

**\*\*\*DRAFT – DELIBERATIVE AND PREDECISIONAL\*\*\***

# 2016 Democratic Party Platform

## DRAFT

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**2016 DEMOCRATIC PARTY PLATFORM DRAFT**

**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. We have seen 75 straight months of private-sector job growth and added 14.5 million new jobs. Twenty million people have gained health insurance coverage. The American auto industry just had its best year ever. 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 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. 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 and Dolores Huerta 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.

1  
2 We believe in helping Americans balance work and family without fear of punishment or  
3 penalty. We believe in at last guaranteeing equal pay for women. And as the party that created  
4 Social Security, we believe in protecting every American’s right to retire with dignity.

5  
6 And we firmly believe that the greed, recklessness, and illegal behavior on Wall Street must be  
7 brought to an end. Wall Street must never again be allowed to threaten families and businesses  
8 on Main Street.

9  
10 Democrats believe we are stronger when we protect citizens’ right to vote, not corporations’ and  
11 billionaires’ right to buy elections. We will bring an end to the broken campaign finance system,  
12 overturn the disastrous *Citizens United* decision, restore the full power of the Voting Rights Act,  
13 and return our elections to the American people.

14  
15 Democrats believe that climate change poses a real and urgent threat to our economy, our  
16 national security, and our children’s health and futures, and that Americans deserve the jobs and  
17 security that come from becoming the clean energy superpower of the 21st century.

18  
19 Democrats believe we are stronger and safer when America brings the world together and leads  
20 with principle and purpose, and when we strengthen our alliances, not weaken them. We believe  
21 in the power of development and diplomacy. We believe our military should be the best-trained,  
22 best-equipped fighting force in the world, and that we must do everything we can to honor and  
23 support our veterans. And we know that only the United States can mobilize common action on a  
24 truly global scale, to take on the challenges that have no borders, from international terrorism to  
25 climate change to health pandemics.

26  
27 Above all, Democrats are the party of inclusion. We know that diversity is not our problem—it is  
28 our promise. As Democrats, we respect differences of perspective and belief, and pledge to work  
29 together to move this country forward, even when we disagree. With this platform, we do not  
30 merely seek common ground—we strive to reach higher ground.

31  
32 We are proud of our heritage as a nation of immigrants. We know that today’s immigrants are  
33 tomorrow’s teachers and soldiers, entrepreneurs and activists, PTA members, and pillars of their  
34 communities.

35  
36 We believe in protecting civil liberties and guaranteeing civil rights and voting rights, women’s  
37 rights and workers’ rights, LGBT rights and rights for people with disabilities. We believe  
38 America is still, as Robert Kennedy said, “a great country, an unselfish country, and a  
39 compassionate country.”

40  
41 These principles stand in sharp contrast to the Republicans, who have nominated as the standard-  
42 bearer for their party and their candidate for President a man who seeks to appeal to Americans’  
43 basest differences, rather than our better natures.

44  
45 The stakes have been high in previous elections. But in 2016, the stakes can be measured in  
46 human lives—in the number of immigrants who would be torn from their homes; in the number

1 of faithful and peaceful Muslims who would be barred from even visiting our shores; in the  
2 number of allies alienated and dictators courted; in the number of Americans who would lose  
3 access to health care and see their rights ripped away.

4  
5 This election is about more than Democrats and Republicans. It is about who we are as a nation,  
6 and who we will be in the future.

7  
8 Two hundred and forty years ago, in Philadelphia, we started a revolution of ideas and of action  
9 that continues to this day. Since then, our union has been tested many times, through bondage  
10 and civil war, segregation and depression, two world wars and the threat of nuclear annihilation.  
11 Generations of Americans fought and marched and organized to widen the circle of opportunity  
12 and dignity—and we are fighting still.

13  
14 Despite what some say, America is and has always been great—but not because it has been  
15 perfect. What makes America great is our unerring belief that we can make it better. We can and  
16 we will build a more just economy, a more equal society, and a more perfect union—because we  
17 are stronger together.

### **Raise Incomes and Restore Economic Security for the Middle Class**

18  
19  
20  
21  
22 Democrats believe we must restore the basic bargain that built America’s mighty middle class: If  
23 you work hard and play by the rules, you can get ahead and stay ahead, provided we break down  
24 certain barriers. The system isn’t working when we have a rigged economy in which ordinary  
25 Americans work longer hours for lower wages, while most new income and wealth goes to the  
26 top one percent. In contrast, Donald Trump has shown time and again that he cannot be trusted to  
27 secure the basic economic dignity of Americans.

#### *Minimum Wage*

28  
29  
30 Democrats believe that the current minimum wage is a starvation wage and must be increased to  
31 a living wage. No one who works full time should have to raise a family in poverty. We believe  
32 that Americans should earn at least \$15 an hour and have the right to form or join a union. We  
33 applaud the approaches taken by states like New York and California. We should raise and index  
34 the minimum wage, give all Americans the ability to join a union regardless of where they work,  
35 and create new ways for workers to have power in the economy. We also support creating one  
36 fair wage for all workers by ending the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers and people with  
37 disabilities.

38  
39 Democrats support a model employer executive order or some other vehicle to leverage federal  
40 dollars to support employers who provide their workers with a living wage, good benefits, and  
41 the opportunity to form a union. The \$1 trillion spent annually by the government on contracts,  
42 loans, and grants should be used to support good jobs that rebuild the middle class.

#### *Labor*

43  
44  
45 The Democratic Party believes that when workers are strong, America is strong. Democrats will  
46 make it easier for workers, public and private, to exercise their right to organize, and join unions.

1 We will fight to pass laws that direct the National Labor Relations Board to certify a union if a  
2 simple majority of eligible workers sign valid authorization cards, and that brings companies to  
3 the negotiating table. We support binding arbitration to help workers that have voted to join a  
4 union reach a first contract.

5  
6 A major reason for the 40-year decline in the middle class is that the rights of workers to bargain  
7 collectively for better wages and benefits have been under attack at all levels. Donald Trump  
8 would make matters worse by creating a race to the bottom where the middle class is fighting  
9 over fewer and fewer good-paying jobs. In fact, Trump rejected some attempts by his own  
10 employees to unionize and has personally hired union-busting firms to undermine workers'  
11 rights.

12  
13 Democrats believe so-called “right to work” laws are wrong for workers and wrong for America.  
14 We will continue to vigorously oppose those laws and other efforts that would eliminate dues  
15 check-off procedures, attack prevailing wage standards, abolish fair share requirements, restrict  
16 the use of voluntary membership payments for political purposes, and require annual  
17 recertification efforts.

18  
19 The Democratic Party believes consumers and workers who have been mistreated should never  
20 be denied their right to fight for fair treatment under the law. That is why we will support efforts  
21 to limit the use of forced arbitration clauses in employment and service contracts that unfairly  
22 strip workers, consumers, and students of their right to their day in court.

23  
24 *Equal Pay, Paid Leave, and Caregiving*

25 We will fight to secure equal pay for women and—after 240 years—finally enshrine the rights of  
26 women in the constitution by passing the Equal Rights Amendment. While Donald Trump thinks  
27 it is “dangerous” for women to leave the home and paid family leave hurts our economy,  
28 Democrats will make sure that the United States finally enacts national paid family and medical  
29 leave by passing a family and medical leave act that would provide at least 12 weeks of paid  
30 leave to care for a new child or address a personal or family member’s serious health issue, and  
31 we will fight to allow workers the right to earn at least seven days of paid sick leave. We will  
32 also encourage employers to provide paid vacation.

33  
34 Our work and family policies must also ease the burden on family caregivers, in part by creating  
35 a strong, stable workforce to help meet families’ needs. We will take steps to expand and  
36 strengthen the homecare workforce. We will increase childcare investments to make quality  
37 childcare more affordable, boost wages for childcare workers, and support the millions of people  
38 paying for, coordinating, or providing care for aging relatives or those with disabilities.

39  
40 *Housing*

41 Where Donald Trump rooted for the housing crisis, Democrats will continue to fight for those  
42 families who suffered the loss of their homes. We will help those who are working toward a path  
43 of financial stability and will put sustainable home ownership into the reach of more families.  
44 Democrats will also combat the affordable housing crisis and skyrocketing rents in many parts of  
45 the country that are leading too many families and workers to be pushed out of communities  
46 where they work.

1  
2 We will increase the supply of affordable rental housing by expanding incentives and easing  
3 local barriers to building new affordable rental housing developments in areas of economic  
4 opportunity. We will substantially increase funding for the National Housing Trust Fund to  
5 construct, preserve, and rehabilitate millions of affordable housing rental units. Not only will this  
6 help address the affordable housing crisis, it will also create millions of good-paying jobs in the  
7 process. Democrats also believe that we should provide more federal resources to the people  
8 struggling most with unaffordable housing: low-income families, people with disabilities,  
9 veterans, and the elderly.

10  
11 We will reinvigorate federal housing production programs, increase resources to repair public  
12 housing, and increase funding for the housing choice voucher program. And we will fight for  
13 sufficient funding to end chronic homelessness.

14  
15 We must make sure that everyone has a fair shot at homeownership. We will lift up more  
16 families and keep the housing market robust and inclusive by defending and strengthening the  
17 Fair Housing Act. We will also support first time homebuyers, implement credit score reform to  
18 make the credit industry work for borrowers and not just lenders, and prevent predatory lending  
19 by defending the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). And we will help underwater  
20 homeowners by expanding foreclosure mitigation counseling.

#### 21 22 *Social Security*

23 Democrats are proud to be the party that created Social Security, the most successful government  
24 program in our nation's history. We will fight every effort to cut, privatize, or weaken Social  
25 Security, including attempts to raise the retirement age or to diminish benefits by cutting cost-of-  
26 living adjustments. Democrats will expand Social Security so that every American can retire  
27 with dignity and respect, including women who are shortchanged by the current system because  
28 they are widowed or took time out of the workforce to care for their children, aging parents, or  
29 ailing family members. And we will make sure Social Security's guaranteed benefits continue  
30 for generations to come by asking those at the top to pay more, and will achieve this goal by  
31 taxing some of the income of people above \$250,000. The Democratic Party is also committed to  
32 providing all necessary financial support for the Social Security Administration to provide timely  
33 benefits and high-quality service for those it serves. Our plan contrasts starkly with Donald  
34 Trump. He has referred to Social Security as a "Ponzi scheme" and has called for privatizing it as  
35 well as increasing the retirement age.

#### 36 37 *Retirement Security*

38 Democrats believe it should be easier for Americans to save for retirement and prepare for  
39 unforeseen risks and expenses. We will defend the right of workers to collect their defined  
40 benefit pensions and make sure workers get priority and protection when pension plans are in  
41 distress. Democrats will also fight to protect the earned pension benefits of Americans in  
42 multiemployer pension plans. And we will fight against any attempt by Republicans in Congress  
43 or on Wall Street to roll back the Conflict of Interest Rule, which requires that retirement  
44 advisors put the best interests of their clients above their own financial gain.

1 *Postal Service*

2 The United States Postal Service is a national treasure. That is why Democrats embrace a  
3 vibrant, public Postal Service that offers universal service, and reject any effort to privatize or  
4 marginalize it. We are committed to eliminating the unsustainable mandate to “pre-fund”  
5 retiree health costs. And we will work to restore service to appropriate levels including overnight  
6 delivery of first-class mail and periodicals within the same metropolitan area, maintaining six-  
7 day and door-to-door delivery, and appointing members to the Board of Governors and the  
8 Postal Regulatory Commission who champion a strong public Postal Service. Democrats also  
9 advocate for expanding postal services. This includes offering basic financial services such as  
10 paycheck cashing. It also includes promoting vote-by-mail to increase voter participation and to  
11 help address the scourge of voter suppression.  
12  
13

14 **Create Good-Paying Jobs**

15  
16 Democrats know nothing is more important than creating good-paying jobs that can support a  
17 middle-class life and provide workers with dignity and a sense of purpose — from nurses,  
18 firefighters, and teachers, to construction workers, factory workers, and small business owners.  
19

20 *Infrastructure*

21 If we are serious about reversing the decline of the middle class, we need a major federal jobs  
22 program that puts millions of Americans back to work in decent paying jobs in both the public  
23 and private sectors. We will make the most ambitious investment in American infrastructure  
24 since President Eisenhower created the interstate highway system. We will put Americans to  
25 work updating and expanding our roads, bridges, public transit, airports, and passenger and  
26 freight rail lines. We will build 21st century energy and water systems, modernize our schools,  
27 and continue to support the expansion of high-speed broadband networks. We will protect  
28 communities from the impact of climate change by investing in green and resilient infrastructure.  
29 These investments will create secure, good-paying middle-class jobs today and will substantially  
30 increase demand for American-made steel and other products manufactured in the United States.  
31 And by boosting economic growth in a fair and equitable way, and strengthening our long-term  
32 competitiveness, these investments will create many more jobs in the years to come.  
33

34 Democrats will also create an independent, national infrastructure bank that will support critical  
35 infrastructure improvements. The bank will provide loans and other financial assistance for  
36 investments in energy, water, broadband, transportation, and multi-modal infrastructure projects.  
37

38 *Manufacturing*

39 Democrats believe one of the best ways to innovate, prosper, and create good-paying jobs is to  
40 make more in America, which is why we firmly support American manufacturing with a “Make  
41 it in America” plan. We must revitalize hard-hit manufacturing communities, create thriving  
42 hubs of manufacturing and innovation throughout the country, and claw back tax breaks for  
43 companies that ship jobs overseas, using the proceeds to reinvest in communities and workers at  
44 home instead. Donald Trump may talk tough, but he has consistently outsourced his own  
45 products. American workers deserve better.  
46

1 *Clean Energy Jobs*

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

7  
8 *Research, Science, and Technology*

9 Democrats support ambitious public and private investments in science, technology, and  
10 research. We will nurture the next generation of scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs,  
11 especially women and people of color, to make sure America continues to out-compete and out-  
12 innovate the rest of the world with a bold innovation agenda. Democrats also believe we must  
13 harness the promise of technological innovation to promote community participation and  
14 enhance opportunities to achieve greater economic self-sufficiency for people with disabilities.  
15 And we will encourage technology transfer, entrepreneurship, and small business creation  
16 throughout the country and in all types of innovation sectors.

17  
18 Democrats support a free and open internet at home and abroad, and will oppose any effort by  
19 Republicans to roll back the historic net neutrality rules that the Federal Communications  
20 Commission enacted last year.

21  
22 Democrats value American innovation and believe it is one of our country's great strengths. We  
23 will protect the intellectual property rights of artists, creators, and inventors at home and abroad.  
24 The entire nation prospers when we promote the unique and original artistic and cultural  
25 contributions of the women and men who create and preserve our nation's heritage.

26  
27 Democrats will fight against unfair theft of intellectual property and trade secrets. We will also  
28 increase access to global markets for American intellectual property and other digital trade by  
29 opposing quotas, discriminatory measures, and data localization requirements.

30  
31 *Small Business*

32 While Donald Trump has often stifled small businesses—nearly bankrupting some—with his  
33 deceptive and reckless corporate practices, the Democratic Party will make it easier to start and  
34 grow a small business in America. We will open up access to credit because we know that small  
35 businesses are some of the best job creators in our country. By supporting small businesses, we  
36 can grow jobs faster in America. Democrats also realize the critical importance of small business  
37 to women, people of color, tribes, and rural America and will work to nurture entrepreneurship.

38  
39 *Youth Jobs*

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

**Fight for Economic Fairness and Against Inequality**

1  
2  
3  
4 Democrats believe that today’s extreme levels of income and wealth inequality are bad for  
5 Americans and bad for our economy. Our economy depends on a thriving middle class to drive  
6 economic growth, yet Americans in the top one-tenth of one percent of income levels now own  
7 almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent of Americans combined. And the 20 wealthiest  
8 people in this country now own more wealth than the bottom half of the American people.  
9

10 *Fixing our Financial System*

11 To restore economic fairness, Democrats will fight against the greed and recklessness of Wall  
12 Street. We must make Wall Street work for the job-creating, productive economy—including by  
13 making loans more affordable for small- and medium-sized businesses. Wall Street cannot be an  
14 island unto itself, gambling trillions in risky financial instruments and making huge profits, all  
15 the while thinking that taxpayers will be there to bail them out again. We must tackle dangerous  
16 risks in big banks and elsewhere in the financial system. We need to prohibit Wall Street from  
17 picking and choosing which credit agency will rate their products and from imposing excessive  
18 fees on consumers. And we must hold both individuals and corporations accountable when they  
19 break the law. Democrats believe that no bank can be too big to fail and no executive too  
20 powerful to jail. “Equal Justice Under Law” will not just be words engraved on the entrance of  
21 the Supreme Court. It will be the standard that applies to Wall Street and all Americans.  
22

23 We will also vigorously implement, enforce, and build on the landmark Dodd-Frank financial  
24 reform law, and we will stop dead in its tracks every Republican effort to weaken it. We will  
25 continue to protect consumers and defend the CFPB from Republican attacks. Our goal must be  
26 to create a financial system and an economy that works for all Americans, not just a handful of  
27 billionaires. We support a financial transactions tax on Wall Street to curb excessive speculation  
28 and high-frequency trading, which has threatened financial markets. We acknowledge that there  
29 is room within our party for a diversity of views on a broader financial transactions tax.  
30

31 Democrats will not hesitate to use and expand existing authorities as well as empower regulators  
32 to downsize or break apart financial institutions when necessary to protect the public and  
33 safeguard financial stability, including new authorities to go after risky shadow-banking  
34 activities. Banks should not be able to gamble with taxpayers’ deposits or pose an undue risk to  
35 Main Street. Democrats support a variety of ways to stop this from happening, including an  
36 updated and modernized version of Glass-Steagall and breaking up too-big-to-fail financial  
37 institutions that pose a systemic risk to the stability of our economy.  
38

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

1  
2 We will reform the Federal Reserve so that it is more representative of America as a whole, and  
3 we will fight to make sure that executives at financial institutions are not allowed to serve on the  
4 boards of regional Federal Reserve banks or select its members.

5  
6 At a time when many of the largest banks have shunned communities across America,  
7 Democrats believe that we need to give Americans affordable banking options, including by  
8 empowering the United States Postal Service to facilitate the delivery of basic banking services.

9  
10 *Stopping Corporate Concentration*

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

18  
19 *Taxes*

20 At a time of massive income and wealth inequality, we believe the wealthiest Americans and  
21 largest corporations must pay their fair share in taxes. Democrats will claw back tax breaks for  
22 companies that ship jobs overseas, eliminate tax breaks for big oil and gas companies, and crack  
23 down on inversions and other methods companies use to dodge their tax responsibilities. We will  
24 make sure that our tax code rewards businesses that make investments and provide good-paying  
25 jobs here in the United States, not businesses that walk out on America. We will end deferrals so  
26 that American corporations pay U.S. taxes immediately on foreign profits and can no longer  
27 escape paying their fair share of United States taxes by stashing profits abroad. We will then use  
28 the revenue raised from fixing the corporate tax code to reinvest in rebuilding America and  
29 ensuring economic growth that will lead to millions of good-paying jobs.

30  
31 We will ask those at the top to contribute to our country’s future by establishing a  
32 multimillionaire surtax to ensure millionaires and billionaires pay their fair share. In addition, we  
33 will shut down the “private tax system” for those at the top, immediately close egregious  
34 loopholes like those enjoyed by hedge fund managers, restore fair taxation on multimillion dollar  
35 estates, and ensure millionaires can no longer pay a lower rate than their secretaries. At a time  
36 when we have seen near-record corporate profits, slow wage growth, and rising costs, we need to  
37 offer tax relief to middle-class families—not those at the top. We will offer tax relief to hard  
38 working, middle-class families for the cost squeeze that they have faced for years from rising  
39 health care, childcare, education, and other expenses. Donald Trump and the Republican Party  
40 would do the opposite and provide trillions in tax cuts for millionaires, billionaires, and  
41 corporations at the expense of working families, seniors, and the health of our economy.

42  
43 *Trade*

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

1  
2 Over the past three decades, America has signed too many trade deals that have not lived up to  
3 the hype. Trade deals often boosted the profits of large corporations, while at the same time  
4 failing to protect workers’ rights, labor standards, the environment, and public health. We need  
5 to end the race to the bottom and develop trade policies that support jobs in America. That is  
6 why Democrats believe we should review agreements negotiated years ago to update them to  
7 reflect these principles. Any future trade agreements must make sure that our trading partners  
8 cannot undercut American workers by taking shortcuts on labor policy or the environment.  
9

10 Democrats will fight to significantly strengthen enforcement of existing trade rules and the tools  
11 we have, including by holding countries accountable on currency manipulation and significantly  
12 expanding enforcement resources. China and other countries are using unfair trade practices to  
13 tilt the playing field against American workers and businesses. When they dump cheap products  
14 into our markets, subsidize state-owned enterprises, devalue currencies, and discriminate against  
15 American companies, our middle class pays the price. That has to stop. Democrats will use all  
16 our trade enforcement tools to hold China and other trading partners accountable—because no  
17 country should be able to manipulate their currencies to gain a competitive advantage.  
18

19 While we believe that openness to the world economy is an important source of American  
20 leadership and dynamism, we will only approve new trade agreements if they support American  
21 jobs, raise wages, and improve our national security. We believe any new trade agreements must  
22 include strong and enforceable labor and environmental standards in their core text. Trade  
23 agreements should crack down on the unfair and illegal subsidies other countries grant their  
24 businesses at the expense of ours. It should promote innovation of and access to lifesaving  
25 medicines. And it should protect a free and open internet. We should never enter into a trade  
26 agreement that prevents our government, or other governments, from putting in place rules that  
27 protect the environment, food safety, or the health of American citizens or others around the  
28 world.  
29

30 These are the standards Democrats believe must be applied to any future trade agreements. On  
31 the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), there are a diversity of views in the party. Many Democrats  
32 are on record stating that the agreement does not meet the standards set out in this platform;  
33 other Democrats have expressed support for the agreement. But all Democrats believe that any  
34 trade agreement must protect workers and the environment and not undermine access to  
35 critically-needed prescription drugs.  
36  
37

### **Bring Americans Together and Remove Barriers to Create Ladders of Opportunity**

38  
39

40 Democrats believe that everyone in America deserves the chance to live up to their God-given  
41 potential. We will work to break down barriers standing in the way of Americans and replace  
42 them with ladders of opportunity.  
43

#### *Racial Justice*

44  
45 Democrats will fight to end institutional and systemic racism in our society. We will challenge  
46 and dismantle the structures that define lasting racial, economic, political, and social inequity.

1 Democrats will promote racial justice through fair, just, and equitable governing of all  
2 institutions serving the public and in the formation of public policy. We will push for a societal  
3 transformation to make it clear that black lives matter and there is no place for racism in our  
4 country.

#### 6 *Racial Wealth Gap*

7 America's economic inequality problem is even more pronounced when it comes to racial and  
8 ethnic disparities in wealth and income. It is unacceptable that the median wealth for white  
9 Americans is roughly ten times that of African Americans and Latino Americans.

10 These disparities are just as stark for American Indians and certain Asian American subgroups.  
11 The racial and ethnic gap in wealth and income has been created by historical and contemporary  
12 policies and practices that discriminate against people of color and constrained their ability to  
13 earn income and build assets to the same extent as other Americans.

14  
15 This economic disadvantage has accumulated over time and is made worse by ongoing  
16 discrimination. For example, as a result of the housing crisis and the great recession, African  
17 Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans lost more than half of their net worth. And these  
18 losses were compounded by the fact that during the subprime mortgage crisis lenders targeted  
19 communities of color for faulty mortgages.

20  
21 Democrats believe it is long past time to close this racial wealth gap by eliminating systemic  
22 barriers to wealth accumulation for different racial groups and improving opportunities for  
23 people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds to build wealth.

#### 25 *Criminal Justice*

26 Democrats are committed to reforming our criminal justice system and ending mass  
27 incarceration. Something is profoundly wrong when a quarter of the world's prison population is  
28 in the United States, even though we have less than five percent of the world's people. We will  
29 reform mandatory minimum sentences and close private prisons and detention centers. We will  
30 rebuild the bonds of trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve. Across the  
31 country, there are many police officers who inspire trust and confidence, deploying creative and  
32 effective strategies, and demonstrating that it is possible to reduce crime without relying on  
33 unnecessary force. We should learn from those examples and build on what works.

34  
35 We will invest in training for officers on issues such as de-escalation and the appropriate use of  
36 force, and encourage better police-community relations and the use of smart strategies like police  
37 body cameras. We will end racial profiling that targets individuals, based solely on race, religion,  
38 ethnicity, and national origin, which is un-American and counterproductive. We support states  
39 and localities that choose to make the investigations and prosecutions of police-involved  
40 shootings more independent and transparent, including through reforming the grand jury process.  
41 And we will explore reforms of the civil asset forfeiture system. Instead of investing in more  
42 jails and incarceration, we need to provide greater investment in jobs and education, and end to  
43 the school-to-prison pipeline. We will remove barriers to help formerly incarcerated individuals  
44 successfully re-enter society by banning the box, expanding reentry programs, and restoring  
45 voting rights. We will prioritize treatment over incarceration in tackling addiction and substance  
46 use disorder. This means significantly expanding treatment in this country for people struggling  
47 with addiction and mental health issues.

1  
2 We believe that the states should be laboratories of democracy on the issue of marijuana, and  
3 those states that want to decriminalize marijuana should be able to do so. We support policies  
4 that will allow more research on marijuana, as well as reforming our laws to allow legal  
5 marijuana businesses to exist without uncertainty. And we recognize our current marijuana laws  
6 have had an unacceptable disparate impact, with arrest rates for marijuana possession among  
7 African Americans far outstripping arrest rates among whites, despite similar usage rates.

8  
9 We will abolish the death penalty, which has proven to be a cruel and unusual form of  
10 punishment. It has no place in the United States of America.

11  
12 We have been inspired by the movements for criminal justice that directly address the  
13 discriminatory treatment of African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders,  
14 and American Indians to rebuild trust in the criminal justice system.

### 15 *Immigration*

16 People should come to the United States with visas and not through smugglers. That is why the  
17 Democratic Party supports legal immigration, within reasonable limits, that meets the needs of  
18 families, communities, and the economy as well as maintains the United States' role as a beacon  
19 of hope for people seeking safety, freedom, and security. Immigration is not a problem to be  
20 solved, it is a defining aspect of the American character and history. We must defend against  
21 those who would exclude or eliminate legal immigration avenues and denigrate immigrants.  
22 Those immigrants already living in the United States, who are assets to their communities and  
23 contribute so much to our country, should be incorporated completely into our society through  
24 legal processes that give meaning to our national motto: *E Pluribus Unum*.

25  
26  
27 Democrats believe we need to urgently fix our broken immigration system—which tears families  
28 apart and keeps workers in the shadows—and create a path to citizenship for law-abiding  
29 families who are here, making a better life for their families and contributing to their  
30 communities and our country.

31 While we continue to fight for comprehensive immigration reform, we will defend and  
32 implement President Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and Deferred Action for  
33 Parents of Americans executive actions to help DREAMers, parents of citizens, and lawful  
34 permanent residents avoid deportation. We will build on these actions to provide relief for others,  
35 such as parents of DREAMers. We will invest in immigrant integration services, expand access  
36 to English language education, and promote naturalization to help the millions of people who are  
37 eligible for citizenship take that last step.

38 We believe immigration enforcement must be humane and consistent with our values. We should  
39 prioritize those who pose a threat to the safety of our communities, not hardworking families  
40 who are contributing to their communities. We will end raids and roundups of children and  
41 families, which unnecessarily sow fear in immigrant communities. We should ensure due process  
42 for those fleeing violence in Central America and work with our regional partners to address  
43 the root causes of violence. We must take particular care with children, which is why we should  
44 guarantee government-funded counsel for unaccompanied children in immigration courts.

1 We will work with Congress to end the lengthy, forced, and prolonged expulsion from the  
2 country that many immigrants endure when trying to adjust their status by rescinding the three-  
3 year, ten-year and permanent bars. We will fight to end federal, state, and municipal contracts  
4 with for-profit private prisons and private detention centers. In order to end family detention, we  
5 will ensure humane alternatives for those who pose no public threat. We should consider all  
6 available means of protecting these individuals from the threats to their lives and safety—  
7 including strengthening in-country and third-country processing, expanding the use of  
8 humanitarian parole, and granting Temporary Protected Status.

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

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

#### 14 *Civil Rights*

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

#### 26 *LGBT Rights*

27 Democrats applaud last year’s decision by the Supreme Court that recognized LGBT people—  
28 like every other American—have the right to marry the person they love. But there is still much  
29 work to be done. LGBT kids continue to be bullied at school, a restaurant can refuse to serve a  
30 transgender person, and a same-sex couple is at risk of being evicted from their home. That is  
31 unacceptable and must change. Democrats will fight for comprehensive federal non-  
32 discrimination protections for all LGBT Americans and push back against state efforts to  
33 discriminate against LGBT individuals. We will combat LGBT youth homelessness and improve  
34 school climates, and we will protect transgender individuals from violence. We will promote  
35 LGBT human rights and ensure America’s foreign policy is inclusive of LGBT people around  
36 the world.

#### 38 *Disability Rights*

39 No one should face discrimination based on disability status. Democrats are committed to  
40 realizing the full promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act. We will improve access to  
41 meaningful and gainful employment for people with disabilities. We will provide tax relief to  
42 help the millions of families caring for aging relatives or family members with chronic illnesses

1 or disabilities. And we will continue to fight for ratification of the Convention on the Rights of  
2 Persons with Disabilities.

3  
4 *Faith and Service*

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

9  
10 We believe in the power of national service, with people of all backgrounds coming together in  
11 common purpose to serve their communities and country.

12  
13 *Agricultural Communities*

14 We will work to build a stronger rural and agricultural economy. Democrats will spur investment  
15 to power the rural economy and increase funding to support the next generation of farmers and  
16 ranchers. We will expand local food markets and regional food systems and provide a focused  
17 safety net to assist family operations that need support during challenging times. And we will  
18 promote clean energy leadership and collaborative stewardship of our natural resources, while  
19 expanding opportunities in rural communities across America.

20  
21 *Poverty/ Communities Left Behind*

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

29  
30 Democrats will also protect and expand proven programs, including robust support for nutrition  
31 assistance to stop people from going hungry as well as programs that help people grow their  
32 skills and provide training opportunities. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program should  
33 be expanded for low-wage workers not raising children, including extending the credit to young  
34 workers starting at age 21. The Child Tax Credit (CTC) should be indexed to inflation to stem  
35 the erosion of the credit.

36  
37 Democrats will also do more to invest in our most distressed communities—from our cities to  
38 coal country to the Rust Belt. We will create good-paying jobs and enhance opportunities by  
39 investing in small business, youth employment, and reentry programs for formerly incarcerated  
40 people. We will improve safety by repairing crumbling infrastructure in communities that need it  
41 most as well as on tribal lands. And we will make investments in housing near good jobs and  
42 good schools.

43  
44 *Honoring Indigenous Tribal Nations*

45 We have a profound moral and legal responsibility to the Indian tribes—throughout our history  
46 we have failed to live up to that trust. That is why the Democratic Party will uphold, honor, and

1 strengthen to the highest extent possible the United States’ fundamental trust and responsibility,  
2 grounded in the Constitution and treaties, to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes.

3  
4 We recognize the inherent sovereignty of Indian nations and will work to enact laws and policies  
5 that strengthen, not reduce, the powers of Indian nations over people who interact with them in  
6 Indian Country. We will work on a government-to-government basis to continue to empower  
7 Indian nations, and to provide sufficient and meaningful resources to Indian tribes to increase  
8 economic development and self-determination. As Democrats, we will constantly seek to ensure  
9 that American Indian communities are safe, healthy, nurturing, educated, innovative, and  
10 prosperous.

11  
12 We will restore tribal lands by continuing to streamline the land-into-trust process and recognize  
13 the right of all tribes to protect their lands, air, and waters. We will continue to work on a  
14 government-to-government basis to address chronic underfunding, and provide meaningful  
15 resources and financial investments that will empower American Indian tribes through increased  
16 economic development and infrastructure improvements on tribal lands.

17  
18 We will strengthen the operation of tribal housing programs, and fully fund the Indian Housing  
19 Block Grant Program. We will increase affordable and safe housing and fight to significantly  
20 reduce homelessness on and off Indian reservations, especially among Native youth and  
21 veterans.

22  
23 We will invest in Indian education from early childhood through higher education. We will fully  
24 fund the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) and strengthen self-determination to enable  
25 culturally-tailored learning unique to each tribal nation and help to retain qualified teachers for  
26 Native learners. Democrats will continue to support President Obama’s Generation Indigenous  
27 program that has made important strides in promoting new investments and increased  
28 engagement with American Indian youth, including by continuing efforts to reform the BIE to  
29 provide students attending BIE-funded schools with a world-class culturally-based  
30 education. We also support the elimination of school and sports mascots that reflect outdated  
31 stereotypes and that perpetuate racism.

32  
33 We will strengthen tribal sovereignty and tribal jurisdiction by enacting laws and policies that  
34 enhance the ability of Indian nations to govern their territories, keep their communities safe, and  
35 prosecute crimes committed on tribal lands. And we will back these efforts through robust  
36 investments in effective tribal law enforcement and tribal courts.

37  
38 We believe that health care is a core federal trust responsibility, and we support a robust  
39 expansion of the health care provided by the Indian Health Service. We will work to fully fund  
40 the Indian Health Service, Tribal, Urban Indian health care system and to ensure that Americans  
41 Indian have adequate, safe, and affordable access to primary care providers, including oral  
42 health, mental health practitioners, and substance abuse treatment options.

43  
44 We acknowledge the past injustices and the misguided, harmful federal and state policies and  
45 actions based on outdated and discredited values and beliefs that resulted in the destruction of the  
46 Indian nations’ economies, social, and religious systems, the taking of their lands, and the

1 creation of intergenerational trauma that exists to this day. We believe that we have a moral and  
2 profound duty to honor, respect, and uphold our sacred obligation to the Indian nations and  
3 Indian peoples.

4  
5 We will protect tribal sacred sites and empower tribes to maintain and pass on traditional  
6 religious beliefs, languages and social practices without fear of discrimination or suppression.  
7 We also believe that Native children are the future of tribal nations and that the Indian Child  
8 Welfare Act is critical to the survival of Indian culture, government, and communities and must  
9 be enforced with the original intent of the law.

10  
11 We will strengthen Indian voting rights, including improved access to polling locations. We will  
12 build on federal programs to reduce the disproportionate incarceration of American Indian and  
13 Alaska Native men and women, reduce disparity in prison sentencing, protect the religious rights  
14 of Native prisoners, reduce barriers to prisoner reentry, and offer access to housing and  
15 employment upon reentry.

16  
17 We are committed to principles of environmental justice in Indian Country and we recognize that  
18 nature in all its life forms has the right to exist, persist, maintain, and regenerate its vital  
19 cycles. We call for a climate change policy that protects tribal resources, protects tribal health,  
20 and provides accountability through accessible, culturally appropriate participation and strong  
21 enforcement. Our climate change policy will cut carbon emission, address poverty, invest  
22 in disadvantaged communities, and improve both air quality and public health. We support the  
23 tribal nations to develop wind, solar and other clean energy jobs.

24  
25 Democrats also support efforts for self-determination and sovereignty of Native Hawaiians.

26  
27 *People of the Territories*

28 We support full self-government and self-determination for the people of the territories of Guam,  
29 American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana  
30 Islands and their right to decide their future status.

31  
32 *Puerto Rico*

33 And we are committed to addressing the extraordinary challenges faced by our fellow citizens in  
34 Puerto Rico. Many stem from the fundamental question of Puerto Rico's political status.  
35 Democrats believe that the people of Puerto Rico should determine their ultimate political status  
36 from permanent options that do not conflict with the Constitution, laws, and policies of the  
37 United States. Democrats are committed to promoting economic opportunity and good-paying  
38 jobs for the hardworking people of Puerto Rico. We also believe that Puerto Ricans must be  
39 treated equally by Medicare, Medicaid, and by other benefits programs for families. All  
40 American citizens, no matter where they reside, should have the right to vote for the President of  
41 the United States. Finally, we believe that Washington must respect Puerto Rico's local self-  
42 government as Congress and the Executive Branch work to provide the necessary tools and aid  
43 that Puerto Rico needs to restructure its debt so that it can get on a path towards stability and  
44 prosperity, while maintaining its autonomy.

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

*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, same day voting, 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.

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

*Campaign Finance*

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.

*Judges*

We will appoint judges who defend the constitutional principles of liberty and equality for all, protect a woman's right to safe and legal abortion, curb billionaires' influence over elections

1 because they understand that *Citizens United* has fundamentally damaged our democracy, and  
2 see the Constitution as a blueprint for progress.

3  
4 *D.C. Statehood*

5 Restoring our democracy also means finally passing statehood for Washington, D.C., so that its  
6 citizens have full and equal congressional rights as well as the right to have the laws and budget  
7 of their local government respected without Congressional interference.

8  
9 *Management of Federal Government*

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

17  
18 We will also ensure that new spending and tax cuts are offset so that they do not add to the  
19 nation's debt over time. We will tackle waste, fraud, and abuse to make sure government dollars  
20 are spent wisely and efficiently. Democrats believe that we should not be contracting,  
21 outsourcing, or privatizing work that is inherently governmental in nature, including postal  
22 services, school services, and state and local government services. We are committed to a strong,  
23 effective, accountable civil service, delivering the quality public services Americans have every  
24 right to expect.

25  
26  
27 **Combat Climate Change, Build a Clean Energy Economy, and Secure Environmental  
28 Justice**

29  
30 Climate change is an urgent threat and a defining challenge of our time. Fifteen of the 16 hottest  
31 years on record have occurred this century. While Donald Trump has called climate change a  
32 "hoax", 2016 is on track to break global temperature records once more. Cities from Miami to  
33 Baltimore are already threatened by rising seas. California and the West have suffered years of  
34 brutal drought. Alaska has been scorched by wildfire. New York has been battered by  
35 superstorms, and Texas swamped by flash floods. The best science tells us that without  
36 ambitious, immediate action to cut carbon pollution and other greenhouse gases across our  
37 economy, all of these impacts will be far worse in the future. We cannot leave our children a  
38 planet that has been profoundly damaged.

39  
40 Democrats share a deep commitment to tackling the climate challenge; creating millions of  
41 good-paying middle class jobs; reducing greenhouse gas emissions more than 80 percent below  
42 2005 levels by 2050; and meeting the pledge President Obama put forward in the landmark Paris  
43 Agreement, which aims to keep global temperature increases to "well below" two degrees  
44 Celsius and to pursue efforts to limit global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius. We  
45 believe America must be running entirely on clean energy by mid-century. We will take bold  
46 steps to slash carbon pollution and protect clean air at home, lead the fight against climate

1 change around the world, ensure no Americans are left out or left behind as we accelerate the  
2 transition to a clean energy economy, and be responsible stewards of our natural resources and  
3 our public lands and waters. Democrats reject the notion that we have to choose between  
4 protecting our planet and creating good-paying jobs. We can and we will do both.

5  
6 *Clean Energy Economy*

7 We are committed to getting 50 percent of our electricity from clean energy sources within a  
8 decade, with half a billion solar panels installed within four years and enough renewable energy  
9 to power every home in the country. We will cut energy waste in American homes, schools,  
10 hospitals, and offices; modernize our electric grid; and make American manufacturing the  
11 cleanest and most efficient in the world, creating new jobs and saving families and businesses  
12 money on their energy bills. And we will transform American transportation by reducing oil  
13 consumption through cleaner fuels, making new investments in public transportation, expanding  
14 electrification of the vehicle fleet, increasing the fuel efficiency of cars, boilers, ships, and  
15 trucks, and by building bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure across our urban and suburban  
16 areas. Democrats believe the tax code must reflect our commitment to a clean energy future by  
17 eliminating special tax breaks and subsidies for fossil fuel companies as well as defending and  
18 extending tax incentives for energy efficiency and clean energy.

19  
20 Democrats are committed to defending, implementing, and extending smart pollution and  
21 efficiency standards, including the Clean Power Plan, fuel economy standards for automobiles  
22 and heavy-duty vehicles, building codes and appliance standards, and the reduction of methane  
23 emissions from oil and gas production. We will work to expand access to cost-saving renewable  
24 energy by low-income households, create good-paying jobs in communities that have struggled  
25 with energy poverty, and oppose efforts by utilities to limit consumer choice or slow clean  
26 energy deployment. We support President Obama's decision to reject the Keystone XL pipeline.  
27 And we believe that the federal government should lead by example, which is why we will take  
28 steps to power the government with 100 percent clean electricity.

29  
30 *Environmental and Climate Justice*

31 Democrats believe clean air and clean water are basic rights of all Americans. Yet as we saw in  
32 Flint, Michigan, low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately home  
33 to environmental justice "hot spots," where air pollution, water pollution, and toxic hazards like  
34 lead increase health and economic hardship. The impacts of climate change will also  
35 disproportionately affect low-income and minority communities, tribal nations, and Alaska  
36 Native villages—all of which suffer the worst losses during extreme weather and have the fewest  
37 resources to prepare. Simply put, this is environmental racism. The fight against climate change  
38 must not leave any community out or behind—including the coal communities who kept  
39 America's lights on for generations. Democrats will fight to make sure these workers and their  
40 families get the benefits they have earned and the respect they deserve, and we will make new  
41 investments in energy producing communities to help create jobs and build a brighter and more  
42 resilient economic future.

43  
44 All corporations owe it to their shareholders to fully analyze and disclose the risks they face,  
45 including climate risk. Those who fail to do so should be held accountable. Democrats also  
46 respectfully request the Department of Justice to investigate allegations of corporate fraud on the

1 part of fossil fuel companies accused of misleading shareholders and the public on the scientific  
2 reality of climate change.

3  
4 *Public Lands and Waters*

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

11  
12 We oppose drilling in the Arctic and off the Atlantic coast, and believe we need to reform fossil  
13 fuel leasing on public lands. We can phase down extraction of fossil fuels from our public lands,  
14 starting with the most polluting sources, while making our public lands and waters engines of the  
15 clean energy economy and creating jobs across the country.

16  
17  
18 **Provide Quality and Affordable Education**

19  
20 *Higher Education*

21 Democrats believe that if you are an American who wants to get an education, you should  
22 always be able to get one: money should never stand in the way. Cost should not be a barrier to  
23 getting a degree or credential, and debt should not hold you back after you graduate. Bold new  
24 investments by the federal government, coupled with states reinvesting in higher education and  
25 colleges holding the line on costs, will ensure that Americans of all backgrounds will be prepared  
26 for the jobs and economy of the future. We will make community college free, while ensuring  
27 the strength of our historically minority-serving institutions. Achieving these goals depends on  
28 state and federal investment in both students and their teachers. Whether full-time or adjunct,  
29 faculty must be supported to make transformative educational experiences possible. As we make  
30 college affordable for future students, we will not forget about the millions of borrowers who  
31 need help with their debt right now.

32  
33 *Student Debt*

34 Democrats will allow those who currently have student debt to refinance their loans at the lowest  
35 rates possible. We will simplify and expand access to income-based repayment so that no student  
36 loan borrowers ever have to pay more than they can afford. And we will significantly cut interest  
37 rates for future undergraduates, thereby preventing the federal government from making billions  
38 of dollars in profit from student loans. Democrats will also fight for a Student Borrower Bill of  
39 Rights to ensure borrowers get adequate information about options to avoid or get out of  
40 delinquency or default. We will hold lenders and loan servicers to high standards to help  
41 borrowers in default rehabilitate and repay their debts. Finally, Democrats will restore the prior  
42 standard in bankruptcy law to allow borrowers with student loans discharge their debts in  
43 bankruptcy as a measure of last resort.

1 *Minority-Serving Institutions*

2 We will strengthen our nation’s public and private Historically Black Colleges and Universities,  
3 Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving  
4 Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving  
5 Institutions, and other minority-serving institutions by providing a dedicated fund of tens of  
6 billions of dollars to keep costs down, provide a quality education, and provide dedicated support  
7 to improve student outcomes and completion rates. These schools play an important role in  
8 building opportunity and creating a diverse workforce.

9  
10 *For-Profit Schools*

11 Donald Trump ran a fake university—the now bankrupt Trump “University”—that scammed  
12 many out of their hard-earned savings and led to no degree and no obvious benefit to their  
13 education or economic prosperity. Democrats will not tolerate this type of fraud. We will also  
14 continue to crack down on for-profit schools that take millions in federal financial aid—often as  
15 their principal source of revenue—and then exploit students and burden them with debt rather  
16 than educating them. That is why we will strengthen the gainful employment rule to ensure that  
17 for-profit schools enable students to complete their degrees and prepare them for work. We will  
18 go after for-profits that engage in deceptive marketing, fraud, and other illegal practices. It is not  
19 right that for-profit schools with low graduation rates keep encouraging their students to take out  
20 federal loans they will have trouble paying back.

21  
22 *Early Childhood, Pre-K, and K-12*

23 Democrats believe we must have the best-educated population and workforce in the world. That  
24 means making early childhood education a priority, especially in light of new research showing  
25 how much early learning can impact life-long success. Democrats will invest in early childhood  
26 programs like Early Head Start and provide every family in America with access to high-quality  
27 childcare and high-quality pre-K programs.

28  
29 We will ensure there are great Pre-K-12 schools in every zip code. Democrats are committed to  
30 the federal government continuing to play a critical role in working towards an America where a  
31 world-class education is available to every child. Democrats believe that a strong public  
32 education system is an anchor of our democracy, a propeller of the economy, and the vehicle  
33 through which we help all children achieve their dreams. Public education must engage students  
34 to be critical thinkers and civic participants while addressing the wellbeing of the whole child.

35  
36 Democrats believe that all students should be taught to high academic standards. Schools should  
37 receive adequate resources and support. We will hold schools, districts, communities, and states  
38 accountable for raising achievement levels for all students—particularly low-income students,  
39 students of color, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities. We are also deeply  
40 committed to ensuring that we strike a better balance on testing so that it informs, but does not  
41 drive, instruction.

42  
43 To close the opportunity gap, we also must find ways to encourage mentoring programs that  
44 support students in reaching their full potential. Mentoring is a strategy to ensure that children  
45 living in poverty have the encouragement and support to aim high and enter the middle class. We

1 will focus on group mentoring, which is a low-cost, high-yield investment that offers the benefit  
2 of building a supportive network of peers who push one another towards success.

3  
4 Democrats know that good teachers are essential to improving student learning and helping all  
5 students meet high academic standards. Democrats will launch a national campaign to recruit and  
6 retain high-quality teachers, and we will ensure that teachers receive the tools and ongoing  
7 professional development they need to succeed in the classroom and provide our children with a  
8 world-class education. We also must lift up and trust our educators, continually build their  
9 capacity, and ensure that our schools are safe, welcoming, collaborative, and well-resourced  
10 places for our students, educators, and communities.

11  
12 We will invest in high-quality STEM classes, community schools, computer science education,  
13 arts education, and expand linked learning models and career pathways. We will end the school-  
14 to-prison pipeline. And we will work to improve school culture and combat bullying of all kinds.

15  
16 Democrats are also committed to providing parents with high-quality public school options and  
17 expanding these options for low-income youth. We support great neighborhood public schools  
18 and high-quality public charter schools, and we will help them disseminate best practices to other  
19 school leaders and educators. Democrats oppose for-profit charter schools focused on making a  
20 profit off of public resources. We instead support increased transparency and accountability for  
21 all charter schools.

## 22 23 24 **Ensure the Health and Safety of All Americans**

### 25 26 *Universal Health Care*

27 We believe as Democrats that health care is a right, not a privilege, and our health care system  
28 should put people before profits. Thanks to the hard work of President Obama and Democrats in  
29 Congress we took a critically important step towards the goal of universal health care by passing  
30 the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which has offered coverage to 20 million more Americans and  
31 ensured millions more will never be denied coverage on account of a pre-existing condition.  
32 Democrats will never falter in our generations-long fight to guarantee health coverage as a  
33 fundamental right for every American. As part of that guarantee, Americans should be able to  
34 access public coverage through Medicare or a public option. By contrast, Donald Trump wants to  
35 repeal the ACA, leaving tens of millions of Americans without coverage.

36  
37 For too many of us, health care costs are still too high, even for those with insurance. And  
38 medical debt is a problem for a growing number of working families, with one-quarter of  
39 Americans reporting that they or someone in their household had problems or an inability to pay  
40 medical bills in the past year. We will keep costs down by making premiums more affordable,  
41 reducing out-of-pocket expenses, and capping prescription drug costs. Democrats will also work  
42 to end surprise billing and other practices associated with out-of-control medical debt that lead to  
43 unconscionable economic strain on American households. We will offer relief so Americans do  
44 not face high costs, and we will fight back against insurers trying to impose excessive premium  
45 increases.

1 Furthermore, as Democrats, we will keep fighting until the ACA’s Medicaid expansion has been  
2 adopted in every state. Twenty states have not yet adopted expanded Medicaid, which not only  
3 means that millions of low-income Americans still lack health insurance and are not getting the  
4 care they need, but health care providers, clinics, hospitals, and taxpayers are footing a higher  
5 bill when people without insurance visit expensive emergency rooms.  
6

7 Democrats believe that it is not right that your zip code or census tract is a predictor of your  
8 health, which is why we will make health equity a central part of our commitment to revitalizing  
9 communities left behind. Democrats believe that all health care services should be culturally and  
10 linguistically appropriate. And we should disaggregate data collection for Asian Americans and  
11 Pacific Islanders because data disaggregation is a necessary step in fully understanding the needs  
12 of the AAPI community for all government services.  
13

#### 14 *Community Health Centers*

15 We must renew and expand our commitment to Community Health Centers, as well as  
16 community mental health centers and family planning centers. These health clinics, which offer  
17 comprehensive primary care, mental health, and family planning services to underserved  
18 populations, are critical to the successful implementation of the ACA. These health centers are a  
19 critical bulwark, allowing for better care prevention, education, and treatment of chronic  
20 conditions, while preventing unnecessary, expensive trips to emergency rooms.  
21

22 As Democrats, we will fight for a comprehensive system of primary medical, dental, and mental  
23 health care and low-cost prescription drugs through a major expansion of community health  
24 centers. Democrats know that one of the key ingredients to the success for these health centers is  
25 a well-supported and qualified workforce. We will fight to train and support such a workforce.  
26 We will also encourage providers to work with underserved populations through the National  
27 Health Service Corps, and create a strategy to increase the pool of primary care health  
28 professionals.  
29

#### 30 *Prescription Drug Costs*

31 It is unacceptable that the United States pays, by far, the highest prices in the world for  
32 prescription drugs and that one out of five Americans between the ages of 18 and 64 cannot  
33 afford to fill the prescription drugs prescribed to them by their doctors. A lifesaving drug is no  
34 good if it is unaffordable to the very people who need it most. While Democrats are committed  
35 to investing in the research, development, and innovation that creates lifesaving drugs and lowers  
36 overall health costs, the profiteering of pharmaceutical companies is simply unacceptable. And  
37 many drug companies are spending more on advertising than on research. The largest  
38 pharmaceutical companies are together earning \$80 to \$90 billion per year in profits at higher  
39 margins than other industries, while charging Americans thousands of dollars for new drugs—  
40 often at much higher costs than in other developed nations.  
41

42 We will crack down on price gouging by drug companies and cap the amount Americans have to  
43 pay out-of-pocket every month on prescription drugs. We will prohibit anti-competitive “pay for  
44 delay” deals that keep generic drugs off the market, and we will allow individuals, pharmacists,  
45 and wholesalers to import prescription drugs from licensed pharmacies in Canada and other

1 countries with appropriate safety protections. Democrats will also fight to make sure that  
2 Medicare can negotiate lower prices with drug manufacturers.

3  
4 *Medical Research*

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

11  
12 *Drug and Alcohol Addiction*

13 We must confront the epidemic of drug and alcohol addiction, specifically the opioid crisis, by  
14 vastly expanding access to treatment, supporting recovery, helping community organizations,  
15 and promoting better practices by prescribers.

16  
17 We should also do more to educate our youth, as well as their families, teachers, coaches,  
18 mentors, and friends, to intervene early to prevent drug and alcohol abuse and addiction. We  
19 should help state and local leaders establish evidence-based, age-appropriate, and locally-tailored  
20 prevention programs. These programs include school-based drug education programs that have  
21 been shown to have meaningful effects on risky behavior; community-based peer mentorship and  
22 leadership programs; and after-school activities that deter drug use and encourage life skills.

23  
24 *Mental Health*

25 We must treat mental health issues with the same care and seriousness that we treat issues of  
26 physical health and promote better integration of the behavioral and general health care systems.  
27 We must also expand community-based treatment for substance abuse disorders and mental  
28 health conditions and fully enforce our parity law. And we should create a national initiative  
29 around suicide prevention across the lifespan—to move toward the goal of Zero Suicide that has  
30 been promoted by the Department of Health and Human Services.

31  
32 *Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice*

33 Democrats are committed to protecting and advancing reproductive health, rights, and justice.  
34 We believe unequivocally that every woman should have access to quality reproductive health  
35 care services, including safe and legal abortion—regardless of where she lives, how much money  
36 she makes, or how she is insured. We believe that reproductive health is core to women’s, men’s,  
37 and young people’s health and wellbeing. We will continue to stand up to Republican efforts to  
38 defund Planned Parenthood health centers, which provide critical health services to millions of  
39 people. We will continue to oppose—and seek to overturn—federal and state laws and policies  
40 that impede a woman’s access to abortion, including by repealing the Hyde Amendment. We  
41 need to defend the ACA, which extends affordable preventive health care to women, including  
42 no-cost contraception, and prohibits discrimination in health care based on gender.

43  
44 We will address the barriers that inhibit meaningful access to reproductive health care services,  
45 including those based on gender, sexuality, race, income, and other factors. We recognize that  
46 quality, affordable comprehensive health care, evidence-based sex education, and a full range of

1 family planning services help reduce the number of unintended pregnancies and thereby also  
2 reduce the need for abortions. And we strongly and unequivocally support a woman’s decision to  
3 have a child, including by ensuring a safe and healthy pregnancy and childbirth, and by  
4 providing services during pregnancy and after the birth of a child, including adoption and social  
5 support services.

6  
7 *Public Health*

8 Investment in our nation’s crumbling public health infrastructure is critical to ensuring  
9 preparedness for emerging threats; for preventing disease, illness, and injury in communities; and  
10 for promoting good health and wellbeing. Inadequate access to public health services has a  
11 disparate impact on poor and minority communities where public health services are a significant  
12 source of health care. Democrats will fight for increased investments in public health to better  
13 address emerging threats and the needs across our country.

14  
15 *Violence Against Women and Sexual Assault*

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

25  
26 *Gun Violence Prevention*

27 With 33,000 Americans dying every year, Democrats believe that we must finally take sensible  
28 action to address gun violence. While gun ownership is part of the fabric of many communities,  
29 too many families in America have suffered from gun violence. We can respect the rights of  
30 responsible gun owners while keeping our communities safe. We will expand background checks  
31 and close dangerous loopholes in our current laws, hold irresponsible dealers and manufacturers  
32 accountable, keep weapons of war—such as assault weapons—off our streets, and ensure guns  
33 do not fall into the hands of terrorists, domestic abusers, other violent criminals, and those with  
34 severe mental health issues.

35  
36  
37 **Principled Leadership**

38  
39 Democrats believe that America must lead in the world to grow our economy, protect our  
40 interests, and make our country safer and more prosperous. We cannot outsource our position of  
41 global leadership and allow other countries to make decisions about our lives, jobs, and safety.

42  
43 Democrats further believe that when America leads, it should be as a principled force for peace  
44 and prosperity in the world. We believe that empowering women and other minorities is essential  
45 for security and economic growth. We believe the smart use of diplomacy, development, and  
46 economic statecraft can prevent crises, foster stability, and make us safer. And we believe that

1 we are stronger when we work with our partners and allies, including the largest economic and  
2 military powers in the world, rather than try to go it alone. Our global network of alliances is not  
3 a burden—it is a source of tremendous strategic advantage.

4  
5 Democrats believe that our military should only be sent into combat when the terms of  
6 engagement are clearly presented to the American people and our troops have what they need to  
7 fulfill their mission. And we believe that war must always be the last resort, never the first  
8 choice.

9  
10 These principles have underpinned the important progress of the last eight years. When President  
11 Obama assumed office, the world economy was in the worst crisis since the Great Depression,  
12 our alliances were strained, Osama bin Laden remained at large, Iran was racing toward a  
13 nuclear weapon, and we were mired in two costly wars. We brought bin Laden to justice,  
14 crippled Al Qaeda’s core leadership, saved America from a second Great Depression, repaired  
15 our alliances, reestablished relations with Cuba while continuing to press for reforms, and—  
16 without firing a shot, dropping a bomb, or putting a single American soldier in harm’s way—  
17 blocked Iran’s ability to pursue a nuclear weapon. America is stronger abroad and safer at home  
18 because of this principled leadership.

19  
20 But there is much more to do to keep our country prosperous and safe, from defeating terrorism  
21 and combating climate change to managing China’s rise and strengthening our nation’s  
22 cybersecurity. The next Democratic administration will confront the complex challenges that lay  
23 ahead by staying true to our principles and core values.

24  
25 Donald Trump has a different approach. There has never been a major party candidate less  
26 qualified or less fit for the office of President of the United States or to be Commander-in-Chief  
27 than Donald Trump. He wants more countries to have nuclear weapons. He thinks our military  
28 should engage in war crimes. He wants to build walls and keep people—including Americans—  
29 from entering the country based on their race, religion, ethnicity, and national origin. He has no  
30 strategy for dealing with key threats facing our country, including climate change and ISIS. He  
31 wants to abandon our allies and empower our adversaries. His dangerous, incoherent policies  
32 would undo the progress we have made.

33  
34 Donald Trump believes America is weak and an embarrassment. He has called our military “a  
35 disaster”. We reject that view of America and of our brave men and women in uniform. America  
36 is unlike any other nation on earth. Our ingenuity is unparalleled, our military unrivaled, our  
37 economy the largest, most dynamic, and innovative, and our values an enduring source of  
38 strength and inspiration the world over. We are not a country that cowers behind walls. We lead  
39 with purpose. With American leadership, guided by our principles and in concert with our allies  
40 and partners, the coming years can be the most stable, secure, and prosperous time we and the  
41 world have ever known.

42  
43  
44 **Support Our Troops and Keep Faith with Our Veterans**  
45

1 Democrats believe America must continue to have the strongest military in the world. We  
2 support a smart, predictable defense budget that meets the strategic challenges we face, not the  
3 arbitrary cuts that the Republican Congress enacted as part of sequestration. We must prioritize  
4 military readiness by making sure that our armed forces remain the best trained and equipped  
5 and that the Department of Defense invests its budget wisely. As we look beyond the wars in  
6 Iraq and Afghanistan and the conclusion of long-term nation-building with large military  
7 footprints, we will continue to get rid of outdated Cold War-era systems and ensure our security  
8 with a more agile and more flexible force.  
9

10 At the same time, we must end waste in the defense budget, which is an abuse of taxpayer  
11 dollars. That is why we will audit the Pentagon, launch a high-level commission to review the  
12 role of defense contractors, and take greater action against those who have been involved in  
13 fraud.  
14

15 Our country has a sacred, moral responsibility to keep faith with our veterans. We must take care  
16 of those who have put their lives on the line to defend us. That is why we will push for more  
17 educational benefits and job training, end chronic homelessness and combat suicide, and protect  
18 and preserve the post-9/11 GI Bill for future generations. We are outraged by the systemic  
19 problems plaguing the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and will fight for every veteran to  
20 have access to timely, high-quality health care. The delays in processing claims and appeals are  
21 unacceptable. We must also look for more ways to make certain that the VA provides veteran-  
22 centric care, such as providing women with full and equal treatment, including reproductive  
23 health services; expanding mental health programs; continuing efforts to identify and treat  
24 invisible, latent, and toxic wounds of war; and expanding the post-9/11 veteran's caregiver  
25 program to include all veterans. We reject attempts by Republicans to sell out the needs of  
26 veterans by privatizing the VA. We believe that the VA must be fully resourced so that every  
27 veteran gets the care that he or she has earned and deserves.  
28

29 Democrats honor the sacrifice of military families who serve alongside our service members. We  
30 recognize the unique concerns and challenges they face, especially after 15 years of continuous  
31 deployments. We will support military families with jobs, education, childcare, and health care.  
32 We will promote family-friendly policies and champion efforts to care for our military family  
33 members, especially for the spouses and children who have to rebuild their lives after the loss of  
34 a loved one.  
35

36 Democrats welcome and honor all Americans who want to serve and will continue to fight for  
37 their equal rights and recognition. We are proud of the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell and the  
38 opening of combat positions to women. Our military is strongest when people of all races,  
39 religions, sexual orientations, and gender identities are honored for their service to our country.  
40

#### 41 **Confront Global Threats**

42  
43  
44  
45 Democrats will protect our country. We will strengthen our homeland security, deal wisely and  
46 firmly with those who seek to imperil America or our partners, deter aggression, promote peace,

1 and use all the tools of American power, especially diplomacy and development, to confront  
2 global threats and ensure war is the last resort.

3  
4 *Terrorism*

5 We must defeat ISIS, Al Qaeda, and their affiliates, and prevent other groups from emerging in  
6 their place. First, Democrats will continue to lead a broad coalition of allies and partners to  
7 destroy ISIS’ stronghold in Iraq and Syria. We will press those in the region, especially the Gulf  
8 countries and local forces on the ground, to carry their weight in prosecuting this fight. Second,  
9 we will dismantle the global network of terror, which supplies terrorists with money, arms, and  
10 fighters, and stop them from recruiting and inspiring potential radicals. Third, we will harden our  
11 defenses at home, as well as those of our partners, against external and homegrown threats. We  
12 will strengthen our resilience, reminding the terrorists and ourselves that America will always  
13 come together and stand up to terror. Democrats will also seek an updated Congressional  
14 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) that is more precise about our efforts to defeat  
15 ISIS and that does not involve large-scale combat deployment of American troops.

16  
17 The Syrian crisis is heartbreaking and dangerous, and its impact is threatening the region,  
18 Europe, and beyond. Donald Trump would inflame the conflict by alienating our allies,  
19 inexplicably allowing ISIS to expand in Syria, and potentially starting a wider war. This is a  
20 reckless approach. Democrats will instead root out ISIS and bring together the Syrian opposition,  
21 international community, and our regional allies to reach a negotiated political transition that  
22 ends Assad’s rule. Given the immense scale of human suffering in Syria, it is also imperative that  
23 we lead the international community in providing greater humanitarian assistance to the civilian  
24 victims of war in Syria and Iraq.

25  
26 In Afghanistan, we will work with the NATO-led coalition of partners to bolster the  
27 democratically-elected government as it assumes a primary role in tackling terrorism, forges a  
28 more secure future for the country, and safeguards advances, like securing women’s rights.  
29 Democrats will continue to push for an Afghan-led peace process and press Pakistan to deny all  
30 terrorists sanctuary on its soil. We support President Obama’s decision to maintain a limited  
31 troop presence in Afghanistan and ensure that it never again serves as a haven for terrorists to  
32 plan and launch attacks on our homeland.

33  
34 As we prosecute the fight against terrorism, Democrats will repudiate vile tactics that would do  
35 us harm. We reject Donald Trump’s vilification of Muslims. It violates the religious freedom that  
36 is the bedrock of our country, feeds into ISIS’ nefarious narrative, and alienates people and  
37 countries who are crucial to defeating terrorism. We reject Donald Trump’s suggestion that our  
38 military should engage in war crimes, like murdering civilians related to suspected terrorists or  
39 torturing prisoners. These tactics run counter to American principles, undermine our moral  
40 standing, cost innocent lives, and endanger Americans. We also firmly reject Donald Trump’s  
41 willingness to mire tens of thousands of our combat troops in a misguided ground war in the  
42 Middle East. It would embolden ISIS, and there is nothing smart or strong about such an  
43 approach.

1 *Iran*

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

8  
9 Democrats will also address the detrimental role Iran plays in the region and will robustly  
10 enforce and, if necessary, strengthen non-nuclear sanctions. Iran is the leading state sponsor of  
11 terrorism. It violates the human rights of its population, denies the Holocaust, vows to eliminate  
12 Israel, and has its fingerprints on almost every conflict in the Middle East. Democrats will push  
13 back against Iran’s destabilizing activities including its support for terrorist groups like Hamas  
14 and Hezbollah, counter Iran’s ballistic missile program, bolster the capabilities of our Gulf  
15 partners, and ensure that Israel always has the ability to defend itself.

16  
17 *North Korea*

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

26  
27 *Russia*

28 Russia is engaging in destabilizing actions along its borders, violating Ukraine’s sovereignty and  
29 attempting to recreate spheres of influence that undermine American interests. It is also propping  
30 up the Assad regime in Syria, which is brutally attacking its own citizens. Donald Trump would  
31 overturn more than 50 years of American foreign policy by abandoning NATO partners who  
32 help us fight terrorism every day and embracing Russian President Vladimir Putin instead. We  
33 believe in strong alliances and will deter Russian aggression, build European resilience, and  
34 protect our NATO allies. We will make it clear to Putin that we are prepared to cooperate with  
35 him when it is in our interest—as we did on reducing nuclear stockpiles, dismantling Iran’s  
36 nuclear program, sanctioning North Korea, and resupplying our troops in Afghanistan—but we  
37 will not hesitate to stand up to Russian aggression.

38  
39 *Cybersecurity*

40 Democrats will protect our industry, infrastructure, and government from cyberattacks. We will  
41 strengthen our cybersecurity, seek to establish global norms in cyberspace, and impose  
42 consequences on those who violate the rules. We will do all this while protecting the privacy and  
43 civil liberties of the American people.

44

1 *Non-proliferation*

2 We believe America will be safer in a world with fewer weapons of mass destruction. Donald  
3 Trump encourages the spread of nuclear weapons across Asia and the Middle East, which would  
4 weaken the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and he is unwilling to rule out  
5 using a nuclear weapon against ISIS. Democrats want to reduce the number of nuclear, chemical,  
6 and biological weapons around the world, as well as their means of delivery. We will stop the  
7 spread of nuclear weapons and loose nuclear material, as well as strive to eliminate these  
8 weapons entirely as President Obama laid out in his speech in Prague in 2009. Democrats will be  
9 informed by a new Nuclear Posture Review in determining continued ways to appropriately  
10 shape our nuclear deterrent, with the aim of reducing our reliance on nuclear weapons while  
11 meeting our national security obligations. Democrats will also seek new opportunities for further  
12 arms control and avoid taking steps that create incentives for the expansion of existing nuclear  
13 weapons programs.

14  
15 *Climate Change*

16 Climate change poses an urgent and severe threat to our national security. According to the  
17 military, climate change is a threat multiplier that is already contributing to new conflicts over  
18 resources, catastrophic natural disasters, and the degradation of vital ecosystems across the  
19 globe. While Donald Trump says that climate change is a “hoax” created by and for the Chinese,  
20 Democrats recognize the danger facing our country and our planet. We believe the United States  
21 must lead in forging a robust global solution to the climate crisis. We will not only meet the  
22 goals we set in Paris, we will seek to exceed them and push other countries to do the same by  
23 slashing carbon pollution and rapidly driving down emissions of potent greenhouse gases like  
24 hydrofluorocarbons. We will support developing countries in their efforts to mitigate carbon  
25 pollution and other greenhouse gases, deploy more clean energy, and invest in climate resilience  
26 and adaptation. And as a proud Arctic nation, we are against putting the region at risk through  
27 drilling in the Arctic Ocean or the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Instead, while protecting our  
28 strategic interests, we will seek collaborative, science-based approaches to be good stewards of  
29 the rapidly changing Arctic region.

30  
31  
32 **Protect Our Values**

33  
34 Our values of inclusion and tolerance inspire hope around the world and make us safer at home.  
35 The world will be more secure, stable, and peaceful when all people are able to reach their God-  
36 given potential and live in freedom and dignity. We strive to ensure that the values upon which  
37 our country was built, including our belief that all people are created equal, are reflected in  
38 everything our nation does. That is why we will promote peacebuilding and champion human  
39 rights defenders. We will fight to end child labor. And we will seek to safeguard vulnerable  
40 minorities, including LGBT people and people with disabilities.

41  
42 *Women and Girls*

43 We believe the United States must continue to be the world’s strongest advocate for the rights of  
44 women and girls. We will encourage their economic, political, and educational opportunities, and  
45 protect them from violence at home and abroad. We will support sexual and reproductive health  
46 and rights around the globe. In addition to expanding the availability of affordable family

1 planning information and contraceptive supplies, we believe that safe abortion must be part of  
2 comprehensive maternal and women’s health care and included as part of America’s global  
3 health programming. Therefore, we support the repeal of harmful restrictions that obstruct  
4 women’s access to health care information and services, including the “global gag rule” and the  
5 Helms Amendment that bars U.S. assistance to provide safe, legal abortion throughout the  
6 developing world.  
7

#### 8 *Trafficking and Modern Slavery*

9 We will stop the scourge of human trafficking and modern slavery of men, women, boys, and  
10 girls. We will use the full force of the law against those who engage in modern-day forms of  
11 slavery, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children and the forced labor of men,  
12 women, and children. Building on the accomplishments of the Victims of Trafficking and  
13 Violence Protection Act of 2000, we call for increased diplomatic efforts with foreign  
14 governments to root out complicit public officials who facilitate or perpetrate this evil.  
15

#### 16 *Young People*

17 The majority of the developing world is under age of 30. These countries will be more  
18 prosperous and stable if young people have access to education and employment opportunities.  
19 Democrats will promote the rights of young people and nurture young leaders. We will work  
20 with people around the world who seek greater opportunities, including by promoting job  
21 creation, expanding education and health care, and fostering partnerships between peoples.  
22

#### 23 *Religious Minorities*

24 We are horrified by ISIS’ genocide of Christians and Yezidis and crimes against humanity  
25 against Muslims and others in the Middle East. We will do everything we can to protect religious  
26 minorities and the fundamental right of freedom to worship and believe.  
27

#### 28 *Refugees*

29 The world is experiencing a major refugee crisis with more than 60 million people displaced as a  
30 result of conflicts in the Middle East, Africa, and Eastern Europe. We support President Obama’s  
31 call for an international summit to address this crisis so that every country assumes its  
32 responsibility to meet this humanitarian challenge. While Donald Trump proposes banning  
33 Muslim refugees, we will look for ways to help innocent people who are fleeing persecution  
34 while ensuring rigorous screening and vetting.  
35

#### 36 *Civil Society*

37 Democrats support progress towards more accountable governance and universal rights. As  
38 autocrats and strongmen around the world crack down on civil society and imprison those who  
39 speak out to demand greater freedom, we will continue to bolster groups and individuals who  
40 fight for fundamental human rights.  
41

#### 42 *Anti-Corruption*

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

1  
2 *Torture*

3 We will always seek to uphold our values at home and abroad, not just when it is easy, but when  
4 it is hard. That is why President Obama banned torture without exception in his first week in  
5 office and why Democrats condemn Donald Trump’s statements that he would order our military  
6 to engage in torture and other war crimes.  
7

8 *Closing Guantánamo Bay*

9 The Democratic Party remains committed to closing the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay.  
10 Keeping the facility open is a blemish on our record, serves as a recruiting tool for extremists,  
11 and undermines our standing in the world.  
12

13 *Development Assistance*

14 We believe that development assistance is an essential instrument of American power. It can  
15 prevent threats, enhance stability, and reduce the need for military force. With less than one  
16 percent of the federal budget, our development assistance has helped cut extreme poverty in half,  
17 drastically decreased child mortality, reduced global hunger, countered deadly pandemics, and  
18 put an AIDS-free generation within reach. This investment reflects the best of America and  
19 makes us safer. We need to continue this work and make more progress on important global  
20 goals like ending extreme poverty and hunger.  
21

22 *Global Health*

23 It is vital that we protect our nation’s health security. While the Republican Party refuses to fund  
24 important measures that could contain and address the Zika pandemic, Democrats are ready to  
25 limit the reach of Zika—just as we did with Ebola—and support funding for diagnostic tests for  
26 the virus, vaccine, and treatment. We also need to prepare for potential pandemics, like H1N1,  
27 by working with first responders and health officials to reduce the risks associated with  
28 unintentional or deliberate outbreaks of infectious diseases.  
29

30 *HIV and AIDS*

31 Democrats believe an AIDS-free generation is within our grasp. But we know far too many  
32 Americans still suffer, which is why we will implement the National HIV and AIDS Strategy,  
33 increase research funding for the National Institutes of Health, cap pharmaceutical expenses for  
34 people living with HIV and AIDS, address HIV criminalization laws, and expand access for HIV  
35 prevention medications, particularly for the populations most at risk of infection. Abroad, we  
36 will make the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief more effective and increase global  
37 funding for HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment. Democrats will always protect those living  
38 with HIV and AIDS from stigma and discrimination.  
39

40 *International Labor*

41 Democrats believe that a key element of American leadership is growing our economy and  
42 protecting American jobs. We also believe that the world will be safer when there is greater  
43 prosperity. That is why we will prioritize and strongly enforce provisions on decent work and  
44 worker rights in all American diplomatic, trade, and programmatic efforts. We think it is wrong  
45 for workers in the United States to compete against poverty-wage, child, or slave labor.  
46

1 Democrats will promote broad-based economic growth across the world, pursuing a global  
2 economic agenda that promotes rising wages and invests in quality public services, workers'  
3 rights, and environmental protections. We believe that we need to coordinate our economic  
4 actions with other countries to address economic insecurity, specifically youth un- and  
5 underemployment, gender inequality, digital transformation, and the transition towards green  
6 jobs.

### 9 **A Leader in the World**

10  
11 It would be a dangerous mistake for America to abandon our responsibilities. We cannot, as  
12 Donald Trump suggests, cede the mantle of leadership for global peace and security to others  
13 who will not have our best interests in mind. American leadership is essential to keeping us safe  
14 and our economy growing in the years ahead.

#### 15 *Asia-Pacific*

16 From the Asia Pacific to the Indian Ocean, we will deepen our alliances in the region with  
17 Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand. Democrats will  
18 continue to invest in a long-term strategic partnership with India—the world’s largest  
19 democracy, a nation of great diversity, and an important Pacific power. We will work with our  
20 allies and partners to fortify regional institutions and norms as well as protect freedom of the seas  
21 in the South China Sea. We will push back against North Korean aggression and press China to  
22 play by the rules. We will stand up to Beijing on unfair trade practices, currency manipulation,  
23 and cyberattacks. And we will promote greater respect for human rights, including the rights of  
24 Tibetans.

25  
26  
27 Democrats are committed to a “One China” policy and the Taiwan Relations Act and will  
28 continue to support a peaceful resolution of Cross-Strait issues that is consistent with the wishes  
29 and best interests of the people of Taiwan.

#### 30 *Middle East*

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

40  
41  
42 We will continue to work toward a two-state solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict  
43 negotiated directly by the parties that guarantees Israel’s future as a secure and democratic  
44 Jewish state with recognized borders and provides the Palestinians with independence,  
45 sovereignty, and dignity. While Jerusalem is a matter for final status negotiations, it should  
46 remain the capital of Israel, an undivided city accessible to people of all faiths. Israelis deserve

1 security, recognition, and a normal life free from terror and incitement. Palestinians should be  
2 free to govern themselves in their own viable state, in peace and dignity.

3  
4 *Europe*

5 Europe remains America's indispensable partner and a cornerstone of global security. Democrats  
6 will help our European allies and partners deter Russian aggression, address security challenges  
7 to Europe's south, and deal with unprecedented economic and social challenges. We reject  
8 Donald Trump's threats to abandon our European and NATO allies, all while he praises Putin.  
9 When the United States was attacked on September 11, 2001, our NATO allies invoked Article 5  
10 of the North Atlantic Treaty, stating that an attack against one is an attack against all—for the  
11 first and only time in its history. Our NATO allies fought alongside us in Afghanistan and are  
12 still there today. We will maintain our Article 5 collective security commitments to NATO  
13 because we are stronger when we have our allies at our side.

14  
15 *Americas*

16 The Americas are a region of singular strategic, economic, and cultural importance and  
17 opportunity for the United States. Democrats reject Donald Trump's proposal to build a wall on  
18 our southern border and alienate Mexico, a valuable partner. We will instead embrace our  
19 neighbors and pursue strong, fruitful partnerships across the region, from Canada to Latin  
20 America and the Caribbean. We will build on our long-term commitment to Colombia and work  
21 with Central American countries to stabilize the Northern Triangle. We will bolster democratic  
22 institutions, promote economic opportunity and prosperity, and tackle the rise of drugs, crime,  
23 and corruption. In Cuba, we will build on President Obama's historic opening to end the travel  
24 ban and embargo. We will also stand by the Cuban people and support their ability to decide  
25 their own future and to enjoy the same human rights and freedoms that people everywhere  
26 deserve. And in Venezuela, we will push the government to respect human rights and respond to  
27 the will of its people.

28  
29 *Africa*

30 Africa is home to many of the fastest growing economies in the world. Democrats will  
31 strengthen our partnership and collaboration with the African Union, emphasizing trade while  
32 increasing development assistance to bolster the continent's domestic economies. We applaud  
33 President Obama for engaging our African partners on the full range of global challenges and  
34 opportunities, and we will continue to strengthen democratic institutions, fair trade and  
35 investment, development, and global health. Democrats will support our African partners in  
36 improving their capacity to respond to crises and protect citizens, especially women and girls.  
37 We will also work to end the reign of terror promulgated by Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM,  
38 and ISIS.

39  
40 *Global Economy and Institutions*

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

44  
45 Democrats believe that global institutions and multilateral organizations have a powerful role to  
46 play and are an important amplifier of American strength and influence. Many of these

**\*\*\*DRAFT – DELIBERATIVE AND PREDECISIONAL\*\*\***

1 organizations need reform and updating, but it would be reckless to follow Donald Trump and  
2 turn our back on the international system that America built. It has provided decades of stability  
3 and economic growth for the world and for America.