



# THE GEN-Z BILL OF RIGHTS

DREAM FOR AMERICA★

January 2024 Edition

## **Gen-Z deserves a future of hope, progress, & prosperity.**

**The Gen-Z Bill of Rights** is a comprehensive platform by **Dream for America** outlining *Gen-Z's blueprint for America*. By 2036, young people will make up 60% of the American electorate. We're angry about the assault on civil rights, the surging cost of living, and the hijacking of America's promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. As the generation defined by school shootings and economic crises — which is now graduating into one of the most turbulent times in our nation's history, we believe a better world is possible — but only if Gen-Z has a hand in shaping it.

**Gen-Z knows what our priorities are.** We're everyday Americans who want opportunities for ourselves and security for our families. We want safe communities and decent educations. We want good healthcare that doesn't force us to go broke when we get sick. We want our voices to be heard in a system ruled by special interests trying to erode our democracy. We want to know that somebody is listening to us and fighting for our future. The problems of today require solutions from tomorrow that are not only ambitious and aspirational, but actionable from campuses to capitols.

Together, Dream for America is building the most organized, active, and powerful progressive grassroots network both online and on-campus across the country to engage young Americans of all backgrounds at all times — not just on the eve of an election. The rich and powerful know they have the far-right in their corner to fight for their priorities. We're helping usher in a new wave of progressivism that informs, energizes, and empowers young Americans to become the next generation of democracy defenders.

At critical moments throughout history, young people have always been at the forefront in marches and in movements — driving progress to secure a better future. The only way we fight fascism and defend democracy is to come together not as Democrats, not as Republicans — but as Americans, and as human beings first and foremost — to usher in a new era not about division, but about putting progress over politics — solving the problems that we all share. And this is what we're fighting for.

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# A New Deal for the 21st Century

## An Economic Bill of Rights

*“The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have too much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little,”* said President Franklin Delano Roosevelt after winning re-election in a landslide, campaigning on continuing to offer working-class Americans a promise of relief, recovery, and reform.

In 1944, Roosevelt unveiled his vision for a Second Bill of Rights – a belief that we need to do more than just help Americans survive, but truly create an economy where all can thrive. Together, we must work to fulfill Roosevelt’s legacy and create a new Economic Bill of Rights – a vision enshrining that every American has the right to access:

1. a good-paying job
2. a decent wage
3. an adequate home
4. basic medical care
5. economic protection during sickness, accident, old age, or unemployment
6. a quality education
7. & clean air, water, nature, and food.

Gen-Z deserves the same economic opportunities provided to our parents and grandparents. As the wealthiest nation on Earth, we cannot rest until every American has the opportunity to share in that prosperity. [President Biden’s Build Back Better Agenda](#) has been a historic investment in places and in people that have been historically left behind and offer all Americans a chance to make the American Dream, a real American reality.

## **A Marshall Plan For America**

In 1948, President Harry Truman authorized \$13 billion in economic recovery programs for a Europe hollowed out by war – the plan was dubbed [\*"The Marshall Plan"\*](#), intending to rebuild the eviscerated economies and shattered spirits of Western Europe. Over the next few years, the Plan was key to the restoration of political stability and revitalization of global economies.

For millions of Americans – especially the next generation – the American Dream has been downsized. At a time when too many are worried about how they're going to survive in today's economy, we must bring back an era of hope and national prosperity. Let's borrow from the principles of the New Deal and Truman's Marshall Plan to build an economy that allows every hard-working American the chance to earn a good life – a future which requires a strong and modern government to work together with a thriving and dynamic private sector to achieve historic growth, robust economic security, & sustained social prosperity.

## **Compassionate Capitalism**

Lately, our country has faced so many pessimistic questions that we've stopped asking hopeful ones, like: "What would it look like if every family could make ends meet?" Let's rally around a vision that better aligns investors and the public interest alike on critical issues like workers' rights, environmental conservation, and social equality. Instead of hastily constructing an economic foundation based on bureaucratic welfare states or excessive economic concentration, America must be built on the principles of an investments-based economy propping up the American Dream. That means positioning American workers and businesses to compete in the 21st century, and building an economy that rewards work, not wealth. Let's invest in workers, invest in industries, invest in families, and invest in our futures.

## **Rebuild Forgotten Towns & Cities**

Today, one-in-six rural Americans live in poverty.<sup>1</sup> Over the last several decades, our farmers have been stiffed, our environments have been polluted, small towns have been hollowed out, and our communities have been destroyed. America has always been a nation of doers and industrial might, so let's put America's truckers, tradespeople, and blue-collar backbone to work to rebuild forgotten communities and reinvigorate small towns with big hearts.

Let's rebuild infrastructure, revitalize rural towns, support family farms and ranches, reinstate mandatory country-of-origin labeling, ensure farmers have the Right to Repair their equipment, help struggling malls attract new business, and bring universal high-speed broadband to every corner of America. The [Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill of 2021](#) was a strong first step, and made historic investments in communities historically left behind.

## **Revive American Industry & Manufacturing**

Over the last several decades, out-of-touch politicians have eviscerated America's small towns and factories. They wrote bad trade deals that shipped our jobs overseas and built an economy that works for the few, rather than the many. It's time we chart a blue-collar blueprint to revive our industry and ensure we have a future made in America. That means:

- **Creating** good-paying jobs that don't require advanced degrees.
- **Rewriting** trade deals to protect wages & stop the outsourcing of jobs.
- **Investing** in job training, local governments, & the factories of the future.
- **Raising** the cost of offshoring by requiring U.S. companies to reimburse governments for all the subsidies they received on the mainland.
- **Becoming** the world's leading renewable energy exporter.
- **Buying** American and hiring American.

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<sup>1</sup> [Extreme Poverty Counties Found Solely in Rural Areas in 2018](#)



## **The Largest Public Works Project in History**

Decades of neglect have let our roads, bridges, and airports fall into a state of decay. The Infrastructure Report Card gave the U.S. an abysmal grade of C-.<sup>2</sup> The World Economic Forum ranks America as 13th globally in quality of infrastructure, with the American Society of Civil Engineers declaring over 45,000 bridges and 1 in 5 miles of all roads to be in poor condition.<sup>3</sup> From the transcontinental railroad and the interstate highway to the Hoover Dam and the Golden Gate Bridge – American ingenuity cannot be beat. Let’s reignite a thriving America with a strong middle class and an even stronger infrastructure. That means:

- **Reviving** Roosevelt’s [Public Works Administration \(PWA\)](#) to hire unemployed Americans to repair existing infrastructure and enact the largest public works project in history.
- **Upgrading** crumbling schools, sewers, streets, hospitals, ports, post offices, and municipal buildings.
- **Constructing** new state-of-the-art bridges, beaches, canals, parks, pipelines, public squares, railroads, energy grids, and hundreds of thousands of miles of new road.
- **Investing** in new walkable cities & building modern world-class airports.

## **Free & Fair Trade**

In 2022, U.S. trade deficits soared to a record \$1.2 trillion.<sup>4</sup> While we break down barriers, we must defend American competitiveness by fighting for fair trade deals that protect American industry, pay good wages, conserve our climate, & preserve strong economic growth. By negotiating free and fair trade deals that encourage companies to “Buy Local” and “Buy American”, we will once again reignite America as the manufacturing superpower of the world.

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<sup>2</sup> [Infrastructure Report Card](#)

<sup>3</sup> [The Global Competitiveness Report 2019](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Annual 2022 Press Highlights | Census Bureau](#)

## **Jobs for Working Families**

As the wealthiest nation on Earth, everyone who can work and wants to work should be given the opportunity to do so. In 1944, Franklin Roosevelt talked about the fundamental economic right of every American to have a job – his words were true then, and even truer today. That means:

- **Initiating** a *Federal Creator's Project* to spur artists, actors, writers, and other creators to document American culture and history, fund local theatrical productions, and create public works of art.
- **Collaborating** with businesses and private industry to offer job incentives and training programs.
- **Establishing** the *Youth Employment Administration (YEA)* to aid young Americans in finding jobs in the public or private sector.

## **Wage A War on Poverty**

Nothing is more debilitating or devastating than poverty. The Census Bureau says that over 37 million Americans are living in poverty, with nearly 103 million living in near-poverty.<sup>5</sup> In the 1960s, President Lyndon B. Johnson waged a War on Poverty that elevated a generation. 20 years later, compassionate capitalism was replaced by trickle-down economics that spread the promise of wealth to all by cutting taxes for the rich. Today, nine million children go to bed hungry.<sup>6</sup> Millions of hard-working Americans are forced to choose between food and utilities; with millions more living on the brink, a single car repair or hospital visit away from disaster. Rather than “lifting all boats,” as was promised, it left millions without even a life raft. Once more, let’s enact an economic vision that protects Social Security, ensures fiscal responsibility; and guarantees opportunity and prosperity for all Americans, not just the wealthy and well-connected.

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<sup>5</sup> [Poverty in the United States: 2021](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Hunger in America | Feeding America](#)

## **A Regional Minimum Wage**

In 2009, Congress raised the federal minimum wage to \$7.25. Two economic recessions and a global pandemic later – millions of Americans, students in particular, are still earning the same starvation wages.<sup>7</sup> All of us agree on the need for a higher wage. However, while America may be one country – we are a collection of thousands of different micro-economies. That’s why it’s time for a regional minimum wage that reflects these differences and helps working families wherever they live.

This new approach would immediately raise wages and lift millions of working people out of poverty. It would also break the decades-long logjam in Washington where the wage floor is lifted inadequately once every ten years because high-cost areas need a far different minimum than the low-cost areas that are over-represented in Congress.

For example, the cost of a hamburger or haircut is far different in New York City than in Clarksburg, Mississippi. It makes sense to adopt a [\*regional minimum wage\*](#) where the benchmark national minimum wage would be set at the beginning of each year to one-half of the hourly wage for nonsupervisory workers. According to data from 2019, that wage would be \$11.55.

Each city and rural community would be placed in one of five categories based on living costs. The minimum wage would be either slightly below that benchmark for low-cost areas or slightly above for high-cost ones. Local and state governments would still be free to pass higher minimum wages.

With a minimum wage that reflects the cost-of-living disparities between urban and rural communities, we can ensure that all workers are paid a living wage in their local economy.<sup>8</sup> We must also eliminate the so-called “tipped minimum wage” – allowing workers in the service industry to be exploited.

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<sup>7</sup> [\\$15 An Hour Isn't Enough: U.S. Workers Need a Living Wage](#)

<sup>8</sup> [A Regional Minimum Wage](#)

## **Cut Costs for Working Families**

At a time when the cost of living is putting a strain on everyone's wallets, we need to create an economy that works for everyone – not just the wealthy and well-connected – by cutting taxes for working families and giving everyday Americans an extra bit of breathing room. That means:

- **Lowering** costs for families through the [Inflation Reduction Act](#).
- **Strengthening** our supply chains to be more resilient & ensure they start and end right here at home.
- **Expanding** the [Earned Income Tax Credit \(EITC\)](#).
- **Cracking down** on excessive junk fees.
- **Unleashing** American energy production & independence.
- **Cutting** the deficit by ensuring billionaires pay their fair share.
- **Reinstating & raising** the [Child Tax Credit](#).
- **Creating** good-paying jobs that don't require a college degree.
- **Eliminating** the sales tax on baby formula, diapers, school supplies, athletic uniforms, and children's clothing items to give working families some much-needed economic relief.

## **Safeguard Social Security & Medicare**

At the heart of the American Dream is the ability of our nation's seniors to retire with dignity without fear of poverty. Social Security and Medicare aren't just programs – they're promises of a dignified retirement after decades of hard work. At a time when radical partisans seek to strip seniors of their benefits, we must:

- **Defend** [Social Security & Medicaid](#) against partisan attacks.
- **Drive down** prescription drug costs for seniors.
- **Protect** [Social Security & Medicaid](#) for decades to come by eliminating the cap on payroll taxes to raise revenue and balance the scales.
  - The current cap is \$160,200 – meaning that billionaires pay the same as someone who makes that same amount.

## **America Open For Business**

The Founding Fathers considered monopolies to be detrimental to freedom. President Thomas Jefferson wrote to James Madison that he strongly disliked the omission of a “restriction against monopolies” from the Bill of Rights. One thing is clear: corporate monopolies are bad for our economy. They drive up prices, drive down quality, create waste and inefficiency, and kill free-market competition. Mega monopolies aren't just taking advantage of the American tax code, they're taking advantage of the American people. The real wealth of our nation lies not in corporate profits but in our people. Mom-and-pop stores and shops are the lifeblood of America and the real dynamos of American enterprise. Let's protect American workers, consumers, and business owners so that all Americans can once again have an economy that works for all rather than the few and create a nation that's truly open for business. That means:

- **Cutting** taxes & eliminating red tape for small and local businesses.
- **Making** it easier for Americans to start and operate businesses.
- **Creating** a *National Competition Administration (NCA)* to foster market competition & solidify local business as the lifeblood of our economy.
- **Incentivizing** “Made in America” manufacturing.
- **Expanding** the *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)*.
- **Banning** child labor exploitation.
- **Empowering** the *Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB)*.
- **Investing in** good-paying jobs and skill-building training opportunities.
- **Expanding** programs to incubate and mentor new entrepreneurs.
- **Cracking down** on companies that send jobs and profits overseas.
- **Strengthening** collective bargaining, overtime rules, paid family and medical leave, and the union way of life.
- **Ensuring** small businesses and contractors get paid – not stiffed.
- **Protecting** workers from exploitation and union-busting.
- **Eliminating** corporate & Wall Street tax loopholes.

# America First in Quality of Life

## Achieve Universal Healthcare

The American healthcare system is broken. 68,000 Americans die each year due to a lack of health insurance.<sup>9</sup> 85 million are uninsured or underinsured, with 500,000 Americans going into medical debt and 18 million unable to fulfill their medical prescriptions each year.<sup>10</sup> U.S. life expectancy is now lower than it was 20 years ago. When healthcare spending per capita has increased twelve-fold since 1960, are we twelve-times healthier?

Today's healthcare system treats symptoms of illness at the expense of curing their cause. We face a devastating pandemic – not of COVID-19, but of chronic disease. Autoimmunity, allergies, diabetes, obesity, addiction, anxiety, and depression – once, rarities of our past – now afflict nearly two-thirds of Americans. We need a fundamental re-evaluation of our chemical, food, and ecologic policies in this country to lower costs and foster public health. All Americans also deserve the peace of mind that, if an illness strikes or an accident occurs, you can get the care you need without going homeless after paying the bill. People shouldn't have to choose between putting food on the table for their kids or whether they can afford life-saving medication to stay alive. The amount of uninsured people in America who live day-to-day in fear of an injury they can't afford is a downright disgrace.

The question isn't how we can afford to pay for universal access to healthcare coverage; but rather how can we afford not to? We must slash skyrocketing prescription drug costs, expand paid family and medical leave, and move towards a public option as outlined in the [Medicare for America Act of 2019](#) to guarantee everyday Americans quality, affordable, and universal access to healthcare so that no American needs to gamble their savings to save their life.

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<sup>9</sup> [Medicare for All Would Save \\$450 Billion Annually While Preventing 68,000 Deaths, New Study Shows](#)

<sup>10</sup> [U.S. Healthcare Factsheet](#)

## **Slash Prescription Drug Costs**

Since the passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), we've seen real improvements in health care delivery – including free preventive care, Medicaid expansion to millions of working families, eliminating discrimination against pre-existing conditions, ending lifetime limits on care, and allowing young adults to stay on their parents' plans until age 26.

Yet, medicine costs are still skyrocketing. Today, most Americans are one medical crisis away from a lifetime of debt and despair – and we deserve better. The [Inflation Reduction Act of 2022](#) was a historic investment in our nation's seniors. Now we must build on that progress for all Americans and continue the fight for universal access to quality, affordable healthcare – even if it means standing up to lobbyists and powerful special interests. We must:

- **Fight** for health insurance for the lowest-income Americans in every state by incentivizing states to enact Medicaid Expansion.
- **Defend** the Affordable Care Act from partisan attacks.
- **Bring down** out-of-pocket costs like copays and deductibles.
- **Increase** the annual [Branded Prescription Drug Fee](#).
- **Cut** regulations that may slow the approval of cheaper generics.
- **Increase** funding for the [Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#) to ensure the agency can guarantee the quality and safety of drugs.
- **Permit** drug importation from Canada.
- **Incentivize** American pharmaceutical manufacturing.
- **Penalize** big pharma companies that needlessly hike prescription drug prices while marketing long-standing, life-saving treatments and face little or no competition.
- **Enable** the federal government to engage in price negotiations for [Medicare and Medicaid](#) with drug manufacturers.
- **Expand** the \$35 cap on insulin prices to all Americans.

## **Tackle the Opioid Crisis**

115 Americans die every day from opioid overdose.<sup>11</sup> Thousands more struggle with addiction, and the mental and behavioral side-effects these drugs entail. The opioid crisis is a public health emergency that has devastated communities across America. With over 47% of opiate addicts being under the age of 35 – America’s next generation is struggling. We must address the root causes of this crisis, from economic insecurity and social isolation to creating supportive and healthy communities where individuals can responsibly thrive with health.<sup>12</sup> That means:

- **Declaring** the Opioid Crisis as a national state of emergency.
- **Increasing** federal funding directed towards addiction treatment and rehabilitation for addictive opiates at the local level.
- **Limiting** the importation of heroin, fentanyl, and other illicit substances – especially through the Southern Border.
- **Regulating** pharmaceutical company marketing tactics as much as the FDA regulates the release of new drugs.
- **Encouraging** all opioid prescriptions to be made from hospitals rather than individual offices and medical practices.
- **Only allowing** doctors with specialized training and education in pain management to prescribe higher doses of opioids.
- **Requiring** individuals with Opioid prescriptions to follow-up with the same doctor.
- **Reforming** general orders mandating that prescribers duly investigate the need for a new prescription.
- **All** first responders should have access to naloxone, a drug that can prevent opioid overdoses from becoming fatal.
- **Taxing** opiate manufacturers retroactively to 2005 to further fund treatment and rehabilitation because drug companies deserve to pay to treat the pain they have profited from.

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<sup>11</sup> [Opioid Overdose Statistics in America](#)

<sup>12</sup> [47% Opioid Addicts Under 35 Years Old](#)



## **Revitalize Public Health**

More Americans than ever before in history are being diagnosed with chronic illnesses and enduring the stigma of disabilities. We must move from a sick-care system to a wellness society. It's time we:

- **Commit** to preventing, effectively treating, and making a cure possible for Alzheimer's disease by 2030.
- **Expand** air, water, and food quality requirements.
- **Adequately fund** early childhood autism intervention and treatment.
- **Ensure** all hospitals & public transit are ADA-compliant.
- **De-stigmatize** marginalized low-cost alternatives & holistic care.
- **Treat** gun violence as a public health crisis.
- **Increase** funding & research to achieve an HIV & AIDS-free generation.

## **Fulfill Our Promise to Veterans**

Every day, 22 veterans commit suicide.<sup>13</sup> Over 30,000 veterans are homeless, and millions more have been disappointed by a system that fails to adequately address mental health or provide proper care, employment opportunities, and adequate support for societal reintegration. As a nation, we have a moral obligation to do more than offer some handshakes and platitudes. Those with the courage to defend our freedom, deserve that same courage from their government to provide an economy built for success and a country welcoming with open arms. That means:

- **Fully funding** and resourcing the VA & eliminating VA-benefit backlogs.
- **Guaranteeing** access to comprehensive mental health services.
- **Ensuring** that all VA facilities meet the world-class standards of care.
- **Drastically** decreasing the veteran suicide rate.
- **Supporting** military spouses in pursuing education, seeking jobs, building careers, & starting families.

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<sup>13</sup> [VA Releases Report on Nation's Largest Analysis of Veteran Suicide](#)

## **World-Class Education**

America's greatest resource is the brain of every child. The way to guarantee a thriving society 10 years from now, is to do everything we can to help every 10-year-old thrive today. Every child, no matter his or her background, should be guaranteed a high-quality education. Every child deserves the chance to fulfill his or her God-given potential.

50 years ago, there was no better place than America to have a big dream. Obtaining a high school degree meant that every single American had a fair shot at getting a good job, raising a family, buying a house, and sending their kids to school – all on one income. Nowadays, the economy of the 21st-century places an ever-greater importance on trade skills and receiving a college degree. However, Gen-Z is being short-changed, with our elected officials overpromising and under delivering. Our public schools are the bedrock of our communities and the American Dream, and yet, our schools are chronically underinvested – our Infrastructure is crumbling and neglected, veteran teachers are leaving en masse, schools are overcrowded, curriculums and technology are out of date, and academic achievement has fallen off a cliff. Moreover, the United States now places an unimpressive 35th out of 71 countries in math and science achievement.<sup>14</sup>

If we want to prepare America's next generation for a highly competitive world, we ought to get serious about investing in our future. We must fight for accessible and quality public education for all American children and affordable college education for all who want it. We must ensure that every public school is a palace of learning, culture, and modern infrastructure; and truly guarantee that no child is left behind academically, socially, or economically. Together, it's time that we reduce child poverty and increase child opportunity for America's next generation.

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<sup>14</sup> [United States Academic Achievement Lags Behind the World](#)

## **Student Debt Relief**

Student debt is holding millions of Americans back and crushing the financial futures of millions of young Americans trying to make ends meet. Over the last few decades, student loans have skyrocketed past \$1.6 trillion.<sup>15</sup> In 2023, there were over 43 million student-loan borrowers, with the average borrower owing \$37,574.<sup>16</sup> Together, we can provide a path to economic stability for millions of Americans and take a critical step towards strengthening our economy, expanding financial horizons, and building a better, brighter America. We must:

- **Make** all community colleges tuition-free.
- **Ensure** low-income and middle-class families pay no tuition on in-state four-year public colleges and universities.
- **Cap** student-loan interest rates.
- **Improve** the [Public Service Loan Forgiveness](#) program.
- **Allow** all borrowers to refinance loans at current interest rates.
- **Crack down** on predatory schools, lenders, and bill collectors.
- **Expand** the [Biden-Harris Administration's Student Debt Relief](#) plan.

## **Universal School Meals**

Today, twelve million children are hungry in America – there should not be even one.<sup>17</sup> Students with school lunch debt are forced to go on welfare and not only face the struggle of economic disparity and social stigma – but also the ire of debt collectors who may deny their ability to graduate. It is not a radical idea to protect the well-being of all our children and ensure no child goes hungry. Just as the State of Minnesota did in March of 2023, we as a nation must follow suit and provide year-round, quality, healthy, delicious, and free universal breakfast and lunch school meals to all.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> [Student Loans Skyrocket](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Student Loans Average Borrower](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Children Hungry in America](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Minnesota Signs Universal Free School Meals Into Law](#)

## **Access to Affordable College**

While student debt relief eases the economic burden of college education – these proposals are merely a band-aid solution on a more elemental problem: college affordability. Making higher education more affordable is urgent and undeniable. Decades ago, Baby Boomers could hold down a summer job and pay for most, if not all of their college tuition. Today, students would be lucky if they could afford the cost of their textbooks. With tuition surging as much as 440% over the last 25 years, higher education has now been relegated to a privilege for the few rather than an opportunity available for all.<sup>19</sup> Every year, hundreds of thousands of students opt against getting a higher education for one reason: their family lacks the income. If students want to earn a degree after high school, they should have every right to. Income should not be a barrier to opportunity – it's unfair to students, and it's unfair to the future of our country. We must:

- **Make** public colleges, universities, HBCUs, minority-serving institutions, and trade schools more affordable for all.
- **Offer** tuition-free community college and trade schools for all.
- **Provide** tuition-free workforce training courses.
- **Double** investments in [Pell Grants](#).
- **Allow** community college and trade school class credits to be more easily transferable to universities.
- **Guarantee** access to mental health professionals on campus.
- **Expand** access to work-study programs.
- **Increase** funding for the [TRIO and GEAR UP](#) program.
- **Create** more opportunities for higher education and for students who seek education in trades or technical fields.
- **Provide** college students who are parents the support they need and the resources they deserve.
- **End** food-insecurity on college campuses.

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<sup>19</sup> [Growth of College Tuition over the Last 25 Years](#)

## **A New Era in Education**

America used to lead the world in the percentage of young people with college degrees. Today, we are #11 behind countries like South Korea, Japan, Canada, and the United Kingdom.<sup>20</sup> America is falling behind – thanks to MAGA Republicans waging unnecessary culture wars attempting to ban books rather than ban school hunger. Extremist state supermajorities have also made radical spending cuts to critical public services like public education in favor of privatization and voucher scams, all while padding corporate monopolies with billions in subsidies at the expense of our nation falling further and further behind in academic achievement and educational prowess. Let’s actually put America first by offering a world-class education. We must:

- **Establish** [\*universal childcare & pre-K\*](#) for all.
- **Fully fund** public schools, and make every school a palace of learning, culture, and modern infrastructure.
- **Increase** the salary of public school teachers.
- **Achieve** equitable funding for public schools by rethinking the link between property taxes, standardized testing, and school budgets.
- **Reevaluate** school start and end times.
- **Give** every student an opportunity to learn computer science.
- **Provide** more educational opportunities for students with disabilities.
- **Revitalize** rural schools.
- **Pass** curriculum reform:
  - **de-emphasize** standardized testing
  - **prioritize** critical thinking, life skills, and job preparation
  - **mandatory** personal finance and civics classes
  - **implement** study skills courses
  - **expand** innovative education programs like Early College.
- **Eliminate** vouchers for private schools.
- **Cancel** all existing student lunch debt.

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<sup>20</sup> [Percentage of Young Individuals with College Degrees](#)

## Affordable Housing for All

Homeownership is at the center of the American Dream and the key to building generational wealth. Yet, nearly 11 million families and a quarter of young renters pay more than 50 percent of our income on housing – with millions more who will never afford to own a home.<sup>21</sup> Decades of red-lining, surging income inequality, predatory lending practices, and neglect of our veterans and the downtrodden have caused homelessness to become a crisis in nearly every major city.

Today, too many families with good credit still find the path to sustainable homeownership closed. Too many communities are in distress, with abandoned buildings and poverty cutting entire neighborhoods off from jobs, from commerce, and from hope. Even worse, there is virtually no city or community where a full-time minimum-wage worker can afford a decent, two-bedroom apartment. Gen-Z deserves housing that is stable, accessible, safe, healthy, energy efficient, and – above all – affordable. We must:

- **Build** 2 million additional affordable public housing units.
- **Fight** unfair rent gouging by corporate landlords.
- **Crack down** on rental junk fees.
- **Revitalize** public housing by investing in the repair, decarbonization, and building of current and new public housing.
- **End** redlining & other discriminatory and unfair practices in the housing market.
- **Eliminate** discriminatory zoning policies.
- **Address** construction materials shortages with public-private partnerships to address supply chain disruptions.
- **Ensure** that public housing has quality community spaces.
- **Guarantee** access to broadband for all public housing.
- **Enforce** fair housing and fair lending laws.
- **Incentivize** development in new hubs of economic growth.
- **Enact** a mortgage relief tax credit for middle class first-time home buyers.
- **Provide** up to \$25,000 in down payment assistance for first-time home buyers.

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<sup>21</sup> [Americans Pay 50% of Income on Housing](#)

## **A Green New Century**

Antarctica is melting, the Amazon rainforest is burning, and the Arctic is on fire. Climate change is the biggest threat to our way of life and a heightening global emergency. The last few years have seen one environmental disaster after another. Our soils are depleted, our trees are dying, chronic disease is at an all time high, and extreme weather events from surging heat waves and wildfires to catastrophic floods and hurricanes ravage entire communities, economies, and our American way of life. Through decades of government inaction, working-class and communities of color have borne this affliction disproportionately; and it seems inevitable that Gen-Z will be forced to shoulder this burden.

The first step to solving any problem is to come together and acknowledge it exists. The willingness to recognize the tremendous issues we face is the prerequisite for any moral and substantive action. Together, we must foster consensus and build coalitions. Americans of every stripe from liberal environmentalists to conservative conservationists share a common desire for a clean and healthy environment.

While progressive public policy discussions have done a great job in jump-starting a conversation about the scope of our problems and the scope of our solutions in how we achieve lower emissions, greater renewable energy, and protect good paying jobs; we must chart a better, more attainable path towards a cleaner, greener, and brighter future shifting our thinking from short-term change to long-term transformation. Rather than a Green New Deal, let's embrace a common-sense [Green New Century](#) of climate innovation, clean energy independence, and becoming a global leader in rainforest preservation and marine restoration because America's next generation deserves a walkable, breathable, and livable future.

## **Combat Climate Change**

Our planet is a mess. The last eight years have been the eight warmest in history. Over the last 20 years, Greenland has lost about 255 giga-tons of ice each year – a “worst-case scenario” not anticipated until 2070. Atlantic hurricanes are growing in intensity and frequency, our West Coast has been engulfed by fire, and communities all across America are enduring new waves of drought, flood, loss of agriculture and biodiversity, and toxic waste and industrial poisons that make people and ecosystems sick.<sup>22</sup> Time is running out and our generation will not be gambling our future. We must:

- **Achieve** a carbon-free America by 2050.
- **Enact** a [Carbon Fee & Dividend](#).
- **Preserve** public land, water, and wildlife.
- **Balance** decarbonization with economic development.
- **Eliminate** the billions in wasteful tax subsidies oil and gas companies have enjoyed for too long and invest it in clean energy.
- **Responsibly transition** to clean energy by incentivizing companies to adopt zero-waste cycles & clean energy sources.
- **Invest** in greater natural disaster preparedness.
- **Shift** agricultural subsidies to encourage regenerative practices.
- **Revitalize** left behind coal communities.
- **Make** our power and energy grid more resilient against heat waves, hurricanes, & extreme weather events.
- **Forge** international agreements with other nations to implement these policies throughout the global supply chain.
- **Become** global leaders in rainforest preservation, climate conservation, and marine restoration.
- **Activate** the American entrepreneurial spirit to provide the innovation and technology to power us at home and abroad.

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<sup>22</sup> [Greenland Loses 255 Gigatons of Ice Annually](#)



## **Clean Energy Independence**

Today, America relies heavily on fossil fuels for our energy needs – which not only contributes to climate change but also poses dire national security risks. Dependence on foreign oil leaves our nation vulnerable to price shocks and supply disruptions, while the extraction and transportation of fossil fuels pose devastating environmental impacts. By investing in clean energy development and deployment – America can assert global leadership in the fight to lead a more safe, secure, and sustainable future. That means:

- **Subsidizing** public transportation, electric cars, high-speed rail, intercontinental space transport, and other green projects.
- **Investing** in carbon capture, clean energy storage, & green efficiency.
- **Supporting** clean and nuclear energy.
- **Partnering** with the private sector to spur climate innovation.
- **Easing** market and regulatory barriers to innovation, deployment, and adaptation of climate technologies.
- **Cutting** billions of wasteful tax subsidies to oil and gas companies.
- **Asserting** American global leadership on climate change.

## **Land & Wildlife Conservation**

From luscious habitats and endangered species to national parks and iconic landmarks – our country is blessed to have natural treasures that define our identity as a nation. These icons of our heritage are a birthright we pass down from generation to generation. When we conserve our country's natural gifts, we aren't just protecting the livelihoods of people who depend on them; but also enshrining the heart and soul of our collective national pride. Let's:

- **Establish** a Department of Beautification to uphold national treasures to the highest standards of care and maintenance and promote new and beautiful architecture that reflects our national history and heritage.
- **Protect** pets and farm animals from inhumane treatment.
- **Build** new green spaces and national parks.

## **Expand the TVA Nationwide**

In 1933, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed into law a federally-owned electric utility company called the [Tennessee Valley Authority \(TVA\)](#). For decades, the TVA has provided seamless stewardship of economic development and environmental conservation in the Tennessee Valley by offering flood control, wildlife conservation, and cheap electricity to local residents. At a time when one-third of American families struggle to pay for their basic energy needs, we must expand the TVA nationwide to become the [American Energy Authority \(AEA\)](#). By competing with private energy companies who monopolize the market and price-gouge consumers, the AEA would provide unparalleled programs to offer clean, efficient, reliable, and affordable energy for all who want it. Under the AEA, America would be one step closer to a clean, green, and sustainable future.

## **End the Teenage Mental Health Crisis**

The kids are not alright. Teenage mental health is in crisis.<sup>23</sup> The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) says that 1 in 3 high-school girls have seriously considered attempting suicide, with a record-high number of teenage boys experiencing mental distress as well.<sup>24</sup> Mental health affects all of us, but so many struggling don't get the support they need. We must:

- **Guarantee** universal, quality, & affordable access to mental health care.
- **Expand** Telehealth services to reach young people in rural America.
- **Launch** a national initiative for suicide prevention.
- **Create** a culture that fosters hope and community and addresses the root causes of teenage mental health issues by:
  - **promoting** healthy social connections,
  - **supporting** academic access without forcing undue pressure,
  - and **de-stigmatizing** mental health treatment.

<sup>23</sup> [Teen Girls Experience Increase in Suicide Ideation](#)

<sup>24</sup> [Teen Boys Struggling in America, Mental Illness Skyrockets](#)

# Life, Liberty, & Pursuit of Happiness

## Defend Our Democracy

From partisan gerrymandering and attempts to suppress the vote to the unfettered influence of big money in politics and Trump's insurrection and Capitol riot on January 6th – our democracy is in serious peril. Democracy is not a given; it's a dynamic process that requires constant vigilance and respect. In recent years, we've seen a surge in attacks on our democratic institutions and the values we hold as a nation. These attacks threaten to erode the very foundations of our Constitutional republic, but we must not give in to despair. Instead, we must stand up and defend our democracy – using our voices and our votes to protect the principles that make America great.

Even the strongest of nations aren't immune to the erosion of their democracies. Amid class divisions and unresponsive institutions, our system breeds anger, fear, and vitriol. When forced into frustration, everyday citizens look towards authoritarian demagogues – who masquerade as saviors of the working man – grasping at extremist distractions from radical culture wars to scapegoating immigrants to find answers to our shared problems.

To cure the sickness of fascism, we must speak out against those who seek to divide and degenerate us. We must be a bulwark against the toxicity of hatred and intolerance. We must reject false narratives and put truth over lies. We must work to drive civic engagement, participation, and education. We must uphold the values of democracy in every tenet of our lives from elections to economics. We must craft an economy, a democracy, and a future built for all. Every generation of Americans have faced a moment when they have to defend democracy, stand up for our personal freedom, stand up for the right to vote and our civil rights – this is our moment.

## **Strengthen Our Democracy**

The most fundamental right in a democracy is the right to vote. White or black, male or female, rich or poor, old or young: we are all equal at the ballot box. Yet, in recent years, we have seen a concerted effort to suppress the votes of all Americans.

Moreover, our government is built on the credo: “we the people” – *not* “we the donors”. Americans are understandably cynical about a political system that has been hijacked by billionaires and special interests when our government and our elections are supposed to represent all Americans. Gen-Z is committed to building a democracy where every voice is heard, and every vote counts. That means:

- **Making** Election Day a national holiday.
- **Automatic** voter registration for every American over 18.
- **Restoring** the voting rights of 6 million former felons who have already fully served their time.
- **Expanding** early voting.
- **Universal** access to mail-in ballots.
- **Lowering** the voting age for local elections to 16.
- **Increasing** polling places on Native American reservations.
- **Making** voting more accessible for people with disabilities.
- **Keeping** foreign money out of our elections.
- **Stopping** secret, unaccountable money in elections.
- **Electing** non-voting Congressional Delegates for American territories.
- **Allowing** same-day voter registration.
- **Making** Washington, D.C. the 51st state.
- **Ensuring** a nonpartisan and fully resourced election administration to prevent unfair partisan skewing of our elections.
- **Ending** partisan gerrymandering by enacting non-partisan redistricting commissions like that of Nebraska and Iowa.
- **Repairing** the [Voting Rights Act](#).

## Guarantee Our Rights & Freedoms

248 years ago, Americans waged a Revolution against tyranny & sacrificed countless lives in countless wars to preserve our birthright to the promises of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Throughout our history, Americans of all stripes and backgrounds struggled for freedom: we marched in Selma for civil rights, rioted at Stonewall for LGBTQ+ equality, & protested for disability rights. While America has made great strides in lifting ourselves from our divisive past, we still have a long way to go before we can truly guarantee every American their basic human rights. We must:

- **Strengthen** the [Civil Rights Act](#).
- **Pass** the [Equality Act](#).
- **Protect** freedom of speech and press & stop censorship.
- **Ban** school hunger instead of school books.
- **Relocate** Confederate monuments from public property and place them in museums where they were originally from.
- **Outlaw** conversion therapy.
- **Address** the homelessness crisis of LGBTQ+ youth.
- **End** the violence against trans Americans & rigorously investigate hate crimes.
- **Ensure** the transgender & non-binary Americans can receive official government documents that accurately reflect their identity.
- **Support** Congress' [Transgender Bill of Rights](#).
- **Protect** LGBTQ+ children from bullying and assault.
- **Defend** LGBTQ+ adoption rights.
- **Expand** accessible education & transportation by people with disabilities.
- **Ensure** Native Americans have the right to vote.
- **Guarantee** Native Americans housing, education, and economic opportunities.
- **Invest** in tribal nations and Native communities.
- **Adopt** the Biden-Harris Administration's ["Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights"](#).
- **Prevent** businesses from refusing service based on identity.
- **Counter** the rise in hate crimes.
- **Address** the security needs of houses of worship.
- **Advance** equal opportunities for all Americans, regardless of identity.

## Women's Rights Are Human Rights

Today, gender equality and reproductive freedom are under siege from radical partisans who seek to strip women across this nation of their rights – from bodily autonomy to economic opportunity. Gen-Z believes that every issue is a women issue. While America has made tremendous strides in expanding opportunities for women – there is still more we can do to expand economic opportunity, safeguard physical security, protect civil rights, ensure social equality, & break down the barriers that hold women back. That means:

- **Codifying** [Roe v. Wade](#) into law.
- **Protecting** a woman's right to access safe & legal abortion.
- **Ratifying** the [Equal Rights Amendment](#).
- **Ensuring** all survivors of sexual assault – regardless of gender – have access to mental health counseling and legal resources.
- **Improving** the access to & quality of postpartum care.
- **Closing** the gender pay gap by passing the [Paycheck Fairness Act](#).
- **Fighting** back against far-right attempts to restrict access to quality, affordable reproductive health care.
- **Standing** with [Planned Parenthood](#) & the essential health and reproductive care they provide for women.
- **Investing** in women-owned small businesses.
- **Ending** discrimination against pregnant and nursing workers.
- **Defending** access to affordable contraception & preventive care.
- **Expanding** higher education opportunities for women in STEM careers.
- **De-stigmatizing** men's mental health and sexual assault.
- **Stopping** campus sexual assault.
- **Making** quality, affordable [universal childcare & pre-K](#) a reality.
- **Guaranteeing** paid family leave.
- **Ending** violence against women by supporting survivors, ending the rape kit backlog, changing the culture that enables sexual violence, & confronting online harassment, abuse, and stalking.

## **Prevent Gun Violence**

“Do something.” That was the plea of parents who lost their children in Parkland. That was the plea of parents who lost their children in Uvalde. That was the plea of parents who lost their children in Columbine, in Oxford, at Sandy Hook and in countless other tragedies with countless other victims. With mass shootings occurring on a daily basis in the United States, gun violence has become a public health crisis.

An epidemic of gun violence has gripped our nation. While bearing arms is a right enshrined in our Constitution – the right to gun violence, however, is not. In 2023 alone: there were 656 mass shootings, 42,967 people killed from gun related injuries, 6,192 children and teenagers shot, & nearly 400 million weapons in circulation.<sup>25</sup> We deserve more than mere thoughts and prayers. An April 2023 Fox News poll indicates that over 87% of Americans are in favor of common-sense gun reform.<sup>26</sup> We can protect the Second Amendment while also saving student lives and preventing suicides. Gen-Z will be the generation to finally make gun violence a thing of the past. We must:

- **Enact** universal background checks.
- **Ban** assault weapons & high-capacity magazines.
- **Close** the [“Gun Show”](#), [“Internet Sale”](#), & [“Charleston Loophole”](#).
- **Pass** national [“red flag” laws](#) & [“Ethan’s Law”](#).
- **Outlaw** domestic abusers, the severely mentally ill, and violent criminals and terrorists from purchasing firearms.
- **Make** mental health care more accessible to reduce suicides.
- **Hold** gun companies responsible for their products.
- **Continue** the work of the [Office for Gun Violence Prevention](#).
- **Invest** in fingerprint sensors & other smart technologies for firearms.
- **Take** on corrupt gun lobby special interests like the NRA.

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<sup>25</sup> [Gun Violence Deaths in America](#)

<sup>26</sup> [87% of Americans Favor Gun Limits](#)

## **Safe Streets & Secure Neighborhoods**

The men and women who serve our country as police officers deserve our full gratitude and respect. For decades, the work of our police forces is commendable in protecting families and keeping communities safe. However, the recent killings of George Floyd, Eric Garner, Trayvon Martin highlight an increasing number of Americans – especially African Americans – dying at the hands of police brutality and racially motivated violence. Moreover, local and federal governments alike have failed to make sufficient investments in creating a strong American social fabric.

We must reduce the use of excessive force, ensure greater police accountability, and strengthen the bonds of trust between communities and law enforcement. That means:

- **Fully funding** our police force.
- **Rooting** out problematic officers.
- **Passing** the [George Floyd Justice in Policing Act](#) in Congress.
- **Implementing** community-based policing.
- **Universal** body cameras for police officers.
- **Mandating** de-escalation training & work shift sleep requirements.
- **Improving** the mental and physical wellness of police officers.
- **Investing** in more deterrent measures at schools like cameras and metal detectors to strengthen security at schools.
- **Banning** fatal choke holds.
- **Investing** in state-of-the-art law enforcement training programs.
- **Strengthening** trust between communities and law enforcement.
- **Doubling** the funding of firefighters & other social services.
- **Hiring** more and raising the pay of 911-call operators.
  - **Providing** mental health services to officers & operators.
  - **Nationally classifying** call dispatchers as first responders.



## **Criminal Justice Reform**

When the United States has less than 5 percent of the world’s population but over 25 percent of the total prison population, and more Black and brown men in prisons than were enslaved in 1850 – and wasting nearly \$300 billion each year on a system that doesn’t adequately correct criminals or make our everyday lives any safer – it is time we make deep, structural, and long-term investments to rebuild the communities decimated by crime, prevent the conditions that lead to arrest, rehabilitate those who have made mistakes, and usher in a new era of public safety.<sup>27</sup> We ought to have a system that prevents crime, rather than merely punish it. We must:

- **Ban** for-profit prisons and detention centers.
- **Restore** the voting rights of non-violent former inmates who have already served their time.
- **End** the profiteering of our criminal justice system.
- **Improve** mandatory minimum sentencing laws.
- **Reduce** the prison population via alternative detention such as house arrest, probation, restitution, and community service.
- **Ban** minors from being sentenced to solitary confinement.
- **Stop** racial profiling.
- **Prioritize** treatment and rehabilitation for low-level offenses.
- **Reform** the juvenile justice system.
- **Invest** in public defenders and other legal aid programs to guarantee defendants’ access to quality counsel.
- **Connect** former inmates to economic opportunities.
- **Dismantle** the school-to-prison pipeline.
- **Minimize** recidivism through prison programs.
- **Focus** on rehabilitation, reintegration, and redemption.

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<sup>27</sup> [\\$300 Billion Wasted in Incarceration](#)

## Stop the War on Drugs

For the last 50 years, the “War on Drugs” has been a disastrous policy failure excessively devastating communities of color and ruining the lives of millions of Americans. Furthermore, the War on Drugs has spent more than \$1 trillion since 1971 locking up millions of Americans for nonviolent offenses, disproportionately arresting people of color, and unnecessarily criminalizing addiction rather than investing in treatment.<sup>28</sup>

The War on Drugs has criminalized addiction and seen no fruit to bear, failing to curb drug use or revitalize left-behind communities. Substance use disorders are diseases, not crimes – and it’s time our government treats it as such. That means:

- **Legalizing** medical marijuana.
- **Expunging** all previous marijuana possession charges & releasing current inmates imprisoned on marijuana possession charges.
- **Refocusing** priorities to stop dealers, rather than consumers.
- **Empowering** communities to implement programs to teach adolescents about drug use and addiction.
- **Increasing** the use of drug courts, harm reduction interventions, & treatment diversion programs.
- **Reorienting** our public safety approach toward prevention.
- **Increasing** licenses for dispensaries & other cannabis facilities.
- **Prioritizing** rehabilitation over punishment.
- **Ending** all incarceration for drug use alone and instead divert individuals to drug courts and treatment.
- **Targeting** the illegal manufacturing of synthetic drugs.
- **Cracking down** on drug trafficking at our borders & ports of entry.

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<sup>28</sup> [War on Drugs Spent \\$1 Trillion](#)

## **Secure Borders & Immigration Reform**

For centuries, immigrants have been a source of hard work and innovation for our country. Every single family in America came here from somewhere else in search of the American Dream – some are native to our shores, some came by choice, some came by necessity, and others came by chains.

We, as a people, are at our strongest when we extend a hand to brothers and sisters around the world. We must acknowledge America is strong because of our diversity, not in spite of it. Immigrants are essential to our culture and critical to our economic prosperity; they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, not as political pawns.

Yet today, dark political forces seek to scapegoat our history and our heritage for political gain. It's no secret that our immigration system is broken with skyrocketing numbers of unprocessed asylum cases, a surge in illegal border crossings, and record levels of illicit substances traveling through ports of entry. However, we must not succumb to hate, cruelty, and extremism. We can secure the border while still upholding fundamental values. We must:

- **Strengthen** border security agencies & law enforcement personnel.
- **Counter** drug cartels, narcotics trafficking networks, & the flow of illicit drugs at ports of entry like fentanyl.
- **Humanely** enforcing immigration laws.
- **Pass** the [Bipartisan National Security Agreement](#), the toughest set of immigration reforms to secure the border in decades.
- **Ensure** legal representation & translators in every court hearing.
- **Establish** better systems for asylum requests & other protection claims.
- **Provide** more legal protections & a pathway to citizenship for DREAMers.
- **Ban** the practice of family separation at border facilities.
- **Defend** [DACA & DAPA](#) from partisan attacks.

## Leadership At Home & Abroad

America has been a positive force for good in the world. From Franklin Roosevelt to John F. Kennedy, our nation has always led the way in spreading peace, prosperity, and democracy. Many great leaders in our history have proven time and again that we can maintain strong relationships with our allies, while also sending clear messages to those who seek to bring us harm. In order to best secure our national interests and protect the American people, we must ground our foreign policy in strength, democracy, and diplomacy – leading the call for civil and human rights and rallying international cooperation in the fight against global injustice. That means:

- **Building** a 21st-century military that is the best-trained, best-equipped, and most effective fighting force in the world governed by strategy and security that maximizes effect and drives down cost.
- **Multiplying** the impact of our foreign aid with new measures for transparency and accountability & upholding the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#).
- **Working** with our allies to dismantle global terror networks.
- **Strengthening** relationships with NATO allies & international partners.
- **Preserving** international institutions & the global world order.
- **Supporting** Ukraine in its defense against Russia.
- **Upholding** an ironclad relationship between the United States & Israel.
- **Supporting** a two-state solution for Israel & Palestine.
- **Preventing** Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.
- **Hardening** defenses at home by investing in first responders, law enforcement, and intelligence officers with the right resources.
- **Investing** in education, infrastructure, healthcare, & innovation to build an America strong at home – so we can lead abroad.
- **Expanding** [AmeriCorp](#), the [Peace Corps](#), & other national service opportunities.
- **Mobilizing** the world to address transnational crises like COVID-19.
- **Being** a force against racism, antisemitism, and totalitarianism.
- **Taking care** of our veterans when they return home by ensuring access to care & economic and education opportunities.
- **Leading** the world on democracy, human rights, LGBTQ+ rights, gender equality, disability rights, labor standards, religious freedom, & Indigenous rights.

# Make America Cool Again

## Make Taxes Easy

Whether it's city hall or the halls of Congress, it's hard for governments at any level to build trust with the American people when the most direct interaction we have is something radically painful: tax season. The complex flurry of papers, mind-numbing paragraphs of legalese, and the barrage of bureaucracy makes filing taxes whether for ourselves or businesses a dreadful process instead of a celebration of contributions to our shared society. Instead, we ought to make taxes more fun and easy-going. That means:

- **Making** filing taxes and starting businesses easier.
- **Allowing** Americans to opt-in to an online, automatic tax filing system.
- **The IRS releases a "Shareholders Report"** to each taxpayer as a rundown of the actual amount of their taxes that went to each major federal spending category such as healthcare or the military.
- **Modernize** the IRS website and its filing forms
- **Allow** Americans to direct 1% of their taxes to a specific department or activity of the federal government.

## The Penny Makes No Cents

Pennies aren't popular. Brown and small, they aren't valuable enough to buy anything. And if time is money, you'd be better off using cash or other coins rather than slowly counting them at the checkout counter. Moreover, pennies also cost US taxpayers over \$145 million each year to make.<sup>29</sup> Pennies are also made out of zinc and copper, and mining for those materials would be detrimental to the environment and public health of local communities. Most of our zinc supply also comes from China, adding \$1.3 million to our ever-growing trade deficit.<sup>30</sup> The penny just simply makes no 'cents'.

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<sup>29</sup> [The True Cost of Pennies](#)

<sup>30</sup> [Zinc Supplied from China](#)

## **Local Journalism Fund**

Local print, broadcast, and digital journalism are dying. In small towns and cities all across America, the local newspaper is a relic of the past. Local media were the bedrock in giving residents a sense of what was happening in their local schools, governments, and communities. For decades, local journalism thrived with the backing of local ads and local entrepreneurs. While that is no longer a viable business model, independent and local media are still the bedrock of any functional democracy. We must establish a Local Journalism Fund to offer grants to nonprofits and local libraries to help local newspapers, periodicals, and websites stay afloat and transition towards a burgeoning revitalization of local journalism.

## **Revitalize the Arts**

The arts are a means of self-expression and creative exploration that words alone cannot convey. Over time, artists have the same effect on communities as entrepreneurs do. Due to budget cuts, art organizations of every shape and form are shrinking in size from museums and theaters to operas and orchestras. Art continues to play a critical role in our daily lives, and it's time we revitalize how culture and humanity connect with all of us. That means exploring changes to the tax code to spur investment in film, TV, and live theater; as well as working with the Department of Beautification to redesign clunky and out-of-date government logos.

## **Free Marriage Counseling for All**

A happy marriage contributes to longer life spans, increased satisfaction, and a greater likelihood that children have successful socioeconomic outcomes. Yet, there are very few options for those looking to mend their marital relationship. Let's offer free marriage counseling for all under any healthcare plan offered by the federal government.

## **Philanthropy Funds**

Non-profit organizations play a critical role in our communities, helping to offer solutions to various policy shortcomings of local and federal governments. Yet, not everybody has the means to support local nonprofits. The federal government ought to allow each working-age American \$100 per year to donate towards a 501(c)3 non-profit organization of their choice. Paid for by a reduction in tax credits for itemized donations, nearly \$21 billion would be funneled toward the critical role local non-profits play in our lives.

## **Reinstate the Fairness Doctrine**

Against the backdrop of surging disinformation and skepticism against mainstream media, Americans find it harder and harder to agree on policy because we cannot agree on facts. In 1987, the [Federal Communications Commission \(FCC\)](#) abolished the Fairness Doctrine mandating that required news broadcasters present controversial issues of public importance and to do so in a manner that fairly reflected differing viewpoints.<sup>31</sup> Let's bring back civility and science back to mainstream journalism.

## **Ban Brake Checks**

Making brake checks illegal is a crucial step in promoting road safety. Brake checks – the intentional act of abruptly slamming on the brakes without valid reason – pose a significant risk to other drivers on the road. These actions can lead to collisions, injuries, and even fatalities. By enacting laws that prohibit brake checks, we send a clear message that such dangerous behavior is unacceptable. This measure encourages responsible driving and emphasizes the importance of prioritizing the safety of all road users. It helps foster a more secure and predictable driving environment, reducing the likelihood of accidents and saving lives.

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<sup>31</sup> [Abolishment of the Fairness Doctrine](#)

## **Redesign the Dollar**

The Dollar, in its physical form, is not just a tool for economic transactions; it is a symbol of our collective identity, values, and aspirations. Our currency has a rich history, representing the economic might and stability of the United States. As we move forward in this rapidly evolving world, it's essential that our currency reflects the American spirit of progress, prosperity, and innovation. That includes a top-down redesign of currency to include iconic leaders in American history (such as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy) and capsules of time capturing our common glory, natural beauty, and technological might (like the Golden Gate Bridge, the Statue of Liberty, the Washington Memorial, the Constitutional Convention, raising the Flag on Iwo Jima, & the Moon Landing).

For potential designs supported by Dream for America, click [here](#).

## **Make Daylights Savings Permanent**

Darker mornings and lighter evenings for longer allow for greater outdoor activity, increased economic activity, fewer night time crimes or traffic accidents, and fewer annoyed Americans needing to reset our clocks. That means passing [Florida's Sunshine Protection Act](#) nationally to make Daylight Savings Time a permanent fixture of our national clock.

## **American High School Exchange Program**

Gen-Z and Americans in general are becoming more socially isolated. The urban-rural divide is now greater than ever, with partisan tribalism causing Americans to lose our collective sense of empathy for each other. One avenue to counter the rising tide of division is to guarantee future generations the opportunity during high school to embark on a three-month multi-region exchange program introducing them to communities and other citizens they'd otherwise not meet as part of their civic education.