

PolicyThink:
Women of Color
Federal Policy Brief



The Civic Engagement and Leadership Institute for Everyone

authentically multicultural • diversity • engagement • inclusion • leadership programs



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SUMMIT PARTNERS

- American Association of University Women
- American College Personnel Association
- Black Women for Positive Change
- Council for Opportunity in Education
- D&P Creative Strategies
- DiverseLink
- Estell Group, LLC
- Higher Heights
- Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
- Legal Progress
- Multicultural Media, Telecommunications and Internet Council
- National Association of Social Workers
- National Congress of Black Women
- National Hispanic Leadership Agenda
- National Organization of Women
- National Women's Law Center
- National Women's Political Caucus
- Planned Parenthood Federation of America
- Progress 2050
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INTRODUCTION

The recommendations outlined in this policy brief were developed and compiled during the first national policy summit for women of color, PolicyThink: Women of Color Policy Summit.¹ Hosted by CELIE (the Civic Engagement and Leadership Institute for Everyone),² the summit took place in Washington, DC on November 15, 2016, just one week after the November elections. CELIE invited more than 20 national organizations and a select number of community-based organizations to participate in a full day of activities.³ The timing of the summit provided a rare opportunity to capture the issues top of mind for those leaders, advocates and organizations working on the frontlines at the national level on issues relevant to women of color in communities across the US.

More than 60 women participated in the summit, representing a broad cross-section of ethnic, class, age, political and professional diversity. Attendees participated in seven professionally facilitated breakout sessions.⁴ Issues addressed in the seven breakout sessions include, child welfare, civil rights and immigration, criminal justice, diversity and inclusion, economic security, education, and health. They also participated in two plenary briefings: one on budget and appropriations and the other on telecommunications and broadband. This policy brief incorporates the priorities that were both identified by the individual groups and approved by the summit as a collective body.

The recommendations are not exhaustive, but they are comprehensive. At a minimum, the recommendations ask the new administration and Congress to do no harm. More profoundly, there is a hope that national leaders will pursue policy priorities that allow every person in the US just and reasonable opportunities to realize their full potential. This means providing necessary funding for nondefense discretionary programs; tending to the needs of the young and elderly and their caregivers; protecting civil rights; providing a living wage; continued affordable access to health care; criminal justice reform; providing globally-competitive educational opportunities; increase access to broadband; and removing barriers to professional mobility and access to capital for minority-women-owned businesses.

The priorities articulated in this brief represent something profound and powerful. They embody key issues an age-diverse, multicultural and bipartisan group of women acknowledge as some of the “shared concerns” they are willing and eager to work on collectively at the national level (and elsewhere) on behalf of women of color. The recommendations, however, do not replace or limit policy priorities that any summit partner may pursue independently.

Many thanks to the summit partners, facilitators, participants, and contributors who helped to make the summit and this policy brief possible. It has been an honor and joy to get to know you and to provide a forum and assistance needed to develop recommendations that capture key themes relevant to one of the most influential communities in the US and around the world. We look forward to working with you to help improve the quality of life for women of color, and the communities where they play, work and live.

Anita R. Estell
Founder & President
CELIE

¹ PolicyThink: Women of Color Policy Summit is the premier national policy development and civic engagement summit for women of color. Women of color are a formidable force. This inaugural summit harnessed the collective power of this group by convening women of color and other influencers, leaders, nonprofits and business interests to address and develop policy recommendations and an agenda to be shared with the Trump Transition team and the US Congress. Attendees had an opportunity to interact with national leaders, participate in facilitated workshops and contribute to this set of final policy recommendations.

² Established this year, CELIE is a national organization committed to expanding access and opportunity for all Americans, particularly underserved and multicultural populations in the areas of civic engagement and public and private diversity and inclusion efforts.

³ The estimated combined reach of the organizations represented is about six million people.

⁴ The issue areas covered in the breakout sessions were selected based on the preferences attendees noted as a part of their online registration. They had 12 areas from which to choose their top preferences, and the areas noted here represent the top choices.



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BACKGROUND ON CELIE

Mission. CELIE is a national organization committed to expanding access and opportunity for all Americans, and others, particularly underserved and multicultural populations in the areas of civic engagement and public and private diversity and inclusion efforts.

Vision. To offer world-class engagement and training programs, tools and resources that advance opportunities for all by unleashing the potential and talents of participants and partners in ways that transform lives, organizations, communities and nations.

Opportunity. Numerous reports highlight and confirm dramatic developments associated with changing demographics. The combined composition of the US and global consumer and political markets reflect a world that is growing in its heterogeneity and ethnic, age and gender diversity. These population shifts are occurring rapidly, with an indelible effect on public policy, consumer patterns, voter composition, constituent services, talent recruitment, retention and promotion, and business and marketing strategies for years to come.



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Civic Engagement

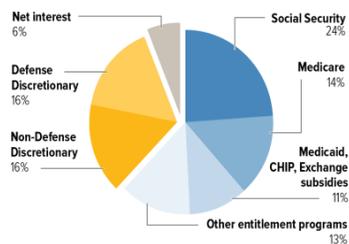
PolicyThink® and the **Freedom Factory®** are CELIE's signature civic engagement programs, providing best-in-class resources, tools, training and other resources to local, state and community leaders, national associations, institutions of higher education, non-profits, advocates, activists, community organizations, grantees, strategic allies/partners and others. PolicyThink allows us to provide customized convenings, including conferences, summits, focus groups and community engagement activities. Through the Freedom Factory® we offer an advocacy academy and related programs that provide civic-engagement training for persons and organizations seeking more profound engagement at the national level with Congress, the federal agencies and the White House.

Theory of Change. Providing American people with information and tools enlisted by Washington influencers is an intervention that can accelerate change and help sustain a robust American democracy and legislative process. We believe that if more Americans constructively engage with Congress and the White House, the work of Congress and the White House will benefit more Americans.

BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS

Since 2011, federal efforts to reduce the national deficit have included significant across-the-board cuts to domestic discretionary programs.¹ In 2013 and 2015, the Bipartisan Budget Acts provided some relief from mandated cuts; however, investments in the nondefense discretionary programs that are vital to many Americans have been reduced significantly.

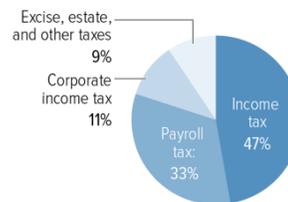
Federal Spending by Program, FY 2015



Source: Congressional Budget Office

cbpp.org

Federal Revenues, FY 2015



Note: "Other Taxes" category includes profits on assets held by the Federal Reserve.

Source: Office of Management and Budget

cbpp.org

Source: Ellen Nissenbaum, Senior Vice President, Center for Budget Policy and Priorities

These reductions have hit communities of color particularly hard. In fact, funding for these programs represents their lowest share of GDP since 1962²—translating into reduced investments in federal education, job training and other programs that help small businesses and families seeking prosperity and a better way of life.

Recommendations

- Eliminate and prevent arbitrary cuts to nondefense discretionary programs by ending the across-the-board cuts (sequestration) and budget caps required by the 2011 Budget Control Act.
- Increase investment of federal funding for nondefense discretionary programs in ways that will allow more Americans real pathways to good-paying jobs and the middle class.
- Prioritize education, job creation, social service, transportation, infrastructure and other investments in rural, suburban and urban communities that have experienced economic decline for more than three decades.³
- Reform tax policy to increase revenues and incentivize foundations and corporations to invest in the recovery of blighted communities, underserved populations, and organizations that serve them, such as historically black colleges and universities and minority-serving institutions.
- Reform tax policy to incentivize public-private partnerships to spur economic development and job creation in blighted neighborhoods and communities, particularly urban and rural areas that have experienced persistent poverty and high unemployment rates for more than three decades.

¹ The 2011 Budget Control Act established caps on discretionary spending through a set of arbitrary, across-the-board budget cuts, known as sequestration.

² Linden, M. (2013, January 29). Budget Cuts Set Funding Path to Historic Lows, Center for American Progress. Retrieved from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2013/01/29/50945/budget-cuts-set-funding-path-to-historic-lows/>

³ This request aligns with and extends the coverage of the 10-20-30 initiative authored by Assistant Democratic Leader Jim Clyburn to include inner-city and other communities currently not covered by the eligibility criteria outlined in the initiative.



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CHILD WELFARE

Child welfare systems are designed to support families and to protect children from harm through an array of prevention and intervention services; in particular, they are designed to support children who have been or are at risk of abuse or neglect. The most vulnerable children, youths, and families are served by child welfare systems across the country – many of them are children of color. In 2014, an estimated 702,000 children were found to have experienced maltreatment, with children under the age of one at most risk. Of the children and youths who were abused or neglected, an estimated 147,462 received foster care services.⁴ There were a total of 427,910 children and youths in foster care and 17,188 young people who aged out of foster care in fiscal year 2015.⁵ Furthermore, it is estimated that 1,580 children die each year due to child abuse and neglect, but many experts report that this number may be much higher.⁶

Children of color in child welfare systems are disproportionately represented in child welfare. In fact, research shows the overrepresentation of certain racial and ethnic groups, including African-Americans and Native Americans, in the system when compared with the general population. Among the reasons for this are poverty, cultural bias and distrust between child welfare workers and families, and difficulty in recruiting adoptive parents.

A qualified and stable child welfare workforce is critical to effective child welfare service delivery for these children and their families. Child welfare workers face critical decisions about the lives of these vulnerable children and youths while working in stressful environments that include high caseloads and workloads, inadequate supervision, safety concerns, and limited training and resources. All of these conditions, coupled with low salaries and administrative burdens, can affect the recruitment and retention of qualified staff. Child welfare systems across the country are stretched beyond capacity. To better serve vulnerable children, youths, and their families, we need to strengthen child welfare systems.

Recommendations

- Promote a trauma-informed Child Welfare System that supports children, youth and families by building on programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); Maternal and Child Health Services; Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Head Start; and the Affordable Care Act to ensure child well-being.
 - ◆ Develop and maintain a stable, well-qualified, diverse child welfare workforce

⁴ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, & Children's Bureau. (2016). Child maltreatment 2014. Retrieved from www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/child-maltreatment-2014

⁵ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, & Children's Bureau. (2015). The AFCARS report. Retrieved from www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/afcarsreport22.pdf

⁶ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, & Children's Bureau. (2016). Child maltreatment 2014. Retrieved from www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/child-maltreatment-2014



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- ◆ Create incentives to recruit and retain the child welfare workforce through measures such as loan forgiveness and the use of Title IV-E⁷ for Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and Master of Social Work (MSW) education and longevity programs
- Invest and advocate for leadership, including political appointments
- Develop and promote a child welfare finance reform strategy to allow flexibility of Title IV-E funding toward prevention and intervention services
- Oppose all efforts that would lead to the separation of mixed-status immigrant families due to minor infractions

CIVIL RIGHTS

Civil rights⁸ are the systemic threads of equality, fairness, justice and other protections that keep the fabric of democracy whole and vibrant. Issues associated with civil rights touch every sector and community – criminal justice, education, environment, employment, financial services, housing, transportation, and more. In this section, we address two primary issues: immigration and voting rights. A more expansive discussion on civil rights issues related to criminal justice, education, health and pay equity appears elsewhere in this document.

Recommendations

Immigration. We offer two broad recommendations related to the protection of undocumented immigrants who come to the US as children and the elimination and replacement of detention centers, which essentially are extensions of the prison-industrial complex:

- Preserve the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which protects undocumented immigrants who arrived to the US as children.⁹ We support the findings of 250 college and university presidents who published an open letter in support of DACA on November 21,

⁷ Title IV-E foster care funds are awarded to the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and federally recognized Indian Tribes, Indian Tribal organizations and Tribal consortia with approved title IV-E plans, and they are available as open-ended entitlement grants through single-year appropriations. The program's focus, which is articulated in statute, is children eligible under the pre-welfare reform Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program and who are removed from their homes due to maltreatment, lack of care, lack of supervision, or other problems attributed to a relative caregiver. Specifically, the program permits title IV-E agencies to claim reimbursement for a portion of foster care expenditures for children covered by the program. Since the late 1980s, the training provision of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, created as part of the Child Welfare and Adoption Assistance Act of 1980 [P.L. 96-272, Section 474(a)(3)(B)], has been a major public funding source supporting both staff training and the opportunity for current and prospective employees to earn BSW and MSW degrees. Using these federal funds to support social work education has been instrumental in educating a new generation of social workers to pursue child welfare careers.

⁸ Numerous civil rights protections are available through local, state, federal and constitutional law. Under federal law, there is an array of civil rights statutes available to protect individuals from discrimination. Although these laws share similar features, the type of discrimination that they prohibit and the circumstances under which they operate vary from statute to statute. Relevant federal civil rights statutes include the Civil Rights Act, the Equal Pay Act, the Voting Rights Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Fair Housing Act, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Rehabilitation Act, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act, the Age Discrimination Act, the Civil Service Reform Act, the Immigration and Nationality Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, the Congressional Accountability Act, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, and the Reconstruction Statutes. Jody Feder, *Federal Civil Rights Statutes: A Primer*, Congressional Research Service, November 21, 2012.

⁹ DACA confers non-immigrant legal status but does not provide a path to citizenship. It was established by the Obama administration in June 2012. As of June 2016, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (UCSIS) received 1,541,960 applications for DACA status, 1,451,195 (94 percent) of which were accepted. Of those, 1,267,834 cases have been approved, with 64,972 denied; as of June 30, 2016, 118,326 cases were pending. Over half of those accepted reside in California and Texas. Childhood Arrivals by Fiscal Year, Quarter, Intake, Biometrics and Case Status: 2012-2016, US Citizenship and Immigration Services. Retrieved November 28, 2016.



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2016. In that letter, they stated that preservation of DACA “is both a moral imperative and a national necessity. America needs talent – and these students, who have been raised and educated in the United States, are already part of our national community. They represent what is best about America, and as scholars and leaders they are essential to the future.”

- Alternatives to detention are more affordable and humane than locking up immigrants in federally funded prisons. For instance, the US Immigration and Customs Service spends about \$2 billion a year to detain immigrants. Alternatives to detention, such as release on recognizance, community support, bond, and formal monitoring programs, are much more cost-effective than institutional detention and reduce the strain on individual lives and the federal budget.¹⁰

Voting Rights. Reintroduction and enactment of legislation to restore and strengthen voting rights protections is required to help ensure that states and political subdivisions with recent histories of voting rights violations obtain preclearance under section 5 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) before they can introduce changes to their election practices. Last Congress, legislation was introduced to remedy the portions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 11 that were invalidated by the US Supreme Court in the 2013 *Shelby County v. Holder* decision. The proposed legislation also extended voting rights to a number of disadvantaged groups. Additionally, the bill attempted to increase transparency in the electoral process. We ask the Trump administration and Congress to take affirmative steps to reinstate voting rights protections.

¹⁰ The sole purpose of immigration detention is to make sure people show up for their court hearings and comply with final case outcomes. Only a fraction of federal spending in this area supports alternative programs, which clearly are more affordable and humane. Individual adult detention costs about \$161 per day, family detention costs \$298 a day and alternatives to detention range from 17 cents to \$17 a day. See ACLU Legislative Update: Alternatives to Immigration Detention: Less Costly and More Humane than Federal Lock-up, retrieved November 28, 2016.

¹¹ According to the Lawyers’ Committee on Civil Rights, “The VRA made it possible for racial minority voters across the country to participate equally in the electoral process. Because of the VRA, literacy tests, poll taxes, and other discriminatory mechanisms were invalidated. In recent years, the VRA has worked to block voting practices, such as redistricting plans, registration requirements, polling place changes, and voter ID laws that were found to be racially discriminatory. Yet since the Supreme Court invalidated the key enforcement provision of the VRA in 2013, voting discrimination has become harder to stop.” See, Lawyers’ Committee on Civil Rights Fact Sheet: Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2015, June 24, 2015.



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CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The United States currently has the largest prison population in the entire world. Between 1980 and 2014, violent crime rates fell by 39 percent and property crime rates fell by 52 percent—yet in that same time frame, the incarceration rate grew by 220 percent.¹² Currently, there are 2.2 million Americans behind bars and more than 70 million people living in the country with a criminal record.¹³

Viewed through an economic lens, maintenance of the criminal justice system costs too much money, particularly when there are more affordable alternatives. In 2012, real expenditures on the criminal justice system totaled over \$274 billion, which is a 74 percent increase relative to spending in 1993.¹⁴ And in 2013, 11 states spent more on corrections than on higher education.¹⁵ Not only is the cost of maintaining current incarceration rates high, but the economic disadvantages placed on individuals who have served their debt to society impose significant strains on families and communities as well.

Policing tactics and policies associated with stop and frisk, the “Broken Windows” theory,¹⁶ and the War on Drugs contribute to over-policing and high incarceration rates. Data further reveal that these policies contribute to people of color being disproportionately patrolled, arrested and incarcerated at a higher rate than their white counterparts. Although Blacks and Hispanics represent approximately 30 percent of the population, they comprise over 50 percent of the incarcerated population.¹⁷ As they move through the system, Blacks and Hispanics face further discrimination in regard to ineffective defense counsel, unfair prosecutorial plea bargains and sentencing processes. Consequently, they face multiple challenges and civil liberties limitations upon their release, such as voting rights and equal access to housing and employment opportunities. These disadvantages place strains on their ability to successfully reenter society and gain economic mobility.

It is equally important to note that beyond ethnicity lies the intersecting identity of gender (and class), which often is omitted from reform narratives. Women of color make up two-thirds of the female prison population. According to a 2014 Bureau of Justice Statistics report, the incarceration rate of African

12 The White House (2016, June). Federal Sentencing Reporter, Vol. 28 No. 5; (pp. 361-362).

13 FACT SHEET: White House Launches the Fair Chance Business Pledge. (2016, April 11). Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/04/11/fact-sheet-white-house-launches-fair-chance-business-pledge>.

14 The White House (2016, June). Federal Sentencing Reporter, Vol. 28 No. 5.

15 Mitchell, M., & Leachman, M. (2014). Changing Priorities: State Criminal Justice Reforms and Investments in Education (Rep.). Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

16 “Broken Windows” Theory influence on policing: Broken windows is based on the notion that signs of incivility, like broken windows, signify that nobody cares, which leads to greater fear of crime and a reduction of community efficacy, which in turn can lead to more serious crimes and greater signs of incivility, repeating the cycle into a potential spiral of decay. For police, the insight of broken windows is that they are called on to address minor quality-of-life offenses and incidents of social disorder to prevent more serious crime, and that they must take specific steps to increase the capacity of communities to exert informal social control. Source: Sousa, W.H. & Kelling, G.L. (2006). Of “broken windows,” criminology, and criminal justice. In D. Weisburd & A. A. Braga (Eds.), *Police Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives* (pp.77-97). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/January_2009/nugget.htm.

17 Executive Office of the President of the United States (2016, April). Economic Perspectives on Incarceration and the Criminal Justice System. Retrieved from: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/documents/CEA%2BCriminal%2BJustice%2BReport.pdf>.



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American women was more than double the incarceration rate of white women.¹⁸ As previously stated, once prisoners have paid their debt to society, they face mountainous repercussions when reentering society. For women of color the oppression doubles, since they carry intersecting marginalized identities.

Federal and state legislators have been moving in the right direction to exonerate faulty policies within the criminal justice system, but it is only a starting point. True reform cannot be accomplished without bringing awareness to racial and gender disparities. We offer reform suggestions that benefit all Americans and are specifically inclusive of the needs of women of color and the communities they represent.

GOAL:

Preventative measures that assist in the comprehensive overhaul of the criminal justice system.

Recommendations

The issues affecting the US criminal justice system are structural and systemic. A non-partisan Criminal Justice Commission is proposed to study and present recommendations for major reform to the criminal justice system. The commission would be similar to the one proposed by Senator Jim Webb (D-VA).¹⁹ It would review the costs of the justice system and ways to reduce costs, crime prevention measures, hiring and retaining a diverse criminal justice workforce, reducing the size of correctional institutions, reducing racial and gender disparities in the criminal justice system, providing quality legal services and identifying technology and research that could improve the system. The Commission would be charged with looking at long- and short-term reform measures. The areas where review and action are most needed include (1) policy review and resources, (2) human resources, (3) technology and equipment and (4) coordination.

Policy Review & Resources

- Require police departments to review and implement relevant provisions within the 21st Century Policing Report²⁰
- Work toward rebuilding black and brown communities through effective reentry programs and job training
- Creation of laws and policies with proportionality in mind
- Provide national incentives to encourage hiring that reflects demographics in the communities being served
- Elimination of the three-strike rule to address mass incarceration rate
- Provide additional resources to support expanded provision of mental health services for communities and those who are incarcerated

¹⁸ Carson, E.A. (2015). Prisoners in 2014. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

¹⁹ Senator Webb first introduced the National Criminal Justice Commission Act in 2009. The measure established a bipartisan commission to review a number of issues and received the support of the National Sheriffs' Association, the ACLU, the Fraternal Order of the Police and the NAACP.

²⁰ President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing. (2015). Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing. Washington, DC, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.



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- Review policing needs of college and university campuses in large population centers, located near critical national assets and national borders
- Ban the box
- Continue to identify nonviolent criminals for potential release
- Refund the COPS program
- Create a national public defender service
- Congressional review and repeal of laws that contribute to over-criminalization
- Provide alternatives to incarceration and support drug courts
- Reform arrest, sentencing and detention policies that result in the inequitable treatment of youth from underserved, multicultural communities
- Tie receipt of certain federal funds to achievement of these goals, as well as community coordination and engagement, including any effort to access equipment no longer available because of the 1033 program

Human Resources

- Promote hiring that reflects the demographics in communities being served
- Provide college student loan relief and other incentives and assistance to police officers
- Provide resources for correctional facility officers to receive professional development/training

Technology & Equipment

- Demilitarize the police force
- Encourage state legislators to create policy regulations on purchases made by police departments to further extend federal revisions of the 1033 program
- Provide federal resources to support expanded use of body cameras
- Have technology experts train officers on effective use of body cameras; require national use of body cameras
- Provide federal resources for cohesive technology systems that track community policing, arrests, casualties, etc.

Coordination

- Require all states to become active participants in the police data initiative and include information on police shootings



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DEVELOPING DIVERSE GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE WORLD-CLASS LEADERS AND WORKERS

Having a globally competitive workforce representative of the US population is required to truly make America great. Inclusive federal policies that ensure the constructive engagement of all Americans in public and private hiring, retention, promotion, leadership and contracting strategies is not only desirable; it is necessary. Given the demographic shifts, globalization of our economy, and shrinking of our space with instant connectivity, it is increasingly imperative that we all embrace diversity in all its human dimensions.

We already know that diversity is good for business. In a recent study from McKinsey & Company, of the more than 336 corporations surveyed, those that had more gender-diverse leadership were found to be 15 percent more likely to perform financially above the median in their industry, and corporations that had more ethnically diverse leadership were 35 percent more likely to perform financially above the median in their industry.²¹ Also, a report from the Credit Suisse Research Institute reveals that shareholders receive greater returns from companies that have a larger number of women in leadership positions.²²

Given that worldwide, eight out of ten women are women of color and in the US, they soon will represent a collective majority, it is important for the federal government to encourage companies, states and municipalities to engage and leverage participation of this talent pool, and those from other communities, as globally relevant contributors to America's ultimate success.

Recommendations

- *Winners' Circle Conversation.* Work with CELIE (the Civic Engagement and Leadership Institute for Everyone) to convene a conversation with selected leaders in the public and private sectors regarding the relevance of diversity and inclusion in seizing US and global workforce opportunities. Representatives from private sector companies that have adopted best practices, representatives from federal agencies with missions associated with data science, cybersecurity, intelligence, health and STEM should be invited along with relevant members of Congress. The invitation-only convening will inform and outline relevant next steps regarding how best to align federal policy and programs with market demands and needs.
- *Executive Order.* Issue a presidential executive order continuing support for diversity and inclusion policies and programs across the federal agency enterprises.²³
- *Workforce.* Increase funding for those programs and partnerships across the federal agencies and Congress that increase and improve the competencies of the US workforce and the participation of persons from historically underserved communities.

21 Hunt, V., Layton, D., Prince, S. (2015, January) Why Diversity Matters, McKinsey and Company. Retrieved <http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/why-diversity-matters>

22 Dawson, J., Kersley, R., Natella, S. (2016, September). The CS Gender 3000: The Reward for Change, Credit Suisse Institute. Their data show that just 3.9 percent of CEOs are female in the CSG 3000 (encompasses 27,000 senior managers at over 3,000 companies worldwide), a figure that barely moved from two years ago. Analysis and projection of their data indicate that at the current rate of progress, gender parity will be reached in 2070! This is not and should not be an acceptable statistic.

23 President Barack Obama, Executive Order 13583—Establishing a Coordinated Government-Wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce.



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- *Supplier Diversity*. Establish directives that support policy and programs that increase the participation of businesses owned by women and persons of color in contracts and related opportunities at all of the federal agencies (including the US Department of Veterans Affairs, prison industries, and disaster relief and emergency management – sectors sometimes overlooked as sources of opportunities).
- Incorporate the findings of the report, “Raising the Floor: Sharing What Works in Workplace Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.”²⁴

ECONOMIC SECURITY

The improvement of working conditions, receipt of a living wage, access to important benefits such as health insurance and paid leave, access to quality and affordable child care and affordable home and business loans are critical to economic security and opportunity for women of color in the US.²⁵ The recommendations in this section would help to (1) remove barriers and/or (2) create opportunities for women of color workers and business owners.

In the US, women make up nearly half of the workforce, and their earnings are essential to the economic security of their families and communities. In heterosexual marriages, 38 percent of women currently are the breadwinners compared to only 18 percent in 1987²⁶; including single mothers, 40 percent of all households with children under the age of 18 include mothers who are either the sole or primary source of income for the family.²⁷ The facts are clear²⁸:

- When more women work, economies grow. An increase in female labor force participation—or a reduction in the gap between women’s and men’s labor force participation—results in faster economic growth;
- Evidence from a range of countries shows that increasing the share of household income controlled by women, either through their own earnings or cash transfers, changes spending in ways that benefit children; and
- Increasing women and girls’ education contributes to higher economic growth. See more detailed recommendations in the education section of this brief.

Yet, women of color face significant barriers to economic security and opportunity. Gender wage equality is not the reality of the vast majority of the women in the US. Women who work full time year-round still earn

24 Smith, M., Weidman Powers, L. (2016, November). Raising the Floor: Sharing What Works in Workforce Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Retrieved at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2016/11/28/raising-floor-sharing-what-works-workplace-diversity-equity-and-inclusion>.

25 Of the 42.3 million women of color age 18 and older in the United States, 41.5 percent (17,537,563) live in the South, 23.2 percent in the Pacific West, 16.3 percent in the Northeast, 9.8 percent in East North Central, 6.4 percent in the Mountain West, and 2.9 percent in West North Central – Retrieved from <http://www.iwpr.org/initiatives/the-status-of-women-and-girls/publications>.

26 Chalabi, M. (2015, February 05). How Many Women Earn More Than Their Husbands? Retrieved December 08, 2016, from <http://fivethirtyeight.com/datalab/how-many-women-earn-more-than-their-husbands/>.

27 Wang, W., Parker, K., & Taylor, P. (2013). Breadwinner Moms (Rep.). Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.

28 UN Women, See more at <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures>.



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only 80 cents on the dollar compared with men, and the gender wage gap has remained stagnant for almost a decade.²⁹ This disparity is compounded for women of color by the intersectionality of a number of factors, including ethnicity, gender, systemic cycles of family poverty and limited educational opportunities.

Unemployment rates for women of color remain disproportionately high, and access to capital for small businesses is limited.³⁰ Women of color are overrepresented in minimum wage jobs, underrepresented in management positions, and too often lack access to critical supports like health insurance, quality and affordable childcare, and paid leave. Women of color bear the responsibility for caregiving at high rates, but only 47 percent of Black women, 45 percent of Asian American and Pacific Island (AAPI) women and 36 percent of Hispanic women report having access to some form of paid leave—including either formal policies or informal arrangements.³¹ Women continue to face discrimination in the workplace, including sexual harassment, pregnancy discrimination and sex stereotyping, thus creating obstacles to opportunity and advancement.

The good news: Women of color make up 35 percent of the female workforce in America and have made important strides in attaining economic security and professional success. In recent years, between 1997 and 2013, the number of women-owned businesses increased by 59 percent; Black women-owned businesses, by 258 percent; Hispanic women-owned businesses, by 180 percent; Asian American women-owned businesses, by 156 percent; and American Indian/Alaska Native women-owned businesses, by 108 percent.³²

Recommendations

Through tax reform, public-private partnerships, direct funding, legal reform and other approaches, there are real opportunities to address the needs and provide expanded engagement of women of color in the US economy by removing barriers to success and creating opportunity.

Removing Barriers

- Employee Child Care and Caregiving
 - ◆ Provide stipends to family members for childcare, so that parents can be reliable employees
 - ◆ Provide tax incentives for employees and those enrolled in job training programs to provide on-site childcare
 - ◆ Provide incentives to train retirees to provide childcare and mentorship for youth

²⁹ The glass ceiling persists, and occupational segregation—the concentration of women in some jobs and men in others—remains a stubborn feature of the US labor market. These national trends show up in states across the nation. Retrieved at <http://www.iwpr.org/initiatives/the-status-of-women-and-girls/#publications>.

³⁰ While over the past three years, 12-month average unemployment rates have fallen by 3.2 percentage points for Black women, 3.6 percentage points for Hispanic women, and 2.8 percentage points for Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) women, unemployment rates for women of color are still generally higher than for White women.

³¹ Jarrett and Tchen.

³² Ahmad, F. (2016, June 10). How Women of Color are Driving Entrepreneurship, Center for American Progress. Retrieved at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/reports/2014/06/10/91241/how-women-of-color-are-driving-entrepreneurship/>



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- ◆ Provide microfinancing for childcare cooperatives and afterschool care business ventures
- Equal Pay
 - ◆ Raise the federal minimum wage and eliminate the tipped minimum wage
 - ◆ Promote pay equity by strengthening the Equal Pay Act
- Paid Leave
 - ◆ Ensure all workers have access to paid family leave and earned sick leave
- Prevent discrimination and promote equal treatment
 - ◆ Enforce and adopt policies and laws that discourage and prevent discrimination and unequal treatment in the workplace

Creating Opportunities

- Adopt policies and laws that discourage and prevent discrimination and unequal treatment in the workplace, including pregnancy discrimination and access to accommodations, and sexual harassment, and ensure EEOC and the Department of Labor have the resources necessary to vigorously enforce such laws.
 - ◆ Establish corporate partnerships to promote career training with inner-city high schools and middle schools
 - ◆ Work with the Federal Communications Commission to establish telecommunications career programs for high school and middle school
 - ◆ Model career development and economic development programs that have proven successful
 - ◆ Create pathways from poverty to prosperity by establishing training programs in nontraditional occupations (such as welding) and emerging technologies, such as robotics, cybersecurity, data science and commercial space transportation, that promote inclusion and increase the participation of women of color
- Promote and support training and community-friendly public-private partnerships for women-of-color-owned businesses
 - ◆ Provide additional resources to the Minority Business Development Administration, Department of Commerce, to expand outreach, targeting and development opportunities for women of color
 - ◆ Provide additional resources to the Small Business Administration to expand outreach to and engagement of women-of-color-owned businesses
 - ◆ Incentivize federal purchasing of goods and services from small, women-of-color-owned businesses through set-aside programs
 - ◆ Relax federal policies that disproportionately limit access to capital and home mortgages
- Explore in collaboration with the FCC how telecommunications companies can be encouraged to support partnerships with Title I schools and the students who attend them



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EDUCATION

In 2010, the US spent 39 percent more per full-time student in K-12 schools than the average amount spent by the other 34 countries that belong to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).³³ Even so, educational attainment in the US is woefully low when compared to other industrialized countries, particularly in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). These issues are compounded by complexity when addressing the challenges associated with closing the educational achievement gaps for women and persons of color.

US Education Reform and National Security

The quality of education that Americans receive is a national security issue. There is still a need to address the findings articulated in a report on US Education Reform and National Security, published by the Council on Foreign Relations a few years ago. Written by an independent Task Force chaired by Joel Klein, former head of New York City Public Schools and Condoleezza Rice, former US secretary of state, the report notes, “educational failure puts the United States’ future economic prosperity, global position, and physical safety at risk.” The Task Force also warns that the US “will not be able to keep pace—much less lead—globally unless it moves to fix the problems it has allowed to fester for too long.” The report outlines four reasons why education is a national security issue:

- It is critical that children in the United States be prepared for futures in a globalized world. They must master essential reading, writing, math, and science skills, acquire foreign languages, learn about the world and—importantly—understand America’s core institutions and values in order to be engaged in the community and in the international system.
- The US must produce enough citizens with critical skills to fill the ranks of the Foreign Service, the intelligence community, and the armed forces.
- Military might alone is not enough. Failure to produce globally competitive human capital will undermine American security.
- A continued divide between the uneducated and educated undermines national cohesion and America’s ability to lead.

The call for American talent that possesses globally competitive critical skills extends its reach into economically disadvantaged, historically underserved, multicultural communities. These communities often face complex challenges that undermine educational achievement and economic prosperity.

The Civil Right Data Collection reports compiled by the US Department of Education Office of Civil

33 Cook, L. (2015, January 28). US Education: Still Separate and Unequal, US News. Retrieved at <http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/data-mine/2015/01/28/us-education-still-separate-and-unequal>.



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Rights shed light on some of the areas of educational inequality that disproportionately burden efforts to educate women and students of color.³⁴

Also consider the findings of the Southern Education Foundation, which reports that most US public school students live in or near poverty. In 21 states and the District of Columbia, more than half of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.

In the area of higher education, students of color and women have made significant strides in narrowing the college admissions and achievement gaps. Nonetheless, many challenges remain related to college affordability, student debt, admissions, persistence, completion, participation in the STEM fields of study, and other areas. Addressing educational inequities is a critical step toward harvesting the talent within these communities.

Recommendations

We must provide educational opportunities and resources that allow all Americans to earn a good living and develop their talents and potential in ways that are personally satisfying and advance US national security interests and economic well-being. The more robust engagement of the talent assets representative of the nation's gender, class, and ethnic compositions is required to solidify the position of US educational institutions, businesses and workers as globally competitive and world-class leaders, makers and producers. More aligned, focused attention and assistance from leaders at the state, local and national levels is needed to support broader engagement of under-served communities to meet the timelines and demands of a globally based knowledge economy.

Furthermore, our colleges and universities must be safe places to learn, where all students have an equal opportunity to thrive and participate in ways that inform and promote innovation and excellence. Finally, the realization of desired outcomes and metrics requires the adoption of more robust approaches across the educational continuum of activities.

³⁴ The Department of Education's civil rights survey examined all 97,000 public schools in the US, representing 49 million students. See also, Steve Hsieh, 14 Disturbing Stats About Racial Inequality in American Public Schools, The Nation, March 21, 2014 Key findings include:

- (1) Black students accounted for 18 percent of the country's pre-K enrollment, but made up 48 percent of preschoolers with multiple out-of-school suspensions;
- (2) Black students were expelled at three times the rate of white students.
- (3) American Indian and Native-Alaskan students represented less than 1 percent of students, but 3 percent of expulsions.
- (4) Black girls were suspended at higher rates than all other girls and most boys.
- (5) American Indian and Native-Alaskan girls were suspended at higher rates than white boys or girls.
- (6) Nearly one in four boys of color, excepting Latino and Asian American students, with disabilities received an out-of-school suspension.
- (7) One in five girls of color with disabilities received an out-of-school suspension.
- (8) A quarter of the schools with the highest percentage of black and Latino students did not offer Algebra II.
- (9) A third of these schools did not offer chemistry.
- (10) Less than half of American Indian and Native-Alaskan high school students had access to the full range of math and science courses, which consists of Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, calculus, biology, chemistry and physics.
- (11) Black and Latino students accounted for 40 percent of enrollment at schools with gifted programs, but only represented 26 percent of students in such programs.
- (12) Black, Latino and Native American students attended schools with higher concentrations of first-year teachers (3 to 4 percent) than white students (1 percent).
- (13) Black students were more than three times as likely to attend schools where fewer than 60 percent of teachers meet all state certification and licensure requirements.
- (14) Latino students were twice as likely to attend such schools.



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Early Childhood

The human brain develops most of its neurons and is most receptive to learning between birth and three years of age.³⁵ Exposing young children to information and other positive stimuli is a vital element for healthy development.³⁶ Several federal programs are important to providing children with the early childhood education opportunities that are important to overall development and future productivity. These programs are particularly relevant to women of color and their children. The National Head Start Association notes:

Children that [sic] participate in Head Start programs receive innumerable benefits. These advantages appear immediately, last a lifetime, and even have an effect on other generations. The effects are particularly strong amongst certain subgroups of children, particularly Hispanic and African-American children, dual language learners, children who are homeless or in foster care, those who qualify for free lunch, and those whose mothers didn't graduate high school.³⁷

Access to high-quality early childcare + education

- a. Childcare funding
- b. Protect + support full funding for Head Start and other Pre-K Programs

K-12

Global competitiveness requires that all US schools (traditional public/public charter) subscribe to world-class standards of excellence. This requires the Administration and Congress to oversee and ensure the robust implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) by providing the fully authorized levels of funding for students covered under Title I and English Language Learners; wrap-around supports for rural, suburban, tribal and urban schools; parent and family engagement programs; and digital access and acuity initiatives. Additionally, we ask that the administration and Congress address the following:

- *Readiness*. Provide resources, guidance and assistance to ensure that students are college and career ready.
- *Career and Technical Education (CTE)*. Strengthen CTE programs by aligning policy and funding and providing programmatic supports that promote seamless movement between secondary, postsecondary and workforce systems. This may require defining what it means to be career ready in policy and enlisting metrics to measure outcomes that strategically align funding and programs.

³⁵ Retrieved from http://web.jhu.edu/CSOS/early_learning/.

³⁶ Research shows that children enrolled in Head Start programs benefit by receiving formal education before kindergarten. According to some studies, children enrolled in these programs are more behaved and have higher IQ scores upon enrolling kindergarten than their peers without formal education. Likewise, it was shown that children enrolled in Head Start programs learned quicker than children not enrolled in these programs. Retrieved at <http://www.educationcorner.com/importance-of-early-childhood-education.html>.

³⁷ Retrieved at <https://www.nhsa.org/facts-and-impacts>.



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- *Safety & Inclusion.* Ensure safe/inclusive learning environments, including those free of sexual violence.
 - ◆ Provide sufficient resources for the US Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights (OCR) to support and address matters falling under its jurisdiction; and
 - ◆ Provide resources in support of high-quality teacher prep programs and efforts
 - ◆ Ensure girls of color are not disproportionately disciplined and pushed out of school

Post-Secondary

Federal policy and resources are vital to ensuring that students in the US, and those from abroad who wish to attend US institutions of higher education, have access to world-class advanced learning and can make a good living after they complete their studies. Our nation has many of the best and most esteemed colleges and universities in the world. It is a system we can take pride in, but it is not without its challenges. According to the US Department of Education, nearly half of today’s students who begin college do not graduate within six years. Acquiring debt but never obtaining a degree or receiving a degree without work-ready competencies can be devastating. For example, students who borrow for college but never graduate are three times more likely to default on their student loans.³⁸

We support efforts that expand higher education opportunities and nurture persistence, timely completion and gainful employment for all Americans, particularly those from underserved communities. Our policy recommendations and priorities address the following:

- *Return on Investment.* Those receiving a post-secondary certificate or degree in the US should be able to make a family-sustaining wage or salary and have the professional and skills competencies that support economic mobility.
- *Learning Environment.* Institutions of higher education should provide academically rigorous, healthy and safe environments where students can create and thrive. Policymakers should take proactive steps to deter hate crimes and sexual assaults on campus, using various strategies related to prevention and prosecution. This includes providing OCR with the resources needed to manage the programs falling under its jurisdiction.
- *Supportive Services.* The maintenance and provision of supportive services for low-income, first-generation, underserved populations and other groups should be strengthened and maintained. Increased funding is requested for TRIO, GEAR UP, higher education programs in general and the College Assistance Migrant Program.

³⁸ Fact Sheet: Focusing Higher Education on Student Success. (2015, July 27). Retrieved from <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/fact-sheet-focusing-higher-education-student-success>.



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- *Post-graduate Opportunities.* Global market demands require the engagement of Americans from every community, particularly those who have been underrepresented and underserved historically and traditionally. We support continuation and full funding for STEM programs, CTE apprenticeships, Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMPS), McNair Scholars, GAA Fellowships and other programs at the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Labor, National Aeronautics Space Administration, the National Science Foundation and other agencies.
- *HBCUS and MSIs.* Issue individual Executive Orders in support of historically black, predominantly black, Hispanic, Tribal and Asian-Pacific Islander colleges and universities. Increase funding and support of these institutions via programs authorized in the Higher Education Act, and which are in place at the various federal agencies.
- *Affordability.* Every step should be taken to make college more affordable. The relevance of obtaining a college degree or other postsecondary credential or certificate is critical to individual advancement and US prosperity. According to information shared by the US Department of Education, over the past 30 years, tuition at public four-year colleges has more than doubled, even after adjusting for inflation. Between 1992 and 2012, the average amount owed by a typical student loan borrower who graduated with a bachelor's degree more than doubled to a total of nearly \$27,000.³⁹ And, the maximum Pell Grant covers only about 30 percent of the cost of a four-year public college education—the lowest proportion in history and less than half of what it covered in 1980.⁴⁰ We ask that maximum funding and resources be provided for the following:
 - ◆ Support grants, loans and scholarships, including those that assist underserved, needy and undocumented students
 - ◆ Double Pell and make it available for year-round study
 - ◆ Make the American Opportunity Tax Credit fully refundable for students and families with no tax liabilities
 - ◆ Allow loan forgiveness in bankruptcy for individuals in poverty
 - ◆ Maintain and allow loan forgiveness for certain education, health and civil service professionals and social workers

³⁹ Retrieved at <http://www.ed.gov/college>, "College Affordability and Completion: Ensuring a Pathway to Opportunity."

⁴⁰ Ibid.



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HEALTH POLICY PRIORITIES

In 2013, the US spent 17.1 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on health care.⁴¹ This exceeded expenditures by the next-highest spender (France, 11.6 percent of GDP) by almost 50 percent. In real dollars, US health care expenditures total \$3.2 trillion, or \$9,990 per person.⁴²

US technological advancements, biomedical research, and training of health and medical workers allow us to continue to provide global leadership in this area. Unfortunately, our achievements do not parallel the improvement in health outcomes for many in the US, particularly those communities facing disproportionate health disparities.

Before the Affordable Care Act (ACA), many persons of color were uninsured and could not afford to go to a doctor for a diagnosis, or they could not afford the needed medications because of a lack of insurance. Now, with the passage of the ACA, insurance is available to almost everyone, and 12.7 million new consumers have obtained health insurance.

Specifically, the ACA has benefitted people of color the most. For instance, the uninsurance rate among Latinos fell from 26 to 17 percent.⁴³ Further, the law has made significant advancements for women of color's access to health coverage and the quality of coverage available. The ACA requires health plans to cover preventive services, such as birth control, breast and cervical cancer screenings, annual well-woman exams, and maternity coverage, without out of pocket cost-sharing.⁴⁴ Further, the ACA expanded access to the Medicaid program. For women, this means access to critical primary and preventive women's health services such as family planning services and pregnancy-related care, including pre-and post-natal care.

Despite these improvements, challenges persist. Currently, communities of color comprise 37 percent of the population and are growing.⁴⁵ Within this group, Latinos, African Americans and Native Americans suffer from health disparity issues such as higher rates of diabetes, hypertension, HIV/AIDS, and other conditions.

Additional investment of resources in social services, clinical trials, education, research, training and outreach programs is necessary to close the health disparity gaps in the US.

41 Retrieved from <http://www.hhs.gov/healthcare/facts-and-features/state-by-state/>.

42 National Health Expenditure 2015 Highlights – Centers of Medicare and Medicaid. Retrieved from <http://www.cms.gov/Research...Data.../NationalHealthExpendData/.../highlights.pdf>.

43 S. Artiga, P. et. al., Health Coverage by Space and Ethnicity: Examining Changes Under the ACA and the Remaining Uninsured, Kaiser Family Foundation, <http://kff.org/report-section/health-coverage-by-race-and-ethnicity-examining-changes-under-the-aca-and-the-remaining-uninsured-issue-brief/>.

44 Retrieved at <http://kff.org/health-reform/fact-sheet/preventive-services-covered-by-private-health-plans/>.

45 Non-Hispanic whites make up 63 percent of the U.S.; Hispanics, 17 percent; African Americans, 12.3 percent; Asians, 5 percent; and multiracial Americans, 2.4 percent. About 353 of the nation's 3,143 counties, or 11 percent, are now "majority-minority."



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Recommendations

- Retain ACA in complete form, including Medicaid expansion and enforcement of all provisions
 - ◆ Expand subsidies
 - ◆ Protect coverage of 26-year-olds
- Maintain health safety net programs including
 - ◆ Title X funding⁴⁶
 - ◆ Medicaid as one entitlement program
 - ◆ Do not exclude providers or health center(s) from those programs for any reasons other than the ability to provide care
- Retain or increase current funding level for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), increasing outreach, and inclusion of persons of color, rural, and other marginalized communities in clinical trials and health research
- Do not add restrictions on abortion or other reproductive health services
- Provide maximum support and resources to ensure we have the diverse workforce to address US health care needs, including funding for health and medical professions training, centers of excellence, cultural competency initiatives, graduate education and other programs
- Protect ban on denial of coverage for pre-existing conditions

⁴⁶ The Title X Family Planning Program, officially known as Public Law 91-572 or "Population Research and Voluntary Family Planning Programs", was enacted under President Richard Nixon in 1970 as part of the Public Health Services Act. It is the only federal grant program solely dedicated to providing comprehensive family planning assistance and related services to low-income women.



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TELECOMMUNICATIONS

High-speed Internet has become an essential element of American life. Many basic services related to educational and job opportunities, health care and even completion of homework require connectivity to the Internet. Yet, one-third of American adults have no access to broadband at home, and more Americans were without broadband at home in 2015 than in 2013.⁴⁷

Recommendations

- Support the Lifeline Program
- Promote competition in ways that provide greater public access, lower prices and drive innovation
- Build high-speed Internet and connect underserved rural and underserved communities, schools, libraries and community centers
- Support and continue the E-Rate program, which helps to provide broadband access to schools and libraries
- Put in place incentives and capital access opportunities that promote diversity in ownership of technology, broadcast and telecommunications properties.

47 Anderson, M., Horrigan J. (2016, October 3). Smartphones Help Those without Broadband get Online, but Don't Necessarily Bridge the Digital Divide. Pew Research Center. Horrigan, J., Duggan, M. (2015, December 21). Home Broadband 2015. Pew Research Center.