



# 2020 Democratic Party Platform

## *FCDC Edition*

Delegates to the 2020 Democratic National Convention officially approved the 2020 Democratic Party Platform on Tuesday, August 18, 2020. Click [HERE](#) for the original PDF version.

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## DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*The Democratic National Committee wishes to acknowledge that we gather together to state our values on lands that have been stewarded through many centuries by the ancestors and descendants of Tribal Nations who have been here since time immemorial.*

*We honor the communities native to this continent, and recognize that our country was built on Indigenous homelands.*

*We pay our respects to the millions of Indigenous people throughout history who have protected our lands, waters, and animals.*

*We respectfully acknowledge that we present this Platform at our 2020 Democratic National Convention on the lands of the [Bad River Band](#) of the Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians, the [Forest County Potawatomi Community](#), the [Ho-Chunk Nation](#), the [Lac Courte Oreilles Band](#) of Lake Superior Chippewa, the [Lac du Flambeau Band](#) of Lake Superior Chippewa, the [Menominee Nation](#), the [Oneida Nation of Wisconsin](#), the [Red Cliff Band](#) of Lake Superior Chippewa, the [St. Croix Chippewa Indians](#) of Wisconsin, the [Sokaogon Chippewa Community](#), and the [Stockbridge-Munsee Community](#), Band of Mohican Indians.*

## PREAMBLE

America is an idea—one that has endured and evolved through war and depression, prevailed over fascism and communism, and radiated hope to far distant corners of the earth. Americans believe that diversity is our greatest strength. That protest is among the highest forms of patriotism. That our fates and fortunes are bound to rise and fall together. That even when we fall short of our highest ideals, we never stop trying to build a more perfect union.

When the American people go to the polls this fall, we will be choosing more than a candidate. [Character](#) is on the ballot in this election. The character of our President, yes, but more than that: the character of our democracy, our society, and our leadership in the world.

The challenges before us—the worst public health crisis in a century, the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, the worst period of global upheaval in a generation, the urgent global crisis posed by climate change, the intolerable racial injustice that still stains the fabric of our nation—will test America’s character like never before.

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare deep-seated problems in our society—the fragility of our economy and social safety net, the risks posed by growing inequality, the impacts of racial and economic disparities on health and well-being, and the profound consequences of deepening polarization and political paralysis.

The bill has come due on the Trump Administration’s hollowing out of our public institutions: the sidelining of experts, the rejection of science, the underinvestment in research, and the gross corruption and abuses of power. President Trump’s dereliction of duty has caused the deaths of tens of thousands of Americans, the loss of tens of millions of American jobs, and lasting harm to our children’s education and future.

And it has revealed, at tragic economic and human cost, the emptiness of the Republican Party’s “America First” foreign policy. Under President Trump, America stands alone. Friends and foes alike neither admire nor fear President Trump’s leadership—they dismiss and ridicule it. The Republican Party under President Trump has made America small—when we are a people called to do the greatest things.

Democrats will fight to repair the soul of this nation. To unite and to heal our country. To turn this crisis into a crucible, from which we will forge a stronger, brighter, and more equitable future.

We must right the wrongs in our democracy, redress the systemic injustices that have long plagued our society, throw open the doors of opportunity for all Americans, and reinvent our institutions at home and our leadership abroad. We do not simply aspire to return our country to where we were four years ago. We know we must be bolder and more ambitious.

We must once again stop another Republican recession from becoming a second Great Depression. President Trump and the Republican Party have rigged the economy in favor of the wealthiest few and the biggest corporations, and left working families and small businesses out in the cold. Democrats will forge a new social and economic contract with the American people—a contract that creates millions of new jobs and promotes shared prosperity, closes racial gaps in income and wealth, guarantees the right to join or form a union, raises wages and ensures equal pay for women and paid family leave for all, and safeguards a secure and dignified retirement.

We must guarantee health care not as a privilege for some, but as a right for every single American. For a century, Democrats have fought to secure universal health care. In the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic, President Trump and the Republican Party are trying to tear health care away from millions of people who depend on it for survival. Democrats will not allow that to happen. We will not rest until every American can access quality health care and affordable prescription drugs.

We must steel and strengthen our democracy, not distort and debase it. Democrats believe there is nothing to fear from the voices and votes of the American people. We will restore the full power of the [Voting Rights Act](#) and stamp out voter suppression in all its forms. We will curb the corrupting influence of money in politics and protect the integrity of our elections from all enemies, foreign and domestic. We will never accept political gridlock as our fate. We will never tire in our fight to deliver results and create opportunity for all Americans. And we will end the war on government that has politicized our institutions, denigrated public service, and left the American people on their own instead of working to make them whole.

We must heal our nation's deepest wounds, not fan the flames of hate. Democrats will root out structural and systemic racism in our economy and our society, and reform our criminal justice system from top to bottom, because we believe Black lives matter. We will ensure that our nation continues to prize diversity and compassion, and welcomes those who yearn to participate in our great democratic experiment by creating a humane, 21st century immigration system that benefits all Americans.

We will give hate no safe harbor. We will never amplify or legitimize the voices of racism, misogyny, anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim bigotry, or white supremacy. Democrats will protect and promote the equal rights of all our citizens—women, LGBTQ+ people, religious minorities, people with disabilities, Native Americans, and all who have been discriminated against in too many ways and for too many generations. We commit ourselves to the vision articulated by [Frederick Douglass](#) of “*a Government founded upon justice, and recognizing the equal rights of all . . . [claiming higher authority for existence, or sanction for its laws, that nature, reason, and the regularly ascertained will of the people; steadily refusing to put its sword and purse in the service of any religious creed or family is a standing offense to most of the Governments of the world, and to some narrow and bigoted people among ourselves.]*”

We must lead the world in taking on the climate crisis, not deny the science and accelerate the damage. From Houston, Texas, to Mexico Beach, Florida; from San Juan, Puerto Rico, to Davenport, Iowa, the last four years have seen record-breaking storms, devastating wildfires, and historic floods. Democrats will rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement and go further, building a thriving, equitable, and globally competitive clean energy economy that puts workers and communities first, and leaves no one behind.

We must provide a world-class education in every ZIP code, to every child, because education is a critical public good. Democrats believe in universal early childhood education, and affordable, high-quality child care. We will shut down the school-to-prison pipeline, and build a school-to-opportunity pipeline in its place. We will make college affordable again, and give Americans relief from crushing student debt.

We commit to a foreign policy that accelerates our domestic renewal, not undermines it. We will focus on what matters most to Americans—more and better jobs, greater security, a cleaner environment, and a more inclusive and resilient society. Democrats will lead with diplomacy as our tool of first resort and mobilize our allies and partners to meet the tests none of us can meet on our own. We will stand up to the forces of authoritarianism, not aid and abet their rise, and we will speak and act with clarity and purpose on behalf of human rights wherever they are under threat. And we will honor our sacred covenant with our women and men in uniform, our veterans, and our military families who have carried the burdens of wars that must—at long last—come to an end.

Above all, Democrats still believe in the American idea—its principles, its purpose, and its promise. We know that four more years of the crass, craven, corrupt leadership we have seen from Donald Trump and the Republican Party will damage our character and our country beyond repair. We pray, as [Langston Hughes](#) did, “[O, let America be America again—the land that never has been yet—and yet must be—the land where every man is free.](#)” Democrats call on all Americans to come together and seize this last, best chance to restore the soul of our nation—and vote this November to ensure our greatest days are still to come.

## PROTECTING AMERICANS AND RECOVERING FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

When we do not have competent, experienced, compassionate leaders in government, the American people suffer. That is the case 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 lives and livelihoods.

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. Disparities in health care access, in access to paid sick leave, in environmental quality, in the employment market, and in housing have contributed to disproportionate rates of infection and death among Black Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, and certain Asian American and Pacific Islander communities.

President Trump's failure to pay attention to early intelligence reports about the pandemic wasted critical weeks in which we could have prepared for the outbreak. Once the pandemic began spreading in the United States, the President's failure to lay out clear, consistent guidelines for cities, states, businesses, and school districts to control the spread of COVID-19 created widespread confusion and chaos. His reckless disregard for the advice of public health experts has made it harder for mayors and governors to protect the American people. Rather than surge the production of personal protective equipment and other critical supplies where they were needed most, the Administration held life-saving resources hostage for political obeisance. Instead of bringing Americans together, President Trump tried to divide us, using racist and xenophobic rhetoric that has contributed to an increase in hate crimes against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. And in the midst of the pandemic, the Trump Administration is arguing in court to invalidate the Affordable Care Act and rip health coverage away from tens of millions of people.

President Trump and his Administration have also failed to drive an economic response that is commensurate with the scale of the challenge before us, preferring to act as though the recession caused by his incompetent mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic will correct itself. He has hung small businesses out to dry while cutting blank checks to the largest corporations; failed to enact adequate support for public school systems, colleges, universities, and state and local governments to maintain public services and jobs; endangered the health of essential workers by failing to enact workplace safety standards; and neglected to protect working families from economic ruin.

Democrats will save lives by using every available tool to beat back this pandemic, which continues to sicken and kill hundreds of Americans per day, and lead a global effort to prevent, detect, and respond to future pandemic threats.

We must start by making COVID-19 testing widely available, convenient, and free to everyone. We must also expand funding so state and local public health departments can hire sufficient staff to conduct contact tracing for everyone who tests positive for the novel coronavirus. Only through widespread, regular testing and tracing can we hope to understand the scope of the pandemic and contain 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, insurance coverage, or 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 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. 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 and in President Trump's recession, Democrats believe the federal government should pick up 100 percent of the tab for [COBRA insurance](#), which keeps people on their employer-sponsored plans, without restrictions. We will 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 health coverage. Democrats will also make available on the marketplace a public option administered through the [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#) (CMS) which includes a platinum-level choice, with low fees and no deductibles. Low-income Americans will be automatically enrolled in the public option at zero cost to them, though they may choose to opt out at any time.

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 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, or adequately surge U.S. manufacturing of needed equipment through tools like the [Defense Production Act](#). The resulting equipment shortages endangered millions of lives, including those of our brave frontline health care workers and other essential workers. Such shortages are unacceptable and 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. We will restore federal leadership to ensure medical supplies are distributed according to need, not political favoritism, and never put states in the position of having to compete against each other for life-saving materials.

Democrats will aggressively enforce non-discrimination protections in the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) and other civil rights laws, especially when designing emergency management systems and new facilities and services in response to the pandemic. Democrats will prohibit unjustified segregation of patients with disabilities, and additionally prohibit rationing of health care that refuses or diverts hospitalization, treatment, or supplies based on a patient's disability. We recognize people with disabilities living in group homes and other care facilities are at greater risk of contracting COVID-19, and that people with disabilities may require additional resources to protect their health, well-being, and independence during the pandemic. We will improve oversight and expand protections for residents and staff at nursing homes, which have seen some of the worst COVID-19 outbreaks. And we will expand support for telemedicine, so Americans do not have to go without essential health care during the pandemic.

America must never again be left vulnerable to a global pandemic. Democrats believe we must follow the informed advice of scientists and public health experts, 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. We will recruit at least 100,000 contact tracers with support from trusted local organizations in the communities most at risk to help state and local health departments use culturally competent approaches to identify people at risk of contracting or spreading the coronavirus.

Democrats believe we must reverse decades of underinvestment in America's public health infrastructure. We will substantially increase funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and for state and local public health departments, many of which suffered deep budget cuts during the Great Recession and are at risk of further cuts as a result of President Trump's recession. State and local public health departments should be given sufficient resources to address pandemic diseases and other public health crises through coordinated efforts that are inclusive of underrepresented groups who may be disproportionately impacted.

Democrats will support medical and public health research grants for [Historically Black Colleges](#)

[and Universities](#) (HBCUs) and other [Minority-Serving Institutions](#) (MSIs), which are particularly well suited to research health disparities in the context of COVID-19.

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—or to build back better.

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' benefits. For those workers who do lose their jobs, we will expand the unemployment insurance system to cover more workers, including independent contractors and gig, part-time, and tipped workers; make sure platform companies and companies that misclassify employees as contractors pay in to support the system like other employers do; and raise wage replacement rates, which are far too low in many states. We will expand, not cut, nutrition assistance and food security programs that millions of Americans are relying on in this crisis. Democrats will also make long-overdue investments to upgrade and modernize states' unemployment system technology and ensure the Department of Labor conducts strong oversight of state unemployment systems 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 support and 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 adding jobs to meet the needs of the American people. Democrats will extend significant aid to state and local governments, school districts, and public and nonprofit colleges and universities, including HBCUs and MSIs, to address these budget shortfalls and secure jobs. We will condition state and federal aid on maintaining and expanding public-sector employment, including provisions to protect workers' rights.

In states and cities across the country, too many parents are being forced to choose between keeping their jobs and keeping their children safe. Democrats believe that making child care affordable and widely available is essential to recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. We

will provide funding to stabilize the sector and ensure child care and educational settings are able to meet the highest possible public health and worker safety standards to protect the health of care workers, children, parents, and the broader community.

The United States is facing an unprecedented housing crisis as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and President Trump's recession, with millions of families at risk of being evicted. We support state and local measures to freeze rent increases, evictions, utility shutoffs, and late fees for rent, to prevent families from becoming homeless and making the pandemic even worse.

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 expenses, and keep their doors open when possible. Some estimates indicate as many as percent of Black-owned small businesses may not survive President Trump's recession, and small businesses owned by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and Latinos are also at risk. Democrats will prioritize support for Black entrepreneurs and other entrepreneurs of color, as well as women entrepreneurs, including by expanding funding for [Community Development Financial Institutions](#) (CDFIs) and other proven programs that invest in low-income communities and communities of color.

We will impose rigorous oversight on big corporations seeking financial assistance to weather the pandemic and President Trump's 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.

No one should have to choose between protecting their health and earning a living. Paid sick leave is a necessity even under normal circumstances, but in a pandemic, it's a matter of national security. This is especially true for the Black, Latino, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Native American, and low-income workers who are less likely to be able to work from home. 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 essential workers on the job where the Trump Administration has neglected them, from agriculture to meatpacking plants to manufacturing facilities to hospitals, including by issuing and enforcing effective infectious disease workplace safety standards 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, an accessible internet is not optional: it is a vital tool for receiving an education and 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 while requiring that funding recipients adhere

to policies that support good jobs and include strong protections for workers' right to organize. We will increase public investment in rural, urban, and Tribal broadband infrastructure, offer low-income Americans subsidies for accessing high-speed internet, and invest in digital literacy training programs, so children and families and people with disabilities can fully participate in school, work, and life from their homes. And Democrats will restore the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) 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.

President Trump and his Administration have not only failed the American people, they have failed the world. In past public health crises, including the Ebola epidemic, disciplined American diplomacy shaped and led a common global response, rallied public and private resources, accelerated research into treatments and vaccines, and directed global emergency aid. In the COVID-19 pandemic, President Trump not only failed to lead, he actively sabotaged global efforts to slow the pandemic. He refused to work with our partners to identify and coordinate manufacture of potential vaccines; allegedly tried to poach exclusive rights to a vaccine candidate from our ally Germany; cut CDC and State Department programs for early identification of infectious pathogens; withdrew funding and support for the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO); and tried to distract from his dereliction of duty by drawing from the authoritarian playbook he so admires—using racist rhetoric to blame “outsiders” and stoke divisions at home.

Democrats will take the opposite tack by restoring American leadership, driving a coordinated global health and economic response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and ensuring that we're far better prepared for future global health emergencies.

## 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.

President Trump inherited the longest economic expansion in American history from the Obama-Biden Administration, and he squandered it. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, President Trump was presiding over a recession in the manufacturing sector, after years of growth in the Obama-Biden Administration. He had the audacity to pay for a permanent tax cut for big business by raising taxes on working families. He launched a reckless trade war with China that cost more than 300,000 American jobs and sent farmers into bankruptcy, decimating the American heartland. He has left our communities vulnerable and exposed to the impacts of climate change, let other countries outpace us in the clean energy revolution America should be leading, and completely failed to fulfill his campaign promise to the American people to invest in rebuilding and modernizing our nation's crumbling infrastructure.

But our economy was rigged against working families and the middle class even before the novel coronavirus sickened millions and killed more than 150,000 Americans and counting. Working families' incomes have been largely 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 one 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. Median incomes are lower and poverty rates are higher for Black Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and certain Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, compared to median white households. And there is a persistent, pernicious racial wealth gap that holds millions of Americans back, with the typical white household holding six times more wealth than the typical Latino family and 10 times more wealth than the typical Black family. President Trump's recession threatens to deepen existing inequities, as Black and Latino workers are less likely to work in jobs that can be done safely from home, less likely to have savings to fall back on, and less likely to be able to access unemployment insurance and other emergency programs electronically.

***That's bad for our economy, bad for our democracy, and 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. 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 and paid family leave for all. A new economic contract that provides access for all to reliable and affordable banking and financial services. A new social and economic contract that at last grapples honestly with America’s long and ongoing history of racism and disenfranchisement, of segregation and discrimination, and invests instead in building equity and mobility for the people of color 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 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 structural and systemic racism and entrenched income and wealth inequality in our economy and our banking system.

## [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, gender identity, disability status, national origin, 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 so it reaches \$15 an hour by 2026. Raising the federal minimum wage, so fewer workers are forced to hold down multiple jobs to make ends meet, will significantly decrease risks of infection from COVID-19 and in the future. 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 ensure those who have been left without wage and hour protections for decades—including domestic workers and farmworkers—have the same rights as other workers. Democrats will support legislation to strengthen [whistleblower and anti-retaliation](#)

[protections for workers](#) who speak for themselves or their coworkers. 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 “card check” processes—and ban captive audience meetings, which employers use to bully and browbeat workers. We will hold executives personally accountable if they interfere in workers' efforts to organize, including issuing criminal penalties for intentional obstruction. 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 penalize companies that bargain in bad faith with their workers. Democrats will vigorously protect 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, committing to a high standard for intervening in strikes, including under the [Railway Labor Act](#).

The right of workers to come together and form a union is under attack. We must unrig the rules that block workers from having the union they want and update our labor laws to make it more possible. We must change labor law so that it is easier for unions and employers to enter into multi-employer agreements establishing minimum workplace standards related to wages, benefits, and working conditions.

Democrats believe taxpayer dollars should never flow to employers who steal workers' wages, violate labor laws, engage in union-busting, or exploit immigrant workers to depress working conditions for all workers. We will increase funding and staffing at the Department of Labor to aggressively enforce wage, hour, health, and safety rules across the economy. Democrats believe employees who are being misclassified, including gig and platform workers, deserve wage and workplace protections including minimum wage and overtime pay, and we support using the [ABC test to determine employee status](#). Democrats believe that all workers should be able to hold their employers accountable for unpaid or underpaid wages, regardless of corporate structure. We support using grants and collaborative relationships with community organizations to ensure that workers know their rights and responsibilities under the law.

Democrats will strengthen labor rights for the more than 20 million public-sector employees in the United States by passing the [Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act](#), which would provide a federal guarantee for public-sector employees to bargain for better pay and benefits and the working conditions they deserve.

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. It takes a typical Black woman 19 months to earn what a typical white

man earns in 12 months—and for typical Latinas and Native American women, 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 its authority to initiate directed investigations into civil rights violations, violations of the rights of people with disabilities, and violations against LGBTQ+ people, especially transgender women of color. Federal contractors should be required

to develop and disclose plans to recruit and promote people of color, women, LGBTQ+ people, 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 paid sick days and a high-quality, comprehensive, and inclusive paid family and medical 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 workers are guaranteed 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, foster or adopted children, and allow all workers to take extended time off to care for themselves or ailing loved ones.

Finding and paying for high-quality child care is an emotional, logistical, and financial tightrope for too many parents, and that needs to change. Working parents shouldn't have to choose between keeping their kids safe and earning a paycheck. Democrats will make major investments in quality, affordable child care, including by significantly increasing the [Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit](#) and providing access to affordable, high-quality child care on a sliding scale by boosting funding for grants to states to help low-income and middle-class families afford child care. We will improve compensation and benefits for child care providers and enact universal, high-quality pre-K programs for three- and four-year-olds. We will also invest in expanding long-term services and supports and home and community-based care for seniors and people with disabilities. Democrats will increase wages and benefits for paid caregivers in all settings, which will improve working conditions and quality of care while enabling family members to rejoin the workforce.

### *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 advanced manufacturing.

We will repair, modernize, and expand our highways, roads, bridges, and airports, including by installing 500,000 public charging stations for electric vehicles, ensuring our passenger transportation systems are resilient to the impacts of climate change, and using safe, modern design approaches that allow drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and others to safely share the road. We will launch our country's second great railroad revolution by investing in high-speed rail and passenger and freight rail systems, and commit to public transportation as a public good, including ensuring transit jobs are good jobs. This railroad revolution will reduce pollution, connect workers to good union jobs, slash commute times, and spur investment in rural communities that will now be better linked to major metropolitan areas. Democrats will invest to ensure passenger transportation, including public transit, is affordable to all and accessible to people with disabilities. We will help transform Amtrak from a laggard to a leader in passenger rail accessibility and ensure people with disabilities can receive compensation when disability equipment, like wheelchairs, are lost or damaged by transportation carriers.

Democrats will upgrade our nation's ports, lock and dam systems, and freight infrastructure to accommodate 21st century cargo, reduce air and water pollution, and create and maintain high-quality, good-paying jobs. We will increase demand for American-made ships by ensuring [U.S. cargo is carried on ships flying our flag](#). We will make sure that every community in America has access to clean, reliable drinking water and safe wastewater systems in their homes, including by replacing dangerous lead pipes. We will increase investment in innovative water technologies, including water use efficiency, water conservation, and water reuse and recycling, that reduce water waste and consumer bills. We will modernize and green our public schools, and ensure they are accessible to students with disabilities. And Democrats will close the digital divide that deprives more than 20 million Americans of high-speed internet access by investing in broadband and 5G technology, including rural and municipal broadband, while ensuring those investments support good jobs and include strong protections for workers' rights to organize, and restoring the FCC's authority to take strong enforcement action against internet service providers who violate net neutrality principles.

Democrats support the creation of an infrastructure bank, a public bank that will leverage public and private resources to build infrastructure projects of national or regional significance, including in rail and transit, clean energy and water infrastructure, broadband, and affordable housing. Projects that receive assistance from the bank will be required to follow Buy America and Buy Clean provisions, [pay Davis-Bacon prevailing wages](#), utilize project labor agreements, and ensure employers remain neutral in workers' organizing efforts.

All federally supported infrastructure projects, whether existing or newly developed, financed through grants, loans, tax incentives, or a national infrastructure bank, should create good, union jobs that expand the middle class. That is why Democrats will ensure labor protections, Davis-Bacon wage standards, project labor agreements, collective bargaining neutrality, and

domestic sourcing requirements are included in any infrastructure legislation, and will block anti-worker provisions, including forced arbitration. As we expand the clean energy technology and infrastructure industry; we will fight to enact legislation that will drive the creation of family sustaining jobs, with the high road labor standards with the provisions defined in the Good Jobs for the [21st Century Energy Act](#). Democrats support transparent, accountable, and sound management of publicly owned infrastructure and assets, and will ensure that local jurisdictions are adequately protected from partisan power grabs seeking to strip them of those assets. We will ensure robust federal oversight of any proposed transfers of ownership or operations, and will oppose any policy that promotes the privatization of public services or infrastructure.

Democrats believe more products in our homes, stores, workplaces, and communities 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 expand effective tax credits that support domestic manufacturing and grow rural manufacturing jobs through investments in bio-based manufacturing. 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 support robust Buy America and Buy Clean standards for federally supported projects, which help increase demand for domestically produced and low-pollution raw materials.

To ensure all workers can access the good jobs that will be created and supported by these investments and build a diverse pipeline of talent across the economy, Democrats will invest in career and technical education and high-quality job training programs with formal worker representation in program development, including pre-apprenticeship opportunities and registered apprenticeships. We believe in the value of lifelong learning, and will increase investments to support adult literacy and other skills development programs.

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 generate 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 we will increase funding for programs supporting businesses owned by women and people of color, including ending the Trump Administration’s effort to starve the Minority Business Development Agency, improving and expanding Small Business Administration (SBA) programs that most effectively support women- and minority-owned businesses, and increasing opportunities for women- and minority-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, aquaculture farmers, ranchers, and foresters, including returning veterans, to start and grow their operations by expanding [U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) ownership and operating loan programs](#). Recognizing the history of racial

discrimination in USDA's core farming programs, Democrats will continue the reform efforts started under the Obama-Biden Administration to ensure USDA takes a more proactive approach to supporting training and resources for farmers of color. We will protect family farms and promote food security, including by taking steps to limit foreign ownership of U.S. farmland and reforming agricultural subsidies to better support small- and mid-sized farms. Democrats believe farmers should have the right to repair their own farming equipment, rather than being forced to rely on large corporations for even the simplest fixes. And we will expand domestic markets for family farmers and ranchers by developing and growing regional food systems to deliver fresh, American-grown produce to schools, hospitals, Department of Defense installations, and other major public institutions, so small, mid-size, and traditional farmers can stay competitive.

Democrats will partner with America's farmers, ranchers, and foresters to make the U.S. agriculture sector the first in the world to achieve net-zero emissions, which will spark a revolution in agriculture and open up new revenue streams for farmers in energy and waste products, and grow bio-based manufacturing jobs. We will grow the nation's biofuels manufacturing sector, including by strengthening the [Renewable Fuel Standard](#), supporting E15 blends, and supporting research, development, and deployment of advanced biofuels. We will expand popular, voluntary programs for sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices that help protect clean air and water and support wildlife habitats, including for threatened pollinators. Democrats will invest in research and development to support climate-resilient, sustainable, low-carbon, and organic agricultural methods.

America's farmworkers are essential to our economy, our communities, and our security. We will enforce labor and environmental protections for farmworkers, including overtime and safety rules protecting workers from exposure to pesticides and extreme heat, and ensure farmworkers are able to exercise their right to bargain collectively. Democrats will empower small and mid-size family farms by tackling market concentration in agriculture, including by strengthening enforcement of the [Sherman and Clayton Antitrust Acts](#) and the [Packers and Stockyards Act](#). We will also review federal guidelines to improve workers safety at facilities that raise and process meat for consumption, and use the federal government's procurement power to incentivize the humane treatment of farm animals in accordance with commercially-recognized animal welfare standards.

The United States has long been a world leader in science, technology, research, and innovation. Democrats oppose the Trump Administration's efforts to undermine federal scientific research institutions, apply political screens to research grants, and interfere with the work of career scientists—actions which have a chilling effect on scientific discovery and are damaging to America's economic competitiveness. Democrats will support historic federal investments in research, development, demonstration, and deployment, which will break new frontiers of science and create jobs across the country in aerospace, artificial intelligence, advanced materials, biotechnology, and clean energy and clean vehicles. Democrats support public

investments in technology and innovation that help create a stronger economy for all Americans. We will support women innovators and innovators of color, encourage diversity in technology, and promote business models that reinvest in low-income communities and communities of color.

Democrats continue to support the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and are committed to continuing space exploration and discovery. We believe in continuing the spirit of discovery that has animated NASA's human space exploration, in addition to its scientific and medical research, technological innovation, and educational mission that allows us to better understand our own planet and place in the universe. We will strengthen support for the United States' role in space through our continued presence on the International Space Station, working in partnership with the international community to continue scientific and medical innovation. We support NASA's work to return Americans to the moon and go beyond to Mars, taking the next step in exploring our solar system. Democrats additionally support strengthening NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Earth observation missions to better understand how climate change is impacting our home planet.

### *Building A Fair System of International Trade for Our Workers*

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

Democrats will pursue a trade policy that puts workers first. We will negotiate strong and enforceable standards for labor, human rights, and the environment in the core text of our trade deals. Future trade agreements should build on the [pro-labor provisions added to the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement](#) (USMCA) by Democratic members of Congress.

Democrats will take aggressive action against China or any other country that tries to undercut American manufacturing by manipulating their currencies and maintaining a misaligned exchange rate with the dollar, dumping products like steel and aluminum in our markets, or providing unfair subsidies. Unlike President Trump, we will stand up to efforts from China and other state actors to steal America's intellectual property and will demand China and other countries cease and desist from conducting cyberespionage against our companies.

We will eliminate President Trump's tax and trade policies that encourage big corporations to ship jobs overseas and evade paying their fair share of taxes. If companies shut down their

operations here and outsource jobs, we'll claw back any public investments or benefits they received from taxpayers. 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.

## 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. Homeownership has long been central to building generational wealth, and expanding access to homeownership to those who have been unfairly excluded and discriminated against is critical to closing the racial wealth gap. 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 support innovative approaches to eliminating the racial wealth gap in America. Rehabilitating housing and expansion of housing owned by land trusts will increase the amount of housing available for secure homeownership. 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. We will increase funding for assistance to first-time purchasers and homeowners to navigate the financing and servicing of their homes. We will create a new tax credit of up to \$15,000 to help first-time homebuyers, and will make the tax credit refundable and advanceable, so buyers can get assistance at the time of purchase, instead of having to wait until they file their taxes.

Democrats will supercharge investment in the [Housing Trust Fund](#) to greatly expand the number of affordable, accessible housing units on the market. We will expand the [Low-Income Housing Tax Credit](#) to incentivize private-sector construction of affordable housing, and make sure urban, suburban, and rural areas all benefit. We will make energy efficiency upgrades for millions of low-income households, affordable housing units, and public housing units in metropolitan and rural areas to save families money on their energy bills and provide safe and healthy homes. And Democrats will leverage existing programs, including at USDA, to build more affordable,

accessible housing and retrofit existing housing in rural areas. We will ensure all federally supported housing projects, from new builds to retrofits, include mandatory requirements for labor standards, accessibility, and civil rights protections.

Democrats are committed to ending homelessness in America. Democrats commit to providing Section 8 housing support for every eligible family, and will enact protections to keep landlords from discriminating against voucher recipients. We will increase investments in public housing to expand availability for the first time since the 1990s, and improve and upgrade existing public housing to ensure safe living conditions for residents, protecting tenants' rights to return if extensive renovations are needed. 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 post-traumatic stress disorder. We will act swiftly to end homelessness among veterans and will enact strong protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth, especially Black, Latino, and Native American LGBTQ+ youth, who too often find themselves on the streets.

Democrats will enact a [new Homeowner and Renter Bill of Rights](#) to protect families from abusive lenders and landlords. We will empower renters by working to establish a national tenant right to organize, and support outreach and education to help tenants advocate to preserve and expand affordable housing. 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 and strip equity from their communities 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, the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule, and the disparate impact standard, and hold lenders accountable for discriminatory practices. We will also ensure that federal housing programs are better designed to affirmatively further fair housing. 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. We will work to ensure that residential property and mortgage ownership records are publicly available and easily accessible, so that homeowners can always know who services their mortgage and who truly owns their debt. 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.

## Leveling the Economic Playing Field

The U.S. economy is rigged against the American people. Time after time, President Trump and the Republicans have rewarded big corporations and their wealthy donors, and left working families behind. Democrats will take decisive action to level the playing field for people of color, working families, women, small business owners, and others who have been left on the sidelines.

### *Reforming the Tax Code to Benefit Working Families*

Our tax system has been rigged against the American people by big corporations and their lobbyists, and by Republican politicians who dole out tax cuts to their biggest donors while leaving working families to struggle.

Democrats will take action to reverse the Trump Administration's tax cuts benefiting the wealthiest Americans and rewarding corporations for shipping American jobs overseas. We will crack down on overseas tax havens and close loopholes that are exploited by the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations. We will make sure the wealthy pay their fair share in taxes. We will make sure investors pay the same tax rates as workers and bring an end to expensive and unproductive tax loopholes, including the carried interest loophole. Corporate tax rates, which were cut sharply by the 2017 Republican tax cut, must be raised, and ["trickle-down" tax cuts must be rejected](#). [Estate taxes should also be raised back to the historical norm](#).

Democrats will reform the tax code to be more progressive and equitable, and reduce barriers for working families to benefit from targeted tax breaks, including the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit. 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, including by equalizing tax benefits for retirement contributions and providing more accessible tax breaks for homeownership.

### *Curbing Wall Street Abuses*

The scars of the financial crisis that triggered the Great Recession are still present in our economy and our society. Financial institutions should never be "too big to fail." Democrats will work to reverse the over-financialization of the American economy and curb Wall Street speculation by maintaining and expanding safeguards that separate retail banking institutions from more risky investment operations, and ensuring Wall Street investors pay their fair share in Taxes.

We will strengthen and enforce the Obama-Biden Administration's [Dodd-Frank financial reform](#) law, including the [Volcker Rule](#), to protect American workers from the impacts of future

financial crises, and will support an updated and modernized version of Glass-Steagall. 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.

Democrats will 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 strengthen banking regulations, including the [Community Reinvestment Act](#), to ensure equitable access to credit and banking products for all Americans, and reinvigorate the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to ensure that banks, financial institutions, and lenders cannot prey on consumers.

We commit to revisit and repeal sections of existing bankruptcy law that frequently lead to debtors losing their home as the result of medical debt, divorce, job loss, or just bad luck. We will also give bankruptcy judges the authority to "cram down," or modify, mortgages for primary residences during bankruptcy proceedings, so working families can benefit from the same debt relief tools currently available to those who own assets like vacation homes and yachts.

### *Ending Poverty*

Democrats remain committed to ending poverty and enabling all Americans to live up to their God-given potential. We recognize that the official poverty rate, as measured and communicated by the federal government, fails to capture critical needs like housing, education, health care, transportation, energy, and other necessities, and therefore understates the true share of Americans living in poverty. We will support the [10-20-30 funding approach](#), to direct at least 10 percent of federal funding to communities where 20 percent or more of the population has been living below the poverty line for 30 years or longer. Directing more federal investment to the communities most in need will help create jobs; improve and expand housing; modernize and expand transportation, clean water, wastewater, energy, and broadband infrastructure; and promote shared prosperity.

We will raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and guarantee equal pay for women, two measures that in combination will pull millions of families out of poverty. We will make it easier for working families to benefit from targeted tax breaks, including the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit, which too often go unclaimed by the lowest-income tax filers. We will significantly expand affordable housing and build new public housing for the first time since the 1990s, and guarantee [Section 8 benefits](#) to all who qualify—all of which will help reduce housing costs and increase housing availability for low-income families.

Democrats believe health care is a human right. We will incentivize states to expand Medicaid and enroll low-income people who do not otherwise have health insurance in a new, high-quality public option without premiums. We will double investments in community health centers and rural health centers, and expand mobile health units, to make it easier for low-income people to

access health care.

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 also remove barriers that keep the formerly incarcerated from accessing food assistance.

[Cuts to the Legal Services Corporation](#) have imperiled access to justice in civil court for low-income defendants and litigants alike in matters concerning access to public benefits and housing, eviction proceedings, and custodial cases. Democrats will significantly increase investment in the Legal Services Corporation to ensure those who cannot afford private representation can nevertheless equitably access the civil justice system and have their day in court.

Democrats will provide substantially higher levels of support for programs and institutions that boost economic development in America's most impoverished communities, including by doubling funding for CDFIs, expanding the Community Development Block Grant, increasing the number of Rural Business Investment Companies, and expanding and making permanent the [New Markets Tax Credit](#).

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 efforts in Congress to guarantee affordable, transparent, and trustworthy banking services that are language-accessible for low- and middle-income families, including bank accounts and real-time payment systems through the Federal Reserve and easily accessible service locations, like postal banking.

### *[Protecting Consumer Rights and Privacy](#)*

Consumers, workers, students, retirees, and investors who have been mistreated by businesses should never be denied their right to fight for fair treatment under the law. Democrats will support efforts to eliminate the use of forced arbitration clauses in employment and service contracts, which unfairly strip consumers, workers, students, retirees, and investors of their right to their day in court.

In the 21st century—and especially in the COVID-19 pandemic—it is all but impossible for consumers, students, workers, and people with disabilities to opt out of using the internet to shop, socialize, learn, work, bank, and live. Democrats are committed to policies that will protect individuals' privacy and data rights while continuing to support and enable innovation and improve accessibility in the technology sector. We will update the Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights proposed by the Obama-Biden Administration, including adding strong national standards to protect consumers, employees, patients, and students from data breaches, and work with Congress to pass it into law. Democrats will take additional steps to protect student

data privacy, particularly in preschool and K-12 settings where most students are under 18, and ensure that data collected in schools is used only for education, not for commercial purposes. And we support updating the [Electronic Communications Privacy Act](#), which has not been significantly amended since the 1980s, to afford the same protections to digital content as physical content.

### *Tackling Runaway Corporate Concentration*

Democrats are concerned that the increase in corporate concentration across a wide range of industries, from hospitals and pharmaceutical companies to agribusiness and retail chains, could be stifling competition and innovation and creating monopoly conditions that harm consumers. 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, telecommunications, technology, and agricultural industries, to assess whether any have increased market concentration, raised consumer prices, demonstrably harmed workers, increased racial inequality, reduced competition, or constricted innovation, and assign appropriate remedies. Democrats will direct regulators to consider potential effects of future mergers on the labor market, on low-income and marginalized communities, and on racial equity, as well as on consumer prices and market competition. 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 that advocates retirement security for all. We are the party that created and strengthened Social Security, and defended public and private retirement plans that provide a decent monthly income. And we are fighting to make sure that all workers have the ability to save at work for emergencies and for retirement.

Social Security is the most enduring thread in our nation's social safety net. We will enact policies to make Social Security more progressive, including increasing benefits for all beneficiaries, meaningfully increasing minimum benefit payments, increasing benefits for long-duration beneficiaries, and protecting surviving spouses from benefit cuts. We will eliminate provisions that unfairly reduce public sector workers' earned Social Security benefits. 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 ensure Social Security will be there forever.

Democrats will protect Americans' retirement security, especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, and take action to protect public and private pensions to ensure workers keep the benefits they have earned, including through multiemployer plans. Democrats oppose changes to the multiemployer pension system that would endanger workers' and retirees' pensions, including composite pension plans. We support amending federal bankruptcy laws to protect workers' earned pensions from being taken away by employers going through bankruptcy.

We will also make it easier to save for retirement beyond Social Security. We will support approaches to retirement saving that enable workers and retirees to prepare for and prosper in retirement, including reforms that will allow states and municipalities to create public individual and pooled retirement account options that are easy for workers to access and understand. We will advocate federal legislation to make it easy for all workers to save, not just those in states or municipalities that have established their own programs. Democrats believe that when workers are saving for retirement, the financial advisors they consult should be legally obligated to put their client's best interests first. We will take immediate action to reverse the Trump Administration's regulations allowing financial advisors to prioritize their self-interest over their clients' financial wellbeing. And Democrats will equalize the network of retirement savings 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.

## ACHIEVING UNIVERSAL, AFFORDABLE, QUALITY HEALTH CARE

Democrats have fought 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 fundamentally believe health care is a right for all, not a privilege for the few.

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-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 150,000 Americans dead and counting—the Trump Administration is fighting in court to invalidate the entirety of 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 corporations. We will tackle entrenched racial disparities in health care, reduce prescription drug prices by standing up to big pharmaceutical companies, and make it easier to access mental health and substance use disorder treatment and long-term services and supports in metropolitan and rural areas alike.

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.

Generations of Democrats have been united in the fight for universal health care. We are proud our party welcomes advocates who want to build on and strengthen the Affordable Care Act and those who support a Medicare for All approach; all are critical to ensuring that health care is a human right.

## 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 (VA) 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 CMS, 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.

Everyone will be eligible to choose the public option or another Affordable Care Act marketplace plan. 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.

The lowest-income Americans, including more than four million adults who should be eligible for Medicaid but who live in states where Republican governors have refused to expand the program, will be automatically enrolled in the public option without premiums; they may opt out at any time. 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 are categorically opposed to raising the Medicare retirement age.

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.

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 in underserved urban and rural areas, including increased support for dental care, mental health care, and substance use services like medication-assisted treatment, and why we will increase support for mobile health clinics. We will enact longer, multi-year funding cycles for these critical health services so they can operate with greater certainty, as community health centers are the nation's only providers that are required by law to be both located in medically underserved areas and required to serve all who seek care, regardless of their ability to pay. And we will leverage innovative payment options through Medicare and Medicaid to help community health centers and rural health clinics keep their doors open. We will expand the [National Health Service Corps](#) and [Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education Program](#) to grow a diverse primary care workforce and to address critical shortages of health care providers in medically underserved rural and urban areas, including primary care nurses, dental professionals, and mental health and substance use counselors. Democrats will also increase monitoring and enforcement to ensure that health care facilities are accessible to people with disabilities.

## [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 taxpayer money underwrites research leading to the 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, and ensure that all necessary medications are covered. 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 prevent the price of brand-name and outlier generic drugs from rising 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

The United States spends more per capita on health care than any other advanced economy, and has less to show for it. Health care costs have been increasing for decades, with average premiums for an employer-provided family plan topping \$20,000 in 2019. 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 will fight any efforts to cut Medicare benefits, and support finding financially sustainable policies to expand Medicare to cover dental, vision, and hearing.

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. Democrats value all people and will actively promote wellness programs for all ages in our diverse communities for better overall health.

## 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 disorder treatment, no matter where they live. Democrats will aggressively enforce the federal mental health and substance use disorder 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 disorder counselors, and peer support counselors, including by expanding funding for health clinics, especially in rural areas, and increasing access to these services through Medicaid. Trauma has a profound effect on both mental and physical health, and Democrats will support increased training for health care professionals, educators, social workers, and other care workers in trauma-informed care and practices. We will oppose efforts to weaken HIPAA and FERPA privacy rights of people with mental illness.

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 and approved treatments for other substance use disorders. We believe we must stop over-prescribing while improving access to effective and needed pain management. 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 and substance use disorder 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 independent living facilities, and made clear that biases within Medicaid create undue barriers to home- and community-based long-term services and supports. Democrats will work to eliminate waiting lists for home and community-based care and the institutional bias within Medicaid, making investments in building the capacity of the Medicaid system to provide home and community-based services. We will modernize Medicaid eligibility so people with disabilities do not have to work low-wage jobs to access needed services, and to ensure the spouses of people with disabilities can maintain a certain level of income and assets. We will also help Americans pay for long-term care by creating a tax credit for informal and family caregivers and increasing the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit. Democrats will also pursue policies to improve nursing home staffing and quality standards, strengthen accreditation processes, and combat corporate abuses in nursing homes and independent living facilities. 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 unlawful.

### 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 disparate health outcomes, which are a symptom of those disparities in access. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the uninsured rate was nearly three times higher for Latinos and nearly twice as high for Black Americans as it was for whites. Some segments of the Asian American and Pacific Islander population faced uninsured rates rivaling those of Black Americans and Latinos, and more than one in five Native Americans and Alaska Natives was uninsured. Black children are far more likely than 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 more than two years lower for rural Americans compared to those who live in metropolitan areas.

We recognize it is not enough to have a commitment to eliminating health disparities: 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 people of color.

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 that people with disabilities are never denied coverage based on the use of [quality-adjusted life year \(QALY\) indexes](#). Democrats will ensure federal data collection and analysis is adequately funded and designed to allow for disaggregation by race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, geography, disability status, national origin, and other important variables, so that disparities in health coverage, access, and outcomes can be better understood and addressed.

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 remain committed to ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which disproportionately affects communities of color and the LGBTQ+ community, and will support critical investments under the [Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program](#) and the [Minority HIV/AIDS Fund](#).

### *Protecting Native American Health*

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 make mandatory and work toward full 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.

### *Securing Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice*

Democrats are committed to protecting and advancing reproductive health, rights, and justice. We believe unequivocally, like the majority of Americans, that every woman should be able to

access high-quality reproductive health care services, including safe and legal abortion. We will repeal the [Title X domestic gag rule](#) and restore federal funding for Planned Parenthood, which provides vital preventive and reproductive health care for millions of people, especially low-income people, and people of color, and LGBTQ+ people, including in underserved areas.

Democrats oppose and will fight to overturn federal and state laws that create barriers to reproductive health and rights. We will repeal the Hyde Amendment, and protect and codify the right to reproductive freedom. We condemn acts of violence, harassment, and intimidation of reproductive health providers, patients, and staff. We will address the discrimination and barriers

that inhibit meaningful access to reproductive health care services, including those based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, income, disability, geography, and other factors.

Democrats oppose restrictions on medication abortion care that are inconsistent with the most recent medical and scientific evidence and that do not protect public health. We recognize that quality, affordable comprehensive health care; medically accurate, LGBTQ+ inclusive, age-appropriate sex education; and the full range of family planning services are all essential to ensuring that people can decide if, when, and how to start a family. We are proud to be the party of the Affordable Care Act, which prohibits discrimination in health care on the basis of sex and requires insurers to cover prescription contraceptives at no cost. These efforts have significantly reduced teen and unintended pregnancies by making it easier to decide whether, when, and how to have a child.

We believe that a person's health should always come first. Democrats will protect the rights of all people to make personal health care decisions, and will reject the Trump Administration's use of broad exemptions to allow medical providers, employers, and others to discriminate.

### *Protecting and Promoting Maternal Health*

Black women are more than three times as likely to die from complications of pregnancy and childbirth compared to white women. To save mothers' lives, Democrats will expand postpartum Medicaid coverage to a full year after giving birth, invest in rural maternal health, promote a diverse perinatal workforce, and implement implicit bias training for health professionals. We will support comprehensive solutions to address every dimension of the Black maternal health crisis in America and eliminate all racial and ethnic disparities in maternal health outcomes, and support policies and approaches that will at least halve our nation's unacceptably high maternal mortality rate. We strongly and unequivocally support the decision to have a child, including by ensuring a safe and healthy pregnancy and childbirth, and by providing services during pregnancy and after the birth of a child, including adoption and social support services, as well as protections against pregnancy discrimination. We are committed to creating a society where children are safe and can thrive physically, emotionally, educationally, and spiritually.

## *Protecting LGBTQ+ Health*

We condemn the Trump Administration's discriminatory actions against the LGBTQ+ community, including the dangerous and unethical regulations 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 and people living with HIV/AIDS in health insurance, including coverage of all medically necessary care for gender transition. We will also take action to guarantee that LGBTQ+ people and those living with HIV/AIDS have full access to needed health care and resources, including by requiring that federal health plans provide coverage for HIV/AIDS testing and treatment and HIV prevention medications like PrEP and PEP, gender confirmation surgery, and hormone therapy.

Democrats support increased community HIV prevention and testing programs which target Latino, Black, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Native American, and other at-risk communities to address the increases of HIV. Democrats will recommit the federal government to ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2025.

Democrats are proud that the Obama-Biden Administration lifted the discriminatory lifetime ban on blood donation by healthy gay and bisexual Americans. We will work to ensure blood donation regulations are based on science, not fiction or stigma and that no American, when seeking to donate blood, will face more stringent limitations than any other simply because of who they are.

## Strengthening and Supporting the Health Care Workforce

The COVID-19 pandemic has made plain to people across the country that our health care workers are heroes. Our doctors and nurses, our home health aides and physician's assistants, our public health professionals, our home care workers and nursing home workers, and our cleaners and service workers have shown 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—a majority of whom are women of color—are often underpaid and lack access to paid sick days, paid family and medical leave, 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 paid leave, fair and predictable schedules, 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.

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 illnesses, and empower first-time mothers with 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 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

health and medical research and federal grants across agencies, including at the National Cancer Institute and other components of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the CDC, and the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality. We will increase the federal investment in research and development for new medications through the NIH, and make sure that there is a return on that investment for taxpayers. We will also build on the foundation of the Obama-Biden Administration's Cancer Moonshot to break down silos and accelerate research into cancer and cancer treatments by creating an agency with the sole mission of finding new cures and treatments for cancer and other diseases.

Democrats also support increasing funding for research into health disparities by race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, geographic area, and socioeconomic status, with a particular focus on how the social determinants of health contribute to differences in health outcomes. We support fully integrating people with disabilities in all stages of health and medical research to ensure outcomes reflect the true needs of Americans with disabilities. 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 for women and people of color, who are too often left out of research on disease and medical responses to treatment options.

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.

## PROTECTING COMMUNITIES AND BUILDING TRUST 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 Latino 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.

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, have been killed by police every year since 2015. 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 structural and 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 too often relies on arrests and law enforcement to address misbehavior that ought to be handled and deescalated within the school. 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 and children with disabilities in school and educational settings. Democrats believe every school should have sufficient funding to employ guidance counselors, social workers, nurses, 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 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 by 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 [banning the use of chokeholds and carotid holds](#) and permitting deadly force only when necessary and a last resort to prevent an imminent threat to life. Americans must feel safe when they are asleep in their own homes. We will work to establish “no-knock warrants” standards. The risk of mistakes and unintended consequences is too great. 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.

Democrats will support measures to improve training and education for judges, corrections officers, prosecutors, public defenders, and police officers to ensure transgender and gender non-conforming people receive fair and equitable treatment in the criminal justice system.

It is past time to end the failed “War on Drugs,” which has imprisoned millions of Americans—disproportionately Black people and Latinos—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 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 take steps to improve compliance, require their use in blended federal-local task forces, and 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.

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 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, or have their driver's licenses revoked for unpaid tickets or simple violations. 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 and for the Legal Services Corporation.

Since 1990, the United States has grown by one-third, the number of cases in federal district courts has increased by 38 percent, federal circuit court filings have risen by 40 percent, and federal cases involving a felony defendant are up 60 percent, but we have not expanded the federal judiciary to reflect this reality in nearly 30 years. Democrats will commit to creating new federal district and circuit judgeships consistent with recommendations from the Judicial Conference.

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 denounce President Trump's inappropriate use of clemency to help his friends and political cronies avoid justice. 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. Democrats believe prisoners should have a meaningful opportunity to challenge wrongful convictions and unconstitutional conditions in prisons. 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, ban the use of restraints on pregnant federal inmates, and ban the use of chokeholds and carotid holds. Incarcerated people 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 support the automatic expungement of certain criminal records for those that have been fully acquitted, wrongfully convicted, or pardoned by the executive. 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 the community is both cruel and counterproductive.

## HEALING THE SOUL OF AMERICA

Democrats believe in bringing the American people together, not stoking division and distrust. President Trump has denigrated virtually every segment of American society—and in so doing, he has insulted the very idea of America itself. Healing the soul of America means facing up to the deepest inequities in our society, from structural racism to misogyny to discrimination against people with disabilities, and enacting ambitious measures to fix them.

### Protecting Americans' Civil Rights

Democrats are committed to ending discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, language, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability status. We will appoint U.S. Supreme Court justices and federal judges who look like America, are committed to the rule of law, will uphold individual civil rights and civil liberties as essential components of a free and democratic society, and will respect and enforce foundational precedents, including *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Roe v. Wade*. Democrats are committed to restoring the full power of the Voting Rights Act and ensuring every citizen can access the ballot box. We will enforce and strengthen the [Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act](#), and will end racial and religious profiling in law enforcement.

President Trump's words and actions have given safe harbor and encouragement to racists, anti-Semites, anti-Muslim bigots, and white supremacists. It's time to root out domestic terrorism in all its forms. We will use federal law enforcement tools and resources to address domestic terrorism, and if necessary work with Congress to pass a domestic terrorism law that is consistent with the Constitutional right to free speech and civil liberties.

### Achieving Racial Justice and Equity

Historic wrongs and abuses perpetrated against Native Americans, two and a half centuries of slavery, a hundred years of Jim Crow segregation, and a history of exclusionary immigration policies have created profound and lasting inequities in income, wealth, education, employment, housing, environmental quality, and health care for communities of color. Democrats are committed to standing up to racism and bigotry in our laws, in our culture, in our politics, and in our society, and recognize that race-neutral policies are not sufficient to rectify race-based disparities. We will take a comprehensive approach to embed racial justice in every element of our governing agenda, including in jobs and job creation, workforce and economic development, small business and entrepreneurship, eliminating poverty and closing the racial wealth gap, promoting asset building and homeownership, education, health care, criminal justice reform, environmental justice, and voting rights. Democrats will ensure federal data collection and analysis is adequately funded and designed to allow for [disaggregation by race and ethnicity](#), among other important factors, to better design policies to address the needs of the most vulnerable communities and make informed policy choices.

Hate and its symbols have no home in America. Democrats believe that we can only build a more just and equitable future if we honestly reckon with our history and its legacy in the present. We support removing the Confederate battle flag and statues of Confederate leaders from public properties. We recognize Black history has too often been intentionally suppressed or excluded from our history books, and will invest in recovering, celebrating, and highlighting Black history as American history. Democrats believe Juneteenth (June 19th) represents the end of slavery, the freedom for millions of enslaved Black Americans, and should be recognized as a federal holiday.

We believe Black lives matter, and will establish a national commission to examine the lasting economic effects of slavery, Jim Crow segregation, and racially discriminatory federal policies on income, wealth, educational, health, and employment outcomes; to pursue truth and promote racial healing; and to study reparations. We must acknowledge that there can be no realization of the American dream without grappling with the lasting effects of slavery, and facing up to the centuries-long campaign of violence, fear, and trauma wrought upon Black Americans.

The extreme gap in household wealth and income between people of color—especially Black Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and certain Asian American and Pacific Islander communities—and white families is hurting our working class and holding our country back. Democrats are committed to improving economic mobility for people of color. We will fight to tackle intergenerational poverty and close the racial wealth gap.

Democrats support policies to end discrimination and unfair practices in the housing market, will empower local governments to combat gentrification trends that disproportionately harm long-time residents of color, and will create a [Community Restoration Fund](#) to repair the toxic legacy of historic investments in transportation that were designed to enforce racial segregation. We will equalize access to credit and expand support for first-time homebuyers to make homeownership and the wealth-building it creates more accessible for people of color.

Democrats recognize that racial wealth gaps are rooted in longstanding discrimination and unjust policies. 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 right to organize and collectively bargain benefits all workers, but especially for workers of color. Unions close pay gaps between white workers and people of color. The union wage premium is high for all workers, but remains especially substantial for people of color, including Latinos and Black workers. This is one reason why Black workers represent a higher share of the labor movement than the workforce as a whole.

Unemployment rates for people of color are 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.

We will invest in low-income communities, urban and rural areas, and communities of color by strengthening the Community Reinvestment Act, improving federal support and access to credit for women- and minority-owned small businesses, expanding and making permanent the New Markets Tax Credit, and doubling funding for CDFIs.

We will restore and build on the Obama-Biden Administration's Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces policy, and use the purchasing power of the federal government to incentivize private companies to recruit and advance people of color, women, people with disabilities, and veterans.

Democrats believe it is unacceptable that schools are more segregated today than they were in the late 1960s. We believe education is a critical public good, and will increase investments to guarantee all students can access high-quality public schools, no matter where they live, so students of color are well prepared to thrive in college and careers. We will break the school-to-prison pipeline that sees children of color disproportionately punished by the criminal justice system for disciplinary issues that should be handled by school administrators or counselors.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has disproportionately sickened and killed Black Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and certain Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, has made long-standing racial and geographic disparities in health care and health outcomes into front-page news. Democrats will launch an all-of-government effort to eliminate health disparities, including by achieving universal health coverage through a high-quality, affordable public option; expanding funding for community health centers, rural health centers, and mobile health clinics; and tackling environmental racism that sees communities of color disproportionately impacted by air pollution, water pollution, and toxic chemicals.

All people in the United States should be able to easily access public services, and all citizens should be able to exercise their Constitutional right to vote without facing unjust or discriminatory barriers. Democrats will restore the full powers of the Voting Rights Act and go further to roll back discriminatory policies that have been put in place in recent years to prevent people of color from voting. We will ensure all federal agencies produce materials in languages commonly spoken in the United States, including languages spoken by Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, and that voting materials are also easily accessible for citizens with limited English proficiency.

## [Protecting Women's Rights](#)

Democrats will fight to guarantee equal rights for women, including by ratifying the [Equal Rights Amendment](#) and at long last enshrining gender equality in the U.S. Constitution. We will

take aggressive action to end pay inequality, including by increasing penalties against companies that discriminate against women and passing the [Paycheck Fairness Act](#). Democrats are committed to ending sexual assault, domestic abuse, and other violence against women, including the epidemics of violence against Native American women and transgender women of color.

Like the majority of Americans, Democrats believe every woman should be able to access high-quality reproductive health care services, including safe and legal abortion. We oppose and will fight to overturn federal and state laws that create barriers to women's reproductive health and rights, including by repealing the [Hyde Amendment](#) and protecting and codifying the right to reproductive freedom. And Democrats will take action to protect the rights of pregnant women in the workplace, including by requiring employers to make reasonable accommodations for pregnant and breastfeeding workers and those who have recently given birth and at last joining other advanced economies by enacting paid sick days and universal paid family and medical leave.

## [Protecting LGBTQ+ Rights](#)

Democrats applaud this year's U.S. Supreme Court decision that made clear that employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity violates the law, but we know we still have work to do to ensure LGBTQ+ people are treated equally under the law and in our society. We will fight to enact the [Equality Act](#) and at last outlaw discrimination against LGBTQ+ people in housing, public accommodations, access to credit, education, jury service, and federal programs. We will work to ensure LGBTQ+ people are not discriminated against when seeking to adopt or foster children, protect LGBTQ+ children from bullying and assault, and guarantee transgender students' access to facilities based on their gender identity. Democrats will ensure federally funded programs for older adults are inclusive for LGBTQ+ seniors.

Recognizing that LGBTQ+ youth and adults suffer from significant health disparities, including mental health and substance use disorders, Democrats will expand mental health and suicide prevention services, and ban harmful "conversion therapy" practices. We will ensure that all transgender and non-binary people can procure official government identification documents that accurately reflect their gender identity. We will stop employment discrimination in the federal government, and will restore full implementation of President Obama's executive order prohibiting discrimination by federal contractors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Democrats are committed to ending the homelessness crisis, including among LGBTQ+ youth. We will fight to end violence against transgender Americans and particularly against Black transgender women, who are disproportionately victims of assault and homicide, and will prioritize the investigation of hate crimes against transgender and non-binary people.

## Protecting Disability Rights

One in four American adults live with a disability. Democrats believe people with disabilities deserve to lead full, happy, and healthy lives. Democrats will fully enforce the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#), the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#), the [Fair Housing Act](#), the [Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act](#), [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act](#), the [Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act](#), and the [Help America Vote Act](#), among other bedrock statutes protecting the rights of people with disabilities. We will oppose any efforts to weaken enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act. We will ensure non-discrimination in access to health care, building on the protections for people with disabilities enshrined in the Affordable Care Act. We will ensure every federal agency aggressively enforces the integration mandate affirmed in the Olmstead decision, and repair the damage done by the Trump Administration. We will rigorously enforce non-discrimination protections for people with disabilities in health care, employment, education, and housing, and ensure equal access to the ballot box.

Democrats are committed to supporting the millions of Americans on the autism spectrum and their families. We will expand early childhood screening, particularly in underserved communities, and promote equitable treatment of students on the autism spectrum in schools and educational settings, in keeping with our commitment to providing equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities. By eliminating state waiting lists for home and community-based care, ending the institutional bias in Medicaid, and expanding support for informal caregivers, Democrats will enable more individuals with autism to receive the support they need in their homes and communities.

Democrats will phase out the subminimum wage, expand competitive, integrated employment opportunities, and protect and strengthen economic security for people with disabilities. We will take a holistic approach to the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) programs that are essential for millions of Americans with disabilities by increasing SSI benefits, eliminating waiting periods for SSDI, and eliminating the “benefit cliff” for SSDI benefits. We will increase federal funding to expand accessible transportation and accessible, integrated, and affordable housing. We will protect people with disabilities in emergencies and meet the needs of travelers with disabilities. We will ensure new technologies benefit, and are affordable and accessible for, people with disabilities. We will expand access to tax-advantaged ABLE savings accounts, which provide people with disabilities a way to pay for disability-related expenses like housing, education, and transportation. And Democrats will improve access to home- and community-based care for people with disabilities and older Americans, including by enforcing the [Medicaid Home and Community-Based Settings Rule](#), ending the institutional bias within Medicaid, and expanding the home care workforce to end state waiting lists for long-term services and supports.

## Honoring Indigenous Tribal Nations

The U.S. government has a profound legal and moral obligation toward Native American Tribes and Indigenous communities—a trust which has been broken time and again, undermining Tribal nations’ ability to flourish politically, culturally, and economically. Democrats are committed to honoring, upholding, and strengthening the United States’ trust obligations to Tribal Nations and communities, as enshrined in the Constitution, treaties, federal statutes, and case law.

Democrats recognize and support the sovereignty of Tribal Nations and pledge to work on a nation-to-nation basis to empower Indigenous peoples, increase economic development in Tribal Nations, and protect Tribal lands, assets, resources, and treaty rights. We honor and support the great Indigenous traditions all across the country. We stand with the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and all Tribal Nations in rejecting the Trump Administration’s efforts to remove land that had been put into trust by the Obama-Biden Administration. We will fight to enact a clean [Carcieri fix](#) and support policies to restore Tribal lands, including culturally significant federal lands, by moving land into trust, streamlining the land-into-trust process, and conducting land buy-backs. We will also support establishment of additional federal co-management agreements with Tribal Nations on federal lands that have cultural and historical significance to Tribes.

Democrats believe the federal government must commit to providing full funding to fulfill unmet trust and treaty obligations to Tribal Nations and Native American peoples. We will work on a nation-to-nation basis to increase funding, resources, and financial tools for Tribes, particularly in the key areas of criminal justice, health care, education, housing, and economic development. Democrats will work to address the predictability of funding for Tribes, and explore pathways including mandatory funding, advanced appropriations, shutdown exemptions, and other Mechanisms.

The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated Indian Country, with some Tribal communities facing among the highest per capita infection rates in the country. As part of our commitment to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, Democrats will support funding to hire sufficient staff to conduct contact tracing for all who test positive for this deadly disease. We will surge funding to the [Indian Health Service](#) and support investments to help Tribal governments address the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic and President Trump’s recession, including investments to support and create jobs in Tribal communities and to support affordable child care, so parents are not forced to choose between keeping their jobs and keeping their children safe.

Democrats recognize the security of Native peoples (American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians) is paramount, and will ensure that they have the resources they need to investigate and prosecute crimes against Native peoples and communities, including cooperation from law enforcement agencies outside Tribal lands. We will fight for justice for

missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Democrats will at last reauthorize the [Violence Against Women Act](#), reaffirm provisions relating to Tribal jurisdiction, and expand the list of crimes that can be prosecuted under the statute to include stalking, child abuse, and trafficking. We also support Indian Tribal jurisdiction over Tribal lands, and we support further efforts to address the [Oliphant decision](#). We will defend the Indian Child Welfare Act and protect Native families and involve Tribes in child welfare cases. And we will build on federal programs to reduce the disproportionate incarceration of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian men and women, reduce sentencing disparities, and work to ensure all returning citizens have access to housing, employment services, and health care, including mental health and substance use disorder treatment.

American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians are uninsured at higher rates and suffer from disparities in health outcomes, including in the COVID-19 pandemic. Democrats will make mandatory and work toward full funding for the Indian Health Service and the [Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act](#) to help expand access to health care for Native people, including mental health, dental care, and substance use disorder treatments, and will fully fund contract support costs. We will expand insurance coverage for Native Americans (including American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians) no matter where they live by creating a high-quality, affordable public option on the Affordable Care Act exchanges, and making the public option available without premiums to low-income families.

The legacy of Native American boarding schools has caused generational trauma. We acknowledge this injustice and support continued education and restorative justice. We will invest in Indian education from early childhood through college and career education. Democrats will significantly expand funding for the Bureau of Indian Education and invest in improving public school buildings. We will increase resources for programs that promote cultural preservation and [enable Native students to learn their Indigenous languages](#), and support national curricula to teach Native American history and culture in schools. Democrats will increase recruitment of high-quality teachers and school professionals in Tribal areas. And we will break down barriers that keep Native American students from accessing a college education, including by making community colleges free and significantly increasing support to lower attendance costs at [Tribal Colleges and Universities \(TCUs\)](#). Democrats are committed to reestablishing and strengthening the White House Generation Indigenous initiative and its annual White House Tribal Youth Gathering to support Native youth. We are committed to combating hurtful and racist Native American stereotypes in mainstream American culture, especially those associated with sports teams and educational institutions.

Democrats will substantially increase investments to meet Tribal housing needs, including by constructing and upgrading affordable housing on Tribal lands, investing in drinking and clean water infrastructure, and investing in rural and Tribal broadband infrastructure. We will make energy-saving upgrades to millions of low-income homes and affordable and public housing units, and increase funding for the [Indian Community Development Block Grant](#) program. We will unlock significant new resources for economic development on Tribal lands, including

supporting investments in clean energy, climate change resilience, and 21st century infrastructure projects. We will expand access to capital for Tribes by increasing resources for the Native American CDFI Assistance Program, expanding and making permanent the New Markets Tax Credit, and expanding technical assistance to enable Tribes to better access existing federal funding streams. We will continue to support and expand SBA programs for Tribes and fully implement the Buy Indian Act. We will also support Tribal governments and their authority to tax activities on their lands in support of Tribal self-sufficiency and government services. Democrats are committed to environmental justice for Indian Country, and will work to ensure all people have clean air, clean water, modern wastewater infrastructure, and can live without exposure to toxic chemicals.

Democrats recognize that the Native American men and women who have proudly served in the Armed Forces of the United States in all its wars, from the beginning of U.S. history, deserve the total and unqualified support of their needs by the federal government. We will ensure that all the benefits provided to U.S. military veterans are provided to Native veterans and fully funded to meet the special cultural needs of Native veterans. Democrats will additionally establish a Veterans Affairs Tribal Advisory Committee to foster improved collaboration and coordination between the federal government and Tribal Nations on meeting the unique needs of Native American veterans, and establish Tribal veteran service delivery programs in Tribal communities.

Democrats 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 subsistence, 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 lands in which Tribes hold an interest. We will create a more robust and meaningful consultation process that is consistent across all federal agencies, including the Office of Management and Budget, and use early and ongoing consultation to identify and work to appropriately mitigate or address concerns.

Democrats recognize that self-governance and self-determination empowers Tribes to prioritize their needs and plan for the future consistent with their distinct traditions, economies, and institutions. Recognizing the success many Tribes have had with self-governance, we will work to make it more effective within the Bureau of Indian Affairs and encourage other federal agencies to negotiate such agreements with Tribes.

Consistent with the policies of the Obama-Biden Administration, Democrats will make permanent the White House Council on Native American Affairs and commit to holding an annual White House Tribal Nations Conference. We will nominate federal judges who understand Indian law, and will ensure Native Americans and Alaska Natives are appointed to high-level and leadership positions within the federal government.

Over 70 percent of Native Americans live off-reservation. Democrats will create a strategy to support urban Indian populations and ensure their voices are heard and no one is left behind, including by expanding support to access quality health care, culturally relevant education, affordable housing, and other programs.

Democrats also support efforts for self-governance and self-determination of Native Hawaiians. Native Hawaiians are the Indigenous, aboriginal people of Hawai'i whose values and culture are the foundation of the Hawaiian Islands. We support proactive actions by the federal government to enhance Native Hawaiian culture, housing, health, language, and education. We recognize and honor the contributions and sacrifices made in service to our country by Native Hawaiians.

## Ending Violence Against Women

Democrats are committed to ending sexual assault, domestic abuse, and other violence against women. We will act swiftly to overcome Republican obstructionism and reauthorize and expand the Violence Against Women Act to better protect Native American women, women with disabilities, children and young women, transgender women and other LGBTQ+ people, and other groups who are disproportionately affected by sexual assault and domestic abuse.

Democrats will expand services for survivors of violence against women, including by expanding access to housing, legal assistance, and victim advocate services. We will support danger assessment and lethality training for law enforcement officers and community partners to help curb domestic violence homicides. We recognize that sex workers, who are disproportionately women of color and transgender women, face especially high rates of sexual assault and violence, and we will work with states and localities to protect the lives of sex workers. We will enforce and provide tools and resources for schools to implement Title IX, which requires schools and institutions of higher education to properly investigate sexual misconduct, including peer-on-peer sexual harassment and violence; take appropriate action; and prevent future sexual misconduct. Democrats will increase resources to eliminate the national backlog of untested rape kits so that more survivors can see justice be served. And we will support federal and state legislative efforts to make “revenge porn” and other unauthorized disclosures of intimate images a civil and criminal offense.

## Ending the Epidemic of Gun Violence

Gun violence is a public health crisis in the United States. Over 100,000 people are shot and nearly 40,000 people die annually from guns—devastating countless families, friends, and communities. We can and will make gun violence a thing of the past. Addressing the gun violence crisis requires supporting evidence-based programs that prevent gun deaths from occurring in the first place, including by making mental health care more accessible and supporting suicide reduction initiatives, funding interventions to reduce homicides and gun violence in neighborhoods, and strengthening protections against domestic violence. Democrats will also ensure the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have sufficient resources to

study gun violence as a public health issue, including the ongoing health care, mental health, economic, and social costs that can affect survivors and their families for years.

Democrats will enact universal background checks, end online sales of guns and ammunition, close dangerous loopholes that currently allow stalkers, abusive partners, and some individuals convicted of assault or battery to buy and possess firearms, and adequately fund the federal background check system. We will close the “[Charleston loophole](#)” and prevent individuals who have been convicted of hate crimes from possessing firearms. Democrats will ban the manufacture and sale of assault weapons and high capacity magazines. We will incentivize states to enact licensing requirements for owning firearms and extreme risk protection order laws that allow courts to temporarily remove guns from the possession of those who are a danger to themselves or others. We will pass legislation requiring that guns be safely stored in homes. And Democrats believe that gun companies should be held responsible for their products, just like any other business, and will prioritize repealing the law that shields gun manufacturers from civil liability.

## [Supporting Faith and Service](#)

Religious freedom is a core American value and a core value of the Democratic Party. Democrats will protect the rights of each American for the free exercise of his or her own religion. It will be the policy of the Democratic Administration to advocate for religious freedom throughout the world. Democrats celebrate America’s history of religious pluralism and tolerance, and recognize the countless acts of service of our faith communities, as well as the paramount importance of maintaining the separation between church and state enshrined in our Constitution.

During the Trump Administration, too many of our religious communities have been victimized by acts of intolerance, bigotry, and violence. We will reject the Trump Administration’s use of broad religious exemptions to allow businesses, medical providers, social service agencies, and others to discriminate. Democrats will increase funding and support for security investments and protection at houses of worship, because everyone should be able to pray without fear. We will confront white nationalist terrorism and combat hate crimes perpetrated against religious minorities.

Democrats also recognize that, to fully confront the legacy of systemic and structural racism, it is time to examine, confront and dismantle the government programs, policies and practices that have unfairly targeted American Muslims as security threats. We condemn the decades-long campaign to demonize and dehumanize the Muslim faith community, which has led to increased rates of violence and discrimination targeting American Muslims or those perceived to be Muslim. We will hold accountable those who engage in or enable violent or other illegal activity targeting religious minorities, including by directing the federal government to address the growing and violent threat of white supremacist, neo-Nazi and anti-government groups.

## Supporting Press Freedom

The free press is essential to our free democracy. Democrats roundly reject President Trump's denigration of the free and independent press, which has endangered reporters' lives, helped fuel conspiracy theories, and deepened distrust between Americans and their government. Democrats will appoint an independent media professional to head the U.S. Agency for Global Media, to ensure that the news and information projected around the world by the federal government meets the highest standards of fact-based and unbiased journalism. Democrats are concerned about the potentially harmful effects of corporate consolidation in the media industry, including in television, radio, and newspapers, and will reinstate and strengthen media ownership rules and direct federal antitrust agencies to investigate the economic impacts of mergers in the media industry.

## Supporting the Arts and Culture

The arts are essential to our free and democratic society, to our culture, and to our local economies. Democrats are proud of our support for arts funding and education, and will continue policies and programs that promote the creative arts. We support public funding for the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and for art and music education in public schools. We recognize that federal grants supporting nonprofit cultural organizations, artists, scholars, and state and local governments help increase participation in the arts, enhance appreciation, and strengthen our nation's cultural heritage. We value the arts and art education for developing imagination, creativity, innovation, and critical thinking skills in students and for building bridges between people and communities across the country and around the world.

## 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. 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. Farmers' crops have been drowned in their fields across the Midwest. Coastal communities from Florida to New Jersey are facing an existential crisis as a result of sea level rise and stronger storms. 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. 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. Pacific Islanders in Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are losing their traditional way of life as sea level rise submerges their homelands. 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.

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 applaud the organizing efforts of young people, union workers, and communities of color to mobilize voters and make the climate crisis a top priority. As Democrats, we believe the scientists: the window for unprecedented and necessary action is closing, and closing fast. Democrats reject the false choice between growing our economy and combating climate change; we can and must do both at the same time. We will use federal resources and authorities across all agencies to 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, economic 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. 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. 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, especially union jobs that provide strong opportunities for economic advancement. Democrats will target relevant investments with the goal of delivering 40 percent of the overall benefits to disadvantaged and frontline communities, including in clean energy and energy efficiency; clean transit and transportation; affordable and sustainable housing; remediation and reduction of legacy pollution; and critical clean water infrastructure.

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. Black, Latino, and immigrant workers are often on the front lines of disaster relief work with limited worker protections. Democrats will invest in this critical workforce, supporting the creation of family-supporting and union jobs in disaster response and climate resilience, with strong labor standards and worker protections, including good wages, benefits, access to paid leave, training and advancement opportunities.

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, including in rural areas. Within five years, we will install 500 million solar panels, including eight million solar roofs and community solar energy systems, and 60,000 wind turbines, and turn American ingenuity into American jobs by leveraging federal policy to manufacture renewable energy solutions in America. Recognizing

the urgent need to decarbonize the power sector, our technology-neutral approach is inclusive of all zero-carbon technologies, including hydroelectric power, geothermal, existing and advanced nuclear, and carbon capture and storage.

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 strong 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. We will ensure investments in affordable housing and public housing support both energy efficiency retrofits and construction of new units, to greatly increase the number of energy-efficient homes available to low-income families. 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, and incentivize landlords to make energy efficiency and clean energy upgrades that will reduce their tenants' energy costs.

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, address barriers to energy efficiency upgrades, incentivize the adoption of efficient electric and geothermal pump home heating solutions that can help reduce families' energy burden, 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 for electric vehicles powered by high-wage and 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 three 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 efficient and accessible public transportation. Democrats will aim to provide all Americans in municipalities with 100,000 or more residents with quality public transportation options by making flexible federal investments to upgrade and expand light rail, bus lines, existing transit systems, and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Democrats will invest in modernizing our freight infrastructure, including ports, rail, and maritime freight, in order to reduce air and water pollution, improve public health, create jobs, and improve economic competitiveness.

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, cement, and timber, here in the United States. We will apply a carbon adjustment fee at the border to products from countries that fail to live up to their commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement, because we won't let polluters undermine American competitiveness.

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 substantially improve water security and ecological health through conservation, protection, and maintenance of our water infrastructure, including water systems for home, commercial, industrial, and agricultural use. 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. And we will support communities and businesses nationwide in their efforts to build zero-waste and circular economies, including efforts to eliminate plastic waste and food waste.

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 aimed at eliminating legacy pollution, which disproportionately causes illness and premature death in communities of color, low-income communities, and Indigenous communities. We will protect children’s health by replacing lead service lines and remediating lead paint in homes and schools; remediate Superfund and other contaminated sites; and ensure housing and schools have adequate plumbing and safe wastewater disposal systems.

Democrats oppose the Trump Administration's reckless and scientifically unsound decision to reverse a proposed ban on chlorpyrifos, a potent neurotoxin proven harmful to children and farmworkers. We will invest to help farmers reduce pesticide and chemical fertilizer use. And we will set science-based drinking water standards for emerging contaminants like PFOA and PFAS chemicals and establish aggressive plans for remediating this dangerous pollution. Energy companies should be held responsible for meeting strong standards to protect worker safety, public health, and the environment. Democrats are committed to ensuring tough safeguards in place, including [Safe Drinking Water Act](#) provisions, to protect local water supplies. We believe states should not be able to preempt local government decisions about energy production.

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 and identify areas of high cumulative pollution that threatens residents’ health and safety. We will help reduce heat stress in urban neighborhoods by planting millions of trees. 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, prepare for disasters, expand access to green space and outdoor recreation opportunities, improve public health, and restore ecosystems.

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. We will empower local communities to become more resilient to the impacts of the climate crisis. We will prioritize disaster preparedness for disproportionately exposed, frontline, and vulnerable communities and those who struggle most to cope, including seniors, low-income families, and people with disabilities, so that they can become more economically resilient to extreme weather events, heat stress, and increases in disease that scientists have connected to climate change. We will rectify the inequities and inefficiencies of disaster response, including transparent and timely reporting and oversight and protections and enforcement of disability rights.

Democrats will ensure FEMA has the experienced leadership, staff, and resources necessary to coordinate the federal response to climate change-influenced and other disasters, and is equipped to work in partnership with, and drive federal resources to, state, local, Tribal, and territorial governments to mount a successful emergency response in conjunction with local emergency responders, help communities recover and rebuild, and invest in pre-disaster mitigation and resilience. We will increase support for restoring wetlands, which are critical for protecting communities from sea level rise and storm surge and also act as natural carbon sinks. 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 recognize that climate change poses serious risks to the economy and the financial system. We will require public companies to disclose climate risks and greenhouse gas emissions in their operations and supply chains. We will hold polluters and corporate executives accountable for intentionally hiding or distorting material information and for affecting the health and safety of workers and communities.

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](#), expanding the [Radiation Exposure Compensation Act](#) to include those harmed by our nation's nuclear weapons efforts including uranium miners exposed to radiation on the job, 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 and 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 waste 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 national parks and monuments, public lands, and marine protected areas are treasures that should be held in trust for future generations. We will protect these precious places and preserve America's unspoiled wildernesses for hunting, fishing, hiking, and camping by codifying the roadless rule, and grow America's outdoor recreation economy, which supports millions of jobs in rural areas. 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](#). We support banning new oil and gas permitting on public lands and waters, modifying royalties to account for climate costs, and establishing targeted programs to enhance reforestation and develop renewables on federal lands and waters. We will take action to protect wildernesses and waters, and require full, rigorous, and transparent scientific and environmental reviews of any proposed mining projects near national treasures.

Democrats will protect wildlife habitats and biodiversity, slow extinction rates, and grow America's natural carbon sinks by conserving 30 percent of our lands and waters 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, including through private-sector ecosystems markets. And Democrats will ensure America's public lands and waters reflect the diversity of our country by engaging all Americans in the great outdoors, building a diverse workforce in our land management agencies, and protecting landscapes, marinescapes, and cultural sites that tell the full story of America.

## RESTORING AND STRENGTHENING OUR DEMOCRACY

Our government and our elections are supposed to reflect the interests of the American people, not only the wealthiest few and the biggest corporations. Democrats will fight to restore and protect Americans' fundamental right to vote, including by aggressively pushing back against Republican governors, legislatures, and state officials who have disenfranchised people of color, young people, low-income people, and people with disabilities. And we will strictly enforce ethics laws and improve transparency across the federal government in order to rebuild trust with the American people, and will protect civil servants and whistleblowers from political retribution.

### Protecting and Enforcing Voting Rights

Democrats are committed to the sacred principle of “one person, one vote”—and we will fight to achieve that principle for every citizen, regardless of race, income, disability status, geography, or English language proficiency. We stand united against the determined Republican campaign to disenfranchise voters through onerous voter ID laws, unconstitutional and excessive purges of the voter rolls, and closures of polling places in low-income neighborhoods, on college campuses, and in communities of color. Americans should never have to wait in hours-long lines to exercise their voting rights.

Democrats will strengthen our democracy by guaranteeing that every American's vote is protected. We will make it a priority to pass legislation that restores and strengthens the [Voting Rights Act](#), and ensure the Department of Justice challenges state laws that make it harder for Americans to vote. We will make voting easier and more accessible for all Americans by supporting automatic voter registration, same-day voter registration, early voting, and universal vote-from-home and vote-by-mail options.

Democrats believe [Election Day should be a national holiday](#), in celebration of our democratic institutions and to make it easier for everyone to cast their ballot. Democrats recognize that unions, community groups, faith organizations and other civic organizations are critical to facilitating registration, encouraging voting, and protecting voter rights.

We will fully implement the [Help America Vote Act](#) and require that polling places and elections are accessible for people with disabilities, and work to ensure that returning citizens have their voting rights restored upon release from jail or prison without the additional hurdle of having to pay fines and fees in order to vote. Democrats will also fight for emergency funding for states to help make vote-from-home and vote-by-mail universally available during the pandemic, while

ensuring that all jurisdictions take steps to ensure continued meaningful, safe opportunities to vote in person. We recognize that the United States Postal Service is more than ever a critical component to our democracy and must be supported to guarantee timely and efficient delivery and return of vote by mail ballots. Election officials must be provided with sufficient time after election day to process, count, and audit all ballots.

We must give voters the confidence that their ballot was counted as cast by supporting mandatory, statistically meaningful post-election audits and full transparency of all election results and data. To ensure every eligible ballot is counted, vote by mail voters must be informed of and provided a meaningful opportunity to fix any problem with their ballot. A professional and well-trained election workforce is critical to the administration of elections, we support ongoing federal and state funding for local elections offices.

Gerrymandering distorts our democracy, and Democrats will enact measures to end partisan gerrymandering in federal elections. Efforts to redraw legislative districts following the 2020 Census must be guided by transparency and public input, while reducing the power of partisan actors, so that maps reflect the will of voters, fairly represent communities of color, and provide for competitive races. We will protect the integrity of the decennial Census from political interference, including ensuring that apportionment and redistricting be based on total population counts, and also ensure the Census Bureau is equipped to conduct cost-effective, timely, and accurate surveys. Democrats will maintain the legal requirement for Census participation and increase resources to reduce undercounts of communities of color, immigrants, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, rural and low-income populations, and young children that have long plagued the decennial Census. We will also direct the Census Bureau to study whether counting the prison population where they are incarcerated creates inequitable outcomes in state or federal representation or funding allocations.

Democrats will increase investments to help state and local governments upgrade election technology, including cybersecurity technology, and ensure that election technology is accessible for people with disabilities. Democrats will also increase oversight of private election vendors to ensure voting systems are secure and worthy of voters' trust. We will not tolerate election interference and will protect the integrity of our elections from all enemies, foreign and domestic.

## [Reforming the Broken Campaign Finance System](#)

Democrats believe that the interests and the voices of the American people should determine our elections. Money is not speech, and corporations are not people. Democrats will fight to pass a Constitutional amendment that will go beyond merely overturning Citizens United and related decisions like [Buckley v. Valeo](#) by eliminating all private financing from federal elections. In the meantime, Democrats will work with Congress on legislation to strengthen the public funding system by matching small-dollar donations for all federal candidates, crack down on foreign nationals who try to influence elections, and ensure that super PACs are wholly

independent of campaigns and political parties. We will bring an end to “dark money” by requiring full disclosure of contributors to any group that advocates for or against candidates, and bar 501(c)(4) organizations from spending money on elections. Democrats will ban corporate PACs from donating to candidates and bar lobbyists from donating, fundraising, or bundling for anyone they lobby.

## Building an Effective, Transparent Federal Government

Every federal employee swears an oath to support and defend the Constitution. It is a sacred promise to the American people—that federal workers, both civil servants and political appointees, will put the interests of the many ahead of their own personal concerns. President Trump and his Administration have abused the trust between the American people and their government—including by denigrating civil servants, directing federal grants and contracts toward their cronies and political donors, inappropriately interfering with federal investigations and firing independent watchdogs, retaliating against whistleblowers, failing to share information as required with Congress, and, most nefariously, violating the law by withholding congressionally appropriated funds in an attempt to get a foreign government to interfere in America’s elections.

Democrats will establish a commission on federal ethics to aggressively enforce and strengthen federal ethics laws, including rules around personal financial disclosures for Executive Branch officials, and make campaign finance, financial disclosure, and lobbying disclosure filings easier for the public to access and understand. We support requiring all candidates for federal office, including presidential candidates, to publicly disclose at least 10 years of tax returns.

The American people deserve assurances that their elected officials and federal appointees work for them, not for special interests. Democrats will re-establish merit-based federal contracting decisions and prohibit political appointees, at the White House or in agency leadership, from interfering in grantmaking. We will restore and re-empower independent inspectors general across the federal government and work to strengthen whistleblower protections to fully protect federal employees from retaliation. And we will ban lobbying by foreign governments and significantly lower the threshold for having to register as a federal lobbyist in order to close loopholes that allow special interests to secretly influence policymaking in Congress and across the federal government.

Democrats condemn President Trump's determination to sow chaos and division by inappropriately deploying federal agents to American cities, where too many have used egregious tactics against peaceful protestors. We know federal agents can ably protect federal property while also clearly displaying badges, insignias, and identifying markings; without detaining Americans in undisclosed locations without cause; and without brutally attacking peaceful protestors. Democrats are committed to following the rule of law and will uphold the First Amendment right to peaceably assemble.

The Republican Party has packed our federal courts with unqualified, partisan judges who consistently rule for corporations, the wealthy, and Republican interests. They have undermined the legitimacy of our courts through an anti-democratic, win-at-all costs campaign that includes blocking a Democratic president from appointing a justice to the Supreme Court and obstructing dozens of diverse lower-court nominees. The Democratic Party recognizes the need for structural court reforms to increase transparency and accountability.

Now more than ever, federal agencies need experts on staff who know how to use science, evidence, data, and facts to guide decision-making on behalf of the American people. As the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates, our country needs the best experts working within government to protect and improve the lives of all Americans. Democrats support the recruitment of people with expertise in science, social science, technology, and innovation to jobs in public service to help solve our nation's most pressing challenges. To ensure that federal funds are invested as effectively and efficiently as possible, the federal government should be using the best available evidence when making budget and spending decisions. Democrats will ensure federal data collection and analysis is adequately funded and designed to allow for disaggregation by race, gender, LGBTQ+ status, geography, disability status, and other important variables, so that disparities can be better understood and addressed. Democrats support the widespread use of strategies to promote evidence-based policymaking, including more robust evaluations of tax expenditures and allocating funds for program evaluation, to help ensure the American people are receiving the most productive, efficient services from our federal government.

### [Making Washington, D.C. the 51st State](#)

It's time to stop treating the more than 700,000 people who live in our nation's capital as second-class citizens. The residents of Washington, D.C. pay more per capita in federal income taxes than any state in the country—and more in total federal income tax than 22 states—and yet the District has zero voting representatives in the U.S. Congress. The Congress retains broad power to override budget decisions made by democratically elected officials in Washington, D.C. And as was made shockingly clear to the American people this year, under current law, Washington, D.C. does not have control over its own National Guard units and can be occupied by military forces at the President's whim. The citizens of Washington, D.C.—a majority of whom are people of color—voted overwhelmingly in favor of statehood in a 2016 referendum and have ratified a state constitution. Democrats unequivocally support statehood for Washington, D.C., so the citizens of the District can at last have full and equal representation in Congress and the rights of self-determination.

### [Guaranteeing Self-Determination for Puerto Rico](#)

The people of Puerto Rico deserve self-determination on the issue of status. Democrats are committed to helping the island rebuild and recover from the devastation wrought by Hurricanes Irma and Maria and the recent earthquakes, and will mobilize resources

across the federal government to address the island's disparities in energy, infrastructure, health care, education, housing, agriculture, employment, and disaster preparedness. Disaster response in Puerto Rico must be given the same priority and be conducted on the same basis as federal responses to natural disasters elsewhere in the United States. We will forgive disaster relief loans issued to Puerto Rican municipalities following Hurricanes Irma and Maria to help expedite the island's economic recovery.

The unequal treatment of Puerto Rico's residents must end. We will invest in the island's future through economic development initiatives, increased education funding, construction of affordable housing, and innovative energy and climate resilience programs. Democrats support accelerating access to disaster recovery funds so the island can improve its infrastructure and transform itself into one of the fastest-growing, most prosperous parts of the United States. We also believe Puerto Rico should be treated equally with respect to federal programs, including Medicaid, SNAP, and the Child Tax Credit.

Bankruptcy blocks Puerto Rico's growth and recovery. Democrats will help restructure and provide relief from Puerto Rico's remaining debt burden and work with the government of Puerto Rico to accelerate progress in order to dissolve the Financial Oversight and Management Board.

## [Supporting the U.S. Territories](#)

Democrats recognize and honor the contributions and sacrifices made in service of our country by the Americans living in the territories of [Guam](#), [American Samoa](#), the [U.S. Virgin Islands](#), and the [Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands](#). The people of the U.S. territories have played a vital role in American democracy for more than 120 years, and have for too long been met with unequal treatment by the federal government. We support establishing a Congressional task force to gather findings on voting rights in the territories, and recommend changes to Congress to allow for the full and equal voting rights of U.S. citizens who are residents of the territories in federal elections, and for full and equal voting representation in the U.S. House of Representatives. The American citizens of the U.S. territories should have the right to vote for President of the United States. Democrats will support self-determination for the people of the U.S. territories, including respecting their right to decide their future status in a fair, binding, and equitable manner.

The U.S. Virgin Islands suffered significant impacts as a result of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and American Samoa have suffered damages as a result of intensifying Pacific typhoons and cyclones. Democrats will support investments to help the U.S. territories recover from recent natural disasters and build increased resilience to the impacts of climate change, including by expanding access to clean, affordable, reliable energy and water systems. We will mobilize resources to address disparities

in agriculture, economic development, education, employment, energy, health care, housing, and infrastructure in the U.S. territories to help the territories diversify their economies and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

We will improve health care access and affordability and support policies to address health disparities in the U.S. territories. We believe the territories should be treated equally with respect to important federal programs, including the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid, SNAP, and the Child Tax Credit, that reduce poverty and support working families. And Democrats commit to ensuring veterans from the U.S. territories have access to timely and quality health care and other benefits through the VA.

Democrats will continue to work with the people of Guam to properly memorialize residents who suffered unspeakable harm as a result of their U.S. nationality during the Imperial Japanese occupation of Guam during World War II. We recognize the increasing demands placed on state and territorial governments by migration under the [Compacts of Free Association \(COFA\)](#)

, and will explore mechanisms for increasing reimbursement of costs absorbed by Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Hawaii. And Democrats will restore Medicaid eligibility for migrants under COFA who are legally residing, working, and studying in the United States, but who were inadvertently left out of health care legislation.

## Strengthening the U.S. Postal Service

The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) is the world's most efficient mail carrier, and Democrats are wholly committed to supporting a public USPS. We will fight all efforts to privatize the USPS and will work to ensure the USPS is financially sustainable, including by repealing the mandate that the agency "pre-fund" retiree health costs. Democrats will protect the Postal Service's universal service obligation as a core American value and maintain six-day and doorstep mail delivery, which is a lifeline for rural Americans. And we will work to restore service to appropriate levels, including overnight delivery of first-class mail and periodicals within the same metropolitan area, maintaining six-day and door-to door delivery, and appointing members

to the [Board of Governors](#) and the [Postal Regulatory Commission](#) who champion a strong public Postal Service. We will also support new revenue streams for the USPS, including allowing secure shipping of alcoholic beverages by mail and exploring options to enable unbanked and underbanked Americans to access financial services through the Postal Service.

## 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. These actions should not happen in our country again.

***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, Arab, 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 support legislation to ensure that no president can enact discriminatory bans ever again.

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 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 and structural 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. And Democrats will 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, caregivers, students, and children 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, our economy, and our country. Democrats oppose President Trump’s illegal, chaotic, and reckless changes to the legal immigration system, including decisions to slash family-based immigration as well as H-1B and other visa programs that can help our economy.

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, and we will restore family reunification programs ended by the Trump Administration. We support legislation to treat the spouses and children of green card holders as immediate relatives and end their unfair separation. We will eliminate family-based green card backlogs and reform the system to speed up family-based visas. And we will work with Congress to eliminate

immigration barriers, such as the three- 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 human trafficking, including victims of sex 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, and we will work to pave a path to citizenship for those who have been in the country for an extended period of time and built their lives in the United States.

Democrats know that when employers feel free to abuse and bully 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 establishing an affirmative process to request deferred action for workers who report labor violations and 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, and prohibit raids in which children and members of vulnerable populations are left behind without their caregivers. We will prohibit enforcement actions that deter access to justice at courthouses and repress freedom of speech and assembly, 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 will reaffirm enforcement officials' ability to engage in the pre-Trump practice of prosecutorial discretion for deserving cases, including when needed to address humanitarian issues or other injustices. We will also prevent enforcement officials from retaliating against individuals for their political speech or activity, or because of their efforts to advocate for individuals' rights.

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 their safety and dignity. We will ensure all detention centers provide access to competent interpreters who speak migrants' native languages and dialects. Detention of children should be restricted to the shortest possible time, with their access to education and proper care ensured. We will prioritize alternatives to

detention for individuals with special vulnerabilities—those who are known to be suffering from serious physical or mental illness, who have disabilities, who are elderly, pregnant, or nursing, who demonstrate that they are primary caretakers of children or an infirm person, identify as gay, lesbian, transgender, gender non-conforming, or intersex, or whose detention is otherwise not in the public interest.

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 and Customs and Border Protection 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.

## PROVIDING A WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION IN EVERY ZIP CODE

Education is fundamental to the idea of America and to fulfilling our nation's promise. It 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, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, disability status, language status, immigration or citizenship status, household income or ZIP code.

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 school buildings have been neglected, especially in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. 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 and connected devices, have deepened inequities in our educational system for students of color, students with disabilities, English language learners, and students in rural areas and under-resourced neighborhoods during this pandemic. We will significantly increase federal investments in rural, urban, and Tribal broadband infrastructure to close the digital divide and ensure students can access educational resources from their homes and schools now and in the future. 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. To this end, we support K-12 instruction in civics and climate literacy. 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 and qualified, first-class, well-trained, passionate educators 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, lifelong learning, 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, impoverished urban areas impacted by gentrification, and rural areas, and will strive to support holistic school readiness. We also will ensure students with disabilities and English language learners have access to and are fully included in early childhood programs.

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 and will increase funding to states to guarantee that low-income and middle class families can afford child care. We will make major investments to increase quality options for parents and increase compensation for providers. Democrats also support expanding proven programs for low-income and first-time parents, guardians, and caregivers, 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 family-supporting wage, have access to benefits and paid leave, and be 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. Using property taxes to fund public K-12 schools results in inequitable treatment for students in low-income school districts, compared to those in wealthier areas. 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, schools in impoverished urban areas impacted by gentrification, and 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. We will increase investments in high-quality science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs in our public schools, support access to computer science for all and improve professional development opportunities for math and science teachers, including through the creation of a national science corps of outstanding STEM teachers serving as leaders in their schools and communities. Democrats believe we must prioritize STEAM education and funding for underrepresented students, including students of color, girls, and low-income students, to help remove enrollment and achievement barriers. We will equip students with the knowledge and skills to understand complex scientific issues, counter the rising tide of denialism by promoting environmental and climate literacy, and reverse the Trump Administration's cuts to the National Environmental Education Act. In addition to developing strong literacy, numeracy, and STEAM 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, including the program at issue in the recent [Espinoza decision](#).

Democrats are committed to safe and supportive school climates for students and educators alike. Guns have no place in our schools. We disagree strongly with the Trump Administration's dangerous and short-sighted suggestion that teachers should 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, nurses, and school psychologists to help support students' mental health needs, address trauma, and promote social and emotional development. We will work with school administrators, educators, students, and mental health advocates to reduce the stigma that too often prevents students from seeking out these resources. Democrats will make sure schools do not engage in, and appropriately address, discrimination, bullying and harassment related to sex, including sexual orientation and gender identity; race; national origin; immigration or citizenship status; religion; disability; and language status. We will protect the rights of transgender students.

It is unacceptable that America's public schools are more racially segregated today than they were in the late 1960s. Schools—and classrooms and programs within schools—continue to be segregated by race and class. And, with increasing frequency, students are being unnecessarily and unlawfully segregated by disability, language status and through the use of exclusionary discipline and school-based arrests. We believe that schools must no longer engage in segregation and segregative practices. Democrats support appointing judges who will enforce the Civil Rights Act in schools. We will fund federal programs to promote integration and school diversity, including magnet schools and school transportation initiatives. We will also reinvigorate and increase funding for the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, expand the civil rights data collection to inform civil rights enforcement and the public on the status of equal educational opportunity for all children, and build on the Strength in Diversity Act to increase federal funding for community-driven strategies to desegregate schools.

All children have the Constitutional right to go to school. Schools should be safe zones for children and their families, which is why Democrats will protect sensitive locations like schools from immigration enforcement actions. Democrats believe that English learners should be recognized as bringing an asset, rather than a deficit, with them to school. We recognize the need for significantly increased funding and support for English learners to ensure they can participate meaningfully and equally in school. Democrats will protect the civil rights of limited English proficient parents so they receive information in the language they understand and are able to meaningfully participate in their child's education, including through public meetings and community decision-making mechanisms.

Democrats believe in providing equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities. We will fully fund the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) and fully implement its requirements for a free appropriate public education and least restrictive environment. We will support aggressive enforcement of [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act](#) and the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#), including the integration mandate of the Olmstead decision, and provide school districts with additional resources to better serve students with disabilities. We will ban seclusion and prevent and decrease use of physical restraint, in partnership with teachers, school

administrators, and the disability rights movement. Democrats also support aggressive enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act in schools and other settings.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made long-standing educational disparities evident to all Americans. Democrats will prioritize equitable education and access for students with disabilities, English language learners, low-income students, students of color, and urban and rural students, including those who are homeless, are immigrants or refugees, or are in the foster care or juvenile justice systems. Remote instruction must be individualized to the greatest possible extent and reasonable modifications should be provided for students with disabilities even during a pandemic.

The evidence from nearly two decades of education reforms that hinge on standardized test scores shows clearly that high-stakes 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 reliable, continuous, evidence-based approaches to student assessment that rely on multiple and holistic measures that better represent student achievement. Assessments will provide families with clear, accessible, consistent information about how well schools are serving individual students and groups of students, while better representing student achievement. Students, parents, and educators will be supported by data collection and analysis disaggregated by race, gender, disability status, and other important variables, to identify and address disparities in educational equity, access, and outcomes.

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, and will continue to support measures to help teachers pay for out-of-pocket classroom expenses. 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 HBCUs, MSIs, and TCUs.

## [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 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 double federal support for [TRIO programs](#) that help first-generation college students, students with disabilities, veterans, and other underrepresented groups apply to and

complete college.

HBCUs, MSIs, and TCUs 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, MSIs, and TCUs to lower student costs, increase academic research capabilities, and ensure these essential institutions can continue to thrive in the future.

Democrats support making community colleges and trade schools tuition-free for all students, including Dreamers. Our nation's network of two-year community colleges provides accessible, high-quality education for students of all ages. Democrats will additionally support and expand pre-apprenticeship opportunities and registered apprenticeships with formal worker representation in program development to provide a clear pathway to high-quality jobs that does not require attending college.

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, and support and encourage professor tenure. And Democrats will safeguard academic freedom on college campuses.

Democrats oppose the Trump Administration's cruel and capricious treatment of international students studying in the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic. Young people around the world dream of coming to the United States, especially to study, innovate, and contribute to our research institutions, our economy, and our communities. Winning the competition for talents is a major component for winning global competitions in the 21st century. Democrats are committed to policies that make the United States welcoming to the more than one million international students who come to study in our colleges and universities annually, contributing to our higher education sector and to our nation's intellectual and cultural vibrancy. We will act to restore trust and certainty for international students and the higher education sector as part of the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the Trump Administration's harmful policies toward international students.

## 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 through legislative and administration relief processes, including creating a simplified repayment process. Democrats will work to pause monthly billing and stop interest from accruing on federal student loans for people earning less than \$25,000, and cap payments at no more than five percent of discretionary income for those earning more than \$25,000. After 20 years, remaining federal student loan debt should be automatically forgiven without tax liability. For those earning less than \$125,000, we support forgiving all undergraduate tuition-related federal student debt from two- and four-year public colleges and universities, and we will also apply this benefit to individuals holding federal student loans for tuition from private HBCUs and MSIs.

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 five years, and apply this action to people who have already dedicated 5 years or less of service to working in our schools, government agencies, and non-profit organizations. We reject Republican proposals that, in the name of simplification, would make students pay billions of dollars more on their student loans. Not only will these measures make it easier for Americans to buy a home or start a small business, student debt forgiveness is key to helping address the racial wealth gap, as students of color are more likely to have to borrow to finance higher education. Democrats will also empower the CFPB to take action against exploitative lenders and will work with Congress to allow student debt to be discharged during bankruptcy.

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 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 people who are permanently disabled. And we will protect veterans and servicemembers from being steered into low-performing for-profit higher education and professional programs.

## RENEWING AMERICAN LEADERSHIP

Democrats believe that we can only be strong in the world when we are strong and united at home. We believe that a healthy democracy, just society, and inclusive economy are essential prerequisites for effective American leadership abroad. And we believe that the ultimate measure—and purpose—of our foreign policy is whether it protects and advances America's security, prosperity and values—and delivers results for all Americans.

President Trump promised he would put “America First”—but Trump's America stands alone. Under his leadership, America's reputation and influence are in tatters. Our country is less safe, our economy more fragile, and our democracy, values, and unity endangered.

Rather than advance our interests and values in a more competitive world, President Trump has retreated—allowing our adversaries to fill the void. He has attacked the sources of our strength, hollowed out American diplomacy, shredded international commitments, weakened our alliances, and tarnished our credibility.

Rather than make smart investments to keep our military's competitive edge, President Trump has wasted billions on vanity projects, barred patriotic Americans from serving their country, denied military families the care and support they have earned, and tried to use our women and men in uniform to sow fear and division.

Rather than help Americans compete in the global economy, he's launched reckless, politically-motivated tariff wars that have punished American workers, antagonized our allies, and benefited our adversaries.

Rather than end our forever wars, he's brought us to the brink of new conflicts, and further militarized our foreign policy. Rather than reduce nuclear dangers, he's amplified them, and brought the world closer to catastrophe.

Rather than stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our allies and partners, he's betrayed them.

Rather than defend democracy and human rights, he's fawned over autocrats, sent love letters to despots, sided with dictators over peaceful protestors, and invited foreign interference in our elections. Rather than root out corruption, he's made common cause with kleptocrats.

Rather than fight the existential threat of climate change, he's denied science and accelerated the damage.

In every region and on every issue, American security and interests are at greater peril—and our rivals at greater advantage—than four years ago.

Democrats believe four more years of Donald Trump will damage our influence beyond repair. But closing the chapter on “America First” is just the beginning of the work ahead. We must meet the world as it is today, not as it was before President Trump’s destruction. That’s why we cannot simply aspire to restore American leadership. We must reinvent it for a new era.

We will revitalize the power and purpose of American diplomacy to compete in a more contested world. We will lead not just with the example of our power, but with the power of our example. We will place values at the center of our foreign policy. And we will reinvent alliances, partnerships, and international institutions to meet common challenges that no country can face on its own. The world today looks very different from the post-WWII period that gave birth to our alliance system. But these changes make our alliances more—not less—crucial to our Success.

We will ensure that our military has no peer. We owe it to our men and women in uniform and to the American public to spend our defense dollars more wisely and strategically—focused on building a force that can deter and win the conflicts of the 21st century. And we will use force only when necessary, always as a last resort, and with the informed consent of the American People.

And, most importantly, Democrats will ensure that the reinvention of American leadership abroad prioritizes and accelerates our renewal at home. We will root a disciplined foreign policy in the needs and aspirations of the American middle class and the imperative of building a more dynamic, fair, and resilient society—the ultimate wellspring of our power.

## Revitalizing American Diplomacy

Democrats will revitalize American diplomacy to ensure that the United States remains the world’s pivotal power and a principled force for peace and prosperity.

The United States should be at the head of the table whenever the safety and well-being of Americans is at stake, working in common cause with our allies and partners. Time and again, the Trump Administration has stormed out, leaving America’s seat at the table vacant and American interests on the menu. Americans deserve better.

## *Rebuilding America’s Tool of First Resort*

Democrats believe that diplomacy should be our tool of first resort. The world’s greatest power deserves to have the world’s very best diplomatic corps. But today, American diplomacy is badly adrift and under resourced, and our diplomats are demoralized.

Democrats will support and invest in long overdue reforms to make the State Department more strategic, modern, agile, and effective. Rather than militarize our foreign policy, treat our diplomats with contempt, and call for reckless budget cuts, Democrats will put diplomacy back

in the hands of professionals and ensure they are better prepared to advance American interests on the central issues of our time, like disruptive technology and climate change. We will recruit a new generation of Americans who want to serve their country abroad and ensure they have the training and tools they need. And we will expand and reform the Foreign Service so it reflects the diversity and richness of the country it represents.

### *Reinventing Alliances*

Democrats believe America's alliances are an irreplaceable cornerstone of our national security that should be cultivated, not cast away. Our allies offer an enormous strategic advantage that our rivals can't match. They multiply our influence, spread our reach, lighten our burden, and advance our shared interests and priorities much farther than we could ever do on our own.

President Trump has undermined our alliances in ways that our adversaries could have only dreamed of—sowing doubts about our commitments to diplomatic agreements, mutual defense, democratic values, and strategic purpose. As a result, our alliance system today faces its biggest test since the end of the Cold War. He has pushed to bring Russia back into the G7 while lambasting our NATO partners and ignoring intelligence about Russian bounties for killing American troops and other coalition forces in Afghanistan. He has undermined confidence in America's commitment to the alliance's [Article 5 mutual defense provision](#), and threatened to pull troops out of Germany without consultation. In the midst of a nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula, he tried to extort our South Korean allies to dramatically increase their share of alliance costs.

Democrats will not only repair our alliances, but reinvent them to advance mutual priorities and deal with new challenges. We believe our alliances are strongest when they are rooted in shared democratic values. That's why we need to signal clearly our profound concerns about democratic backsliding in a number of ally states, and why we need to work with allied democracies to end democracy's global recession.

We will make developing shared responses to non-military threats like disinformation, corruption, and economic coercion, priorities in our agenda. We will work with our partners to improve interoperability, and we will encourage them to build up their defense capabilities, take greater responsibility for regional security, and contribute their fair share. But we will never treat our alliances like protection rackets. Democrats will not only reinvent existing alliances but also work to strengthen and build new partnerships in regions of growing strategic importance, particularly in Africa and Latin America.

### *International Institutions*

Democrats believe that American security and prosperity are enhanced when the United States leads in shaping the rules, forging the agreements, and steering the institutions that guide international relations. We believe the system of international institutions we built and led over

the past seven decades has generated an enormous return on our investment. And in today's more competitive world, its renovation is a critical diplomatic priority. Unfortunately, President Trump has orchestrated an American retreat from global bodies that weakens our influence, cedes ground to our adversaries, and puts global peace and prosperity in jeopardy.

Instead of walking away, Democrats believe the United States should lead the way and mobilize our partners to work in common cause. We will rejoin and reform the WHO, the [United Nations Human Rights Council](#), and the [United Nations Population Fund](#), because in a global public health crisis and a global democratic recession, American leadership is needed more than ever. We will work to modernize international institutions to make sure they are fit for purpose in the 21st century and responsible stewards of both public funds and the world's trust.

### *Foreign Assistance and Development*

Democrats believe that foreign assistance and development programs are powerful tools for promoting American, and global, security and prosperity. With less than one percent of its annual budget, the United States gets an extraordinary return on its investments in the prevention and alleviation of poverty, hunger, disease, and conflict, the empowerment of vulnerable and marginalized populations, and the opening of global markets for American business and exports to thrive. That's why we will ensure that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) reclaims its position as the world's premier development agency. And it's why we reject the Trump Administration's punitive and transactional approach to foreign aid and its use to advance domestic political errands at the expense of our national interests.

Democrats will devote the resources and implement the reforms necessary to further multiply the impact of foreign assistance. We will reaffirm America's commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and promote data efforts and transparency measures that ensure accountability and help identify areas for strategic investment. We will incorporate local perspectives, including from civil society partners, into the design, execution, and evaluation of our programs to secure lasting impact. And we will provide the budgetary support and statutory authorities necessary to make sure our aid institutions, including the new U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, are successfully integrated into broader international and private-sector development efforts. Democrats will lead international efforts to help developing countries withstand and recover from debt crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and we will push for international standards that establish more transparency and sustainability in development financing.

### [Transforming Our Armed Forces for the 21st century](#)

Democrats believe our military is—and must be—the most effective fighting force in the world. To keep it that way, we need to bring our forever wars to a responsible end, rationalize our defense budget, invest in the forces and technologies of the future, repair civil-military relations, and strengthen our covenant with service members, veterans, and military families.

## *Ending Forever Wars*

Democrats know it's time to bring nearly two decades of unceasing conflict to an end. Our military engagements, which have spanned from West Africa to Southeast Asia, have cost more than \$5 trillion and claimed more than half a million lives. Our war in Afghanistan is the longest war in American history, with the youngest U.S. troops now fighting a war that was launched before they were even born. President Trump said he would get the United States out of these wars, but instead he deployed more combat forces, expanded their missions, and stoked regional tensions that unnecessarily endangered American lives and interests.

Democrats will deliver on this overdue commitment to end the forever wars, and we will do it responsibly—setting priorities, leading with diplomacy, protecting ourselves from terrorist threats, enabling local partners, and bringing our troops home.

Democrats are committed to a durable and inclusive political settlement in Afghanistan that ensures that al-Qaeda isn't allowed to reconstitute, the Islamic State (ISIS) isn't allowed to grow, and the international community can help Afghans safeguard hard-fought gains, especially for women and girls.

Democrats will end support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen and help bring the war to an end. This war is responsible for the world's worst humanitarian crisis, and it amplifies threats to the region and to our interests. Democrats believe that the United States should support diplomatic efforts—not block them.

Democrats will not only end the wars that have cost so much American blood and treasure—we will apply their lessons. We will only use force when necessary to protect national security and when the objective is clear and achievable—with the informed consent of the American people, and where warranted, the approval of Congress. That is why we will work with Congress to repeal decades-old authorizations for the use of military force and replace them with a narrow and specific framework that will ensure we can protect Americans from terrorist threats while ending the forever wars.

Rather than occupy countries and overthrow regimes to prevent terrorist attacks, Democrats will prioritize more effective and less costly diplomatic, intelligence, and law enforcement tools. We will right-size our counterterrorism footprint, put it in service of broader regional and overarching foreign policy objectives, and ensure it never undermines the values we seek to uphold. And we will mobilize our partners to make sustained investments that can prevent conflict and help extinguish the flames on which extremists feed.

## *Securing our Competitive Edge*

Democrats believe the United States military should be the best-trained, best-equipped, and most effective fighting force in the world. Ending the forever wars, reducing the enormous stress

on our forces, and rationalizing our global military footprint are essential prerequisites to securing our competitive edge—but they're not enough.

We will invest in technology and forces that meet the threats of the future—from cyber to space, and artificial intelligence to unmanned systems—and reinforce the alliances and partnerships that enhance our collective security. Rather than continuing to rely on legacy platforms that are increasingly exposed and vulnerable, Democrats support funding a more cost-effective, agile, flexible, and resilient force with modern transportation and logistics capabilities that can operate in more contested environments. Democrats will accelerate defense transformation in a responsible, ethical way, and with strong privacy protections. And we believe the implications of climate change for national security and the Department of Defense can no longer be an afterthought, but must be at the core of all policy and operational plans to secure our vital interests.

### *Defense Spending*

Democrats believe the measure of our security is not how much we spend on defense, but how we spend our defense dollars and in what proportion to other tools in our foreign policy toolbox and other urgent domestic investments. We believe we can and must ensure our security while restoring stability, predictability, and fiscal discipline in defense spending. We spend 13 times more on the military than we do on diplomacy. We spend five times more in Afghanistan each year than we do on global public health and preventing the next pandemic. We can maintain a strong defense and protect our safety and security for less. It's past time to rebalance our investments, improve the efficiency and competitiveness of our defense industrial base, conduct rigorous annual audits of the Pentagon, and end waste and fraud.

### *Keeping Faith with Our Veterans and Military Families*

Democrats believe that our force is stronger when it reflects the richness and diversity of American society, and when we treat our service members, veterans, and their families with the dignity they've earned. We will protect and enhance opportunities for anyone who can meet the standards to serve in combat roles, and we will fight the scourge of rape and sexual assault in our military, end retaliation and impunity, and take care of survivors. We will reverse the Trump Administration's hateful transgender ban, discriminatory exclusions in military health care, and policies that stigmatize and discriminate against people living with HIV and AIDS, and ensure that LGBTQ+ service members and families enjoy equal respect, benefits, and care. We will root out systemic racism from our military justice system, where black service members are twice as likely as white ones to face court-martial. We will accelerate efforts to recruit and promote people of color in the officer corps. We believe that service members, veterans, and their spouses should never face deportation. We will create a parole process for veterans deported by the Trump Administration to reunite them with their families and compatriots. And we believe anyone who has served honorably in our military has earned a path to citizenship prior to discharge or retirement.

Democrats believe that the world's best fighting force and its veterans deserve the world's best health care. We will rebuild trust in, and accountability at, the VA—not privatize it. We will modernize VA facilities and bolster funding to the VA as part of a nationwide infrastructure plan, expand eligibility for VA benefits so that all veterans can access the VA, and work with Congress to eliminate VA co-pays for preventive health care for veterans. We will ensure that VA benefits address the full needs of our women veterans, including reproductive services, and that every veteran receives comprehensive and culturally competent care and benefits regardless of their ethnicity, race, gender identity, or sexual orientation, and eliminate transgender exclusions. We will combat veteran homelessness, including by converting VA facilities into housing.

Twenty veterans and service members take their life every day. We will treat suicide as the public health crisis it is. Today, only half of Afghanistan and Iraq veterans have access to the mental health services they need. That's why we will invest in mental health and suicide prevention services, and work with our military communities to encourage and support those seeking help, connecting them to critical services. Democrats will provide the hundreds of thousands of service members that transition to civilian life with the support they need. Democrats will not abide exploitation of our veterans, especially by for-profit colleges that raid benefits and burden veterans with debt.

Democrats believe that we can't maintain the force we need unless we take care of military families—who have been asked to endure so much for so long, with far too little support. No military family should struggle to pay their bills, put food on the table, or access health care, quality housing, child care, or the workforce. We will ensure pay and compensation keep pace with the current economy. We will also increase time between deployments, improve educational outcomes for military children, and invest in career training, education, and entrepreneurship programs for military spouses, who face an unemployment rate twice the national average. We will expand tax credits to help family caregivers of our veterans, and ensure they receive the support they need from the VA and Department of Defense. And we will support efforts across the country to help veterans and military families thrive, enrich, and strengthen their communities and our nation.

### *Civil-Military Relations*

Democrats believe that healthy civil-military relations are essential to our democracy and to the strength and effectiveness of our military. We will end the Trump Administration's politicization of the armed forces and distortion of civilian and military roles in decision-making. We will reinstate national security policymaking processes that advance competent civilian control and appropriately incorporate military advice—not issue commands by tweet. We will safeguard the independence of the military justice system—not pardon war criminals.

Democrats will hold regular press briefings to explain the legal and policy justifications for military operations, because transparency and open debate with Congress and the American

public are necessary for democratic accountability. Democrats will never use active duty soldiers as political props, and we will never send military forces to suppress Americans exercising their constitutional rights.

## Mobilizing the World to Address Transnational Challenges

### *Global Health and Pandemics*

The human and economic toll of the COVID-19 pandemic underscores the urgency of strengthening the global public health system—and the consequences of America’s disengagement from the world. The Trump Administration was warned about the clear and present danger of a global pandemic. The Administration not only ignored the threat but dismantled our early warning and response mechanisms and failed to act when the pandemic began. We owe it to all those whose lives have been shattered by this disease to learn from that fatal mistake.

Democrats will take overdue steps to ensure our government is not caught off guard by public health threats, at home or abroad. We will revitalize and expand the Obama-Biden Administration’s Global Health Security Agenda, and we will immediately restore the White House National Security Council Directorate for Global Health Security and Biodefense.

Democrats will also mobilize allies, partners, and international institutions to develop a more robust and effective global public health system. We will work to help the United Nations improve its facilitation efforts in public health crises, and we will establish a Global Health Emergency Board to harmonize crisis response for vulnerable communities.

Rather than undercutting the WHO and undermining its work on the frontlines of global pandemic response, Democrats will ensure the United States remains its leading funder and technical partner. Democrats will fully resource the WHO, especially its Contingency Fund for Emergencies, while supporting fundamental reforms and mechanisms to enhance accountability and protect experts from political pressure. We support the development of a vaccine accelerator to ensure rapid, equitable, and affordable global access to vaccines, therapeutics, and supplies.

Democrats know that effective global health policy saves lives at home and around the world. Beyond its immediate damage, the COVID-19 pandemic has badly disrupted routine, life-saving vaccinations, putting 80 million children around the world at greater risk of dying from preventable diseases. We will reaffirm our commitment to the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and help realize the promise of an AIDS-free generation. And we will help the world eradicate tuberculosis, malaria, and polio, as well as preventable maternal and childhood deaths.

## Climate Change

Democrats recognize that the United States does not stand alone in the fight against climate change and global environmental degradation. We will fully integrate climate change into our foreign policy and national security strategies, and we will restore U.S. global climate leadership.

Democrats will immediately rejoin the [Paris Climate Agreement](#), commit the United States to doing its fair share and lead the world in the effort to keep global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, and convene a world summit aimed at new and more ambitious global targets to reduce greenhouse gas pollution. We will revive and expand climate-related foreign assistance including by recommitting to the [Green Climate Fund](#). We will protect our oceans—vital buffers against the impacts of climate change—through fisheries management programs and additional designations of marine protected areas. We will seek collaborative, science-based approaches to be good stewards of the rapidly changing Arctic region, while protecting our strategic interests.

We 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 funding to the [Global Environment Facility](#) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, to support critical climate science research around the world. We will support the protection of species and wildlife habitats around the world, including by advancing the goals of the [United Nations Framework Convention on Biological Diversity](#), and encourage other countries to join us in conserving 30 percent of the planet by 2030.

Democrats will also work 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. We will promote climate accountability and mobilize a united front to keep states like China from outsourcing pollution to other countries.

Democrats believe that executing a strategy of bold climate leadership will require sustained focus and increased expertise across our foreign policy institutions. We will incorporate climate issues as key priorities at the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and in the Intelligence Community. And we will ensure that America's service missions abroad, including those executed through the Peace Corps and USAID, expand their calls to action to include reducing carbon pollution, safeguarding Indigenous peoples and vulnerable populations from climate impacts, and guaranteeing a more sustainable planet for all.

## Technology

Democrats believe that American diplomatic leadership is critical to maximizing the benefits of technological innovation while minimizing its risks and dislocations. We have a stake in bridging the gap between the pace of innovation and the development of rules of the road governing the

most consequential domains of technology, from cyberspace to artificial intelligence to synthetic biology. Democrats will avoid a race to the bottom, where countries hostile to democratic values shape our future. Instead, we will mobilize public and private actors to ensure that new products and new discoveries are bound by law, ethics, and civil liberties protections that enable democratic societies to thrive and prosperity to be shared broadly.

We will recommit the United States to the principles of an open internet, including net neutrality, and vigorously oppose efforts to digitally silo off countries and populations from the rest of the world. Democrats believe that algorithms and platforms should empower people instead of the surveillance state. We expect technology companies and social media platforms to take responsibility and do more to preserve the openness of democratic societies and identify foreign disinformation, especially including paid efforts to influence American elections through advertising or coordinated inauthentic behavior, and we will take steps to prevent the use of new technologies to facilitate repression, spread hate, or incite violence.

Democrats recognize that the security of data is only becoming more vital across all threads of technological progress. That's why we will work with our allies and partners to develop secure 5G networks and address threats in cyberspace. Democrats will maintain American capabilities that can deter cyber threats, and we will work with other countries—and the private sector—to protect individuals' data and defend critical infrastructure, including the global financial system.

We will also work to make sure that the revolution in biotechnology remains a force for global good. We will promote international efforts to responsibly and ethically manage research in areas like gene editing. We will sustain and improve international collaboration and data-sharing. And we will ensure equitable access to medical treatments and vaccines generated by new biotech discoveries. Democrats will partner with other countries and private companies to build up capacity and implement appropriate safety standards for any work that involves dangerous pathogens, and we remain staunchly committed to the international prohibition on the development or use of biological weapons.

### *Nonproliferation*

Democrats believe the United States has a moral responsibility and national security imperative to prevent the spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, and eventually secure their elimination. Over the past four years, the Trump Administration has done precisely the opposite. Its brash nuclear threats, ill-considered withdrawals from critical arms control treaties and nuclear agreements, and reckless embrace of a new arms race have made the United States, and the world, less safe. Thanks to President Trump's abdication of leadership, the nuclear dangers that Americans face are greater than they have been in decades.

#### ***Democrats reject a return to an old era of grave nuclear dangers.***

Democrats believe that the sole purpose of our nuclear arsenal should be to deter—and, if

necessary, retaliate against—a nuclear attack, and we will work to put that belief into practice, in consultation with our allies and military. We will work to maintain a strong, credible deterrent while reducing our overreliance and excessive expenditure on nuclear weapons. The Trump Administration’s proposal to build new nuclear weapons is unnecessary, wasteful, and indefensible.

Democrats commit to strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, maintaining the moratorium on explosive nuclear weapons testing, pushing for the ratification of the [UN Arms Trade Treaty](#) and [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty](#), and extending New START. Just as was the case during the height of the Cold War, it’s in our interest to work with Russia to verifiably limit and reduce our nuclear stockpiles. We will build on this foundation to negotiate arms control agreements that reflect the emergence of new players like China, capture new technologies, and move the world back from the nuclear precipice.

## *Terrorism*

So long as violent extremists continue to plot attacks on our homeland and our interests, Democrats will maintain a vigilant focus on counterterrorism.

Democrats recognize that the threat landscape has evolved dramatically since September 11. Our counterterrorism priorities, strategies, footprint, and tools should shift accordingly, including to respond to the growing threat from white supremacist and other right-wing terrorist groups

Democrats will sustain the global effort to defeat ISIS, al-Qaeda, and their affiliates. We will ensure that the world is equally committed to the difficult task that follows military success: dealing with the underlying conditions that allowed violent extremism to flourish in the first place. We will work with our partners to prioritize diplomatic, law enforcement, and intelligence tools, to reinforce our objectives instead of distorting them.

Democrats believe that our rhetoric, policies, and tactics—and those of our counterterrorism partners—should never serve as terrorist recruiting tools. We will always work to avoid civilian casualties, and we will not weaponize counterterrorism for anti-immigrant purposes. We will reject the targeting of Muslim, Arab, and other racial and ethnic communities based on their faith and backgrounds at home and abroad. We will close the detention center at Guantanamo Bay, enhance transparency, oversight, and accountability in counterterrorism programs and operations, and safeguard civil liberties and the rule of law.

## *Democracy and Human Rights*

Around the world, democracy and human rights are under greater assault than they have been in a generation. Under President Trump, the United States has too often been part of the assault and too rarely engaged in the defense and promotion of universal values. Democrats believe that the fight for universal values should start at home, but it can’t end there. Global democratic

backsliding and the erosion of human rights put our interests and values at risk. That's why the reinvention of American leadership demands we put democratic values at the core of our foreign policy, with renewed strategies and tools for a new era.

Democrats will make gender equality a key foreign policy priority and work to achieve gender parity across our national security team. We will implement the [Women, Peace, and Security Act](#) because advancing gender equality enhances stability and economic prosperity around the world. Along with our diplomatic partners, we will incorporate more women into peace processes—where their participation can improve the odds of a peace agreement holding—and ensure women's leadership in peace and security processes globally. Democrats will lead international efforts to address the scourge of gender-based violence, and we will work to ratify the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women](#). We will push for greater participation by women in the global workforce, which studies show can boost global GDP by 25 percent.

Democrats will always protect sexual and reproductive health and rights. We believe that comprehensive health services, including access to reproductive care and abortion services, are vital to the empowerment of women and girls. We will support the repeal of the global gag rule (also known as the Mexico City Policy) and measures like the Helms Amendment, which limit safe access to abortion. We will also restore and expand American contributions to the United Nations Population Fund to help guarantee access to health care for women and children around the world and eliminate child, early, and forced marriage.

Democrats will advance the ability of all persons to live with dignity, security, and respect, regardless of who they are or who they love. We will restore the United States' position of leadership on LGBTQ+ issues by passing the [GLOBE Act](#) and appointing senior leaders directly responsible for driving and coordinating LGBTQ+ issues at the State Department, USAID, and the National Security Council. We will ensure that our immigration policies account for the needs of LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers, and that we use the full slate of human rights promotion and accountability tools to defend the universal rights of LGBTQ+ people. We will amplify the voices of LGBTQ+ persons around the world and counter violence and discrimination against LGBTQ+ persons wherever it appears.

Democrats will stand up for and support civil society around the world. Crackdowns on civic space in recent years have undermined democracy, the rule of law, and the vibrancy and health of societies. As autocrats leverage technology and employ arbitrary legal measures to shrink civic space, the United States should lead the world in adapting and bolstering support for civic activism.

Democrats believe that the United States should defend freedom of the press. Independent media is not the enemy of the people, but the guardian of democracy. We will push back against erosion of press freedom wherever it occurs and in whatever form—whether through direct intimidation of, and violence against, journalists or legal, regulatory, and financial pressures that

smother free speech.

We will fight human trafficking and strive to end the practice of modern-day slavery around the world. We will aggressively leverage U.S. law enforcement and strengthen diplomatic efforts to combat forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. And we will increase visas for victims of human trafficking at a time when mass migration has affected so many vulnerable Communities.

Democrats believe that improving labor standards around the world protects human rights and promotes broad-based prosperity. We will ensure that America's diplomatic and trade agreements include enforcement provisions for workers' rights, and we will fight to end the evils of poverty-wage, child, and slave labor. We believe that American workers should not be undercut by foreign competition that relies on the abuse of workers, and we will support the rights of unions and workers abroad to organize, including International Labor Organization Conventions supporting freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Democrats believe that America should be a world leader when it comes to disability rights. We will work to ratify the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), and we will appoint a [Special Envoy for International Disability Rights](#). Across American diplomatic and development efforts, we will ensure that programs are disability-inclusive, and we will encourage partner countries and international organizations to address the needs of persons with disabilities.

Democrats believe that freedom of religion and the right to believe—or not to believe—are fundamental human rights. We will never use protection of that right as a cover for discrimination. We reject the politicization of religious freedom in American foreign policy, and we condemn atrocities against religious minorities around the world—from ISIS' genocide of Christians and Yezidis, to China's mass internment of Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities, to Burma's persecution of the Rohingya, to attacks on religious minorities in Northeast Syria.

Democrats believe that the United States should serve as a model for countries around the world when it comes to safeguarding and promoting the rights of Indigenous peoples. We will reaffirm the Obama-Biden Administration's support for, and strive to advance the principles of, the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#). Consistent with the Declaration, the United States should urge the United Nations and the Organization of American States to create mechanisms that include the formal participation of Tribal nations.

Democrats will work to secure a better future for younger generations. Roughly 40 percent of the world's population is under 25, and the proportion of young people is even higher in the developing world. Democrats will ensure that our policies, and those of our partners and development institutions, work to increase economic opportunities, expand education, and improve health care for young people around the world. And we will pay special attention to protecting the rights of youth and nurturing young leaders from vulnerable or underrepresented communities.

Democrats believe that the United States has an urgent, moral obligation and strategic interest to help alleviate suffering around the globe. Entrenched conflicts and unprecedented levels of forced migration have pushed the world into an acute humanitarian crisis that spills across borders. This year, almost 170 million people are going to need humanitarian assistance. By 2022 that figure could top 200 million, and need is poised to continue outstripping growth in humanitarian funding and capacity. Democrats will reassert America's humanitarian example and leadership. We will contribute not just more aid, but better aid. The United States ought to drive the international community in providing more strategic, coordinated, proactive, predictable, and cost-effective funding—and in implementing programs that both reflect the realities of today's increasingly complex and protracted humanitarian emergencies, and deliver on the health, education, and protection needs of populations devastated by conflict and Displacement.

In the midst of the worst forced displacement crisis since WWII, the Trump Administration launched a campaign to undermine the global system that provides crucial assistance to refugees and the countries that give them safe harbor.

Democrats will end the Trump Administration's shameful efforts to close doors to the world's most vulnerable. We will reverse discriminatory bans and policies that deny protection to groups based on their religion, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity. We will significantly raise the annual global refugee admissions target, and work with Congress to create a minimum annual number for refugee admissions, while expanding and identifying new pathways for refugees to seek safe havens.

Admitting refugees is not only the right thing to do—it's the smart thing to do. Bringing in those seeking a better life helps preserve the stability of America's partners abroad, strengthens our hand in getting other countries to uphold their obligations, grows our own economy, and enriches our society.

Democrats believe that torture is immoral and ineffective. President Trump's fondness for torture and other war crimes only gives fodder to America's enemies. Democrats will immediately reaffirm the Obama-Biden Administration's ban on torture and commit to upholding American values at home and abroad. We will condemn the mistreatment of imprisoned individuals wherever it occurs, and we will hold to account those who perpetrate human rights abuses.

## [Advancing American Interests](#)

### *Global Economy and Trade*

Democrats will fight for every American job and will make sure American workers have a fair shot in the global economy.

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 reneged on commitments to be honest and transparent partners.

We will not negotiate any new trade deals before first investing in American competitiveness at home. We will aggressively enforce existing trade laws and agreements. And we will insist on strong and enforceable standards for labor, human rights, and the environment in any future trade agreements, so that they build the American middle class, create jobs, raise wages, and strengthen our communities. We will use all tools at our disposal to take action against countries that steal American intellectual property or manipulate their currencies to get an unfair advantage in international markets.

Democrats believe that if the United States does not work with its allies and partners to shape the terms of global trade, China will shape them for us—and American working families and the middle class will pay the price. That’s why we will work with our allies to mobilize more than half the world’s economy to stand up to China and negotiate from the strongest possible position.

Democrats believe that fighting for American workers also means pushing back against global corruption, and we will make anti-corruption a priority in our foreign policy. The Trump Administration’s own shady dealings and its enthusiasm for authoritarianism abroad have only emboldened the world’s autocrats and kleptocrats. Democrats will implement new transparency measures aimed at preventing illicit money from flowing through the American financial system, including a ban on anonymous shell companies, expansions of anti-money laundering requirements, disclosure of beneficial ownership, and greater oversight of cross-border transactions. We will combat bribery abroad by expanding on the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, and we will deploy the full range of America’s diplomatic and economic tools to target kleptocrats—including targeted sanctions and visa bans.

When used strategically—as one of the tools employed, alongside our allies, to achieve clear policy objectives—financial and economic sanctions are an effective way to advance many core U.S. national security objectives. But when misused and overused, sanctions not only undermine our interests, they threaten one of the United States’ greatest strategic assets: the importance of the American financial system. Democrats will guard against the improper application of economic and financial sanctions that incentivize foreign businesses to bypass our financial system, corrode the power and potential of sanctions, undercut the potential of our diplomacy, hurt our economy, and threaten the key role of the U.S. dollar as the world’s reserve currency.

## *Africa*

Democrats will revitalize our partnerships across [Africa](#) to unleash enormous potential for

growth and innovation and address together challenges and stresses across the continent. Africa is home to some of the world's fastest growing economies. Its population will roughly double to more than two billion by the middle of this century, and Nigeria is projected to have the third largest population in the world. American diplomacy can play a critical role in helping ensure that the region's vulnerabilities to climate change and pandemic disease—and persistent challenges of regional conflict, illicit financial flows, poor governance, and food, water, and health insecurity—do not overwhelm its enormous opportunities.

At a moment when U.S.-Africa ties are increasingly important to our interests and our economy, and when our friends and rivals are investing more resources and diplomatic attention across the continent, the Trump Administration has treated Africa and its people with neglect and contempt. We will repair our relationships with African partners and publics, renewing our commitment to fight for democracy and human rights; advance peace and security; bolster economic growth and public health; and promote clean energy, sustainable agriculture, environmental protection, and decent work for all with special regard for youth and women. Democrats will recommit to the Obama-Biden Administration's [National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking](#) and ban importation into the United States of hunting trophies from Africa's iconic and endangered big cats. Democrats will seize opportunities to strengthen fragile political transitions in Sudan and Ethiopia while deepening relations with key partners. We will not shirk from our longstanding pledge to assist countries in Central Africa, the Sahel, and the Horn of Africa to counter extremism and address root causes of insecurity. We will support the implementation of the African Union's African Continental Free Trade Agreement and its Agenda 2063 and promote a multi-faceted economic engagement focused on increasing two-way and regional trade, promoting investment and partnership in key industries. And we will assist in Africa's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic while expanding efforts to improve the resiliency of health systems across the continent. Moreover, we will stand in solidarity with our African counterparts against structural racism in the United States and abroad, and commit to elevate African voices in multilateral forums to solve the world's most pressing problems.

## *Americas*

Democrats believe the Western Hemisphere is America's strategic home base—a region bound together by common values, history, and vision of a more prosperous, democratic, and secure future. When the United States hosts the region's leaders at next year's Summit of the Americas—the first to be held here since the 1994 inaugural meeting in Miami—we will turn the page on the Trump Administration's denigration and extortion of our neighbors, and we will chart a new era of cooperation based on partnership and shared responsibility for the region we all call home.

Democrats will reaffirm the importance of North America to U.S. global economic competitiveness. We will ensure the USMCA lives up to its commitment to create prosperity for American workers, and we will strictly enforce compliance with its labor and environmental provisions. We will reinvigorate and build upon the North American Plan for Animal and

Pandemic Influenza launched under the Obama-Biden Administration and work with our partners to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has caused the biggest economic decline in history across Latin America and the Caribbean.

Rather than coerce our neighbors into supporting cruel migration policies, we will work with our regional and international partners to address the root causes of migration—violence and insecurity, weak rule of law, lack of educational and economic opportunity, pervasive corruption, and environmental degradation. Rather than encourage climate denial and environmental devastation, we will rally the world to protect the Amazon from deforestation, protect Indigenous peoples, and help vulnerable nations in the Caribbean and Central America adapt to the impacts of climate change. And rather than imitate populist demagogues, we will link arms with our neighbors to realize our shared aspirations for the region's future.

We will reject President Trump's failed Venezuela policy, which has only served to entrench Nicolás Maduro's dictatorial regime and exacerbate a human rights and humanitarian crisis. To rise to the occasion of the world's worst refugee crisis and worst humanitarian crisis outside a warzone in decades, the United States will mobilize its partners across the region and around the world to meet the urgent needs of the people of Venezuela, and grant Temporary Protected Status to Venezuelans in the United States. Democrats believe that the best opportunity to rescue Venezuela's democracy is through smart pressure and effective diplomacy, not empty, bellicose threats untethered to realistic policy goals and motivated by domestic partisan objectives

Democrats will also move swiftly to reverse Trump Administration policies that have undermined U.S. national interests and harmed the Cuban people and their families in the United States, including its efforts to curtail travel and remittances. Rather than strengthening the regime, we will promote human rights and people-to-people exchanges, and empower the Cuban people to write their own future.

### *Asia-Pacific*

As a Pacific power, the United States should work closely with its allies and partners to advance our shared prosperity, security, and values—and shape the unfolding Pacific Century.

Democrats' approach to China will be guided by America's national interests and the interests of our allies, and draw on the sources of American strength—the openness of our society, the dynamism of our economy, and the power of our alliances to shape and enforce international norms that reflect our values. Undermining those strengths will not make us “tough on China.” It would be a gift to the Chinese Communist Party.

Democrats will be clear, strong, and consistent in pushing back where we have profound economic, security, and human rights concerns about the actions of China's government.

Democrats will protect the American worker from unfair trade practices by the Chinese government, including currency manipulation and benefiting from a misaligned exchange rate with the dollar, illegal subsidies, and theft of intellectual property. We will rally friends and allies across the world to push back against China or any other country's attempts to undermine international norms.

Democrats believe the China challenge is not primarily a military one, but we will deter and respond to aggression. We will underscore our global commitment to freedom of navigation and resist the Chinese military's intimidation in the South China Sea. Democrats are committed to the [Taiwan Relations Act](#) and will continue to support a peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan.

Rather than stand with President Xi Jinping as he cracks down on Hong Kong's autonomy, Democrats will stand for the democratic rights of its citizens. We will fully enforce the [Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act](#), including by sanctioning officials, financial institutions, companies, and individuals responsible for undercutting Hong Kong's autonomy. And we will bring the world together to condemn the internment of more than one million Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in concentration camps in China, using the tools provided by the [Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act](#).

Democrats will pursue this strategy without resorting to self-defeating, unilateral tariff wars or falling into the trap of a new Cold War. Those mistakes would only serve to exaggerate China's weight, over-militarize our policy, and hurt American workers.

America must approach our relationship with China with confidence—the confidence to lead international efforts to push back on malign behavior while also pursuing cooperation on issues of mutual interest like climate change and nonproliferation and ensuring that the U.S.-China rivalry does not put global stability at risk.

Rather than denigrate our partners and encourage tensions between our allies, the United States will work to strengthen ties with and between our key allies in the region, including Japan, South Korea, and Australia, and we will work to ensure that our alliances with Thailand and the Philippines live up to the values that our peoples share.

Together with our allies—and through diplomacy with North Korea — we will constrain and contain the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear program and its regional belligerence. We will build a sustained, coordinated diplomatic campaign to advance the longer-term goal of denuclearization. And we will not forget the people of North Korea—Democrats will support humanitarian aid and pressure the regime to cease its gross human rights abuses.

We will reinvigorate our commitment to robust engagement with regional multilateral institutions like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which will help us promote the rule of law and sustainable, inclusive economic growth on both sides of the Pacific. And we will

continue to invest in our strategic partnership with India—the world’s largest democracy, a nation of great diversity, and a growing Asia-Pacific power.

## *Europe*

In the 30 years since the fall of the Berlin wall, the United States and Europe have strived to build a transatlantic community of free and democratic societies that works together to bring peace, prosperity, and dignity to all our citizens. The Trump Administration has put that dream in grave danger. Donald Trump either does not know or has forgotten who America’s friends are. He sees Europe as a foe—not a friend—of the United States. He sees Vladimir Putin’s Russia as a strategic partner—not a strategic rival. He sees anti-European Union, far-right nationalists as political allies—not destructive antagonists.

Democrats, on the other hand, believe a united, democratic, and prosperous Europe is vital to the United States. We believe the transatlantic alliance is the ballast of our global influence. Ours is the largest economic relationship in the world, making up nearly half of global GDP. NATO is the world’s most formidable military alliance. And together, we stand as champions of universal rights and freedoms around the world. Transatlantic cooperation is crucial to addressing almost every global challenge we face.

Democrats will reinvigorate the transatlantic partnership to repair the damage of the Trump era and preempt the risks of broader structural divergence between the U.S. and Europe. We will work together with individual European countries and the European Union to counter threats to our democracies and enhance shared resilience against corruption and kleptocracy. We will support greater European integration, stronger defense capabilities, and greater energy security. We will enhance our coordination and joint standard setting on technology, trade, and investment, and we will work to boost our post-COVID-19 economic recovery and reduce inequality.

Democrats will join our European partners in standing up to a revanchist Russia. We will not allow Moscow to interfere in our democracies or chip away at our resolve. We will reaffirm America’s commitment to NATO and defending our allies. We will maintain transatlantic support for Ukraine’s reform efforts and its territorial integrity. Democrats will lower regional—and global—threats by reinforcing nuclear arms control.

We believe Europe is our natural partner in managing areas of competition with China and will work to establish common priorities, strategies, and tools. And just as we came together to stand up to communism and respond to global terrorism, we will come together with Europe to confront the existential challenge of climate change.

## *Middle East*

Turning the page on two decades of large-scale military deployments and open-ended wars in the Middle East does not mean the United States will abandon a region where we and our

partners still have enduring interests. Democrats believe it's past time, however, to rebalance our tools, engagement, and relationships in the Middle East away from military intervention—leading with pragmatic diplomacy to lay the groundwork for a more peaceful, stable, and free region.

Democrats will call off the Trump Administration's race to war with Iran and prioritize nuclear diplomacy, de-escalation, and regional dialogue. Democrats believe the United States should not impose regime change on other countries and reject that as the goal of U.S. policy toward Iran. We believe the [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action \(JCPOA\)](#) remains the best means to verifiably cut off all of Iran's pathways to a nuclear bomb. The Trump Administration's unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA isolated us from our allies and opened the door for Iran to resume its march toward a nuclear weapons capacity that the JCPOA had stopped. That's why returning to mutual compliance with the agreement is so urgent. The nuclear deal was always meant to be the beginning, not the end, of our diplomacy with Iran. Democrats support a comprehensive diplomatic effort to extend constraints on Iran's nuclear program and address Iran's other threatening activities, including its regional aggression, ballistic missile program, and domestic repression.

Democrats also believe we need to reset our relations with our Gulf partners to better advance our interests and values. The United States has an interest in helping our partners contend with legitimate security threats; we will support their political and economic modernization and encourage efforts to reduce regional tensions. But we have no interest in continuing the blank-check era of the Trump Administration, or indulging authoritarian impulses, internal rivalries, catastrophic proxy wars, or efforts to roll back political openings across the region.

Effective relations with the Gulf will help us reconnect Iraq to its neighbors and protect the country's stability, security, and sovereignty. Democrats support a small, finite, and focused military presence to train our Iraqi partners so they can ensure the lasting defeat of ISIS. We also support keeping up the offensive against ISIS in Syria to prevent it from regaining a foothold, and will stand by Kurdish and other critical partners in that fight. We will work to repatriate foreign fighter detainees, and reinvigorate diplomacy to protect the humanitarian needs and human and civil rights of all Syrians and find a political resolution for this horrific war. Democrats are deeply concerned by the deepening crisis in Lebanon and are committed to work with the Lebanese people to promote political and economic reform, financial stability, and security.

Democrats believe a strong, secure, and democratic Israel is vital to the interests of the United States. Our commitment to Israel's security, its qualitative military edge, its right to defend itself, and the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding is ironclad.

Democrats recognize the worth of every Israeli and every Palestinian. That's why we will work to help bring to an end a conflict that has brought so much pain to so many. We support a negotiated two-state solution that ensures Israel's future as a Jewish and democratic state with

recognized borders and upholds the right of Palestinians to live in freedom and security in a viable state of their own.

Democrats oppose any unilateral steps by either side—including annexation—that undermine prospects for two states. Democrats will continue to stand against incitement and terror. We oppose settlement expansion. We believe that while Jerusalem is a matter for final status negotiations, it should remain the capital of Israel, an undivided city accessible to people of all faiths. Democrats will restore U.S.-Palestinian diplomatic ties and critical assistance to the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza, consistent with U.S. law. We oppose any effort to unfairly single out and delegitimize Israel, including at the United Nations or through the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement, while protecting the Constitutional right of our citizens to free speech.