2016 Democratic Party Platform

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2016 DEMOCRATIC PARTY PLATFORM

Preamble

In 2016, Democrats meet in Philadelphia with the same basic belief that animated the Continental Congress when they gathered here 240 years ago: Out of many, we are one.

Under President Obama's leadership, and thanks to the hard work and determination of the American people, we have come a long way from the Great Recession and the Republican policies that triggered it. American businesses have now added 14.8 million jobs since private-sector job growth turned positive in early 2010. Twenty million people have gained health insurance coverage. The American auto industry just had its best year ever. And we are getting more of our energy from the sun and wind, and importing less oil from overseas.

But too many Americans have been left out and left behind. They are working longer hours with less security. Wages have barely budged and the racial wealth gap remains wide, while the cost of everything from childcare to a college education has continued to rise. And for too many families, the dream of homeownership is out of reach. As working people struggle, the top one percent accrues more wealth and more power. Republicans in Congress have chosen gridlock and dysfunction over trying to find solutions to the real challenges we face. It's no wonder that so many feel like the system is rigged against them.

Democrats believe that cooperation is better than conflict, unity is better than division, empowerment is better than resentment, and bridges are better than walls.

It's a simple but powerful idea: we are stronger together.

Democrats believe we are stronger when we have an economy that works for everyone—an economy that grows incomes for working people, creates good-paying jobs, and puts a middle-class life within reach for more Americans. Democrats believe we can spur more sustainable economic growth, which will create good-paying jobs and raise wages. And we can have more economic fairness, so the rewards are shared broadly, not just with those at the top. We need an economy that prioritizes long-term investment over short-term profit-seeking, rewards the common interest over self-interest, and promotes innovation and entrepreneurship.

We believe that today's extreme level of income and wealth inequality—where the majority of the economic gains go to the top one percent and the richest 20 people in our country own more wealth than the bottom 150 million—makes our economy weaker, our communities poorer, and our politics poisonous.

And we know that our nation's long struggle with race is far from over. More than half a century after Rosa Parks sat and Dr. King marched and John Lewis bled, more than half a century after César Chávez, Dolores Huerta, and Larry Itliong organized, race still plays a significant role in determining who gets ahead in America and who gets left behind. We must face that reality and we must fix it.

We believe a good education is a basic right of all Americans, no matter what zip code they live in. We will end the school-to-prison pipeline and build a cradle-to-college pipeline instead, where every child can live up to his or her God-given potential.

We believe in helping Americans balance work and family without fear of punishment or penalty. We believe in at last guaranteeing equal pay for women. And as the party that created Social Security, we believe in protecting every American's right to retire with dignity.

We firmly believe that the greed, recklessness, and illegal behavior on Wall Street must be brought to an end. Wall Street must never again be allowed to threaten families and businesses on Main Street.

Democrats believe we are stronger when we protect citizens' right to vote, while stopping corporations' outsized influence in elections. We will fight to end the broken campaign finance system, overturn the disastrous *Citizens United* decision, restore the full power of the Voting Rights Act, and return control of our elections to the American people.

Democrats believe that climate change poses a real and urgent threat to our economy, our national security, and our children's health and futures, and that Americans deserve the jobs and security that come from becoming the clean energy superpower of the 21st century.

Democrats believe we are stronger and safer when America brings the world together and leads with principle and purpose. We believe we should strengthen our alliances, not weaken them. We believe in the power of development and diplomacy. We believe our military should be the best-trained, best-equipped fighting force in the world, and that we must do everything we can to honor and support our veterans. And we know that only the United States can mobilize common action on a truly global scale, to take on the challenges that transcend borders, from international terrorism to climate change to health pandemics.

Above all, Democrats are the party of inclusion. We know that diversity is not our problem—it is our promise. As Democrats, we respect differences of perspective and belief, and pledge to work together to move this country forward, even when we disagree. With this platform, we do not merely seek common ground—we strive to reach higher ground.

We are proud of our heritage as a nation of immigrants. We know that today's immigrants are tomorrow's teachers, doctors, lawyers, government leaders, soldiers, entrepreneurs, activists, PTA members, and pillars of our communities.

We believe in protecting civil liberties and guaranteeing civil rights and voting rights, women's rights and workers' rights, LGBT rights, and rights for people with disabilities. We believe America is still, as Robert Kennedy said, "a great country, an unselfish country, and a compassionate country."

These principles stand in sharp contrast to the Republicans, who have nominated as the standard-bearer for their party and their candidate for President a man who seeks to appeal to Americans' basest differences, rather than our better natures.

The stakes have been high in previous elections. But in 2016, the stakes can be measured in human lives—in the number of immigrants who would be torn from their homes; in the number of faithful and peaceful Muslims who would be barred from even visiting our shores; in the number of allies alienated and dictators courted; in the number of Americans who would lose access to health care and see their rights ripped away.

This election is about more than Democrats and Republicans. It is about who we are as a nation, and who we will be in the future.

Two hundred and forty years ago, in Philadelphia, we started a revolution of ideas and of action that continues to this day. Since then, our union has been tested many times, through bondage and civil war, segregation and depression, two world wars and the threat of nuclear annihilation. Generations of Americans fought and marched and organized to widen the circle of opportunity and dignity—and we are fighting still.

Despite what some say, America is and has always been great—but not because it has been perfect. What makes America great is our unerring belief that we can make it better. We can and we will build a more just economy, a more equal society, and a more perfect union—because we are stronger together.

Raise Incomes and Restore Economic Security for the Middle Class

Democrats believe we must break down all the barriers holding Americans back and restore the basic bargain that built America's mighty middle class: If you work hard and play by the rules, you can get ahead and stay ahead. The system is not working when we have a rigged economy in which ordinary Americans work longer hours for lower wages, while most new income and wealth goes to the top one percent. Republican governors, legislatures, and their corporate allies have launched attack after attack on workers' fundamental rights to organize and bargain collectively. Too many Americans are living paycheck to paycheck, and hallmarks of a middle class life—owning a home, having access to affordable and quality childcare, retiring with dignity—feel out of reach. It is no wonder so many Americans feel like the deck is stacked against them. The Democratic Party believes that supporting workers through higher wages, workplace protections, policies to balance work and family, and other investments will help rebuild the middle class for the 21st century.

Raising Workers' Wages

Democrats believe that the current minimum wage is a starvation wage and must be increased to a living wage. No one who works full time should have to raise a family in poverty. We believe that Americans should earn at least $15 an hour and have the right to form or join a union and will work in every way we can—in Congress and the federal government, in states and with the private sector—to reach this goal. We should raise the federal minimum wage to $15 an hour

over time and index it, give all Americans the ability to join a union regardless of where they work, and create new ways for workers to have power in the economy so every worker can earn at least $15 an hour. We applaud the approaches taken by states like New York and California. We also support creating one fair wage for all workers by ending the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers and people with disabilities.

Democrats support a model employer executive order or some other vehicle to leverage federal dollars to support employers who provide their workers with a living wage, good benefits, and the opportunity to form a union without reprisal. The one trillion dollars spent annually by the government on contracts, loans, and grants should be used to support good jobs that rebuild the middle class.

Protecting Workers' Fundamental Rights

The Democratic Party believes that when workers are strong, America is strong. Democrats will make it easier for workers, public and private, to exercise their right to organize and join unions. We will fight to pass laws that direct the National Labor Relations Board to certify a union if a simple majority of eligible workers sign valid authorization cards, as well as laws that bring companies to the negotiating table. We support binding arbitration to help workers who have voted to join a union reach a first contract.

A major factor in the 40-year decline in the middle class is that the rights of workers to bargain collectively for better wages and benefits have been under attack at all levels. Donald Trump would make matters worse by creating a race to the bottom where the middle class is fighting over fewer and fewer good-paying jobs. In fact, Trump rejected some attempts by his own employees to unionize and has personally hired union-busting firms to undermine workers' rights.

Democrats believe so-called "right to work" laws are wrong for workers—such as teachers and other public employees who serve our communities every day—and wrong for America. We will continue to vigorously oppose those laws and other efforts that would eliminate dues check-off procedures, roll-back prevailing wage standards, abolish fair share requirements, restrict the use of voluntary membership payments for political purposes, attack seniority, restrict due process protections, and require annual recertification efforts. We oppose legislation and lawsuits that would strike down laws protecting the rights of teachers and other public employees. We will defend President Obama's overtime rule, which protects of millions of workers by paying them fairly for their hard work.

The Democratic Party believes consumers, workers, students, retirees, and investors who have been mistreated should never be denied their right to fight for fair treatment under the law. That is why we will support efforts to limit 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.

Supporting Working Families

We will fight to secure equal pay for women, which will benefit all women and their families, particularly women of color who are disproportionately impacted by discriminatory pay

practices, and against other factors that contribute to the wage gap. And we will combat the discrimination they face on and off the job. While Donald Trump thinks it is "dangerous" for women to leave the home and paid family leave hurts our economy, Democrats will make sure that the United States finally enacts national paid family and medical leave by passing a family and medical leave act that would provide all workers at least 12 weeks of paid leave to care for a new child or address a personal or family member's serious health issue. We will fight to allow workers the right to earn at least seven days of paid sick leave. We will also encourage employers to provide paid vacation.

Our work and family policies must also help family caregivers. We will ensure that family caregivers have the support, respite care, and training they need to support their loved ones. We will create a strong stable paid caregiving workforce to help meet families' needs, by raising wages, improving access to training, and giving workers the opportunity to come together to make their voices heard in support of a stronger system. We will address the conditions that make it hard for workers with unpredictable or inflexible schedules to meet caregiving responsibilities. We will take steps to expand and strengthen the home care workforce. We will increase investments to make quality childcare more affordable, boost wages for childcare workers, and support the millions of people paying for, coordinating, or providing care for aging relatives or those with disabilities.

Helping More Workers Share in Near-Record Corporate Profits
Corporate profits are at near-record highs, but workers have not shared through rising wages. Profit-sharing is linked to higher pay and productivity. That is why, working with business, labor, and other stakeholders, we will incentivize companies to share profits with their employees on top of wages and pay increases, while targeting the workers and businesses that need profit-sharing the most.

Expanding Access to Affordable Housing and Homeownership
Whereas the Republican Presidential nominee rooted for the housing crisis, Democrats will continue to fight for those families who suffered the loss of their homes. We will help those who are working toward a path of financial stability and will put sustainable home ownership into the reach of more families. Democrats will also combat the affordable housing crisis and skyrocketing rents in many parts of the country, which is leading too many families and workers to be pushed out of communities where they work.

We will preserve and increase the supply of affordable rental housing by expanding incentives to ease local barriers to building new affordable rental housing developments in areas of economic opportunity. We will substantially increase funding for the National Housing Trust Fund to construct, preserve, and rehabilitate millions of affordable housing rental units. Not only will this help address the affordable housing crisis, it will also create millions of good-paying jobs in the process. Democrats believe that we should provide more federal resources to the people struggling most with unaffordable housing: low-income families, people with disabilities, veterans, and the elderly.

We will expand efforts to address the lingering effects of the foreclosure crisis through programs like the federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program. We will also expand programs to prevent

displacement of existing residents, especially in communities of color; create affordable and workforce housing; and preserve neighborhood-serving nonprofit organizations and small businesses. We will reinvigorate housing production programs, repair public housing, and increase funding for the housing choice voucher program and other rental assistance programs. And we will fight for robust funding to end homelessness in our cities and counties once and for all, through targeted investments to provide the necessary outreach, social services, and housing options for all populations experiencing homelessness. We will engage in a stronger, more coordinated, and better funded partnership among federal, state, and local governments to end chronic homelessness for millions of Americans. We will build on and expand President Obama's promising initiatives to end veteran and family homelessness in our country.

We must make sure that everyone has a fair shot at homeownership. We will keep the housing market robust and inclusive by supporting more first-time homebuyers and putting more Americans into the financial position to become sustainable homeowners; preserving the 30-year fixed rate mortgage; modernizing credit scoring; clarifying lending rules; expanding access to housing counseling; defending and strengthening the Fair Housing Act; and ensuring that regulators have the clear direction, resources, and authority to enforce those rules effectively. We will prevent predatory lending by defending the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). These steps are especially important because over the next decade most new households will be formed by families in communities of color, which typically have less generational wealth and fewer resources to put towards a down payment.

Protecting and Expanding Social Security

Democrats are proud to be the party that created Social Security, one of the nation's most successful and effective programs. Without Social Security, nearly half of America's seniors would be living in poverty. Social Security is more than just a retirement program. It also provides important life insurance to young survivors of deceased workers and provides disability insurance protection. We will fight 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 reducing earned benefits. Democrats will expand Social Security so that every American can retire with dignity and respect, including women who are widowed or took time out of the workforce to care for their children, aging parents, or ailing family members. The Democratic Party recognizes that the way Social Security cost-of- living adjustments are calculated may not always reflect the spending patterns of seniors, particularly the disproportionate amount they spend on health care expenses. We are committed to exploring alternatives that could better and more equitably serve seniors.

We will make sure Social Security's guaranteed benefits continue for generations to come by asking those at the top to pay more, and will achieve this goal by taxing some of the income of people above $250,000. The Democratic Party is also committed to providing all necessary financial support for the Social Security Administration so that it can provide timely benefits and high-quality service for those it serves. Our plan contrasts starkly with Donald Trump. He has referred to Social Security as a "Ponzi scheme" and has called for privatizing it as well as increasing the retirement age.

Ensuring a Secure and Dignified Retirement
Democrats believe it should be easier for Americans to save for retirement and prepare for unforeseen risks and expenses. We will defend the right of workers to collect their defined benefit pensions and make sure workers get priority and protection when pension plans are in distress. Democrats will also fight to enact legislation to make sure that the earned pension benefits of Americans will not be cut, and will pay for it by closing tax loopholes that benefit millionaires and billionaires. We will fight against any attempt by Republicans in Congress or on Wall Street to roll back the Conflict of Interest Rule, which requires that retirement advisors put the best interests of their clients above their own financial gain.

Seniors should not have to choose between putting food on the table, keeping a roof over their heads, or buying the medication that they need to stay healthy. We strongly support the Older Americans Act, which funds critical programs to help seniors remain independent in their own homes and communities. We are also committed to fighting the immense problem of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Revitalizing Our Nation's Postal Service
The United States Postal Service (USPS) is a national treasure. That is why Democrats embrace a vibrant, public Postal Service that offers universal service, and reject any effort to privatize or marginalize it. We are committed to eliminating the unsustainable mandate to "pre-fund" retiree health costs. 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. Democrats also advocate for expanding postal services. This includes offering basic financial services such as paycheck cashing and removing statutory restraints on services the USPS may offer. It also includes promoting vote-by-mail to increase voter participation and to help address the scourge of voter suppression.

Create Good-Paying Jobs

Democrats know that nothing is more important than creating good-paying jobs that can support a middle-class life—from nurses, firefighters, and teachers to construction workers, factory workers, and small business owners. That is why we are committed to doing everything we can to build a full-employment economy, where everyone has a job that pays enough to raise a family and live in dignity with a sense of purpose. Democrats will build strong, sustained, shared economic growth. We know that when Americans come together, we can do amazing things. In the last century, our leaders came together across the aisle to electrify the nation, build the Interstate Highway System, support groundbreaking research in medicine, science, and communications, and send a man to the moon. When we are bold and ambitious, we can do big things and make our economy stronger for decades to come.

Building 21st Century Infrastructure
If we are serious about reversing the decline of the middle class, we need major federal investments to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure and put millions of Americans back to work

in decent paying jobs in both the public and private sectors. The climate emergency and the need to expand the middle class demand that we make the most ambitious investment in American infrastructure since President Eisenhower created the interstate highway system. We will put Americans to work updating and expanding our roads, bridges, public transit, airports, and passenger and freight rail lines. We will build 21st century energy and water systems, modernize our schools, and continue to support the expansion of high-speed broadband networks. We will protect communities from the impact of climate change and help them to mitigate its effects by investing in green and resilient infrastructure. We will address the backlog of deferred maintenance in our four key public land management agencies. And we will protect public health and safety by modernizing drinking and wastewater systems. These investments will create secure, good-paying middle-class jobs today and will substantially increase demand for American-made steel and other products manufactured in the United States. And by boosting economic growth in a fair and equitable way, and strengthening our long-term competitiveness, these investments will create many more jobs in the years to come.

Democrats will also create an independent, national infrastructure bank that will support critical infrastructure improvements. This bank will provide loans and other financial assistance for investments in energy, water, broadband, transportation, and multi-modal infrastructure projects. Democrats will continue to support the interest tax exemption on municipal bonds and will work to establish a permanent version of Build America Bonds as an additional tool to encourage infrastructure investment by state and local governments.

Furthermore, Democrats will fight to ensure resources and programs are adequately targeted to provide economic development, job training, and critical infrastructure investment in areas of the greatest need.

Fostering a Manufacturing Renaissance

Democrats believe one of the best ways to innovate, prosper, and create good-paying jobs is to make more in America, which is why we firmly support American manufacturing with a "Make it in America" plan. We must revitalize hard-hit manufacturing communities; create thriving hubs of manufacturing and innovation throughout the country; and claw back tax breaks for companies that ship jobs overseas, using the proceeds to reinvest in communities and workers at home instead. Democrats are proud of rescuing the auto industry from collapse, which saved more than a million jobs, and led the auto industry, which is at the heart of American manufacturing, to record sales. Democrats will defend the Export-Import Bank, which supports good-paying jobs across the country and allows American workers and manufacturers to compete on a level playing field. Donald Trump may talk tough, but he has consistently outsourced his own products. American workers deserve better.

Creating Good-Paying Clean Energy Jobs

We must help American workers and businesses compete for jobs and investments in global clean energy, high-tech products, internet technology products, and advanced manufacturing and vehicles. We must make American manufacturing more internationally competitive by making it the greenest and most efficient in the world, including by investing in industrial energy efficiency.

Pursuing Our Innovation Agenda: Science, Research, Education, and Technology
Democrats support ambitious public and private investments in science, technology, and research. We are focused on creating good jobs in communities across America. Entrepreneurship and innovation are fundamental to our future economic growth—in the information technology (IT) industry as well as energy, manufacturing, transportation, health, retail, services, and countless other sectors. We will nurture the next generation of scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs, especially women and people of color, to make sure America continues to out-compete and out-innovate the rest of the world with our bold innovation agenda.

New technologies are already transforming our economy, and they have the power to generate trillions in economic output. We must harness these forces so that they create higher-paying jobs across the country, bring more people into the workforce, and reduce inequality. To do this, we need to educate our people and train our workforce; support entrepreneurship and promote inclusion in the digital economy; attract and retain talented people from all over the world; and invest in research and development, innovation hubs, as well as in getting ideas to market. We also need to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn computer science by the time they graduate from high school.

Democrats believe we must harness the promise of technological innovation to promote community participation and enhance opportunities to achieve greater economic self-sufficiency for people with disabilities. We will encourage technology transfer, entrepreneurship, and small business creation throughout the country and in all types of innovation sectors.

High-speed internet connectivity is not a luxury; it is a necessity for 21st century economic success, social mobility, education, health care, and public safety. Despite considerable progress and private investment in the last eight years to close the digital divide, there is more work to do. Democrats will finish the job of connecting every household in America to high-speed broadband, increase internet adoption, and help hook up anchor institutions so they can offer free WiFi to the public. We will take action to help America widely deploy 5G technology—the next generation wireless service that will not only bring faster internet connections to underserved areas, but will enable the Internet of Things and a host of transformative technologies.

Democrats support a free and open internet at home and abroad, and will oppose any effort by Republicans to roll back the historic net neutrality rules that the Federal Communications Commission enacted last year.

Democrats value American innovation and believe it is one of our country's great strengths. We will protect the intellectual property rights of artists, creators, and inventors at home and abroad. The entire nation prospers when we promote the unique and original artistic and cultural contributions of the women and men who create and preserve our nation's heritage.

Democrats will fight against unfair theft of intellectual property and trade secrets. We will increase access to global markets for American intellectual property and other digital trade by opposing quotas, discriminatory measures, and data localization requirements.

Pushing beyond the boundaries of what we know is core to who we are as Americans. Democrats are immensely proud of all that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has done—through its achievements in science, technology and exploration—to better understand our place in the universe and inspire and educate generations of young people in this country to pursue careers in science. Space exploration is a reminder that our capacity for curiosity is limitless, and may be matched only by our ability to achieve great things if we work together. Democrats believe in continuing the spirit of discovery that has animated NASA's exploration of space over the last half century. We will strengthen support for NASA and work in partnership with the international scientific community to launch new missions to space.

Supporting America's Small Businesses

The Democratic Party will make it easier to start and grow a small business in America, unlike Donald Trump, who has often stiffed small businesses—nearly bankrupting some—with his deceptive and reckless corporate practices. By supporting small business and entrepreneurship, we can grow jobs faster in America. We will cut the red tape that holds back small businesses and entrepreneurs. We will open up access to credit because we know that small businesses are some of the best job creators in our country. We will provide tax relief and tax simplification. And we will expand access to new markets because every American small business should be able to tap new markets — whether across their city, across their state, or around the world. Democrats will provide targeted funding and support for entrepreneurship and small business growth in underserved communities. Democrats also realize the critical importance of small businesses as engines of opportunity for women, people of color, tribes, and people in rural America, and will work to nurture entrepreneurship.

Creating Jobs for America's Young People

Democrats will make investments to spur the creation of millions of jobs for our young people. Roughly one in ten Americans between the ages of 16 and 24 is unemployed, more than twice the national average. The unemployment rates for African American, Latino, Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI), and American Indian teenagers and youth with disabilities are far too high. That is why Democrats will provide direct federal funding for a range of local programs that will put young people to work and create new career opportunities.

Fight for Economic Fairness and Against Inequality

Democrats believe that today's extreme levels of income and wealth inequality are bad for our people, bad for our businesses, and bad for our economy. Our country depends on a thriving middle class to drive economic growth, but the middle class is shrinking. Meanwhile, the top one-tenth of one percent of Americans now own almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent combined. These trends create problems beyond insulting our sense of basic fairness. Social mobility is far lower than most believe it to be. Children who are born to families in the lowest fifth of earnings are more than 10 times more likely to remain there as adults than they are to earn as much as those in the top fifth. Unless we invest in building a level playing field, we all lose.

Reining in Wall Street and Fixing our Financial System

To restore economic fairness, Democrats will fight against the greed and recklessness of Wall Street. Wall Street cannot be an island unto itself, gambling trillions in risky financial instruments and making huge profits, all the while thinking that taxpayers will be there to bail them out again. We must tackle dangerous risks in big banks and elsewhere in the financial system. We must make Wall Street work for the job-creating, productive economy—including by making loans more affordable for small- and medium-sized businesses. We need to prohibit Wall Street from picking and choosing which credit agency will rate its products as well as from imposing excessive fees on consumers. And we must hold both individuals and corporations accountable when they break the law. Democrats believe that no bank can be too big to fail and no executive too powerful to jail. Democrats will support stronger criminal laws and civil penalties for Wall Street criminals who prey on the public trust. We also support extending the statute of limitations for prosecuting major financial fraud, and providing the Department of Justice, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission more resources to prosecute wrongdoing. "Equal Justice Under Law" will not just be words engraved on the entrance of the Supreme Court. It will be the standard that applies to Wall Street and all Americans.

We will also vigorously implement, enforce, and build on President Obama's landmark Dodd-Frank financial reform law, and we will stop dead in its tracks every Republican effort to weaken it. We will stop Republican efforts to hamstring our regulators through budget cuts, and we will ensure they have the resources and independence to fully enforce the law and hold both individuals and corporations accountable when they break the rules. We will also continue to protect consumers and defend the CFPB from Republican attacks. We oppose any efforts to change the CFPB's structure from a single director to a partisan, gridlocked Commission and likewise oppose any efforts to remove the Bureau's independent funding and subject it to the appropriations process. Democrats will also continue to support the CFPB in enforcing foundational civil rights laws protecting against discrimination in consumer lending. Democrats condemn predatory payday lending, and will protect consumers by defending the CFPB and implementing strong new regulations.

Our goal must be to create a financial system and an economy that works for all Americans, not just a handful of billionaires. We support a financial transactions tax on Wall Street to curb excessive speculation and high-frequency trading, which has threatened financial markets. We acknowledge that there is room within our party for a diversity of views on a broader financial transactions tax.

Democrats will not hesitate to use and expand existing authorities as well as empower regulators to downsize or break apart financial institutions when necessary to protect the public and safeguard financial stability, including new authorities to go after risky shadow-banking activities. Banks should not be able to gamble with taxpayers' deposits or pose an undue risk to Main Street. Democrats support a variety of ways to stop this from happening, including an updated and modernized version of Glass-Steagall as well as breaking up too-big-to-fail financial institutions that pose a systemic risk to the stability of our economy.

We believe that personnel is policy. We will nominate and appoint regulators and officials who are not beholden to the industries they regulate—people with a track record of standing up to power and safeguarding the public trust. We will crack down on the revolving door between the private sector—particularly Wall Street—and the federal government. We will ban golden parachutes for those taking government jobs. We will limit conflicts of interest by requiring bank and corporate regulators to recuse themselves from official work on particular matters that would directly benefit their former employers. And we will bar financial service regulators from lobbying their former colleagues for at least two years.

We will protect and defend the Federal Reserve's independence to carry out the dual mandate assigned to it by Congress—for both full employment and low inflation—against threats from new legislation. We will also reform the Federal Reserve to make it more representative of America as a whole, and we will fight to enhance its independence by ensuring that executives of financial institutions are not allowed to serve on the boards of regional Federal Reserve banks or to select members of those boards.

At a time when many of the largest banks have shunned communities across America, Democrats believe that we need to give Americans affordable banking options, including by empowering the United States Postal Service to facilitate the delivery of basic banking services.

Promoting Competition by Stopping Corporate Concentration

Large corporations have concentrated their control over markets to a greater degree than Americans have seen in decades—further evidence that the deck is stacked for those at the top. Democrats will take steps to stop corporate concentration in any industry where it is unfairly limiting competition. We will make competition policy and antitrust stronger and more responsive to our economy today, enhance the antitrust enforcement arms of the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), and encourage other agencies to police anti-competitive practices in their areas of jurisdiction.

We support the historic purpose of the antitrust laws to protect competition and prevent excessively consolidated economic and political power, which can be corrosive to a healthy democracy. We support reinvigorating DOJ and FTC enforcement of antitrust laws to prevent abusive behavior by dominant companies, and protecting the public interest against abusive, discriminatory, and unfair methods of commerce. We support President Obama's recent Executive Order, directing all agencies to identify specific actions they can take in their areas of jurisdiction to detect anticompetitive practices—such as tying arrangements, price fixing, and exclusionary conduct—and to refer practices that appear to violate federal antitrust law to the DOJ and FTC.

Making the Wealthy Pay Their Fair Share of Taxes

At a time of massive income and wealth inequality, we believe the wealthiest Americans and largest corporations must pay their fair share of taxes. Democrats will claw back tax breaks for companies that ship jobs overseas, eliminate tax breaks for big oil and gas companies, and crack down on inversions and other methods companies use to dodge their tax responsibilities. We will make sure that our tax code rewards businesses that make investments and provide good-paying jobs here in the United States, not businesses that walk out on America. We will end deferrals so

that American corporations pay United States taxes immediately on foreign profits and can no longer escape paying their fair share of U.S. taxes by stashing profits abroad. We will then use the revenue raised from fixing the corporate tax code to reinvest in rebuilding America and ensuring economic growth that will lead to millions of good-paying jobs.

We will ensure those at the top contribute to our country's future by establishing a multimillionaire surtax to ensure millionaires and billionaires pay their fair share. In addition, we will shut down the "private tax system" for those at the top, immediately close egregious loopholes like those enjoyed by hedge fund managers, restore fair taxation on multimillion dollar estates, and ensure millionaires can no longer pay a lower rate than their secretaries. At a time of near-record corporate profits, slow wage growth, and rising costs, we need to offer tax relief to middle-class families—not those at the top.

Democrats believe that no one should be able avoid paying their fair share by hiding money abroad, and that corrupt leaders and terrorists should not be able to use the system of international finance to their advantage. We will work to crack down on tax evasion and promote transparency to fight corruption and terrorism. And we will make sure that law-abiding Americans living abroad are not unfairly penalized by finding the right solutions for them to the requirements under the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) and Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR).

We will offer tax relief to hard working, middle-class families for the cost squeeze they have faced for years from rising health care, childcare, education, and other expenses. Donald Trump and the Republican Party would do the opposite and provide trillions in tax cuts for millionaires, billionaires, and corporations at the expense of working families, seniors, and the health of our economy.

Promoting Trade That is Fair and Benefits American Workers

Democrats acknowledge that for millions of Americans, global trade has failed to live up to its promise—with too many countries breaking the rules and too many corporations outsourcing jobs at the expense of American workers and communities.

Over the past three decades, America has signed too many trade deals that have not lived up to the hype. Trade deals often boosted the profits of large corporations, while at the same time failing to protect workers' rights, labor standards, the environment, and public health. We need to end the race to the bottom and develop trade policies that support jobs in America. That is why Democrats believe we should review agreements negotiated years ago to update them to reflect these principles. Any future trade agreements must make sure our trading partners cannot undercut American workers by taking shortcuts on labor policy or the environment. They must not undermine democratic decision-making through special privileges and private courts for corporations, and trade negotiations must be transparent and inclusive.

Democrats' priority is to significantly strengthen enforcement of existing trade rules and the tools we have, including by holding countries accountable on currency manipulation and significantly expanding enforcement resources. China and other countries are using unfair trade practices to tilt the playing field against American workers and businesses. When they dump

cheap products into our markets, subsidize state-owned enterprises, devalue currencies, and discriminate against American companies, our middle class pays the price. That has to stop. Democrats will use all our trade enforcement tools to hold China and other trading partners accountable—because no country should be able to manipulate their currencies to gain a competitive advantage.

While we believe that openness to the world economy is an important source of American leadership and dynamism, we will oppose trade agreements that do not support good American jobs, raise wages, and improve our national security. We believe any new trade agreements must include strong and enforceable labor and environmental standards in their core text with streamlined and effective enforcement mechanisms. Trade agreements should crack down on the unfair and illegal subsidies other countries grant their businesses at the expense of ours. It should promote innovation of and access to lifesaving medicines. And it should protect a free and open internet. We should never enter into a trade agreement that prevents our government, or other governments, from putting in place rules that protect the environment, food safety, or the health of American citizens or others around the world.

These are the standards Democrats believe must be applied to all trade agreements, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

Bring Americans Together and Remove Barriers to Opportunities

Democrats believe that everyone deserves the chance to live up to his or her God-given potential. We know that there are barriers standing in the way of that goal, from the enduring scourge of systemic racism to our deeply broken immigration system to discrimination against people on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity—and we are committed to facing those problems and fixing them. Being stronger together means reaching communities that have been left out and left behind for too long, from coal country to Indian Country to neighborhoods held back by multigenerational poverty. In America, we do not tear each other down—we lift each other up.

Ending Systemic Racism

Democrats will fight to end institutional and systemic racism in our society. We will challenge and dismantle the structures that define lasting racial, economic, political, and social inequity. Democrats will promote racial justice through fair, just, and equitable governing of all public-serving institutions and in the formation of public policy. Democrats support removing the Confederate battle flag from public properties, recognizing that it is a symbol of our nation's racist past that has no place in our present or our future. We will push for a societal transformation to make it clear that black lives matter and that there is no place for racism in our country.

Closing the Racial Wealth Gap

America's economic inequality problem is even more pronounced when it comes to racial and ethnic disparities in wealth and income. It is unacceptable that the median wealth for African Americans and Latino Americans is roughly one-tenth that of white Americans. These disparities are also stark for American Indians and certain Asian American subgroups, and may become

even more significant when considering other characteristics such as age, disability status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

The racial wealth and income gaps are the result of policies that discriminate against people of color and constrain their ability to earn income and build assets to the same extent as other Americans. It has accumulated over time and is made worse by ongoing policies and practices. For example, African Americans and Latinos lost more than half of their net worth as a result of the housing crisis and the Great Recession, because they lost jobs at a much faster rate than white workers and because they were disproportionately targeted for subprime, predatory, and fraudulent mortgages during the run-up to the housing crisis.

Democrats believe it is long past time to close this racial wealth gap. Disparities in wealth cannot be solved by the free market alone, but instead, the federal government must play a role in eliminating systemic barriers to wealth accumulation for different racial groups and improving opportunities for people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds to build wealth. Federal policies must remove barriers to achieving sustainable homeownership, provide for greater diversity in federal and state contracting practices, incentivize and expand access to retirement investment programs, increase opportunities for quality jobs and education, and challenge the deeply rooted structures that perpetuate and exacerbate current disparities and ultimately stagnate the nation's economic growth and security.

Reforming our Criminal Justice System

Democrats are committed to reforming our criminal justice system and ending mass incarceration. Something is profoundly wrong when almost a quarter of the world's prison population is in the United States, even though our country has less than five percent of the world's population. We will reform mandatory minimum sentences and close private prisons and detention centers. Research and evidence, rather than slogans and sound bites, must guide criminal justice policies.

We will rebuild the bonds of trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve. Across the country, there are police officers inspiring trust and confidence, honorably doing their duty, deploying creative and effective strategies, and demonstrating that it is possible to prevent crime without relying on unnecessary force. They deserve our respect and support, and we should learn from those examples and build on what works.

We will work with police chiefs to invest in training for officers on issues such as de-escalation and the creation of national guidelines for the appropriate use of force. We will encourage better police-community relations, require the use of body cameras, and stop the use of weapons of war that have no place in our communities. We will end racial profiling that targets individuals solely on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, or national origin, which is un-American and counterproductive. We should report national data on policing strategies and provide greater transparency and accountability. We will require the Department of Justice to investigate all questionable or suspicious police-involved shootings, and we will support states and localities who help make those investigations and prosecutions more transparent, including through reforming the grand jury process. We will assist states in providing a system of public defense that is adequately resourced and which meets American Bar Association standards. And we will

reform the civil asset forfeiture system to protect people and remove perverse incentives for law enforcement to "police for a profit."

Instead of investing in more jails and incarceration, we need to invest more in jobs and education, and end the school-to-prison pipeline. We will remove barriers to help formerly incarcerated individuals successfully re-enter society by "banning the box," expanding reentry programs, and restoring voting rights. We think the next President should take executive action to ban the box for federal employers and contractors, so applicants have an opportunity to demonstrate their qualifications before being asked about their criminal records.

The "war on drugs" has led to the imprisonment of millions of Americans, disproportionately people of color, without reducing drug use. Whenever possible, Democrats will prioritize prevention and treatment over incarceration when tackling addiction and substance use disorder. We will build on effective models of drug courts, veterans' courts, and other diversionary programs that seek to give nonviolent offenders opportunities for rehabilitation as opposed to incarceration.

Because of conflicting federal and state laws concerning marijuana, we encourage the federal government to remove marijuana from the list of "Schedule 1" federal controlled substances and to appropriately regulate it, providing a reasoned pathway for future legalization. We believe that the states should be laboratories of democracy on the issue of marijuana, and those states that want to decriminalize it or provide access to medical marijuana should be able to do so. We support policies that will allow more research on marijuana, as well as reforming our laws to allow legal marijuana businesses to exist without uncertainty. And we recognize our current marijuana laws have had an unacceptable disparate impact in terms of arrest rates for African Americans that far outstrip arrest rates for whites, despite similar usage rates.

We will abolish the death penalty, which has proven to be a cruel and unusual form of punishment. It has no place in the United States of America. The application of the death penalty is arbitrary and unjust. The cost to taxpayers far exceeds those of life imprisonment. It does not deter crime. And, exonerations show a dangerous lack of reliability for what is an irreversible punishment.

We have been inspired by the movements for criminal justice that directly address the discriminatory treatment of African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians to rebuild trust in the criminal justice system.

Fixing our Broken Immigration System

The United States was founded as, and continues to be, a country of immigrants from throughout the world. It is no coincidence that the Statue of Liberty is one of our most profound national symbols. And that is why Democrats believe immigration is not just a problem to be solved, it is a defining aspect of the American character and our shared history.

The Democratic Party supports legal immigration, within reasonable limits, that meets the needs of families, communities, and the economy as well as maintains the United States' role as a beacon of hope for people seeking safety, freedom, and security. People should come to the

United States with visas and not through smugglers. Yet, we recognize that the current immigration system is broken.

More than 11 million people are living in the shadows, without proper documentation. The immigration bureaucracy is full of backlogs that result in U.S. citizens waiting for decades to be reunited with family members, and green card holders waiting for years to be reunited with their spouses and minor children. The current quota system discriminates against certain immigrants, including immigrants of color, and needs to be reformed to the realities of the 21st century. And there are real questions about our detention and deportation policies that must be addressed.

Democrats believe we need to urgently fix our broken immigration system—which tears families apart and keeps workers in the shadows—and create a path to citizenship for law-abiding families who are here, making a better life for their families and contributing to their communities and our country. We should repeal the 3-year, 10-year and permanent bars, which often force persons in mixed status families into the heartbreaking dilemma of either pursuing a green card by leaving the country and their loved ones behind, or remaining in the shadows. We will work with Congress to end the forced and prolonged expulsion from the country that these immigrants endure when trying to adjust their status.

We must fix family backlogs and defend against those who would exclude or eliminate legal immigration avenues and denigrate immigrants. Those immigrants already living in the United States, who are assets to their communities and contribute so much to our country, should be incorporated completely into our society through legal processes that give meaning to our national motto: *E Pluribus Unum*.

And while we continue to fight for comprehensive immigration reform, we will defend and implement President Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and Deferred Action for Parents of Americans executive actions to help DREAMers, parents of citizens, and lawful permanent residents avoid deportation. We will build on these actions to provide relief for others, such as parents of DREAMers. We will support efforts by states to make DREAMers eligible for driver's licenses and in-state college tuition. We will invest in culturally-appropriate immigrant integration services, expand access to English language education, and promote naturalization to help the millions of people who are eligible for citizenship take that last step.

We believe immigration enforcement must be humane and consistent with our values. We should prioritize those who pose a threat to the safety of our communities, not hardworking families who are contributing to their communities. We will end raids and roundups of children and families, which unnecessarily sow fear in immigrant communities. We disfavor deportations of immigrants who served in our armed forces, and we want to create a faster path for such veterans to citizenship.

We should ensure due process for those fleeing violence in Central America and work with our regional partners to address the root causes of violence. We must take particular care with children, which is why we should guarantee government-funded counsel for unaccompanied children in immigration courts. We should consider all available means of protecting these individuals from the threats to their lives and safety—including strengthening in-country and

third-country processing, expanding the use of humanitarian parole, and granting Temporary Protected Status.

We will promote best practices among local law enforcement, in terms of how they collaborate with federal authorities, to ensure that they maintain and build trust between local law enforcement and the communities they serve. We will also vigorously oversee any programs put in place, to make sure that there are no abuses and no arbitrary deportation programs. We will establish an affirmative process for workers to report labor violations and to request deferred action. We will work to ensure that all Americans—regardless of immigration status—have access to quality health care. That means expanding community health centers, allowing all families to buy into the Affordable Care Act exchanges, supporting states that open up their public health insurance programs to all persons, and finally enacting comprehensive immigration reform. And we will expand opportunities for DREAMers to serve in the military and to then receive expedited pathways to citizenship.

We will fight to end federal, state, and municipal contracts with for-profit private prisons and private detention centers. In order to end family detention, we will ensure humane alternatives for those who pose no public threat. We recognize that there are vulnerable communities within our immigration system who are often seeking refuge from persecution abroad, such as LGBT families, for whom detention can be unacceptably dangerous.

We reject attempts to impose a religious test to bar immigrants or refugees from entering the United States. It is un-American and runs counter to the founding principles of this country.

Finally, Democrats will not stand for the divisive and derogatory language of Donald Trump. His offensive comments about immigrants and other communities have no place in our society. This kind of rhetoric must be rejected.

Guaranteeing Civil Rights

Democrats will always fight to end discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, language, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. We need to promote civility and speak out against bigotry and other forms of intolerance that have entered our political discourse. It is unacceptable to target, defame, or exclude anyone because of their race, ethnicity, national origin, language, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. While freedom of expression is a fundamental constitutional principle, we must condemn hate speech that creates a fertile climate for violence. We condemn Donald Trump's demonization of prisoners of war, women, Muslims, Mexicans, and people with disabilities; his playing coy with white supremacists; and the climate of bigotry he is creating. We also condemn the recent uptick in other forms of hate speech, like anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

Guaranteeing Women's Rights

We are committed to ensuring full equality for women. Democrats will fight to end gender discrimination in the areas of education, employment, health care, or any other sphere. We will combat biases across economic, political, and social life that hold women back and limit their opportunities and also tackle specific challenges facing women of color. After 240 years, we will

finally enshrine the rights of women in the Constitution by passing the Equal Rights Amendment. And we will urge U.S. ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Guaranteeing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights

Democrats applaud last year's decision by the Supreme Court that recognized that LGBT people—like other Americans—have the right to marry the person they love. But there is still much work to be done. LGBT kids continue to be bullied at school, restaurants can refuse to serve transgender people, and same-sex couples are at risk of being evicted from their homes. That is unacceptable and must change. Democrats will fight for the continued development of sex discrimination law to cover LGBT people. We will also fight for comprehensive federal non-discrimination protections for all LGBT Americans, to guarantee equal rights in areas such as housing, employment, public accommodations, credit, jury service, education, and federal funding. We will oppose all state efforts to discriminate against LGBT individuals, including legislation that restricts the right to access public spaces. We support a progressive vision of religious freedom that respects pluralism and rejects the misuse of religion to discriminate. We will combat LGBT youth homelessness and improve school climates. We will support LGBT elders, ensure access to necessary health care, and protect LGBT people from violence—including ending the crisis of violence against transgender Americans. We will also promote LGBT human rights and ensure America's foreign policy is inclusive of LGBT people around the world.

Guaranteeing Rights for People with Disabilities

No one should face discrimination based on disability status. Democrats are committed to realizing the full promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act. We will protect and expand the right of Americans with disabilities to get the accommodations and support they need to live in integrated community settings. We will improve access to meaningful and gainful employment for people with disabilities. We will provide tax relief to help the millions of families caring for aging relatives or family members with chronic illnesses or disabilities. And we will continue to fight for ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Respecting Faith and Service

Democrats know that our nation, our communities, and our lives are made vastly stronger and richer by faith in many forms and the countless acts of justice, mercy, and tolerance it inspires. We believe in lifting up and valuing the good work of people of faith and religious organizations and finding ways to support that work where possible.

We believe in the power of national service to solve problems and break down barriers by bringing people of all backgrounds together in common purpose. National service expands opportunity for people across America, strengthening our communities and our country. And those who serve earn education awards that they can use for college while building valuable work skills. We will support and strengthen AmeriCorps with the goal that every American who wants to participate in full-time national service will have the opportunity to do so.

Investing in Rural America

We will work to build a stronger rural and agricultural economy. Democrats will increase funding to support the next generation of farmers and ranchers, with particular attention given to promoting environmentally sustainable agricultural practices. We will encourage programs to protect and enhance family farms, a cherished way of life for millions of Americans. We will expand local food markets and regional food systems and provide a focused safety net to assist family operations that need support during challenging times. And we will promote clean energy leadership and collaborative stewardship of our natural resources, while expanding opportunities in rural communities across America. While the EPA's new Agricultural Worker Protection Standard goes a long way to protect farmworkers from harmful pesticides and herbicides, we recognize there is a lot more we can do. The Democratic Party supports stronger agricultural worker protections including regulation of work hours, elimination of child labor, ensuring adequate housing for migrant workers, and sanitary facilities in the field.

Democrats will spur investment to power the rural economy. We support strengthening rural water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure to make rural businesses more competitive. We will expand access to equity capital for businesses and expand the New Markets Tax Credit to better serve rural small businesses. We will promote collaborative stewardship of our natural resources, while developing clean fuels that will grow our economy, lower our energy bills, combat climate change, and make America the clean energy superpower of the 21st century. We will provide assistance to producers who conserve and improve natural resources on their farms and double loan guarantees that support the bio-based economy's dynamic growth.

Ending Poverty and Investing in Communities Left Behind

We reaffirm our commitment to eliminate poverty. Democrats will develop a national strategy, coordinated across all levels of government, to combat poverty. We will direct more federal resources to lifting up communities that have been left out and left behind, such as the 10-20-30 model, which directs 10 percent of program funds to communities where at least 20 percent of the population has been living below the poverty line for 30 years or more. We will also focus on communities that suffer from persistent poverty, including empowerment zones and areas that targeted government data indicate are in persistent poverty.

In the richest country in the world, no one, especially our children, should go hungry. This is why Democrats will protect proven programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—our nation's most important anti-hunger program—that help struggling families put food on the table. We will also help people grow their skills through jobs and skills training opportunities. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program should be expanded for low-wage workers not raising children, including extending the credit to young workers starting at age 21. The Child Tax Credit (CTC) should be expanded, for example, by making more of it refundable, or indexed to inflation to stem the erosion of the credit.

Democrats will also do more to invest in our most distressed communities—from our cities to coal country to the Rust Belt. We will create good-paying jobs and enhance opportunities by investing in small business, youth employment, and reentry programs for formerly incarcerated people. We will expand and make permanent the New Markets Tax Credit. We will improve

safety by repairing crumbling infrastructure in communities that need it most as well as on tribal lands. And we will make investments in affordable housing near good jobs and good schools.

Building Strong Cities and Metro Areas

Democrats have a comprehensive agenda to invest in America's cities, grounded on the premise that local leaders are best equipped to create a better future for their residents—but need the resources and flexibility to get the job done. We also recognize there is no easy way to build strong neighborhoods and strong cities, but rather we must address the challenge across many interconnected fronts—from housing, to schools, to jobs, to transportation, to health.

We will dramatically increase federal infrastructure funding for our cities—making significant new investments in roads and bridges, public transit, drinking and wastewater systems, broadband, schools, and more. Democrats also will revitalize communities being dragged down by physical decay by building on programs like the Neighborhood Stabilization Program and the Hardest Hit Fund, which have helped cities across the country begin to address these challenges. We will provide resources to help overcome blight, expand Community Development Block Grant funds, provide more housing support to high-poverty communities, and build more affordable rental housing units.

We will support entrepreneurship and small business growth in cities by providing mentoring and training to entrepreneurs and small business owners in underserved communities as well as expanding federal funding for the New Markets Tax Credit, community development financial institutions, and the State Small Business Credit Initiative.

Promoting Arts and Culture

Democrats are proud of our support for arts funding and education. We are committed to continuing the policies and programs that have already done so much for our creative arts industry and economy. Investment in the arts strengthens our communities and contributes to our nation's rich cultural heritage. We will continue to support public funding for the National Endowment for the Arts, for the National Endowment for the Humanities, and for programs providing art and music education in primary and secondary schools. The entire nation prospers when we protect and promote the unique artistic and cultural contributions of the women and men who create and preserve our nation's heritage.

Honoring Indigenous Tribal Nations

We have a profound moral and legal responsibility to the Indian tribes—throughout our history we have failed to live up to that trust. That is why the Democratic Party will fulfill, honor, and strengthen to the highest extent possible the United States' fundamental trust responsibility, grounded in the Constitution, treaties, and case law to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes.

We recognize the inherent sovereignty of Indian nations and will work to enact laws and policies that strengthen, not reduce, the powers of Indian nations over people who interact with them in Indian Country. We will work on a government-to-government basis to continue to empower Indian nations, and to provide sufficient and meaningful resources to Indian tribes to bolster economic development and self-determination. As Democrats, we will constantly seek to ensure that American Indian communities are safe, healthy, educated, innovative, and prosperous.

We will restore tribal lands by continuing to streamline the land-into-trust process and recognize the right of all tribes to protect their lands, air, and waters. We will continue to work on a government-to-government basis to address chronic underfunding, and provide meaningful resources and financial investments that will empower American Indian tribes through increased economic development and infrastructure improvements on tribal lands.

We will strengthen the operation of tribal housing programs, and reauthorize the Indian Housing Block Grant Program. We will increase affordable and safe housing and fight to significantly reduce homelessness on and off Indian reservations, especially among Native youth and veterans.

We will invest in Indian education from early childhood through higher education. We will fully fund the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), strengthen self-determination to enable culturally-tailored learning unique to each tribal nation, and help to recruit and retain qualified teachers for Native learners. Democrats will continue to support President Obama's Generation Indigenous initiative that has made important strides in promoting new investments and increased engagement with American Indian youth, including by continuing efforts to reform the BIE to provide students attending BIE-funded schools with a world-class culturally-based education. We also support the elimination of school and sports mascots that reflect derogatory stereotypes and that perpetuate racism.

We will strengthen tribal sovereignty and tribal jurisdiction by enacting laws and policies that enhance the ability of Indian nations to govern their territories, keep their communities safe, and prosecute crimes committed on tribal lands. We will build on the important provisions in the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, which reaffirmed the right of Indian tribes to prosecute perpetrators regardless of race who commit domestic violence on tribal lands. Democrats will continue to work to address criminal justice gaps that undermine the safety of tribal communities. And we will back these efforts through robust investments in effective tribal law enforcement and tribal courts.

We believe that health care is a core federal trust responsibility, and we support a robust expansion of the health care provided by the Indian Health Service. We will work to fully fund the Indian Health Service, Tribal, and Urban Indian health care system and to ensure that all American Indians have adequate, safe, and affordable access to primary care providers, including oral health, mental health practitioners, and substance abuse treatment options.

We acknowledge the past injustices and the misguided, harmful federal and state policies and actions based on outdated and discredited values and beliefs that resulted in the destruction of the Indian nations' economies, social, and religious systems, the taking of their lands, and the creation of intergenerational trauma that exists to this day. We believe that we have a moral and profound duty to honor, respect, and uphold our sacred obligation to the Indian nations and Indian peoples.

We will manage for tribal sacred places, and empower tribes to maintain and pass on traditional religious beliefs, languages, and social practices without fear of discrimination or suppression.

We also believe that Native children are the future of tribal nations and that the Indian Child Welfare Act is critical to the survival of Indian culture, government, and communities and must be enforced with the statutory intent of the law.

We will strengthen Indian voting rights, including improved access to polling locations. We will build on federal programs to reduce the disproportionate incarceration of American Indian and Alaska Native men and women, reduce disparities in prison sentencing, protect the religious rights of Native prisoners, reduce barriers to prisoner reentry, and offer access to housing and employment upon reentry.

We are committed to principles of environmental justice in Indian Country and we recognize that nature in all its life forms has the right to exist, persist, maintain, and regenerate its vital cycles. We call for a climate change policy that protects tribal resources, protects tribal health, and provides accountability through accessible, culturally appropriate participation and strong enforcement. Our climate change policy will cut carbon emission, address poverty, invest in disadvantaged communities, and improve both air quality and public health. We support the tribal nations efforts to develop wind, solar, and other clean energy jobs.

We will engage in meaningful and productive consultation with Tribal Leaders, and will host a White House Tribal Nations Conference annually bringing together cabinet and senior level federal officials to gather input from Tribal Nations when formulating federal policy impacting tribes. Democrats believe that American Indian/Alaska Natives shall be represented in the federal government to properly reflect their needs and will work to appoint American Indian/Alaska Natives to key positions, including retaining a senior level policy position in the White House Domestic Policy Council. We will strengthen the White House Council on Native American Affairs. Democrats will increase engagement with American Indians/Alaska Natives living outside of tribal communities.

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, health, language, and education. We recognize and honor the contributions and sacrifices made in service to our country by Native Hawaiians.

Fighting for the People of Puerto Rico

And we are committed to addressing the extraordinary challenges faced by our fellow citizens in Puerto Rico. Many stem from the fundamental question of Puerto Rico's political status. Democrats believe that the people of Puerto Rico should determine their ultimate political status from permanent options that do not conflict with the Constitution, laws, and policies of the United States. Democrats are committed to promoting economic opportunity and good-paying jobs for the hardworking people of Puerto Rico. We also believe that Puerto Ricans must be treated equally by Medicare, Medicaid, and other programs that benefit families. Puerto Ricans should be able to vote for the people who make their laws, just as they should be treated equally. All American citizens, no matter where they reside, should have the right to vote for the President of the United States. Finally, we believe that federal officials must respect Puerto

Rico's local self-government as laws are implemented and Puerto Rico's budget and debt are restructured so that it can get on a path towards stability and prosperity.

Honoring the People of the Territories

We also recognize and honor the contributions and the 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. We support self-government and self-determination for the people of the territories, and their right to decide their future status. All Americans should be able to vote for the people who make their laws, just as they should be treated equally. And all American citizens, no matter where they reside, should have the right to vote for the President of the United States. We will work as partners to the people of Guam on military matters, believe veterans from Guam and the Virgin Islands should have access to timely and quality Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) care, and take seriously the unique health care challenges that Pacific Island communities face. And we support reviewing the feasibility of extending the ACA to all the territories and increasing the Medicaid cap. For all those who live under our flag, we support strong economic development and will work towards fair and equitable treatment under federal programs.

Protect Voting Rights, Fix Our Campaign Finance System, and Restore Our Democracy

Democrats know that Americans' right to vote is sacred and fundamental. We believe that we must protect Americans' right to vote, while stopping corporations' outsized influence in elections. We must rectify the Supreme Court decision gutting the Voting Rights Act, which is a profound injustice. We will stop efforts by Republican governors and legislatures to disenfranchise people of color, low-income people, and young people, and prevent these voters from exercising their right to vote through onerous restrictions. We will ensure that election officials comply with voting protections, including provisions mandating bilingual materials and voter assistance. And we will fight to reform our broken campaign finance system, which gives outsized influence to billionaires and big corporations. It's time we give back control of our elections to those to whom it belongs—the American people.

Protecting Voting Rights

The Democratic Party was founded on the promise of an expanded democracy. The right to vote is at the heart of our national vision. It is a core principle of the Democratic Party to maximize voter participation for all Americans. Our democracy suffers when nearly two thirds of our citizens do not or cannot participate, as in the last midterm elections. Democrats believe we must make it easier to vote, not harder.

We must restore the full protections of the Voting Rights Act. We will bring our democracy into the 21st century by expanding early voting and vote-by-mail, implementing universal automatic voter registration and same day voter registration, ending partisan and racial gerrymandering, and making Election Day a national holiday. We will restore voting rights for those who have served their sentences. And we will continue to fight against discriminatory voter identification laws, which disproportionately burden young voters, diverse communities, people of color, low-income families, people with disabilities, the elderly, and women.

We support fully funding the Help America Vote Act and will work to fulfill the promise of election reform, including fighting to end long lines at voting booths and ensuring that all registration materials, voting materials, polling places, and voting machines are truly accessible to seniors, Americans with disabilities, and citizens with limited English proficiency. We will support local, county, and state governments in their efforts to upgrade old voting equipment and machines with modern systems, including voter-verified paper ballots, to ensure that all voters are able to exercise this sacred right in the quickest, most convenient, secure and accurate manner possible.

Republicans have enacted various voter suppression tactics from Ohio to Florida, and even though some federal courts have already found that these measures go too far, Democrats will continue to fight these laws to preserve the fundamental right to vote. We support efforts to defeat ill-motivated voter suppression tactics. We also support Ohio's proposed Voters Bill of Rights amendment, North Carolina's Moral Monday movement, and similar initiatives to permanently safeguard this inalienable right.

Fixing Our Broken Campaign Finance System

Democrats believe we must fight to preserve the essence of the longest standing democracy in the world: a government that represents the American people, not just a handful of powerful and wealthy special interests. We will fight for real campaign finance reform now. Big money is drowning out the voices of everyday Americans, and we must have the necessary tools to fight back and safeguard our electoral and political integrity.

Democrats support a constitutional amendment to overturn the Supreme Court's decisions in *Citizens United* and *Buckley v. Valeo*. We need to end secret, unaccountable money in politics by requiring, through executive order or legislation, significantly more disclosure and transparency—by outside groups, federal contractors, and public corporations to their shareholders. We need to amplify the voices of the American people through a small donor matching public financing system. We need to overhaul and strengthen the Federal Election Commission so that there is real enforcement of campaign finance laws. And we need to fight to eliminate super PACs and outside spending abuses.

Our vision for American democracy is a nation in which all people, regardless of their income, can participate in the political process and can run for office without needing to depend on large contributions from the wealthy and the powerful.

Appointing Judges

We will appoint judges who defend the constitutional principles of liberty and equality for all, and will protect a woman's right to safe and legal abortion, curb billionaires' influence over elections because they understand that *Citizens United* has fundamentally damaged our democracy, and believe the Constitution protects not only the powerful, but also the disadvantaged and powerless.

Securing Statehood for Washington, D.C.
Restoring our democracy also means finally passing statehood for the District of Columbia, so that the American citizens who reside in the nation's capital have full and equal congressional rights as well as the right to have the laws and budget of their local government respected without Congressional interference.

Strengthening Management of Federal Government
Democrats understand responsible fiscal stewardship is key to American democracy and to the country's long-term economic prosperity. We believe that by making those at the top and the largest corporations pay their fair share we can pay for ambitious progressive investments that create good-paying jobs and offer security to working families without adding to the debt. This stands in contrast to Donald Trump, whose plans could add more than $30 trillion to the debt and who casually suggests defaulting on America's debt, ending more than 200 years in which the full faith and credit of the United States has been sacrosanct.

We will also ensure that new spending and tax cuts are offset so that they do not add to the nation's debt over time. We will tackle waste, fraud, and abuse to make sure government dollars are spent wisely and efficiently. Democrats believe that we should not be contracting, outsourcing, or privatizing work that is inherently governmental in nature, including postal services, school services, and state and local government services. We are committed to a strong, effective, accountable civil service, delivering the quality public services Americans have every right to expect.

Democrats believe that, in general, the most effective way to identify problems facing our country and develop good solutions is by enacting evidence-based public policy. We recognize the value of data in allowing us to count and carefully consider the needs of different communities. That is why we will preserve and enhance the integrity and accuracy of the census and the American Community Survey (ACS). We will equip the Census Bureau with the resources needed to prepare for and conduct a cost effective, complete and accurate census, as well as improve counting segments of the population that are historically and persistently undercounted, specifically communities of color, immigrants, LGBT people, young children, those with disabilities, and rural and low-income populations. We will also maintain the legal requirement for the public to participate and be counted.

Democrats also believe that government services should be culturally and linguistically appropriate and that data should be disaggregated for those communities, like Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, where it is necessary to fully understand and address their needs.

Finally, Democrats will make government simpler and more user-friendly. The federal government too often operates with websites designed from another era that are too complicated, too hard to use, and rarely designed for mobile phones or tablets. We will build on the creation of the United States Digital Service (USDS) and give it the resources it needs to transform and digitize the top 25 federal government programs that directly serve citizens. We will eliminate internal barriers to government modernization. And we will use technology to improve outcomes and government accountability by embracing prioritized goal setting and performance tracking for the federal government.

Combat Climate Change, Build a Clean Energy Economy, and Secure Environmental Justice

Climate change is an urgent threat and a defining challenge of our time. Fifteen of the 16 hottest years on record have occurred this century. While Donald Trump has called climate change a "hoax," 2016 is on track to break global temperature records once more. Cities from Miami to Baltimore are already threatened by rising seas. California and the West have suffered years of brutal drought. Alaska has been scorched by wildfire. New York has been battered by superstorms, and Texas swamped by flash floods. The best science tells us that without ambitious, immediate action across our economy to cut carbon pollution and other greenhouse gases, all of these impacts will be far worse in the future. We cannot leave our children a planet that has been profoundly damaged.

Democrats share a deep commitment to tackling the climate challenge; creating millions of good-paying middle class jobs; reducing greenhouse gas emissions more than 80 percent below 2005 levels by 2050; and meeting the pledge President Obama put forward in the landmark Paris Agreement, which aims to keep global temperature increases to "well below" two degrees Celsius and to pursue efforts to limit global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius. We believe America must be running entirely on clean energy by mid-century. We will take bold steps to slash carbon pollution and protect clean air at home, lead the fight against climate change around the world, ensure no Americans are left out or left behind as we accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy, and be responsible stewards of our natural resources and our public lands and waters. Democrats reject the notion that we have to choose between protecting our planet and creating good-paying jobs. We can and we will do both.

Building a Clean Energy Economy

We are committed to getting 50 percent of our electricity from clean energy sources within a decade, with half a billion solar panels installed within four years and enough renewable energy to power every home in the country. We will cut energy waste in American homes, schools, hospitals, and offices through energy efficient improvements; modernize our electric grid; and make American manufacturing the cleanest and most efficient in the world. These efforts will create millions of new jobs and save families and businesses money on their monthly energy bills. We will transform American transportation by reducing oil consumption through cleaner fuels, vehicle electrification increasing the fuel efficiency of cars, boilers, ships, and trucks. We will make new investments in public transportation and build bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure across our urban and suburban areas. Democrats believe the tax code must reflect our commitment to a clean energy future by eliminating special tax breaks and subsidies for fossil fuel companies as well as defending and extending tax incentives for energy efficiency and clean energy.

Democrats believe that carbon dioxide, methane, and other greenhouse gases should be priced to reflect their negative externalities, and to accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy and help meet our climate goals. Democrats believe that climate change is too important to wait for climate deniers and defeatists in Congress to start listening to science, and support using every tool available to reduce emissions now. Democrats are committed to defending, implementing, and extending smart pollution and efficiency standards, including the Clean Power Plan, fuel

economy standards for automobiles and heavy-duty vehicles, building codes and appliance standards. We are also committed to expanding clean energy research and development.

Democrats recognize the importance of climate leadership at the local level and know that achieving our national clean energy goals requires an active partnership with states, cities, and rural communities where so much of our country's energy policy is made. We will ensure that those taking the lead on clean energy and energy efficiency have the tools and resources they need to succeed. The federal government should lead by example, which is why we support taking steps to power the government with 100 percent clean electricity.

Democrats are committed to closing the Halliburton loophole that stripped the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of its ability to regulate hydraulic fracturing, and ensuring tough safeguards are in place, including Safe Drinking Water Act provisions, to protect local water supplies. We believe hydraulic fracturing should not take place where states and local communities oppose it. We will reduce methane emissions from all oil and gas production and transportation by at least 40 to 45 percent below 2005 levels by 2025 through common-sense standards for both new and existing sources and by repairing and replacing thousands of miles of leaky pipes. This will both protect our climate and create thousands of good-paying jobs.

We will work to expand access to cost-saving renewable energy by low-income households, create good-paying jobs in communities that have struggled with energy poverty, and oppose efforts by utilities to limit consumer choice or slow clean energy deployment. We will streamline federal permitting to accelerate the construction of new transmission lines to get low-cost renewable energy to market, and incentivize wind, solar, and other renewable energy over the development of new natural gas power plants.

We support President Obama's decision to reject the Keystone XL pipeline. As we continue working to reduce carbon dioxide, methane, and other greenhouse gas emissions, we must ensure federal actions do not "significantly exacerbate" global warming. We support a comprehensive approach that ensures all federal decisions going forward contribute to solving, not significantly exacerbating, climate change.

Democrats believe that our commitment to meeting the climate challenge must also be reflected in the infrastructure investments we make. We need to make our existing infrastructure safer and cleaner and build the new infrastructure necessary to power our clean energy future. To create good-paying middle class jobs that cannot be outsourced, Democrats support high labor standards in clean energy infrastructure and the right to form or join a union, whether in renewable power or advanced vehicle manufacturing. During the clean energy transition, we will ensure landowners, communities of color, and tribal nations are at the table.

Securing Environmental and Climate Justice

Democrats believe clean air and clean water are basic rights of all Americans. Yet as we saw in Flint, Michigan, low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately home to environmental justice "hot spots," where air pollution, water pollution, and toxic hazards like lead increase health and economic hardship. The impacts of climate change will also disproportionately affect low-income and minority communities, tribal nations, and Alaska

Native villages—all of which suffer the worst losses during extreme weather and have the fewest resources to prepare. Simply put, this is environmental racism.

Democrats believe we must make it a national priority to eradicate lead poisoning, which disproportionately impacts low-income children and children of color and can lead to lifelong health and educational challenges. We will prioritize hiring and training workers from affected communities to clean up toxic brownfields and expand clean energy, energy efficiency, and resilient infrastructure.

The fight against climate change must not leave any community out or behind—including the coal communities who kept America's lights on for generations. Democrats will fight to make sure these workers and their families get the benefits they have earned and the respect they deserve, and we will make new investments in energy-producing communities to help create jobs and build a brighter and more resilient economic future. We will also oppose threats to the public health of these communities from harmful and dangerous extraction practices, like mountaintop removal mining operations.

All corporations owe it to their shareholders to fully analyze and disclose the risks they face, including climate risk. Those who fail to do so should be held accountable. Democrats also respectfully request the Department of Justice to investigate allegations of corporate fraud on the part of fossil fuel companies accused of misleading shareholders and the public on the scientific reality of climate change.

Protecting Our Public Lands and Waters

Democrats believe in the conservation and collaborative stewardship of our shared natural heritage: the public lands and waterways, the oceans, Everglades, Great Lakes, the Arctic, and all that makes America's great outdoors priceless. As a nation, we need policies and investments that will keep America's public lands public, strengthen protections for our natural and cultural resources, increase access to parks and public lands for all Americans, protect native species and wildlife, and harness the immense economic and social potential of our public lands and waters.

Democrats will work to establish an American Parks Trust Fund to help expand local, state, and national recreational opportunities, rehabilitate existing parks, and enhance America's great outdoors—from our forests and coasts to neighborhood parks—so "America's Best Idea" is held in trust for future generations, and all Americans can access and enjoy natural spaces. Democrats are committed to doubling the size of the outdoor economy, creating nearly hundreds of billions of dollars in new economic activity and millions of new jobs.

Democrats will approach conservation of our public lands and waters in a way that reflects the diversity of our country, by actively engaging all Americans in the great outdoors and protecting natural landscapes and cultural sites that tell the story of America's complex history. To help meet these goals, we will work to build a diverse workforce in agencies that manage America's public lands, waters, and cultural sites.

We oppose drilling in the Arctic and off the Atlantic coast, and believe we need to reform fossil fuel leasing on public lands. We will phase down extraction of fossil fuels from our public lands,

starting with the most polluting sources, while making our public lands and waters engines of the clean energy economy and creating jobs across the country. Democrats will work to expand the amount of renewable energy production on federal lands and waters, from wind in Wyoming to solar in Nevada.

Democrats oppose efforts to undermine the effectiveness of the Endangered Species Act to protect threatened and endangered species.

Because the Bristol Bay drainages of Alaska produce the world's largest salmon fisheries, we support efforts by the EPA under the Clean Water Act to establish proactively science-based restrictions on discharges of dredged or fill material associated with a potential Pebble mine and urge that such restrictions must apply to potential mines at other metallic sulfide deposits in those drainages.

Agricultural lands account for nearly half of the total land area in America and our agricultural practices have a significant impact on our water, land, oceans, and the climate. Therefore, we believe that in order to be effective in keeping our air and water clean and combating climate change, we must enlist farmers as partners in promoting conservation and stewardship.

Provide Quality and Affordable Education

Democrats know that every child, no matter who they are, how much their families earn, or where they live, should have access to a high-quality education, from preschool through high school and beyond. But the United States still lags behind other advanced economies in providing high-quality, universal preschool programs to help all of our kids get a strong start to their educations. Our schools are more segregated today than they were when *Brown v. Board of Education* was decided, and we see wide disparities in educational outcomes across racial and socioeconomic lines. A college degree or another form of post-secondary education is increasingly required for jobs that pay a middle-class wage, but graduation rates have stagnated for low-income students. And the high cost of college has required too many Americans to take out staggering student loans or put a degree out of reach entirely. We are selling our children and our young people short. Democrats are committed to making good public schools available to every child, no matter what zip code they live in, and at last making debt-free college a reality for all Americans.

Making Debt-Free College a Reality

Democrats believe that in America, if you want a higher education, you should always be able to get one: money should never stand in the way. Cost should not be a barrier to getting a degree or credential, and debt should not hold you back after you graduate. Bold new investments by the federal government, coupled with states reinvesting in higher education and colleges holding the line on costs, will ensure that Americans of all backgrounds will be prepared for the jobs and economy of the future. Democrats are unified in their strong belief that every student should be able to go to college debt-free, and working families should not have to pay any tuition to go to public colleges and universities.

We will also make community college free, while ensuring the strength of our Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority-Serving Institutions. The federal government will push more colleges and universities to take quantifiable, affirmative steps in increasing the percentages of racial and ethnic minority, low-income, and first-generation students they enroll and graduate. Achieving these goals depends on state and federal investment in both students and their teachers. Whether full-time or adjunct, faculty must be supported to make transformative educational experiences possible.

Providing Relief from Crushing Student Debt

As we make college affordable for future students, we will not forget about the millions of borrowers with unsustainable levels of student debt, who need help right now. Democrats will allow those who currently have student debt to refinance their loans at the lowest rates possible. We will simplify and expand access to income-based repayment so that no student loan borrowers ever have to pay more than they can afford. And we will significantly cut interest rates for future undergraduates because we believe that making college more affordable is more important than the federal government making billions of dollars in profit off those loans. Democrats will also fight for a student borrower bill of rights to ensure borrowers get adequate information about options to avoid or get out of delinquency or default. We will hold lenders and loan servicers to high standards to help borrowers in default rehabilitate and repay their debts. We will continue the important Public Service Loan Forgiveness and loan discharge programs begun by the Obama Administration. Finally, Democrats will restore the prior standard in bankruptcy law to allow borrowers with student loans to be able to discharge their debts in bankruptcy as a measure of last resort. To make progress toward these goals, the government should offer a moratorium on student loan payments to all federal loan borrowers so they have the time and get the resources they need to consolidate their loans, enroll in income-based repayment programs, and take advantage of opportunities to reduce monthly payments and fees.

Supporting Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority-Serving Institutions

We will strengthen our nation's public and private Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Predominantly Black Institutions, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions, Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions, and minority-serving institutions. Many of these schools educate disproportionate percentages of growing populations of Americans: students who are racial and ethnic minorities, low-income students, and first-generation students. As the nation is grappling with how to expand educational access and increase success, especially for communities of color and low-income students and families, there is evidence that the nation's HBCUs and Minority Serving Institutions have honed promising models for educating these students to prepare them for high- and critical-need positions while containing costs. We will create a robust and historic dedicated fund to keep costs down, provide quality education, and ensure dedicated support to improve student outcomes and completion rates. We will provide further assistance to students at these schools, as well as other students across the country, by restoring year-round Pell funding so that low- and middle-income students from all backgrounds can get the support they need to make progress toward a college degree throughout the year.

Cracking Down on Predatory For-Profit Schools

We will continue to crack down on for-profit schools that take millions in federal financial aid—often as their principal source of revenue—and then exploit students and burden them with debt rather than educating them. That is why we will strengthen the gainful employment rule to ensure that for-profit schools enable students to complete their degrees and prepare them for work. We will go after for-profits that engage in deceptive marketing, fraud, and other illegal practices. We will also exercise our responsibility in oversight over the Department of Education to carry out their obligation to close down those for-profit schools that consistently engage in fraudulent and illegal conduct. It is unacceptable that for-profit schools with low graduation rates keep encouraging their students to take out federal loans they will have trouble paying back. Therefore, to the maximum extent possible, we will also encourage widespread relief and the forgiveness of debt to those students harmed by the practices of fraudulent institutions.

Guaranteeing Universal Preschool and Good Schools for Every Child

Democrats believe we must have the best-educated population and workforce in the world. That means making early childhood education and universal preschool a priority, especially in light of new research showing how much early learning can impact life-long success. Democrats will invest in early childhood programs like Early Head Start and provide every family in America with access to high-quality childcare and high-quality preschool programs. We support efforts to raise wages for childcare workers, and to ensure that early childhood educators are experienced and high-quality.

We will ensure there are great schools for every child no matter where they live. Democrats know the federal government must play a critical role in making sure every child has access to a world-class education. We believe that a strong public education system is an anchor of our democracy, a propeller of the economy, and the vehicle through which we help all children achieve their dreams. Public education must engage students to be critical thinkers and civic participants while addressing the wellbeing of the whole child.

We also support increased investments in afterschool and summer learning programs, which help working families, keep kids safe, and inspire learning at a time when many students are left unsupervised. We must find ways to encourage mentoring programs that support students in reaching their full potential. Mentoring is a strategy to ensure that children living in poverty have the encouragement and support to aim high and enter the middle class. We will focus on group mentoring, which is a low-cost, high-yield investment that offers the benefit of building a supportive network of peers who push one another towards success.

Democrats believe all students should be taught to high academic standards. Schools should have adequate resources to provide programs and support to help meet the needs of every child. We will hold schools, districts, communities, and states accountable for raising achievement levels for all students—particularly low-income students, students of color, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities.

We must fulfill our national commitment to provide a meaningful education to students with disabilities, and work towards full funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act so that students with disabilities can receive the extra resources and services they need. With an

appropriate educational foundation, children with disabilities can thrive and become adults with greater opportunities and more meaningful life experiences.

We are also deeply committed to ensuring that we strike a better balance on testing so that it informs, but does not drive, instruction. To that end, we encourage states to develop a multiple measures approach to assessment, and we believe that standardized tests must be reliable and valid. We oppose high-stakes standardized tests that falsely and unfairly label students of color, students with disabilities and English Language Learners as failing; the use of standardized test scores as basis for refusing to fund schools or to close schools; and the use of student test scores in teacher and principal evaluations, a practice which has been repeatedly rejected by researchers. We support enabling parents to opt their children out of standardized tests without penalty for either the student or their school.

Democrats recognize and honor all the professionals who work in public schools to support students' education—teachers, education support professionals, and specialized staff. We know that good teachers are essential to improving student learning and helping all students to meet high academic standards. Democrats will launch a national campaign to recruit and retain high-quality teachers. We will ensure that teachers receive the tools and ongoing professional development they need to succeed in the classroom and provide our children with a world-class education. We also must lift up and trust our educators, continually build their capacity, and ensure that our schools are safe, welcoming, collaborative, and well-resourced places for our students, educators, and communities.

We will invest in high-quality STEAM classes, community schools, computer science education, arts education, and expand link learning models and career pathways. We will end the school-to-prison pipeline by opposing discipline policies which disproportionately affect African Americans and Latinos, Native Americans and Alaska Natives, students with disabilities, and youth who identify as LGBT. We will support the use of restorative justice practices that help students and staff resolve conflicts peacefully and respectfully while helping to improve the teaching and learning environment. And we will work to improve school culture and combat bullying of all kinds.

The Democratic Party is committed to eliminating opportunity gaps—particularly those that lead to students from low-income communities arriving on day one of kindergarten several years behind their peers. This means advocating for labor and public assistance laws that ensure poor parents can spend time with their children. This means raising household incomes in poor communities. It means ensuring children have health care, stable housing free of contaminants, and a community free of violence in order to minimize the likelihood of cognitive delays. It means enriching early childhood programming to prepare children in areas such as literacy, numeracy, civic engagement, and emotional intelligence. It means supporting equitable and adequate state funding for public education, and expanding Title I funding for schools that serve a large number or high concentration of children in poverty. It means ending curriculum gaps that maintain and exacerbate achievement gaps.

We support policies that motivate rather than demoralize our educators. We are committed to ensuring that schools that educate children in poverty are not treated unfairly, which is why we

will end the test-and-punish version of accountability that does no more than reveal the many opportunity gaps facing students from low-income communities.

Democrats are committed to providing parents with high-quality public school options and expanding these options for low-income youth. We support democratically governed, great neighborhood public schools and high-quality public charter schools, and we will help them disseminate best practices to other school leaders and educators. Democrats oppose for-profit charter schools focused on making a profit off of public resources. We believe that high-quality public charter schools should provide options for parents, but should not replace or destabilize traditional public schools. Charter schools must reflect their communities, and thus must accept and retain proportionate numbers of students of color, students with disabilities and English Language Learners in relation to their neighborhood public schools. We support increased transparency and accountability for all charter schools.

Ensure the Health and Safety of All Americans

Democrats have been fighting to secure universal health care for the American people for generations, and we are proud to be the party that passed Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Being stronger together means finally achieving that goal. We are going to fight to make sure every American has access to quality, affordable health care. We will tackle the problems that remain in our health care system, including cracking down on runaway prescription drug prices and addressing mental health with the same seriousness that we treat physical health. We will fight Republican efforts to roll back the clock on women's health and reproductive rights, and stand up for Planned Parenthood. And we will tackle the epidemics of substance abuse and gun violence, which each claim tens of thousands of lives every year.

Securing Universal Health Care

Democrats believe that health care is a right, not a privilege, and our health care system should put people before profits. Thanks to the hard work of President Obama and Democrats in Congress, we took a critically important step toward the goal of universal health care by passing the Affordable Care Act, which has covered 20 million more Americans and ensured millions more will never be denied coverage because of a pre-existing condition. Democrats will never falter in our generations-long fight to guarantee health care as a fundamental right for every American. As part of that guarantee, Americans should be able to access public coverage through a public option, and those over 55 should be able to opt in to Medicare. Democrats will empower the states, which are the true laboratories of democracy, to use innovation waivers under the ACA to develop unique locally tailored approaches to health coverage. This will include removing barriers to states which seek to experiment with plans to ensure universal health care to every person in their state. By contrast, Donald Trump wants to repeal the ACA, leaving tens of millions of Americans without coverage.

For too many of us, health care costs are still too high, even for those with insurance. And medical debt is a problem for far too many working families, with one-quarter of Americans reporting that they or someone in their household had problems or an inability to pay medical bills in the past year. Democrats will also work to end surprise billing and other practices that

lead to out-of-control medical debt that place an unconscionable economic strain on American households. We will repeal the excise tax on high-cost health insurance and find revenue to offset it because we need to contain the long-term growth of health care costs, but should not risk passing on too much of the burden to workers. Democrats will keep costs down by making premiums more affordable, reducing out-of-pocket expenses, and capping prescription drug costs. And we will fight against insurers trying to impose excessive premium increases.

Democrats will fight any attempts by Republicans in Congress to privatize, voucherize, or "phase out" Medicare as we know it. And we will oppose Republican plans to slash funding and block grant Medicaid and SNAP, which would harm millions of Americans.

We will keep fighting until the ACA's Medicaid expansion has been adopted in every state. Nineteen states have not yet expanded Medicaid. This means that millions of low-income Americans still lack health insurance and are not getting the care they need. Additionally, health care providers, clinics, hospitals, and taxpayers are footing a higher bill when people without insurance visit expensive emergency rooms.

Democrats believe your zip code or census tract should not be a predictor of your health, which is why we will make health equity a central part of our commitment to revitalizing communities left behind. Democrats believe that all health care services should be culturally and linguistically appropriate, and that neither fear nor immigration status should be barriers that impede health care access.

Supporting Community Health Centers

We must renew and expand our commitment to Community Health Centers, as well as community mental health centers and family planning centers. These health centers provide critically important, community-based prevention and treatment in underserved communities, prevent unnecessary and expensive trips to emergency rooms, and are essential to the successful implementation of the ACA. We will fight for a comprehensive system of primary health care, including dental, mental health care, and low-cost prescription drugs by doubling of funding for federally qualified community health centers over the next decade, which currently serve 25 million people.

Democrats also know that one of the key ingredients to the success of these health centers is a well-supported and qualified workforce in community-based settings. We will fight to train and support this workforce, encourage providers to work with underserved populations through the National Health Service Corps, and create a comprehensive strategy to increase the pool of primary health care professionals.

Reducing Prescription Drug Costs

It is unacceptable that the United States pays, by far, the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs and that too many Americans between the ages of 18 and 64 cannot afford to fill their prescriptions. A lifesaving drug is no good if it is unaffordable to the very people who need it most. And many drug companies are spending more on advertising than on research. The largest pharmaceutical companies are making billions of dollars per year in profits at higher margins compared to other industries while many stash their profits in offshore tax havens.

Meanwhile, they charge Americans thousands of dollars for new drugs—often at much higher costs than in other developed nations. Democrats are committed to investing in the research, development, and innovation that creates lifesaving drugs and lowers overall health costs, but the profiteering of pharmaceutical companies is simply unacceptable.

We will crack down on price gouging by drug companies and cap the amount Americans have to pay out-of-pocket every month on prescription drugs. We will prohibit anti-competitive "pay for delay" deals that keep generic drugs off the market, and we will allow individuals, pharmacists, and wholesalers to import prescription drugs from licensed pharmacies in Canada and other countries with appropriate safety protections. Democrats will also fight to make sure that Medicare will negotiate lower prices with drug manufacturers.

Enabling Cutting-Edge Medical Research

Democrats believe we must accelerate the pace of medical progress, ensuring that we invest more in our scientists and give them the resources they need to invigorate our fundamental studies in the life sciences in a growing, stable, and predictable way. We must make progress against the full range of diseases, including Alzheimer's, HIV and AIDS, cancer, and other diseases, especially chronic ones. We recognize the critical importance of a fully-funded National Institutes of Health to accelerate the pace of medical progress.

Combating Drug and Alcohol Addiction

We must confront the epidemic of drug and alcohol addiction, specifically the opioid crisis and other drugs plaguing our communities, by vastly expanding access to prevention and treatment, supporting recovery, helping community organizations, and promoting better practices by prescribers. The Democratic Party is committed to assisting the estimated 20 million people struggling with addiction in this country to find and sustain healthy lives by encouraging full recovery and integration into society and working to remove common barriers to gainful employment, housing, and education. We will continue to fight to expand access to care for addiction services, and ensure that insurance coverage is equal to that for any other health conditions. We think it is time for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Department of Labor, and state regulatory agencies to fully implement the protections of the Mental Health Parity and Addictions Equity Act of 2008—which means that American medical insurers, including the federal government, will need to disclose how they make their medical management decisions.

We should also do more to educate our youth, as well as their families, teachers, coaches, mentors, and friends, to intervene early to prevent drug and alcohol abuse and addiction. We should help state and local leaders establish evidence-based, age-appropriate, and locally-tailored prevention programs. These programs include school-based drug education programs that have been shown to have meaningful effects on risky behavior; community-based peer mentorship and leadership programs; and after-school activities that deter drug use and encourage life skills.

Treating Mental Health

We must treat mental health issues with the same care and seriousness that we treat issues of physical health, support a robust mental health workforce, and promote better integration of the behavioral and general health care systems. Recognizing that maintaining good mental health is

critical to all people, including young people's health and development, we will work with health professionals to ensure that all children have access to mental health care. We must also expand community-based treatment for substance abuse disorders and mental health conditions and fully enforce our parity law. And we should create a national initiative around suicide prevention across the lifespan—to move toward the HHS-promoted Zero Suicide commitment.

Supporting Those Living with Autism and their Families

Democrats believe that our country must make supporting the millions of individuals with autism and those diagnosed in the future and their families a priority. We will conduct a nationwide early screening outreach campaign to ensure that all children, and in particular children from underserved backgrounds, can get screened for autism. We will expand services and support for adults and individuals transitioning into adulthood, including employment and housing assistance. And we will push states to require health insurance coverage for autism services in private insurance plans as well as state marketplaces so that people with autism are not denied care.

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 have access to quality reproductive health care services, including safe and legal abortion—regardless of where she lives, how much money she makes, or how she is insured. We believe that reproductive health is core to women's, men's, and young people's health and wellbeing. We will continue to stand up to Republican efforts to defund Planned Parenthood health centers, which provide critical health services to millions of people. We will continue to oppose—and seek to overturn—federal and state laws and policies that impede a woman's access to abortion, including by repealing the Hyde Amendment. We condemn and will combat any acts of violence, harassment, and intimidation of reproductive health providers, patients, and staff. We will defend the ACA, which extends affordable preventive health care to women, including no-cost contraception, and prohibits discrimination in health care based on gender.

We will address the discrimination and barriers that inhibit meaningful access to reproductive health care services, including those based on gender, sexuality, race, income, disability, and other factors. We recognize that quality, affordable comprehensive health care, evidence-based sex education and a full range of family planning services help reduce the number of unintended pregnancies and thereby also reduce the need for abortions.

And we strongly and unequivocally support a woman's 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 for women against pregnancy discrimination. We are committed to creating a society where children are safe and can thrive physically, emotionally, educationally, and spiritually. We recognize and support the importance of civil structures that are essential to creating this for every child.

Ensuring Long-Term Care, Services, and Supports

Our country faces a long-term care crisis that prevents too many seniors and people with disabilities from being able to live with dignity at home or in their communities. The vast majority of people who are aging or living with a disability want to do so at home, but face challenges finding and affording the support they need to do so. Programs that emphasize independence rather than institutionalization must be better structured to support them. Democrats will take steps to strengthen and expand the home care workforce, give seniors and people with disabilities access to quality, affordable long-term care, services, and supports, and ensure that all of these resources are readily available at home or in the community.

Protecting and Promoting Public Health

Investment in our nation's crumbling public health infrastructure is critical to ensuring preparedness for emerging threats; for preventing disease, illness, and injury in communities; and for promoting good health and wellbeing. Inadequate access to public health services has a disparate impact on poor, rural, and minority communities where public health services are a significant source of health care. Democrats will fight for increased investments in public health to better address emerging threats and the needs across our country. To further that end, the Democratic Party will continue to oppose Republican attempts to cut public health services and funding. We will ensure adequate funding of public health education at the undergraduate, graduate, and medical school levels as well as adequate funding of residency training programs in public health, preventive medicine, and its subspecialties.

We must take a number of proactive steps so that all Americans—regardless of location, income or history—have the opportunity to live full, healthy lives. Democrats will fight for increased investments and coordination in public health to better address emerging threats as well as persistent needs across our country. Health equity among Americans remains elusive—higher income is strongly associated with longer life expectancy and the gap in life expectancy between the richest and poorest Americans is increasing. We continue to see unacceptable differences in health outcomes by race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. A growing body of research demonstrates the link between social factors—such as poverty, unemployment, experience of discrimination, and housing instability—and poor health. Democrats will continue to pursue policies addressing these social factors and empowering communities to respond to their most pressing health needs.

Ending Violence Against Women

Democrats are committed to ending the scourge of violence against women wherever it occurs —whether in our homes, streets, schools, military, or elsewhere. We will continue to support the Violence Against Women Act to provide law enforcement with the tools it needs to combat this problem. We will support comprehensive services for survivors of violence and increase prevention efforts in our communities and on our campuses. Democrats will fight to bring an end to sexual assault—wherever it occurs, including on campuses— because everyone deserves a safe environment where they can learn and thrive, not live in fear. We will provide comprehensive support to survivors, and ensure a fair process for all on-campus disciplinary proceedings and in the criminal justice system. We will increase sexual violence prevention education programs that cover issues like consent and bystander intervention, not only in college, but also in secondary school.

Preventing Gun Violence

With 33,000 Americans dying every year, Democrats believe that we must finally take sensible action to address gun violence. While responsible gun ownership is part of the fabric of many communities, too many families in America have suffered from gun violence. We can respect the rights of responsible gun owners while keeping our communities safe. To build on the success of the lifesaving Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act, we will expand and strengthen background checks and close dangerous loopholes in our current laws; repeal the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA) to revoke the dangerous legal immunity protections gun makers and sellers now enjoy; and keep weapons of war—such as assault weapons and large capacity ammunition magazines (LCAM's)—off our streets. We will fight back against attempts to make it harder for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives to revoke federal licenses from law breaking gun dealers, and ensure guns do not fall into the hands of terrorists, intimate partner abusers, other violent criminals, and those with severe mental health issues. There is insufficient research on effective gun prevention policies, which is why the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention must have the resources it needs to study gun violence as a public health issue.

Principled Leadership

Democrats believe that America must lead in the world to grow our economy, protect our interests and values, and make our country safer and more prosperous. We cannot walk away from our position of global leadership and allow other countries to make decisions about our lives, jobs, and safety.

Democrats further believe that when America leads, it must be as a principled force for peace and prosperity in the world. We believe all people deserve to live in dignity and have their rights respected. We believe protecting rights and opportunities for women and girls is essential for security and economic growth. We believe providing access to education and employment for young people and safeguarding the rights of minorities is important to ensuring stability. We believe the smart use of diplomacy, development, and economic statecraft can prevent crises, foster stability, and make us safer. And we believe that we are stronger when we work with our partners and allies, rather than try to go it alone. Our global network of alliances is not a burden—it is a source of tremendous strategic advantage.

We believe that while our military must be the strongest in the world, it should only be sent into combat when the terms of engagement are clearly presented to the American people and our troops have what they need to fulfill their mission. We believe that war must always be the last resort, never the first choice.

These principles have underpinned important progress in the last eight years. When President Obama and Vice President Biden assumed office, the world economy was in the worst crisis since the Great Depression, our alliances were strained, Osama bin Laden remained at large, Iran was racing toward a nuclear weapon, and we were mired in two costly wars. We brought bin Laden to justice, crippled al Qaeda's core leadership, saved America from a second Great

Depression, repaired our alliances, reestablished relations with Cuba while pressing for reforms, and—without firing a shot, dropping a bomb, or putting a single American soldier in harm's way—blocked Iran's ability to pursue a nuclear weapon. America is stronger abroad and safer at home because of this principled leadership.

But there is much more to do to keep our country prosperous and safe. From defeating terrorism and combating climate change to managing China's rise and strengthening our nation's cybersecurity, the next Democratic administration will confront the complex challenges that lie ahead by staying true to our principles and core values.

Donald Trump has a different approach. There has never been a major party candidate less qualified or less fit for the office of President of the United States or to be Commander-in-Chief than Donald Trump. He wants more countries to have nuclear weapons. He thinks our military should engage in war crimes. He wants to build walls and keep people—including Americans—from entering the country based on their race, religion, ethnicity, and national origin. He has no strategy for dealing with key threats facing our country, including climate change and ISIS. He wants to abandon our allies and empower our adversaries. His dangerous, incoherent policies would undo the progress we have made.

Donald Trump believes America is weak and an embarrassment. We believe America is unlike any other nation on earth. Our ingenuity is unparalleled, our military unrivaled, our economy the largest, most dynamic, and innovative, and our values an enduring source of strength and inspiration the world over. We are not a country that cowers behind walls. We lead with purpose. With American leadership, guided by our principles and in concert with our allies and partners, the coming years can be the most stable, secure, and prosperous time we and the world have ever known.

Support Our Troops and Keep Faith with Our Veterans

Democrats believe America must continue to have the strongest military in the world. Donald Trump has called our military "a disaster." We reject that view of our brave men and women in serving in the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard. They perform admirably while sacrificing immeasurably.

Defense Spending

We support a smart, predictable defense budget that meets the strategic challenges we face, not the arbitrary cuts that the Republican Congress enacted as part of sequestration. We must prioritize military readiness by making sure our Active, Reserve, and National Guard components remain the best trained and equipped in the world. We will seek a more agile and flexible force and rid the military of outdated Cold War-era systems.

We must end waste in the defense budget. We will audit the Pentagon, launch a high-level commission to review the role of defense contractors, and take greater action against those who have been involved in fraud. And we will ensure that the Department of Defense invests its budget wisely.

Veterans and Service Members

Our country has a sacred, moral responsibility to keep faith with all our veterans and wounded warriors. We must take care of those who have put their lives on the line to defend us. That is why we will push for more educational benefits and job training, end chronic homelessness and combat suicide, and protect and preserve the post-9/11 GI Bill for future generations. We will also ensure that reservists and Guard members are treated fairly when it comes to employment, health, education benefits, deployment, and reintegration.

We are outraged by the systemic problems plaguing the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). We will fight for every veteran to have timely access to high-quality health care and timely processing of claims and appeals. We must also look for more ways to make certain the VA provides veteran-centric care, such as providing women with full and equal treatment, including reproductive health services; expanding mental health programs; continuing efforts to identify and treat invisible, latent, and toxic wounds of war; treating post-traumatic stress; and expanding the post-9/11 veteran's caregiver program to include all veterans. We reject attempts by Republicans to sell out the needs of veterans by privatizing the VA. We believe that the VA must be fully resourced so that every veteran gets the care that he or she has earned and deserves, including those suffering from sexual assault, mental illness and other injuries or ailments.

Military Families

Democrats honor the sacrifice of military families who serve alongside our service members. We recognize the unique concerns and challenges they face, especially after 15 years of continuous deployments. We will support military families with jobs, education, childcare, and health care. We will promote family-friendly policies and champion efforts to care for our military family members, especially for the spouses and children who have to rebuild their lives after the loss of a loved one or life-altering injury or disability.

A Strong Military

Democrats welcome and honor all Americans who want to serve and will continue to fight for their equal rights and recognition. We are proud of the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell and we commit ourselves to insuring fair treatment for LGBT veterans, including by proactively reviewing and upgrading discharge records for veterans who were discharged because of their sexual orientation. We are also proud of the opening of combat positions to women. Our military is strongest when people of all races, religions, sexual orientations, and gender identities are honored for their service to our country.

Democrats are committed to addressing the scourge of military sexual assault. We must increase efforts to prevent sexual assault and rape, and aggressively investigate and prosecute allegations. And we must make sure victims receive timely, appropriate and comprehensive treatment for physical, emotional, and psychological trauma resulting from sexual assault.

Confront Global Threats

Democrats will protect our country. We will strengthen our homeland security, deal wisely and firmly with those who seek to imperil America or our partners, deter aggression, and promote peace. We will use all the tools of American power, especially diplomacy and development, to confront global threats and ensure war is the last resort.

Terrorism

We must defeat ISIS, al Qaeda, and their affiliates, and prevent other groups from emerging in their place. Democrats will continue to lead a broad coalition of allies and partners to destroy ISIS' stronghold in Iraq and Syria. We will press those in the region, especially the Gulf countries and local forces on the ground, to carry their weight in prosecuting this fight. We will dismantle the global network of terror, which supplies terrorists with money, arms, and fighters, and stop them from recruiting and inspiring potential radicals. We will improve our intelligence capabilities, with appropriate safeguards here at home, and ensure that the intelligence community and law enforcement is prepared to deal effectively with the threats we face. We will harden our defenses as well as those of our partners against external and homegrown threats. We will secure the homeland, investing more resources to improve mass transit, aviation, infrastructure, and port security. And we will remain a resilient nation, always coming together to stand up to terror.

Democrats will seek an updated Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) that is more precise about our efforts to defeat ISIS and that does not involve large-scale combat deployment of American troops.

As we prosecute the fight against terrorism, Democrats will repudiate vile tactics that would do us harm. We reject Donald Trump's vilification of Muslims. It violates the religious freedom that is the bedrock of our country and feeds into ISIS' nefarious narrative. It also alienates people and countries who are crucial to defeating terrorism; the vast majority of Muslims believe in a future of peace and tolerance. We reject Donald Trump's suggestion that our military should engage in war crimes, like torturing prisoners or murdering civilian family members of suspected terrorists. These tactics run counter to American principles, undermine our moral standing, cost innocent lives, and endanger Americans. We also firmly reject Donald Trump's willingness to mire tens of thousands of our combat troops in another misguided ground war in the Middle East, which would only further embolden ISIS. There is nothing smart or strong about such an approach.

Syria

The Syrian crisis is heartbreaking and dangerous, and its impact is threatening the region, Europe, and beyond. Donald Trump would inflame the conflict by alienating our allies, inexplicably allowing ISIS to expand in Syria, and potentially starting a wider war. This is a reckless approach. Democrats will instead root out ISIS and other terrorist groups and bring together the moderate Syrian opposition, international community, and our regional allies to reach a negotiated political transition that ends Assad's rule. Given the immense scale of human suffering in Syria, it is also imperative that we lead the international community in providing greater humanitarian assistance to the civilian victims of war in Syria and Iraq, especially displaced refugees.

Afghanistan
In Afghanistan, we will work with the NATO-led coalition of partners to bolster the democratically-elected government as it assumes a primary role in tackling terrorism, forges a more secure future for the country, and safeguards advances, like securing women's rights. Democrats will continue to push for an Afghan-led peace process and press both Afghanistan and Pakistan to deny terrorists sanctuary on either side of the border. We support President Obama's decision to maintain a limited troop presence in Afghanistan into 2017 and ensure that Afghanistan never again serves as a haven for terrorists to plan and launch attacks on our homeland.

Iran
We support the nuclear agreement with Iran because, as it is vigorously enforced and implemented, it verifiably cuts off all of Iran's pathways to a bomb without resorting to war. We reject Donald Trump's view that we should have walked away from a deal that peacefully dismantles Iran's nuclear program. We will continue the work of this administration to ensure that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon and will not hesitate to take military action if Iran races towards one.

Democrats will also address the detrimental role Iran plays in the region and will robustly enforce and, if necessary, strengthen non-nuclear sanctions. Iran is the leading state sponsor of terrorism. It violates the human rights of its population, denies the Holocaust, vows to eliminate Israel, and has its fingerprints on almost every conflict in the Middle East. Democrats will push back against Iran's destabilizing activities including its support for terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah, counter Iran's ballistic missile program, bolster the capabilities of our Gulf partners, and ensure that Israel always has the ability to defend itself. Finally, Democrats recognize that the Iranian people seek a brighter future for their country and greater engagement with the international community. We will embrace opportunities for cultural, academic and other exchanges with the Iranian people.

North Korea
North Korea is perhaps the most repressive regime on the planet, run by a sadistic dictator. It has conducted several nuclear tests and is attempting to develop the capability to put a nuclear warhead on a long-range missile that could directly threaten the United States. The regime is also responsible for grave human rights abuses against the North Korean people. Yet Donald Trump praises North Korea's dictator; threatens to abandon our treaty allies, Japan and South Korea; and encourages the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region. This approach is incoherent and rather than solving a global crisis, would create a new one. Democrats will protect America and our allies, press China to restrain North Korea, and sharpen the choices for Pyongyang to compel it to abandon its illegal nuclear and missile programs.

Russia
Russia is engaging in destabilizing actions along its borders, violating Ukraine's sovereignty and attempting to recreate spheres of influence that undermine American interests. It is also propping up the Assad regime in Syria, which is brutally attacking its own citizens. Donald Trump would overturn more than 50 years of American foreign policy by abandoning NATO partners—

countries who help us fight terrorism every day—and embracing Russian President Vladimir Putin instead. We believe in strong alliances and will deter Russian aggression, build European resilience, and protect our NATO allies. We will make it clear to Putin that we are prepared to cooperate with him when it is in our interest—as we did on reducing nuclear stockpiles, ensuring Iran could not obtain a nuclear weapon, sanctioning North Korea, and resupplying our troops in Afghanistan—but we will not hesitate to stand up to Russian aggression. We will also continue to stand by the Russian people and push the government to respect the fundamental rights of its citizens.

Cybersecurity and Online Privacy
Democrats will protect our industry, infrastructure, and government from cyberattacks. We will strengthen our cybersecurity, seek to establish global norms in cyberspace, and impose consequences on those who violate the rules. We will do this while protecting the privacy and civil liberties of the American people. We will also ensure a coherent strategy across federal agencies by building on the Obama Administration's Cybersecurity National Action Plan, especially the empowerment of a federal Chief Information Security Officer, the modernization of federal information technology, and upgrades to government-wide cybersecurity.

Democrats reject the false choice between privacy interests and keeping Americans safe. We need liberty and security, and each makes the other possible. We will protect the privacy and civil liberties of the American people—standing firm against the type of warrantless surveillance of American citizens that flourished during the Bush Administration. We support recent reforms to government bulk data collection programs so the government is not collecting and holding millions of files on innocent Americans.

We will support a national commission on digital security and encryption to bring together technology and public safety communities to address the needs of law enforcement, protect the privacy of Americans, assess how innovation might point to new policy approaches, and advance our larger national security and global competitiveness interests.

Non-Proliferation of Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Weapons
Democrats are committed to preventing the spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and to eventually ridding the planet of these catastrophic weapons. We believe America will be safer in a world with fewer weapons of mass destruction. Donald Trump encourages the spread of nuclear weapons across Asia and the Middle East, which would weaken the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and he is unwilling to rule out using a nuclear weapon against ISIS.

Democrats want to reduce the number of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons around the world, as well as their means of delivery, while retaining a strong deterrent as long as others maintain nuclear strike capabilities. We will strengthen the NPT, push for the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and stop the spread of loose nuclear material. Democrats will be informed by a new Nuclear Posture Review in determining continued ways to appropriately shape our nuclear deterrent, with the aim of reducing our reliance on nuclear weapons while meeting our national security obligations. Democrats will also seek new opportunities for further arms control and avoid taking steps that create incentives for the

expansion of existing nuclear weapons programs. To this end, we will work to reduce excessive spending on nuclear weapons-related programs that are projected to cost $1 trillion over the next 30 years.

Global Climate Leadership
Climate change poses an urgent and severe threat to our national security, and Democrats believe it would be a grave mistake for the United States to wait for another nation to take the lead in combating the global climate emergency. According to the military, climate change is a threat multiplier that is already contributing to new conflicts over resources, catastrophic natural disasters, and the degradation of vital ecosystems across the globe. While Donald Trump says that climate change is a "hoax" created by and for the Chinese, Democrats recognize the catastrophic consequences facing our country, our planet, and civilization.

We believe the United States must lead in forging a robust global solution to the climate crisis. We are committed to a national mobilization, and to leading a global effort to mobilize nations to address this threat on a scale not seen since World War II. In the first 100 days of the next administration, the President will convene a summit of the world's best engineers, climate scientists, policy experts, activists, and indigenous communities to chart a course to solve the climate crisis. Our generation must lead the fight against climate change and we applaud President Obama's leadership in forging the historic Paris climate change agreement. We will not only meet the goals we set in Paris, we will seek to exceed them and push other countries to do the same by slashing carbon pollution and rapidly driving down emissions of potent greenhouse gases like hydrofluorocarbons. We will support developing countries in their efforts to mitigate carbon pollution and other greenhouse gases, deploy more clean energy, and invest in climate resilience and adaptation.

As a proud Arctic nation, we are against putting the region at risk through drilling in the Arctic Ocean or the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Instead, while protecting our strategic interests, we will seek collaborative, science-based approaches to be good stewards of the rapidly changing Arctic region.

Protect Our Values

Our values of inclusion and tolerance inspire hope around the world and make us safer at home. The world will be more secure, stable, and peaceful when all people are able to reach their God-given potential and live in freedom and dignity. We strive to ensure that the values upon which our country was built, including our belief that all people are created equal, are reflected in everything our nation does. That is why we will promote peacebuilding, protect democracy, and champion human rights defenders. And we will seek to safeguard vulnerable minorities, including LGBT people and people with disabilities.

Women and Girls
We believe the United States must continue to be a strong advocate for the rights and opportunities of women and girls around the world. Elevating their status is not just the right thing to do—it is also a strategic imperative that advances American interests in prosperity and

stability. When women and girls are healthy, educated, and able to participate economically, their families and communities prosper, poverty decreases, and economies grow. And when women participate in conflict resolution and post-conflict processes, it improves the likelihood of securing sustainable peace. Democrats are committed to advancing the rights and opportunities of women and girls as a central focus of American diplomacy, development, and defense efforts and will continue to support the United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security. We will work to end the epidemic of gender-based violence around the world. We will urge ratification of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

We will support sexual and reproductive health and rights around the globe. In addition to expanding the availability of affordable family planning information and contraceptive supplies, we believe that safe abortion must be part of comprehensive maternal and women's health care and included as part of America's global health programming. Therefore, we support the repeal of harmful restrictions that obstruct women's access to health care information and services, including the "global gag rule" and the Helms Amendment that bars American assistance to provide safe, legal abortion throughout the developing world.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People

Democrats believe that LGBT rights are human rights and that American foreign policy should advance the ability of all persons to live with dignity, security, and respect, regardless of who they are or who they love. We applaud President Obama's historic Presidential Memorandum on International Initiatives to Advance the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Persons, which combats criminalization, protects refugees, and provides foreign assistance. We will continue to stand with LGBT people around the world, including fighting efforts by any nation to infringe on LGBT rights or ignore abuse.

Trafficking and Modern Slavery

We will stop the scourge of human trafficking and modern slavery of men, women, boys, and girls. We will use the full force of the law against those who engage in modern-day forms of slavery, including the commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor of men, women, and children. Building on the accomplishments of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, we call for increased diplomatic efforts with foreign governments to root out complicit public officials who facilitate or perpetrate this evil. We will also work to increase the provision of services and protections for trafficking survivors.

Young People

The majority of the developing world is under the age of 30. These countries will be more prosperous and stable if young people have access to education and employment opportunities. Democrats will promote the rights of young people and nurture young leaders. We will work with people around the world who seek greater opportunities, including by promoting job creation, expanding education and health care, and fostering partnerships between peoples.

Religious Minorities
We are horrified by ISIS' genocide and sexual enslavement of Christians and Yezidis and crimes against humanity against Muslims and others in the Middle East. We will do everything we can to protect religious minorities and the fundamental right of freedom of religion.

Refugees
The world is experiencing a major refugee crisis with more than 60 million people displaced as a result of conflicts in the Middle East, Africa, and Eastern Europe. We support President Obama's call for an international summit to address this crisis so that every country assumes its responsibility to meet this humanitarian challenge. While Donald Trump proposes banning Muslim refugees, we will look for ways to help innocent people who are fleeing persecution while ensuring rigorous screening and vetting.

Civil Society
Democrats support progress toward more accountable governance and universal rights. As autocrats and strongmen around the world crack down on civil society and imprison those who speak out to demand greater freedom, we will continue to bolster groups and individuals who fight for fundamental human rights, democracy, and rule of law. We will support strong legislatures, independent judiciaries, free press, vibrant civil society, honest police forces, religious freedom, and equality for women and minorities. We will bolster the development of civil society and representative institutions that can protect fundamental human rights and improve the quality of life for all citizens, including independent and democratic unions. In non-democratic countries, we will work with international partners to assist the efforts of those struggling to promote peaceful political reforms.

Democrats will protect Americans citizens abroad. We condemn the practice of unlawful detentions or imprisonment, especially of journalists and civil rights activists.

Anti-Corruption
Democrats believe that we need to end corruption worldwide and increase transparency. We will fight corruption, promote good governance, and support the rule of law. We will also seek to close offshore tax havens, which corrupt rulers, individuals, and corporations exploit to shelter ill-gotten gains or avoid paying taxes at home.

Torture
We will always seek to uphold our values at home and abroad, not just when it is easy, but when it is hard. That is why President Obama banned torture without exception in his first week in office and why Democrats condemn Donald Trump's statements that he would engage in torture and other war crimes. We agree with military and national security experts who acknowledge that torture is not an effective interrogation technique.

Closing Guantánamo Bay
The Democratic Party remains committed to closing the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay and ending indefinite detention without trial or conviction. Keeping the facility open is a blemish on our record, serves as a recruiting tool for extremists, and undermines our standing in the world.

Development Assistance

We believe that development assistance is an essential instrument of American power. It can prevent threats, enhance stability, and reduce the need for military force. With less than one percent of the federal budget, our development assistance has helped cut extreme poverty in half, drastically decreased maternal and child mortality, reduced global hunger, provided food security, countered deadly pandemics, promoted education, and put an AIDS-free generation within reach. This investment reflects the best of America and makes us safer. We need to continue this work and make more progress on important global goals like ending extreme poverty and hunger.

We will support local development efforts, recognizing the self-determination of the peoples and countries we assist to direct their own futures. We will also learn from recent conflicts to improve civilian capacity for conflict prevention and stabilization.

Global Health

America has made critical investments in global health, including in the areas of maternal and child health, HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. It is vital that we continue this work—which has saved millions of lives around the world and is essential to our nation's health security. While the Republican Party refuses to fund important measures that could contain and address the Zika pandemic, Democrats are ready to limit the reach of Zika—just as we did with Ebola—and support funding for diagnostic tests for the virus, vaccine, and treatment. We will also prepare for potential pandemics, like avian influenza and H1N1, by working with first responders and health officials to reduce the risks associated with unintentional or deliberate outbreaks of infectious diseases.

HIV and AIDS

Democrats believe an AIDS-free generation is within our grasp. But today far too many Americans living with HIV are without access to quality care and too many new infections occur each year. That is why we will implement the National HIV and AIDS Strategy; increase research funding for the National Institutes of Health; cap pharmaceutical expenses for people living with HIV and AIDS; reform HIV criminalization laws; and expand access for harm reduction programs and HIV prevention medications, particularly for the populations most at risk of infection. Abroad, we will continue our commitment to the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and increase global funding for HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment. Democrats will always protect those living with HIV and AIDS from stigma and discrimination.

International Labor

Democrats believe that a key element of American leadership is growing our economy and protecting American jobs. We also believe that the world will be safer when there is greater prosperity. That is why we will prioritize and strongly enforce provisions on decent work and worker's rights in all American diplomatic, trade, and programmatic efforts. We think it is wrong for workers in the United States to have to compete against poverty-wage, child, or slave labor.

Democrats will fight to end child labor. We will promote broad-based economic growth across the world, pursuing a global economic agenda that promotes rising wages and invests in quality

public services, workers' rights, and environmental protections. We believe that we need to coordinate our economic actions with other countries to address economic insecurity, specifically youth un- and underemployment, gender inequality, the digital transformation, and the transition towards green jobs.

A Leader in the World

American leadership is essential to keeping us safe and our economy growing in the years ahead. It would be a dangerous mistake for America to abandon our responsibilities. We cannot, as Donald Trump suggests, cede the mantle of leadership for global peace and security to others who will not have our best interests in mind.

Asia-Pacific

From the Asia Pacific to the Indian Ocean, we will deepen our relationships in the region with Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand. We will honor our historic commitment to Japan. We will continue to invest in a long-term strategic partnership with India—the world's largest democracy, a nation of great diversity, and an important Pacific power. We will build on the historic opening with Burma and advocate for greater human rights protections and national reconciliation among Burma's many different ethnic groups. We will help Pakistan stabilize its polity and build an effective relationship with the predominantly young population of this strategically located, nuclear-armed country. We will also work with our allies and partners to fortify regional institutions and norms as well as protect freedom of the seas in the South China Sea.

Democrats will push back against North Korean aggression and press China to play by the rules. We will stand up to Beijing on unfair trade practices, currency manipulation, censorship of the internet, piracy, and cyberattacks. And we will look for areas of cooperation, including on combatting climate change and nuclear proliferation. We will promote greater respect for human rights, including the rights of Tibetans. We are committed to a "One China" policy and the Taiwan Relations Act and will continue to support a peaceful resolution of Cross-Strait issues that is consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan.

Middle East

In the Middle East, Democrats will push for more inclusive governance in Iraq and Syria that respects the equal rights of all citizens; provide support and security for Lebanon and Jordan, two countries that are hosting a disproportionate number of refugees; maintain our robust security cooperation with Gulf countries; and stand by the people of the region as they seek greater economic opportunity and freedom. A strong and secure Israel is vital to the United States because we share overarching strategic interests and the common values of democracy, equality, tolerance, and pluralism. That is why we will always support Israel's right to defend itself, including by retaining its qualitative military edge, and oppose any effort to delegitimize Israel, including at the United Nations or through the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement.

We will continue to work toward a two-state solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict negotiated directly by the parties that guarantees Israel's future as a secure and democratic

Jewish state with recognized borders and provides the Palestinians with independence, sovereignty, and dignity. 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. Israelis deserve security, recognition, and a normal life free from terror and incitement. Palestinians should be free to govern themselves in their own viable state, in peace and dignity.

Europe

Europe remains America's indispensable partner and a cornerstone of global security. Democrats will stand with our European allies and partners to deter Russian aggression, address security challenges to Europe's south, and deal with unprecedented economic and social challenges. We will maintain our steadfast commitment to the special relationship with United Kingdom and the transatlantic partnership with the European Union. We will seek to strengthen our strategic partnership with Turkey while pushing for reforms, end the division of Cyprus, and continue to support a close relationship with states that seek to strengthen their ties to NATO and Europe, such as Georgia and Ukraine.

We reject Donald Trump's threats to abandon our European and NATO allies, all while he praises Putin. When the United States was attacked on September 11, 2001, our NATO allies invoked Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, stating that an attack against one is an attack against all—for the first and only time in its history. Our NATO allies fought alongside us in Afghanistan and are still there today. We will maintain our Article 5 collective security commitments to NATO because we are stronger when we have our allies at our side. And we will continue to push NATO members to contribute their fair share.

Americas

The Americas are a region of singular strategic, economic, and cultural importance and opportunity for the United States. Democrats reject Donald Trump's proposal to build a wall on our southern border and alienate Mexico, a valuable partner. We will instead embrace our neighbors and pursue strong, fruitful partnerships across the region, from Canada to Latin America and the Caribbean. We will bolster democratic institutions, promote economic opportunity and prosperity, and tackle the rise of drugs, transnational crime, and corruption. We will strengthen the U.S.- Caribbean regional relationship through economic development and comprehensive immigration reform. And we will build on our long-term commitment to Colombia and work with Central American countries to stabilize the Northern Triangle.

In Cuba, we will build on President Obama's historic opening and end the travel ban and embargo. We will also stand by the Cuban people and support their ability to decide their own future and to enjoy the same human rights and freedoms that people everywhere deserve. In Venezuela, we will push the government to respect human rights and respond to the will of its people. And in Haiti, we will support local and international efforts to bolster the country's democratic institutions and economic development. We will also help more Haitians take advantage of Temporary Protected Status. Finally, we will close the School of the Americas, now known as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, because we believe that military and police forces should support democracy, not subvert it.

Africa

Africa is home to many of the fastest growing economies in the world. Democrats will strengthen our partnership and collaboration with the African Union, emphasizing trade while increasing development assistance to bolster the continent's domestic economies. We will engage our African partners on the full range of global challenges and opportunities, and we will continue to strengthen democratic institutions and human rights, fair trade and investment, development, and global health. We will help our African partners improve their capacity to respond to crises and protect citizens, especially women and girls. And we will work to end the reign of terror promulgated by Boko Haram, al-Shabaab, AQIM, and ISIS.

Democrats applaud President Obama's National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking, and his commitment to preserving the earth's natural beauty for future generations. Democrats support science-based management of iconic wildlife in Africa, including stronger regulations banning the importation into the United States of hunting trophies that are not supported by current science-based evidence and are related to or funded by non-scientific special interests.

Global Economy and Institutions

Democrats will protect and grow the global economy. While Donald Trump wants to default on our debt, which would lead to a disastrous global economic crisis, we believe we must be responsible stewards and work with our partners to prevent another worldwide financial crisis.

Democrats believe that global institutions—most prominently the United Nations—and multilateral organizations have a powerful role to play and are an important amplifier of American strength and influence. Many of these organizations need reform and updating, but it would be reckless to follow Donald Trump and turn our back on the international system that our country built. It has provided decades of stability and economic growth for the world and for America.