

# **KEY ISSUES** TO ELEVATE NATIONALLY



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Drawing on our platform, there are several key issues that we want to focus on lifting up into the national debate in 2019 and 2020. These issues were selected based on our shared work as a national network, including both existing and emerging national campaigns.

### **MPROVED MEDICARE FOR ALL**

We demand Improved Medicare for All, a universal, single-payer system for the health care we all deserve. As we make that transition, we must improve the quality of care by: addressing inequities in health outcomes across race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, and citizenship status. Everyone should be guaranteed ALL the care they need, and there should be a single standard of care. We will fight to lower prescription drug costs, serve the needs of rural and urban communities, protect Native sovereignty, invest in long-term care, end the overdose crisis and curb the corporate greed that feeds our current "sick-care" industry.

# POLICY POINTS

- Universal Accessibility Health care is a human right and should be affordable and accessible to all, regardless of who you are, where you live, your citizenship status or who you work for.
- Public Health Care We need a public health care system that takes power out of the hands of corporations and back in the hands of people.
- ✓ End Profiteering Our healthcare system must serve people, not profits.
- Lower Drug Prices Drug prices should be subject to government regulations, so they can be made affordable for all.

#### **HOMES GUARANTEE**

We need a homes guarantee that reinvests in public housing, ends homelessness, creates strong protections for renters and low-income homeowners and pays back Black and Brown families hurt by racist housing policies, as well as communities that never got compensation for the harm done to them in the 2008 financial crisis. The current stage of our work for a Homes Guarantee is to introduce and expand bold legislation on housing at the federal, state and local levels.

### POLICY POINTS

- Reparations Reparations to Black and Brown communities impacted by decades of racist housing policy and the 2008 financial meltdown.
- ✓ **Rent Control** Rent control and tenant protections.
- Funding Federal and state funding for public housing, social housing, and rural housing.
- ✓ Regulate Wall Street Regulations that end Wall Street real estate speculation.

### 100% JUST AND CLEAN ENERGY FOR ALL

100% Just and Clean Energy for All means ending "sacrifice zones" in low-income communities, particularly communities of color, that are currently used as dumping grounds for toxins and pollution. This ensures that the communities that have borne the brunt of climate impacts and pollution are the first in line to get cleaned up and to get good green jobs. 100% Just means moving from corporate control to public and community control of clean energy. It means democratizing the grid, ending energy poverty and ensuring that every person and every community has access to reliable, clean, and affordable energy. 100% Just is a campaign that seeks to end the use of dirty energy, ensure racial and economic equity in this transition, and move from corporate control of the energy sector to public and community control. In addition to state-level work to win 100% Just and Clean Energy for All, we are also trying to move our "100% Just and Clean Energy for All" framework within the national Green New Deal conversation.

## POLIGY POIRTS

- No More Sacrifice Zones Championing No More Sacrifice Zones reforms that will stop Black, Brown and Native communities from being sacrificed to pollution and secure reparations for the harm suffered by those communities for decades.
- Public and Community Ownership Advancing public and community ownership of the new green economy.
- Engage Front-Line Communities Supporting a grassroots process led by front-line communities to flesh out, pass and implement the priorities and policies of the Green New Deal.

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#### 🞸 FREE COLLEGE FOR ALL

Student Action is fighting for Free College for All to cover tuition, books, and fees, as well as living expenses, which are often the greatest drivers of debt for working class and poor students. Free College for All proposals must truly be accessible to all people, rather than exclusionary based on immigration and former or current incarceration status, age, ability, or income. We also advocate for the inclusion of student loan debt forgiveness in Free College for All proposals for the generations already burdened by student loan debt.

# - POLICY POINTS

- For <u>All</u> Free College for All must be accessible to all people, including undocumented students, currently and formerly incarcerated students, non-traditional students, students with disabilities, and more.
- Cover a Range of Costs Free College for All programs should target students most impacted by the college affordability crisis, and include the costs of tuition, books, and fees, as well as cost of living while in school for low-income students.
- Student Loan Debt Forgiveness Proposals to make college more affordable should also address the existing student loan debt crisis by providing student loan forgiveness.

#### **Send Mass incarceration**

The U.S. incarcerates more people than any country on the planet. While much of this incarceration is upheld by local and state policies, hundreds of thousands of incarcerated people are in federally supported prisons or are locked up based on federal mandates. The recent massive expansion of for-profit immigration detention facilities is bolstering the private prison industry, ripping families apart and encouraging unaccountable abuse for the sake of corporate profits. People's Action is working with partners to fight mass incarceration in both immigration detention and our criminal justice system.

# POLICY POIRTS

- End the Use of Money Bail Money bail policies contribute to high incarceration rates among poor people and people of color by keeping them incarcerated simply because they cannot afford to pay bail.
- Make Diversion Programs Accessible to All Make pre-trial diversion available to anyone eligible to participate in the program, irrespective of an individual's ability to pay a fine or fee.
- Promote Proportionate Sentencing and Pathways to Second Chances Promote opportunities for release, through parole or clemency, and to help remove barriers to re-entering society for those who are released from incarceration.
- Keep People Out of Jail for Drug-Related Offenses Adopt policies that reduce the number of people in jails and prisons for drug-related offenses.
- / Treat Kids Like Kids Children should not be prosecuted in adult courts, nor should they be given punishments that preclude opportunities for redemption.
- Promote Policies that Aid Undocumented Communities It is critical that we adopt policies that protect some of our nation's most vulnerable residents. Local law enforcement agencies should not cooperate with ICE, and we oppose any effort to enlist local law enforcement as federal immigration agents.



#### END THE OVERDOSE CRISIS

We are currently in the midst of an overdose epidemic. Overdose is the leading cause of death in the U.S. for people under the age of 55. This nationwide problem has been created by the War on Drugs, and it has been exacerbated by Big PhRMA. The same companies are now trying to profit off the crisis by selling medications to treat people who are suffering from the drug dependence they've helped to create and by insurance companies that have denied people access to needed care to save themselves money. While many elected officials speak about the overdose crisis, few take serious action to address this spiraling epidemic.

# POLICY POIRTS

- Create a Public Health and Compassion Infrastructure Guarantee universal access to life-saving overdose reversal medications like Naloxone, treatment on demand, harm reduction services, and necessary social services to care for people struggling with drug misuse, their families, and communities. We will push back on policies of involuntary or forced treatment (which have been shown to increase overdose deaths) and from punitive and criminal justice system responses. The Care Act is the current federal legislation that most closely reflects this approach.
- Robust and Universal Health Care Protect existing public health programs from cuts and increase access to coverage via our Improved Medicare for All campaign.
- Adequate Resources Ensure that sufficient resources are dedicated to address the epidemic both from pharmaceutical companies and federal and state governments. The Care Act is the current federal legislation that most closely reflects this approach.
- Keep People Out of Jail for Drug-Related Offenses Adopt policies that reduce the number of people in jails and prisons for drug-related offenses.
- Corporate Accountability We will expose the pharmaceutical executives and hedge fund managers who have made billions in profit by creating this crisis of opioid addiction and advance policies (like the Windfall Tax) guaranteeing that they pay their share to address the problem that they helped create.
- ✓ Justice Reform End criminalization. Replace policies that lead to mass incarceration with policies that promote health and wellness. We must end all low-level drug arrests, increase prearrest diversion programs that provide social services instead of arrests, and utilize treatment options over incarceration.

## SUARANTEE DECENT WORK

Our labor system is profoundly degraded, providing either substandard and abusive jobs or joblessness to most of our people. This system has led to working people losing control over their workplaces and over their lives in general, forcing them into insecure jobs, insecure schedules, and unsafe workplaces. Corporations can take away working people's livelihood at a moment's notice. We must re-envision labor and labor rights so working people take power away from rich corporations.

## POLICY POINTS

- Create a Living Wage Floor We support the current campaigns to raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 for all workers, and we believe that minimum wage should be indexed to rise along with inflation as a first step towards a living wage for all people in this country. We call for a commitment to a living wage floor for all and the creation of a plan to achieve it within a reasonable time period.
- Create a Federal Jobs Guarantee Program We must create a Federal Jobs Guarantee that offers jobs for all at \$15 an hour with benefits and collective bargaining to set a floor for the labor landscape. A jobs guarantee would address the millions of people intentionally made unemployed through our economic policy of 4% unemployment, as well as those excluded from decent jobs through criminalization, deindustrialization and other economic factors, and take away private corporations' ability to threaten workers' livelihoods if they exercise their rights
- Empower Working People to Exercise Their Collective Power Our broken labor law system currently frustrates workers from exercising collective power to negotiate for fair treatment on the job. We must empower workers to bargain collectively and more effectively for decent jobs with a re-envisioned and vastly expanded system of bargaining that reaches the real economic actors and full range of issues that are shaping workers' jobs and lives.
- ✓ Strongly Enforce Labor Rights We must address the crises of lawlessness in lowwage workplaces where wage theft, sexual harassment, dangerous conditions, retaliation and abuse are the norm. We must hold large corporations responsible for how they treat workers by banning forced arbitration and severely limiting outsourcing responsibility and liability to outside contractors. We must make enforcement worker driven with a range of co-enforcement models, fully fund and empower government to strategically enforce labor laws, and overhaul enforcement processes so they are accessible and timely and focused on prevention with an effective set of consequences for violations.



## JUSTICE FOR IMMIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND NEW AMERICANS

We demand a transformation of this nation's immigration system, from a system based on criminalization and racial exclusion to one built on justice, shared prosperity and compassion. We have a long-term vision for the full inclusion and enfranchisement of everyone, regardless of their citizenship status, into our society.

# -POLICY POINTS

- Road to Citizenship A road to citizenship for undocumented immigrants in this country, including immediate enactment of existing legislation that would ensure permanent residency and a path to citizenship for DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) participants, and TPS (Temporary Protected Status) and DED (Deferred Enforced Departure) holders.
- Decriminalize Immigrationn We must disentangle our immigration system from the criminal justice system, which would include ending coordination between local law enforcement and ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement), defunding the Secure Communities program and decriminalizing border crossing (that is, making it a civil offense, not a criminal offense).
  People should not be jailed for immigration issues. We believe that ICE should be abolished and that the jurisdiction of Customs and Border Patrol should be limited to 25 miles from the border. All agencies related to immigration enforcement should be subject to community oversight.
- Restore Asylum and Due Process We want an immediate release of the people who are being held in detention camps. This should be accompanied by an investment in the processing of asylum cases and in legal representation for asylum and deportation proceedings, so that backlogged asylum and citizenship cases can be justly processed within the year. Family members who have been unjustly deported should have the "right to return" to the United States, and resources should immediately be made available to enable family reunification.
- Ensure Access to Health Care, Housing and Worker Protections for All We oppose efforts by the current administration to penalize and deport immigrants for using public benefits. Further, we believe that undocumented people, visa and green card holders and asylees should be proactively included in all of our social safety net programs.
- Documentation and Enfranchisement for Non-citizens We call on localities and states to pass legislation that will enable undocumented people to access government documentation, including drivers licenses, and that grant non-citizens the right to vote in local and state elections.
- ✓ Support Development in Sending Nations We can't address the underlying pressures driving mass immigration without addressing trade, militarized foreign policy and the impacts of climate change. The United States should invest in development solutions – including employment, public safety and green development programs – in sending nations, particularly in Mexico and Central America.

