Administration efforts to decertify the National Association of Immigration Judges.
- Empower the Chief Information Officer to establish guidelines regarding the use of biometric surveillance and information sharing technologies to meet the standards of privacy specified in the Fair Information Practice Principles, including: transparency and accounting regarding the use of technologies; informing individuals of the use of technology and existence of records; individual access to records and the opportunity to correct inaccuracies; ensuring that records are accurate, relevant, timely, and complete; and that all systems are audited regularly for compliance with these standards.
- End systemic racism in our country that extends to our immigration system, including the policies at our borders and ports of entry, detention centers and within immigration law enforcement agencies, policies and operations.
- Marshal federal resources, through the reestablishment of the Task Force for New Americans, to support community efforts to welcome immigrants.
- Require a one-year timeline for ICE and CBP to institute best practice policies and procedures regarding the use and storage of body cameras.
- Ensure CBP & ICE enforcement is not used to chill First Amendment rights to free speech and assembly.
- Provide discretionary funding for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to address backlogs, and ensure that, going forward, USCIS can adjudicate petitions and applications within six months of filing.

- Invest in modernization, technology, and infrastructure at ports of entry; change the culture to emphasize “customer service” for travelers coming into our country to spend their money.
- Study best practices in immigration governance and review whether making USCIS an independent agency would enhance or undercut immigration protections or national security.

Enforcement and Detention:

- Ensure access to counsel and establish federal funding to provide representation and ensure that individuals in DHS custody have meaningful opportunities to secure counsel. Ensure that all unaccompanied children have access to legal services both while in and after leaving ORR custody.
- Protect sensitive locations, like places of worship, schools, health care facilities, benefit offices, and DMVs, and prohibit enforcement actions at courthouses that deter access to justice. Extend DHS’s “sensitive locations” provisions restricting immigration enforcement to extend to areas near schools and school bus stops.
- Reverse the historic use of 287(g), and similar programs that force local law enforcement to take on the role of immigration enforcement, including by ending all agreements entered into by the Trump Administration.
- Direct DOJ to drop litigation and other inherited cases that are misaligned with an immigration system that values diversity, family relationships, and other core principles.
- Direct DOJ to drop funding restrictions (and related litigation) relating to state and local decisions regarding their role in enforcement of federal immigration law.
- End use of the unaccompanied minors program as an enforcement trap against family sponsors, including where such a trap is facilitated by the use of information sharing between ICE and ORR.
- Prioritize investments in alternatives to detention, including in proven community-based alternatives and non-profit case management programs, which support migrants as they navigate their legal obligations.
- End the use of for-profit detention facilities and use detention as a last resort. Eliminate the profit motive to detain immigrants. Prioritize the use of DHS facilities, case management systems, and community-based alternatives to detention for migrants who do not present a threat to public safety. Detention of children should be restricted to the shortest possible time, with their access to education and proper care ensured.
- Create a parole process for deported veterans and stop targeting women and men who served in uniform, or their families.
- Reintroduce discretion into the immigration system so that judges and adjudicators can weigh all facts and make just and fair decisions and reverse harmful provisions enacted in 1996.
- Establish immigration court rules for the acceptance of remote testimony and remote attorney appearances.
- Reform immigration court procedures to prevent errors with scheduling and hearing notices, allow for better communication between courts and participants, provide guidance on procedures, and reduce waste of tax-payer dollars due to costly rescheduling and undeserved in-absentia orders.

- In consultation with an advisory committee of stakeholders, develop a functional and secure electronic filing system that includes language access protocols for the immigration courts. Such a system should be available in addition to the paper-based system for the filing of applications, briefs, forms, and change-of-address notices.

Asylum and Refugees:

- Increase the annual global refugee admissions cap to 125,000 in the first year and seek to raise it over time. Support passage of the Guaranteed Refugee Admissions Ceiling Enhancement (GRACE) Act, and commit to complying with statutory requirements to consult with Congress prior to issuing refugee determinations.
- Restore the refugee definition which has been decimated by hostile Attorney General opinions.
- Expand global efforts to register and process refugees for resettlement.
- Double the number of immigration judges, court staff, and interpreters to remove the backlog of immigration cases and support timely and fair adjudications for asylum matters and other cases.
- Reverse policies that prevent victims of gang and domestic violence, as well as members of the LGBTQ+ community, from being eligible to apply for asylum.
- Increase U.S. Government resources to support asylum seekers and the organizations providing for their needs.
- Keep credible fear determinations under USCIS/Asylum Division jurisdiction (not CBP).
- Protect and expand the existing asylum system and other humanitarian protections, including provisions in the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA) and the Flores Settlement Agreement for arriving unaccompanied minors.
- Remove restrictions that were implemented to delay and arbitrarily deny refugee applications rather than to improve national security.

Strengthening Local Communities

Workforce:

- End the practice of debt servitude for temporary workers and ensure that workplaces that employ them follow the appropriate labor and employment laws.
- Work with Congress to reform the current system of temporary work visas, including by establishing a need- and wage-based allocation process, as well as enforcement mechanisms to ensure they align with labor market needs and do not undermine wages or displace workers.
- Work with Congress to reform the current system of temporary work visas to allow workers to switch jobs in select industries while certifying the labor market's need for foreign workers, including to leave an abusive employer.
- Enforce OSHA and environmental standards for all workers. Direct OSHA to set a standard that would effectively protect all workers during an outbreak of infectious disease, including COVID-19.
- Re-establish the Interagency Working Group on Consistent Enforcement of Federal Labor, Employment and Immigration Laws.
- Restore resources and staffing to our labor agencies so they are able to enforce labor and safety rules such as overtime, humane living conditions, and protection from pesticide

and heat exposure. Protect immigrants who come forward to report labor violations, or experience intimidation or retaliation on the job. Ensure that employers cannot use a worker's immigration status to suppress their labor rights and thereby depress working conditions for all workers. Ensure all workers have access to a fair grievance process, can collectively bargain, and are fully protected if unfairly terminated.

- Work with Congress to ensure employers cannot take advantage of immigrant workers by supporting the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights.
- Triple the current 10,000 annual cap for U visas and end processing delays for VAWA self-petitions, T visas, and U visas. Expand the U visa program to cover certain workplace crimes and secure passage of the POWER Act.
- Enforcement should sanction employers, not workers. End workplace raids and ensure that I-9 audits do not undermine workers' ability to organize and assert their rights.
- Simplify the process for applying for work authorization, including by allowing electronic filing, extending the duration of work authorization where appropriate, simplifying the application process, and translating the form into appropriate languages. Reverse changes made by the Trump Administration to restrict work authorization for asylum seekers and others under ERO supervision.

Education:

- Ensure Dreamers are eligible for federal student aid and included in proposals to access community colleges without debt, including those who transfer to a four-year HBCU, TCU, or MSI from a tuition free community college.
- Develop a national approach to funding ESL programs.
- Exempt STEM PhD program graduates from any visa caps.

Health Care:

- Ensure that during any pandemic or public health crisis such as COVID-19, health coverage is available to everyone for testing, treatment, medical services, rehabilitation, and that vaccines are available free of charge, regardless of immigration or economic status. During the course of their diagnosis and treatment, clarify that patients with COVID-19 or COVID-19 symptoms should have coverage for other health services. And provide authority to immigrant detention centers to modify detention practices to protect their health, including use of alternatives to detention, in order to protect the health of those detained, the staff at detention facilities, and the surrounding communities.
- To ensure that people living and working across the country have health care access, extend Affordable Care Act (ACA) coverage to DACA recipients, allow undocumented immigrants to purchase unsubsidized coverage in the ACA marketplace, and increase funding for Community Health Centers. Work with Congress to lift the five-year waiting period for low-income lawfully present immigrants for Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program eligibility.
- Reinstate Medicaid eligibility for migrants under the Compact of Free Association (COFA) -- which includes persons from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Palau -- who are legally residing, working, and studying in the U.S. but were inadvertently left out of healthcare legislation.
- Ensure language access to health information, especially during pandemics, by providing updated and relevant health information in the languages in which Census 2020 materials

are disseminated, and provide funding to healthcare providers to make essential healthcare accessible and make medical interpretation and translation universal.

Addressing the Root Causes

Governance:

- Establish and maintain an active dialogue with civil society leaders in the United States and in source countries on addressing the root causes of migration.
- Ensure trade agreements and development funding are tied to high labor standards in migrants' countries of origin.
- Combat corruption in source countries by revoking visas to the United States and freezing the assets of corrupt individuals.
- Establish an Anti-Corruption Task Force in Treasury's Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) focused on Central America and the Caribbean.
- Embed DOJ and Treasury attachés at tax, customs, and security agencies in Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.
- Support reforms in Central America and the Caribbean to fight corruption in the security services and strengthen the judiciary.
- Support existing anti-corruption mechanisms while also working with partners and multilateral institutions to create a regional commission to fight corruption.
- Provide technical assistance to judges and prosecutors to help authorities more effectively combat financial crimes.

Economic Prosperity and Climate Resilience:

- Combat global food insecurity as a root cause of migration by investing in malnutrition programs.
- Work with international bodies such as the UN to develop a global strategy for climate migrants.
- Develop a comprehensive diplomatic and foreign assistance strategy for Haiti, in coordination with multilateral banks and organizations, to address the political, economic, security and pandemic-related drivers of migration.
- Direct the U.S. Trade Representative and the Labor and Commerce Departments to redouble efforts to ensure parties to DR-CAFTA are abiding by labor commitments and human rights laws.
- Strengthen U.S. investments in reintegrating returning migrants to ensure these individuals can lead prosperous lives within their countries.
- Bolster microfinance and financial inclusive banking with a priority on programs that empower women. Promote mechanisms to help remittance recipients, especially women, invest in and start small businesses.

Citizen Security:

- In collaboration with local communities, invest in improving public safety in migration source countries, including Central America, the Caribbean, and Africa.
- Back community-led violence reduction and job training programs that prevent youth from joining criminal gangs.
- Ensure access to justice and support services for victims of domestic violence.

- Prioritize efforts to strengthen the professionalization and independence of prosecutors and judges.
- Increase support for accountable efforts to combat global organized crime responsible for human and drug trafficking.

Regional Migrant Protections:

- Strengthen U.S. investments in reintegrating returning migrants so they have increased economic and educational opportunities to ensure these individuals do not once again undertake the dangerous trek north.
- Re-establish the Central American Minors program.
- Work with the UNHCR to strengthen asylum processing and integration efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean, especially Mexico, and promote in-country protections for Internally Displaced Populations, including those fleeing crime and gang-related violence, LGBTQ+ individuals, and victims of domestic violence.

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