



NAACP LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR THE 116TH CONGRESS (2019 – 2020)

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

ISSUE	House Bill	Senate Bill	NAACP
Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity	Bass, Karen H.R. 7120	Cardin S. 3063	Issue Alert available
End Racial and Religious Profiling	Bass, Karen H.R. 7120	Cardin S. 2355	Action Alert available
Eliminate racially disparate prosecution			Issue Alert available
Require video surveillance of all law enforcement activities while maintaining civil rights	Bass, Karen H.R. 7120		Issue Alert available
Establish effective and independent civilian review boards to examine police activity	Bass, Karen H.R. 7120		Issue Brief available
Comprehensive Sentencing Reform	Scott H.R. 1097	Paul S. 399	
De-criminalize small amounts of recreational use marijuana	Lee / Nadler HR1456 / HR3884	Booker / Harris S 597 / S 2227	
Enactment of Safe, Sane & Sensible Laws to Curb Gun Violence	Thompson (CA) H.R. 8	Murphy S. 42	Issue Brief Available
Death Penalty Abolition	Espallat / Pressley HR 4022 / HR 4052	Durbin S.2390	Action Alert available
Require sensitivity training of law enforcement & independent investigations of deadly force	Cohen HR 125	Duckworth S. 1938	Action Alert available
Reform monetary bail requirements	Lieu H.R. 4474		Issue Alert available
Incentivize states and jurisdiction to credibly report hate crimes	Beyer H.R. 3545	Blumenthal S. 2043	Action Alert available
Reauthorize and update the Violence Against Women Act	Bass H.R. 1585	Feinstein S. 2843	Action Alert Available
Justice for victims of lynching	Rush / Bass H.R. 35 / H.R. 7120	Harris S. 488	Action Alert available
Reverse Mass Incarceration	Cardenas HR 2865	Booker S 1557	Action Alert available

ECONOMIC JUSTICE / LABOR

ISSUE	House Bill	Senate Bill	NAACP
Support, preserve, and Protect Equal Opportunity Programs including “Affirmative Action”			Issue Brief available
Eliminate potential discrimination in “Faith Based” initiatives			Issue Brief available
Study Proposals for Reparations for African Americans	Jackson Lee / Lee (CA) HR 40 / H.Con.Res. 100	Booker S. 1083	Action Alert available
Increase the federal Minimum Wage	Scott, R. (VA) H.R. 582	Sanders S.150	Action Alert Available
Job Creation			
Protect union / collective bargaining rights of public employees	Cartwright HR 3463	Hirono S. 1970	
Federal budget that invests in people, civil rights			
Protect and Expand Social Security	Larson (CT) H.R. 860/HR 2210	Blumenthal S. 269	Action Alert available
Establish a national cap on interest rates and fees at 36% to eliminate high-cost loans		Durbin S. 1230	Action Alert available
Establish paid sick and maternity leave	DeLauro H.R. 1185	Gillibrand S. 463	Action Alert available
Equal pay for equal work	DeLauro H.R. 7	Murray S. 270	Action Alert available
Expand civil rights protections to include the LGBT community	Cicilline H.R. 5	Merkley S. 788	Action Alert Available
Restore the Power and Mission of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau	Waters H.R. 1500		Action Alert Available
Prohibit the use of credit checks by potential employers	Cohen HR 3862		
Ban questions about criminal records on most employment questionnaires (“ban the box”)	Cummings H.R. 1076	Booker S 387	
Update the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to ensure against discrimination	Kennedy H.R. 1450	Harris S. 593	Action Alert available
Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit	Kildee H.R. 3157	Brown S. 1138	

EDUCATION

ISSUE	House Bill	Senate Bill	NAACP
Public School Construction, Repair and Renovation	Scott, R. (VA) H.R. 865	Reed S. 266	Action Alert Available
Ensure consistent, reliable and affordable internet service is available for all students	Veasy H. R. 6881	Wyden S. 4095	
Oppose publically funded private school vouchers			
Maintain the federal role in ensuring a decent public education / civil rights protections			
Allow students convicted of minor drug offenses to receive federal financial aid	Pocan H.R. 1571	Schatz S. 672	
Increase support for Historically Black Colleges and Universities			
Expanding Pell grant availability and funding	Davis, Danny HR 2168	Schatz S. 1074	Issue Brief Available
Making College Affordable / eliminate student loan debt	Pocan H.R. 1571	Schatz S. 672	Issue Brief Available

(Placement on list does not represent priority)

NAACP Legislative Priorities for the 116th Congress (2019 – 2020) (continued)

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

ISSUE	House Bill	Senate Bill	NAACP
Preserve clean air & clean water laws, rules & regulations			
Reduce climate change	Castor H.R.9		Action Alert Available
Invest in America's public drinking water and wastewater treatment plants	Lawrence H.R. 1417	Sanders S. 611	Action alert Available

HEALTH

ISSUE	House Bill	Senate Bill	NAACP
Preserve gains made in health care coverage under the Affordable Care Act ("Obama Care")			Issue Brief available
Full funding for AIDS Prevention, Treatment & Education			
End Childhood Obesity			
Protect Medicare and Medicaid benefits			
Restore Medicaid Eligibility to COFA recipients living in the USA			
Eliminate health care disparities / inequities among racial and ethnic minorities			
Health care for all Americans	Jayapal H.R.1384	Sanders S. 1129	

HOUSING

ISSUE	House Bill	Senate Bill	NAACP
Enact a comprehensive program to combat homelessness			
Increase resources to fight housing discrimination	Green, Al (TX) H.R. 149		
Increase availability of safe, decent, affordable low-income housing			

PANDEMIC RESPONSE

ISSUE	House Bill	Senate Bill	NAACP
Comprehensive response to the devastation caused by the Coronavirus pandemic	Lowey H.R. 6800		

VOTING RIGHTS

ISSUE	House Bill	Senate Bill	NAACP
Repair, restore, and strengthen the Voting Rights Act of 1965	Sarbanes / Sewell H.R. 1 / H.R. 4	Udall / Leahy S. 949 / S. 561	Action Alert available
Expand access to the polls for all eligible voters; make registering and voting easier	Lewis, John / Sarbanes HR 1275 / H.R. 1	Gillibrand / Udall S.549 / S. 949	Action Alert available
Automatic Voter Registration	Sarbanes / Cicilline HR 1 / HR 645	Udall S. 949	Action Alert available
Oppose Photo Identification requirements for voting			Issue Brief Available
Make mail-in voting more secure for those who want to use it			
Congressional Voting Rights / Statehood for the District of Columbia	Norton HR 51	Carper S 631	Action Alert available
Campaign Finance Reform	Sarbanes H.R. 1	Udall S. 949	Action Alert Available
Re-enfranchisement of Ex-Felony Offenders	Sarbanes / Nadler HR 1 / H.R. 196	Udall / Cardin S. 949 / S 1068	Action Alert Available
Ensure an accurate, fair, and credible 2020 census			
End prison-based gerrymandering	Clay / Sarbanes H.R. 794 / H.R. 1	Udall S. 949	

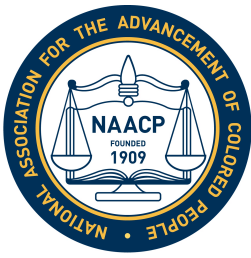
INTERNATIONAL

ISSUE	House Bill	Senate Bill	NAACP
Eliminate U.S. trade and travel embargos against Cuba	Rush H.R. 2404		Action Update available
Peace in Sudan			
Enhance aid, trade and development programs throughout Africa and the Caribbean			
Establish a Department of Peace	Lee, B. H.R. 1111		
Increase stability in and humanitarian assistance to Haiti			

IMMIGRATION

ISSUE	House Bill	Senate Bill	NAACP
Enact humanitarian, comprehensive immigration reform which retains entry into the US from all regions of the world			
Allow Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) status people to stay in the U.S.	Roybal Allard H.R. 6		Action Alert Available
Protect DREAMERS	Roybal Allard H.R. 6	Graham S 874	Action Alert Available

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NAACP LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR THE 116TH CONGRESS (2019 – 2020)

THE NAACP FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

In February, 2012, the NAACP Board of Directors adopted a strategic plan to map out the path of the organization for the 21st century. The plan is centered around 5 primary “Game Changers”—the core areas where we intend to have an impact in the years ahead. The Game Changers have been created under consultation with the National Board of Directors, unit leaders, and staff through a year-long collaborative process, and they address the major areas of inequality facing African Americans that are the focus of the NAACP’s work. The five “game changers” are:

- **Economic Sustainability:** *A chance to live the American Dream for all. Every person will have equal opportunity to achieve economic success, sustainability, and financial security.*
- **Education:** *A free, high-quality, public education for all. Every child will receive a free, high quality, equitably-funded, public pre-K and K-12 education followed by diverse opportunities for accessible, affordable vocational or university education.*
- **Health:** *Health equality for all Americans including a healthy life and high-quality health care. Everyone will have equal access to affordable, high-quality health care, and racially disparate health outcomes will end.*
- **Public Safety and Criminal Justice:** *Equitable dispensation of justice for all. Disproportionate incarceration, racially motivated policing strategies, and racially biased, discriminatory, and mandatory minimum sentencing will end. Incarceration will be greatly reduced and communities will be safer. The death penalty will be abolished at the state and federal level, as well as in the military.*
- **Voting Rights and Political Representation:** *Protect and enhance voting rights and fair representation. Every American will have free, open, equal, and protected access to the vote and fair representation at all levels of the political process. By protecting democracy, enhancing equity, and increasing democratic participation and civic engagement, African Americans will be proportionally elected to political office.*

In accordance with our mandate to promote these “game changers” the NAACP Washington Bureau has identified several legislative proposals that are important to our membership and that we will be pursuing vigorously over the next two years. These issues are outlined below. For further information on any or all of the issues listed below, please feel free to contact the Washington Bureau at (202) 463-2940, or look for our “Action Alerts” on the web at www.naacp.org.

*The Washington Bureau is committed to ensuring that our members are kept up to date on issues that are important to them. We will, therefore, be faxing out **Action Alerts** on matters that are expected to come before the House or the Senate in the near future, or on issues that may arise over the course of the Congress that would have an impact on the basic rights of American citizens. Action Alerts outline the problem, give a legislative update and inform our membership how they can contact their representatives.*

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE ISSUES

*** All across our nation, people are beginning to speak out about and respect the horrors and brutality of law enforcement misconduct and the fact that people of color, disproportionately African Americans, are treated more harshly by law enforcement officers - often fatally. People are looking to our local, state, and federal leaders for real change.*

While the NAACP supports many initiatives that independently address many of the problems, we also strongly support comprehensive legislation to address a number of very real problems and solutions. Included in any comprehensive law enforcement reform bill should be provisions which: hold all law enforcement officials accountable for their actions; ends "qualified immunity" for police officers; ends racial and religious profiling; empowers our communities; establishes uniform policies for the use of force; mandates data collection on police encounters; bans chokeholds and "no knock" warrants; limits the use of military equipment on American streets; requires body-worn cameras; and classifies lynching as a hate crime, therefore making it open to federal resources for investigations and prosecutions.

Listed below are a few of the more in-depth analysis of some of the smaller, individual elements of policing reform which is strongly supported by the NAACP.

Law enforcement trust and integrity:

Police misconduct, the lack of law enforcement accountability to the communities they serve, and the fact that there are no national, uniform, use-of-force standards for law enforcement officers or agencies, are problems that affect every sector of our country and imperils the continued security of our nation. The fact that actions which may not be accepted or practiced in one community are regularly used in another can lead to a mistrust of law enforcement by the people they are hired to protect and serve.

Furthermore, there is a strong perception among Americans of all races that people of color are treated much more aggressively and with much more force than their Caucasian counterparts by law enforcement agents at all levels. We are subject to stories of police misconduct on an almost daily basis: acts of blatant, unwarranted brutality, and the increase in national media attention which they are receiving, have lead to a mistrust by members of every community. Something must be done to raise the level of accountability, or the situation will only continue to deteriorate.

The *Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act* provides incentives for local police organizations to adopt performance-based standards to ensure that incidents of misconduct will be minimized through appropriate management, training and oversight protocols and that if such incidents do occur, that they will be properly investigated. By doing this, not only would we be building trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve, we would also be providing police officers with the tools necessary to work with their communities and to enhance their professional growth and education.

Eliminate racial and religious profiling:

The *End Racial and Religious Profiling Act* comprehensively addresses the insidious practice of biased treatment by law enforcement because of who you are, which God you believe in, or who you are perceived to be, by law enforcement. Specifically, the *End Racial and Religious Profiling Act* addresses bias policing on five levels: first, it clearly defines the discriminatory practice of profiling by law enforcement at all levels; second, it creates a federal prohibition against profiling; thirdly, it mandates data collection so we can fully assess the true extent of the problem; fourth, it provides funding for the retraining of law enforcement officials on how to discontinue and prevent the use of profiling; and fifth, it holds law enforcement agencies that continue to use profiling accountable.

Numerous studies over the past few years have provided us with evidence to support what we have known for decades: law enforcement agents at all levels have consistently used race, ethnicity, religion,

and national origin when choosing which individuals should be stopped and searched. At the most basic level, it is difficult for our faith in the American judicial system not to be challenged when we cannot even drive down an interstate without being stopped merely because of the color of our skin. We need this legislation to stop this insidious practice and to help begin to restore the confidence of communities of color throughout the United States in federal, state and local law enforcement.

Eliminate racially disparate prosecution:

While people may argue about the reasons behind it, few would disagree that extensive racial and ethnic disparities exist today in the American criminal justice system. These disparities are particularly true for African American men and boys, who are grossly overrepresented at every stage of the judicial process, from initial contacts with police to punishments. African Americans routinely receiving more jail time and harsher punishments; 42% of Americans currently on death row are African American. Nearly a million African Americans today are incarcerated in prisons and in jails, and unless there is a change, a black male born today has a one-in-three chance of going to prison in his lifetime. In fact, despite the fact that numerous studies show that African Americans and Caucasians use cocaine at roughly the same rate, statistics confirm that over 80% of those currently in prison for crack cocaine possession are African American.

To address these disparities, the bipartisan *Justice Integrity Act* aims to address the issue of unwarranted racial disparities in the American criminal justice system was introduced. This important legislation would establish 10 pilot programs to create local advisory groups charged with collecting and analyzing racial and ethnic data on charging, plea negotiations, sentencing recommendations and other factors involved in creating these disparities.

Require Video Surveillance of all law enforcement activities while maintaining civil rights protections:

The availability of video evidence of police interactions with civilians through body cameras, cameras mounted on dashboards of police vehicles, and cameras mounted to guns and tasers can lead to significant improvements in police accountability and trust among a community. Video cameras and the evidence they produce help law enforcement agencies and community groups alike gather and preserve the best possible evidence and serve as another layer of transparency.

To help ensure that police-operated cameras are used to enhance civil rights without infringing upon civil liberties, law makers and law enforcement agencies must:

- **Develop camera policies in public** with the input of civil rights advocates and the local community. Current policies must always be publicly available, and any policy changes must also be made in consultation with the community;
- **Commit to a set of narrow and well-defined purposes** for which cameras and their footage may be used. In particular, facial recognition and other biometric technologies must be carefully limited: if they are used together with body cameras, officers will have far greater visibility into heavily policed communities—where cameras will be abundant—than into other communities where cameras will be rare. Such technologies could amplify existing disparities in law enforcement across communities;
- **Specify clear operational policies for recording, retention, and access**, and enforce strict disciplinary protocols for policy violations. While some types of law enforcement interactions (*e.g.*, when attending to victims of domestic violence) may happen off-camera, the vast majority of interactions with the public—including all that involve the use of force—should be captured on video. Departments must also adopt systems to monitor and audit access to recorded footage, and secure footage against unauthorized access and tampering;
- **Make footage available to promote accountability** with appropriate privacy safeguards in place. At a minimum: (1) footage that captures police use of force should be made available to the public and press upon request, and (2) upon request, footage should be made available in a timely manner to any filmed subject seeking to file a complaint, to criminal defendants, and to the next-of-kin of anyone whose death is related to the events captured on video. Departments

must consider individual privacy concerns before making footage available to broad audiences; and

- **Preserve the independent evidentiary value of officer reports** by prohibiting officers from viewing footage before filing their reports. Footage of an event presents a partial—and sometimes misleading—perspective of how events unfolded. Pre-report viewing could cause an officer to conform the report to what the video appears to show, rather than what the officer actually saw.

Establish effective and independent civilian review boards to examine police activity:

We must restore and give power to local communities over the agencies which are meant to “protect and serve.” The NAACP therefore strongly supports the establishment of civilian accountability review boards for every local, state, and even federal law enforcement agency.

While the exact composition of these Boards should be determined by the needs and the make-up of the community being served, in order to be effective they must all have the following characteristics:

- The review board must be **independent** in that it will have the power to conduct hearings, subpoena witnesses and report findings and recommendations to the public and it shall be housed away from police headquarters to maintain credibility;
- It needs to be **relevant** in that it will have the power to independently investigate incidents and issue findings on complaints; it will be able to spot problem policies and provide a forum for developing reforms; an effective review board must have complete access to police witnesses and documents through legal mandate and subpoena power; the Board will publish, on a periodic basis, statistical reports which detail trends in allegations, to help identify officers or who of practices which are subjects of unusually numerous complaints; and Board findings will be considered in determining appropriate disciplinary action. The Civilian Board will also have the capacity to compel prosecutors offices to bring charges against police officers to a panel or Grand Jury to try the case;
- Finally, an effective Civilian Review Board will be **reflective** of the racial and ethnic make-up of the community in that the Board and staff will be broadly representative of the community it serves.

The Review Board must consistently be adequately funded to fulfill the obligations laid out above; it should not be a lower budget priority than police internal affairs systems.

Comprehensive sentencing reform:

While the enacted First Step Act was a good beginning, Congress must do much more fix our broken criminal justice system and reduce the number of people who are unnecessarily sent to prison. We must curtail over-criminalization by eliminating federal criminal penalties for simple drug possession in state jurisdictions; requiring public disclosure of regulatory criminal offenses; allowing victims of regulatory over-criminalization to contact the inspector general; restoring discretion to judges to determine to what extent manipulated conduct that results from fictitious law enforcement “stings” may be considered in court; protecting against wrongful convictions; and creating procedures to simplify charging and safely reduce pre-trial detention. Furthermore, we must eliminate mandatory minimum sentences and return sentencing discretion to judges. We need to increase the use of evidence-based sentencing alternatives by expanding eligibility for pre-judgment probation; promoting greater use of probation for lower-level offenders; and encouraging judicial districts to open drug, veteran, mental health and other problem solving courts. Finally, we should be taking affirmative steps to concentrate prison space on violent and career criminals; increases government transparency and accountability; reduces recidivism by using swift and certain responses so offenders know what will happen if they re-offend or act in a certain way, and by creating a system of rewards and incentives for good behavior; sentences strategically for drug offenders and focuses on high risk offenders; and acknowledges that age matters by implementing smart, targeted geriatric release programs which can ensure heinous offenders remain behind bars while cutting down on costs and maintaining public safety.

De-criminalize small amounts of personal use recreational marijuana:

The NAACP has policy calling for the decriminalization and regulation of medical- and adult-use marijuana. Accordingly, we support the Marijuana Justice Act, groundbreaking legislation that would end the federal marijuana prohibition AND provide restorative justice for the communities that have been impacted the most by mass criminalization and over-incarceration; the REFER (Restricting Excessive Federal Enforcement and Regulations of Cannabis) Act, legislation that would prevent federal agencies from using tax payer funds to interfere in state and local cannabis laws. It would also ban the use of federal funding by any agency to intrude in states and local municipalities that have updated their laws regarding cannabis use, possession, cultivation and distribution; and the REPSECT (Realizing Equitable & Sustainable Participation in Emerging Cannabis Trades) Resolution, which will help communities of color benefit from and expand their foothold in the cannabis industry. Due to decades of inequitable enforcement and discriminatory sentencing for cannabis offenses, communities of color are being locked out of the burgeoning cannabis industry.

Enactment of safe, sane and sensible laws to curb gun violence:

All-too easy access to guns and ammunition as well as the resulting gun violence are a major and deadly problem in the United States today. In 2014, every day, more than 92 Americans were killed by gun violence; more than 100,000 Americans were shot in that year alone; almost 34,000 died and more than 66,000 were injured. That same year, more than 21,000 Americans committed suicide using a firearm. From mass shootings to street shootings, gun homicides today are a common cause of death in the United States, killing about as many people as car crashes. “Survivors” of gun violence are often crippled, with many in constant pain; children are left as orphans; whole communities terrorized and scarred; and parents and families members are left broken and destroyed.

Gun violence disproportionately impacts communities of color in the United States. Gun violence is the number one killer of African Americans aged 15 to 34. Despite the fact that African Americans make up only 13% of the U.S. population, we represent nearly 50% of all gun homicide victims. Over 80 percent of gun deaths of African Americans are homicides.

Given the disproportionate damage gun violence is having on our communities, the NAACP has advocated for a number of sane, sensible laws which will help eliminate or at least decrease the damage and death caused by gun violence. We strongly support several sensible proposals which together will do a lot to help keep dangerous firearms off our streets and out of the hands of those who should not have access to them. These measures include:

- Requiring universal background checks on all gun sales and transfers;
- Ban military-style semi-automatic assault guns and military high capacity ammunition clips;
- Enact tough new criminal penalties for straw purchasers and gun traffickers;
- Ban suspects on the terror watch list from purchasing firearms;
- Allow the Center for Disease Control to research gun violence as a major public health issue;
- Maintain current law requiring background checks and permits for gun silencers;
- Allow states to maintain and enforce their own “concealed carry” laws;
- Require microstamping or ballistic fingerprinting of all new firearms and ammunition sold in the U.S.;
- Repeal all state “stand your ground” laws;
- Encourage local jurisdictions to utilize their “buyer power” to create incentives for firearm manufacturers to employ “countermarketing” strategies to ensure that their retailers are using all available procedures to prevent illegal firearms diversion.

Death penalty abolition:

From the days of slavery, through years of lynchings and Jim Crow laws, and even today capital punishment has always been deeply affected by race. Although African Americans make up only 13% of the overall population, 42% of the people currently on death row are black, and 35% of those who

have been executed in the United States are African American. A recent study by the Death Penalty Information Center, in fact, found that in Philadelphia the odds of receiving the death sentence are nearly four times higher if the defendant is African American. The NAACP supports an abolition of the death penalty.

Require cultural training of law enforcement and independent investigations of deadly force

The majority of law enforcement officers are hard working men and women, whose concern for the safety of those they are charged with protecting and serving is often paramount, even when their own safety is on the line. However, if and when even one of their colleagues engages in behavior that is seen as insensitive to the culture of a community, whether it be conscious or subconscious, the trust of the entire community can be, and will be, lost. The NAACP supports legislation making receipt of federal funds contingent upon enrollees at law enforcement academies receiving sensitivity training on ethnic and racial bias, cultural diversity, and police interaction with the disabled, mentally ill, and new immigrants will help build the trust that is necessary. This training is required in the “Police Training and Independent Review Act of 2017.” The legislation also mandates that states adopt independent investigations and prosecutions of law enforcement officers in cases where one or more of the alleged offenses involves an officer’s use of deadly force in the course of carrying out his or her official duties will help solidify that trust to ensure that concerns of the community are heard.

Bail Reform:

A fair, equal, and effective justice system means one that protects our public safety and ensures that all people – regardless of their income level or their race, ethnicity, or gender – are treated equally. State and local governments from across the country continue to impose money bail by requiring that individuals who have not yet been convicted remain in jail unless they can pay some amount of money; an amount that is often set arbitrarily without consideration for the person’s ability to pay or an analysis of the person’s actual risk to the public.

The injustice of money bail is compounded by the fact that a disproportionate amount of the harm impacts communities of color. Indeed, studies have shown that African American and Hispanic defendants are more likely to be detained pretrial than white defendants and less likely to be able to post money bail so they can be released. Moreover, race and money bail amounts are significantly correlated: Nationally, African American men pay 35% higher money bail amounts than white men, and Hispanic men pay 19% higher money bail amounts than white men. The effects of money bail systems can be crippling. Research shows that just three days in jail pretrial can cause people to lose employment, housing and destabilize families – all leading to increased likelihood of future criminality. This system is both ineffective and expensive. Taxpayers now spend approximately \$38 million per day to jail people who are awaiting trial. Annually, this adds up to \$14 billion.

The *Pretrial Integrity and Safety Act of 2017*, introduced in the US Senate, would: Authorize a \$10 million grant over a three-year period to incentivize and encourage states to end the practice of money bail; Sets forth principles to obtain grants, including: Replacing money bail systems with individualized, pretrial assessments with risk-based decision-making; providing for a presumption of release unless the judicial officer determines that such release would not result in the appearance of the person at trial or would endanger the safety of others in the community; if pretrial release requires imposing conditions, it should be based on the least restrictive, non-financial conditions that a judicial officer determines is necessary; supervision of bail conditions should be based on evidence-based practices; appointment of counsel at the earliest possible stage of pretrial detention; instituting a system of data collection and reporting to show effectiveness of system improvements.

Incentivize states and jurisdictions to provide annual credible hate crimes statistics:

One of our biggest current problems is the incomplete collection of accurate hate crimes data. The *Hate Crime Statistics Act*, as amended and made permanent in 1996 requires the Attorney General to collect

data on crimes committed because of the victim's race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. Data must drive policy. The first step in addressing hate violence in America is to know its nature and magnitude. Though clearly incomplete, the FBI's annual Hate Crime Statistics Act (HCSA) reports now provide the most comprehensive single national snapshot of bias-motivated criminal activity in the United States. The *National Opposition to Hate, Assault and Threats to Equality* (No Hate) Act incentivizes and encourages state and local law enforcement agencies to more comprehensively collect and report credible, reliable hate crimes data to the FBI. It also allows a judge, at his or her discretion, to sentence an individual convicted of perpetrating a hate crime to undergo a period of supervised release to include community service or education centered on the community targeted by the hate crime.

In 2015, the most current HCSA data available, almost 15,000 law enforcement agencies participated in the HCSA data collection effort – more than ever before. The FBI report documented that hate crimes against African Americans, LGBT community members, Native Americans, Jews, and Muslims all increased in 2015. Indeed, hate crimes against Muslim surged by 67% in 2015. However, the FBI also documented 87 cities over 100,000 in population that either affirmatively reported zero (0) hate crimes – or did not participate in the program at all.

Reauthorize and update the Violence Against Women Act

The NAACP-supported *Violence Against Women Act* of 1994 (VAWA) was originally signed into law in 1994. The original law expired on September 30th, 2018, and received extensions until December 15, 2018. By all accounts, VAWA has proven to be a tremendous success. Since VAWA was enacted more victims report episodes of domestic violence to the police and the rate of non-fatal intimate partner violence against women has decreased by almost two-thirds. In just the first 15 years of VAWA's work, rates of serious intimate partner violence declined by 72% for women and 64% for men. VAWA is crucial in our efforts to fight the epidemic of domestic, sexual dating violence, and stalking. What is called for now is legislation to reauthorize, strengthen, and further improve VAWA; we must continue the momentum. We have the opportunity to build on VAWA's successes and reach more victims. We must pass a VAWA reauthorization that focuses on young women, women who are incarcerated, and women who live on or near tribal lands. The NAACP supports legislation which will: invest in prevention; end impunity for non-Native perpetrators of sexual assault, child abuse co-occurring with domestic violence, stalking, sex trafficking, and assaults on tribal law enforcement officers on tribal lands; improve enforcement of court orders that require adjudicated domestic abusers to relinquish their firearms; improve access to housing for victims and survivors; protect victims of dating violence from firearm homicide; help survivors gain and maintain economic independence; update the federal definition of domestic violence for the purposes of VAWA grants only to acknowledge the full range of abuse victims suffer (does not impact the criminal definition of domestic violence); maintains existing protections for all survivors; and improve the healthcare system's response to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.

Justice for Lynching Victims:

The crime of lynching succeeded slavery as the ultimate expression of racism in the United States following Reconstruction. It was a form of intimidation and domestic terrorism. Lynching was a crime that occurred throughout the United States, with documented incidents in all but 4 States. At least 4,742 people, predominantly African Americans, were reported lynched in the United States between 1882 and 1968. 99 percent of all perpetrators of lynching escaped from punishment by State or local officials. Protection against lynching is the most basic of Federal responsibilities, and the Senate considered but failed to enact anti-lynching legislation despite repeated requests by civil rights groups, Presidents, and the House of Representatives to do so. Notwithstanding the Senate's 2005 apology to the victims of lynching and the body's failure to act, it is wholly necessary and appropriate for the Congress to enact legislation, after 100 years of unsuccessful legislative efforts, finally to make lynching a Federal hate crime.

End Mass Incarceration:

In 1994, Congress passed the Violent Crime and Law Enforcement Act, which created grant programs that incentivized states to incarcerate more people. The Reverse Mass Incarceration Act would do the opposite—it would encourage states to reduce their prison populations and invest money in evidence-based practices proven to reduce crime and recidivism. Specifically, states that reduce their prison population by 7% over 3 years without substantial increase in the overall crime rate would be eligible for grants disbursed by the Department of Justice.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE / LABOR

Support, preserve and protect equal opportunity programs:

Despite the fact that equal opportunity programs, such as affirmative action, have proven to be an effective tool that gives qualified individuals equal access to participate and contribute; access that has been historically denied, they have come under attack again in recent years.

The fact of the matter is that our nation still needs equal opportunity programs in education, employment and contracting. Approximately 18% of all college students are African American, Latino, or American Indian compared with 28% of the college age population. African American men and women comprise less than 2.5% of total employment in the top jobs in the private sector. Based on their number, minority-owned firms received only 57 cents for every federal dollar they would be expected to receive if they were not a minority-owned firm. Equal opportunity programs are making sure that we have competent, educated leaders from and for all communities in the United States. Equal opportunity programs are the epitome of the great American ideal of self-reliance; they give people the opportunity to help themselves.

We need to make our voices heard, and demand that every member of Congress, as well as the President, stand in support of equal opportunity programs including affirmative action.

Eliminate potential discrimination in “faith based” initiatives:

Because of our Nation’s sorry history of bigotry, for decades it has been illegal to discriminate in employment and make hiring decisions based on race or religion. The only exception is faith-based organizations, which are exempted from anti-discrimination provisions in programs using their own money; although until now they had to adhere to basic civil rights laws when using federal monies to support a program.

Under the existing rules, many faith-based organizations of all types get hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars, are still able to pursue their religious missions, and comply with existing anti-discrimination laws. Yet under new proposals from the Trump Administration, faith-based organizations, some of whom, unfortunately, may use religious discrimination as a shield for racial or gender discrimination, will be allowed to legally discriminate against tax-paying Americans in the course of spending federal dollars.

The NAACP recognizes, celebrates and supports the crucial role faith-based organizations have played throughout our nation’s history in addressing some of our country’s most serious ills. Yet led by our Religious Affairs Department, the NAACP remains in firm opposition to any initiative, including the “faith-based” approach that may result in legalized and federally funded discrimination.

Sadly, some lawmakers appear intent on lacing provisions into individual bills that would allow faith-based institutions to discriminate against people because of their religion when implementing programs funded by federal taxpayers’ dollars while eliminating anti-discrimination safeguards.

Study proposals for reparations for descendants of the trans-Atlantic slave trade:

H.R. 40 would establish a Commission to Study the Reparations Proposals for African Americans. This commission would be charged with reviewing the institution of slavery, the resulting economic and racial discrimination against African Americans, and the impact these forces have had on living

African Americans. The bill would also acknowledge the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality and inhumanity of slavery in the United States.

The NAACP also supports legislation which proposes a U.S. Commission on Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation which would acknowledge, memorialize, and be a catalyst for progress, including toward permanently eliminating persistent racial inequities. This proposal would also affirm, on the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first slave ship, the U.S. debt of remembrance not only to those who lived through the injustices of slavery but also to their descendants.

Support for a fair minimum wage:

Since 2009, the federal minimum wage has held consistent at \$7.25 an hour. Across America, 58 million workers earn less than \$15 an hour. Today, a family of three living on the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 would only make about \$15,080 a year. This puts that family over \$5,000 below the federal poverty level threshold. It's time for Congress to Raise the Wage to \$15 by 2024.

The *Raise the Wage Act* would: Raise the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$15 over the next seven years; index future increases in the federal minimum wage to median wage growth; gradually phase out the outdated and unfair tipped minimum wage; gradually phase out the unused youth wage; and end subminimum wage certificates for individuals with disabilities.

Raising the minimum wage to \$15 by 2024 would significantly boost workers' pay. The *Raise the Wage Act* is a win for working people. It would give more than 41 million low-wage workers an increase in wages: over 23 million women, more than 1 out of every 3 women workers, would get a raise; almost 7 million African American workers (40 percent of all African American workers) would get a raise; and 9.4 million Hispanic workers would get a raise (1 out of every 3). The average age of affected workers is 36. Prime-age workers, ages 25-54, make up half of those workers who would get a raise. Teenagers account for 10 percent of the workers that would be affected by the bill.

Enact comprehensive, aggressive job creation legislation that focuses on the needs of American communities as well:

African Americans traditionally face unemployment rates nearly double the national unemployment rate: in some particular sub-groups, such as African American male teens, the rate is much higher. There is a clear need for an aggressive, national job creation program and address an issue that the NAACP has been calling a very real and crucial need for a long time.

The NAACP has consistently called for a comprehensive package which will expand opportunities for the long-term unemployed to reenter the workforce, provide incentives for businesses to hire and make investments in revitalizing schools, infrastructure and neighborhoods. We further support extending unemployment insurance to benefit the long-term unemployed and their families and summer / year-round jobs for youth. Lastly, we have consistently called for tax cuts which will benefit African American small businesses and will help African American owned small businesses access capital.

We have proposed investing \$15 billion in a national effort to put construction workers on the job rehabilitating and refurbishing hundreds of thousands of vacant and foreclosed homes and businesses. We would also invest \$25 billion in school infrastructure to modernize at least 35,000 public schools, with the funds targeted at the lowest income districts. We would also invest \$35 billion to prevent layoffs of up to 280,000 public school teachers, while hiring tens of thousands more teachers and keeping first responders, such as cops and firefighters on the job.

Lastly, we have called for legislation which would target the long-term unemployed by proposing a tax credit of up to \$4,000 to employers for hiring workers who have been looking for a job for more than 6 months. We have also called for a specific prohibition on employers from discriminating against unemployed workers.

The NAACP plans on keeping job creation and anti-employment discrimination a priority for American lawmakers until people and our economy are back at work. As such, we will continue to review and assess all job creation plans and strongly promote and advocate for those which will offer the greatest amount of help to those most in need.

Protect union / collective bargaining rights of public employees:

The former governors of Wisconsin, Ohio and Indiana, as well as an additional two dozen other states have introduced budget proposals which attempt to limit, restrict, reduce or eviscerate the salaries, benefits and collective bargaining rights of state employees. Affected employees include teachers, nurses, police officers and firefighters among others. The NAACP is steadfastly opposed to initiatives which would balance state budgets on the backs of hardworking employees and their families, and intends to fight them at the local, state and federal levels.

The NAACP urges state governments to focus on sustaining and creating living wage jobs and restoring the middle class. Our firefighters, teachers and nurses as well as other public servants are critical, taxpaying members of our communities who provide vital services. Budgets should not be balanced by harming American families. We cannot cut our way out of the recession. Job creation, the development of living wage, sustainable employment, increases our tax revenues and consumer dollars which are the policies that will grow our economy and ultimately reduce our deficit. We strongly urge the restoration of a balance and the growth of America's middle class. We are further convinced that working Americans need to be able to use the strength of collective bargaining rights to fight for better wages and benefits, jobs security and safer work places for everyone.

Led by Wisconsin, Ohio and Indiana, as many as 2 dozen other states are said to be considering similar draconian cuts which may have a debilitating effect on the rights of public employees to form or join a union and bargain collectively for their salaries and benefits from this year on. If enacted, the impact of these cuts and new restrictions will have serious and adverse impacts on middle class Americans, as well as those aspiring to the middle class. This is especially true of the African American middle class, since 25% of all black college graduates are currently employed in the public sector.

On a larger scale, these fiscal attacks on the American middle class, American families and unions are but one of several areas in which some states are trying to turn back the clock on progress it has taken us so long to obtain. Eliminating the rights of state employees to collectively bargain is the beginning of a state strategy being implemented to curb our rights. The NAACP is also deeply concerned about state attempts to restrict voting rights through discriminatory photo identification requirements and to re-segregate public education.

Develop a federal budget that invests in people and the protection of civil rights:

A nation's budget is, in its aggregate, a statement about the values and priorities of its people. Each year, the President submits his budget proposal for the following fiscal year to Congress in late February, which sets off the budget process which, ideally, culminates in a federal budget by the beginning of the fiscal year, which is October 1st (for more information on the budget process, see the NAACP Washington Bureau publication, "The path to a federal budget.")

The NAACP has historically supported budget proposals that invest in the American people, all the American people, by ensuring that the health, education, crime prevention, protection of civil rights needs and employment needs are met. Furthermore, we will continue to oppose changes to the budget which might result in a decrease in the "federal safety net," programs that serve and assist the most

vulnerable among us, including Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid and long term unemployment benefits.

Protect and Expand Social Security:

Under the current system, Social Security will be unable to meet its financial obligations to beneficiaries by the year 2032. Therefore, over the last few years politicians and others have sought ways to “save” Social Security. While some proposals call for a reduction in benefits, others call for Social Security funds to be invested in the stock market, or “privatized.” Because African Americans and other ethnic minorities tend to be at the low end of the earning scale over their lifetimes, they are generally more dependent upon Social Security in their retirement years. For this reason, any changes in Social Security are of special importance to the NAACP. Specifically, the NAACP has pledged to oppose any proposal that would reduce monthly benefits or eliminate the guarantee of a minimum monthly benefit; or that would raise the retirement age, as African Americans tend to have shorter life expectancies and would thus be disproportionately hurt by any such increase.

There are also strong efforts in Congress to expand Social Security. Specifically, the *Social Security Act 2100* lifts the cap on income, therefore prolonging the programs solvency for at least 75 years. The *Social Security 2100 Act* also increases benefits for all current and future beneficiaries; ensures that those who work their whole lives will not retire in poverty; and switches to a more accurate cost-of-living adjustment so that Social Security benefits do not erode over time.

Eliminate high-cost loans, such as debt perpetuating “pay day” loans:

Predatory lenders strip cash from the earnings of working people at astounding rates. Predatory loans, including high-cost lending such as payday loans, car title loans and refund anticipation loans cost American families nearly \$5 billion in fees per year. They trap people in debt and make it impossible for individuals or families to save money, build nest eggs, or sometimes even to simply survive. Nearly 12 million Americans are caught in a cycle of five or more high-cost payday loans per year.

“Payday loans” are perhaps the most common predatory loan. Payday lenders offer small, short-term loans while charging annual interest rates of up to 400%. One of the biggest problems with payday loans is that consumers who use payday lenders are often in desperate debt, and the high interest rate makes it so hard to pay back the loan that they quickly find themselves on the perpetual debt treadmill. When they cannot pay back the original loan, they extend it, often paying the fees and interest several times over. The end result is that many consumers end up paying far more in fees than what they originally borrowed. This is so common that 99% of all payday loans go to repeat borrowers; the typical payday borrower pays almost \$800 on a \$325 loan.

The sad truth is that many payday lenders locate themselves in low-and moderate income neighborhoods as well as communities with large concentrations of racial or ethnic minorities and areas surrounding military bases. One study found that African American neighborhoods have three times as many payday lending stores per capita as white neighborhoods in North Carolina, even when the average income of the neighborhood is taken into account. Another study showed that in Texas, where 11% of the population is African American, 43% of the payday loans were taken out by blacks. In too many cases, payday lenders are the only financial institutions in a community of color.

The NAACP supports legislation which would establish a new Fee and Interest Rate (FAIR) calculation that includes all interest and fees and creates a cap of 36% for all consumer credit transactions, including all open-end and closed-end consumer credit transactions, including mortgages, car loans, credit cards, overdraft loans, car title loans, refund anticipation loans, and payday loans. That rate is similar to usury caps already enacted in many states and is the same as the cap already in place for military personnel and their families, and we must also ensure that this federal law does not preempt stricter state laws.

Paid Sick Leave

The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was signed into law in 1993 by President Bill Clinton, and it allows workers to take up to three months of unpaid leave to care for themselves, a newborn child, an ill parent, or another family member facing a serious illness without the fear of losing their job or their health insurance. Since enactment 13 years ago, the FMLA has been used by American workers more than 200 million times. The FAMILY Act builds upon the success of the of FMLA in that it provides American workers with up to three months of paid sick leave in the event of a serious illness, the birth or adoption of a new child, or if they need to care for a very sick family member.

The FAMILY Act is modeled after successful programs in several states, including California, New Jersey, Rhode Island and most recently New York. The *FAMILY Act* will allow employees to allocate part of their wages to take off up to 60 workdays, or 12 workweeks, in a year to address their own serious health issue or to care for a family member and will provide 66% of their highest annual earning over the last three years. Some of the covered health issues include pregnancy, childbirth, or adoption; caring for an ill family member; and for specific military caregiving and leave purposes. Under this legislation, both employees and employers would contribute a small amount every pay period to a self-sustaining fund. The eligibility rules of the *FAMILY Act* would allow younger, part-time, or low-wage workers to contribute and benefit, regardless of their employer's size or their length of time on the job.

Equal pay for equal work:

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, women who work full time still earn, on average, only 77 cents for every dollar men earn. The statistics are even worse for women of color. African-American women make only 62 cents, and Hispanic women only 54 cents, for every dollar earned by white, non-Hispanic men. These gaps translate into a loss of almost \$20,000 a year for African-American women and almost \$24,000 annually for Hispanic women.

The Equal Pay Act of 1963, mandates that employers pay equal wages to men and women who perform substantially the same work. While the Equal Pay Act has helped to narrow the wage gap between men and women in our workforce, significant disparities remain and must be addressed. To eliminate these continuing disparities, the NAACP supports the Paycheck Fairness Act. The *Paycheck Fairness Act* closes loopholes in the Equal Pay Act of 1963 that have diluted its effectiveness in combating unfair and unequal pay.

Expand existing civil rights protections to include the LGBT population

President Lyndon Johnson once said that 'freedom is the right to share, fully and equally, in American society... the right to be treated in every part of our national life as a person equal in dignity and promise to all others.' But all too often, LGBTQ Americans do not have this freedom today. In more than half of states, LGBTQ Americans still have no explicit legal protections against pernicious discrimination that targets them simply for who they are and whom they love. *The Equality Act* authored by Senator Merkley (OR) and Congressman David Cicilline (RI), would amend existing civil rights laws to include explicit protections against discrimination for LGBTQ Americans. This legislation would ensure that LGBTQ Americans enjoy the same protections under law that all Americans already enjoy on the basis of religion, race, gender and more.

Restore the Power and Mission of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

In response to the 2008 financial crisis, Congress created the independent Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to stand up for consumers confronted by hidden fees, predatory financial products, and deceptive practices and to make sure that the public is provided with accurate information regarding the terms of their mortgages, auto loans, credit cards, and other financial transactions. Carrying out its intended purpose, the CFPB has returned \$12 billion to over 30 million harmed American consumers.

Since 2017, the CFPB has gone through drastic changes that take away the emphasis on its mission of protecting consumers. The CFPB has been stopped from reviewing compliance with the Military Lending Act as part of its examinations, halted payments to harmed consumers and dropped existing lawsuits and investigations of predatory actors. The restructuring of the CFPB includes eliminating the office specifically dedicated to addressing student loan abuses and taking away the enforcement powers of the Office of Fair Lending and Equal Opportunity (OFLEO).

In response to these developments, the *Consumers First Act* pushes the CFPB back to carrying out its statutory purpose of putting consumers first and protecting them from bad actors by doing the following:

- reestablishes the full duties of enumerated offices, including OFLEO;
- restores the supervisory and enforcement powers of the fair lending office;
- reestablishes a dedicated student loan office;
- reactivates prior MOUs promoting effective interagency efforts;
- requires adequate agency staffing, including for supervision and enforcement, to fully carry out the Consumer Bureau’s statutory mandates;
- requires the Consumer Advisory Board to include a majority of members who represent the consumer interest; and
- limits the number of political appointees that may be hired.

Ban the use of credit checks by potential employers:

The practice, used by a growing number of employers, to check a person’s credit score when considering him or her for a job, is both superfluous and discriminatory. Due to misleading and miscalculated credit scores, African Americans and Hispanics have, on average, substantially lower than scores for Caucasian Americans. The practice is also counterproductive, because normally an individual’s credit score in no way indicates or predicts the type of employee he or she may be. Sadly, the use of credit checks to determine employment is not only misleading and discriminatory, but also a growing trend.

Despite the fact that several studies by well respected, unbiased groups have confirmed that an individual’s credit history does not predict job performance, currently 60% of all employers admit to performing credit checks on potential employees. This number is up from just over 40% of all employers less than two years ago. This growing trend is extremely problematic for the NAACP, as there appears to be a consensus that credit scores are discriminatory. According to one recent study, the average credit score of African Americans and Hispanics is roughly 5% to 35% lower than the score for white Americans. Furthermore, given the on-going and perilously high unemployment rate among Americans, and the fact that the unemployment rate is consistently almost double the national rate when you are talking about racial and ethnic minority Americans –and the impact unemployment can have on a person’s credit history – the NAACP is concerned that these disparities in credit ratings will only grow in the future. Thus reviewing a person’s credit background as part of a pre-employment check is akin to subjecting an individual to a classic “catch 22”, and this is disproportionately a predicament being faced by people of color.

Ban questions about criminal records on most employment questionnaires (“ban the box”)

There are an estimated 70 million U.S. adults with arrests or convictions, many of whom are turned away from jobs despite their skills and qualifications. Given our nation’s unfair criminal justice system, a disproportionate number of these people are racial or ethnic minorities – and the disproportionality is growing. Removing questions about conviction history from job applications is a simple policy change that eases hiring barriers and creates a fair chance to compete for jobs. Known as “ban the box,” this change allows employers to judge applicants on their qualifications first, without the stigma of a record. Fair-chance policies benefit everyone, not just people with records, because they’re good for families, local communities, and the overall economy.

Nationwide, 33 states and over 150 cities and counties have adopted what is widely known as “ban the box” so that employers consider a job candidate’s qualifications first—without the stigma of a conviction or arrest record. These initiatives provide applicants a fair chance at employment by removing the conviction history question from job applications and delaying background checks until later in the hiring process. Momentum for these policies has grown exponentially, particularly in recent years. At the national level, former President Obama endorsed ban-the-box by directing federal agencies to delay inquiries into job applicants’ records until later in the hiring process.

Update the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to ensure against discrimination:

In 1993, Congress passed and President Clinton signed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) to expand protections for religious exercise as a response to the 1990 Supreme Court decision in *Employment Division v. Smith* – a case regarding the ceremonial use of peyote and other religious items by Native American Indians. Under RFRA, Congress gave religious liberty a heightened protection requiring that government action may only substantially burden a person’s exercise of religion if it is in the furtherance of a compelling government interest, and is the least restrictive means to achieve that interest.

Sadly, since the federal enactment of RFRA, twenty-one states have passed convoluted state versions of RFRA and there is growing concern about how RFRA may be used by some as a sword and not a shield to advance harm to the rights of others in the pursuit of racial and other prejudices in one’s “sincerely held” beliefs. Most recently, several states have used their RFRA-like laws to legitimize discrimination against transgender people; although the laws have not stopped there. As recently as February of 2016 Georgia passed a so-called religious freedom bill which was vetoed by the governor after the criticism of over 400 major companies, and an African American lawmaker was able to get the sponsor of the so-called religious liberty bill to admit that the legislation would, in fact, protect even the Ku Klux Klan and its discriminatory agenda.

Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a proven policy success story, lifting millions out of poverty and rewarding work for millions of families. Its largest shortcoming, however, is the very small credit it provides workers who are not raising children in their homes. This is the only group of Americans that the tax code taxes into, or deeper into, poverty. We strongly support a major expansion of the EITC for childless workers, substantially raising the maximum credit and expanding its age range. We also support increasing its maximum credit and phase-in rate

The current Child Tax Credit (CTC) is only partially refundable—the refundable portion of the credit is limited to 15 percent of a family’s earnings above \$2,500, up to a maximum of \$1,400 per child. The NAACP supports: making the CTC fully refundable; a new Young Child Tax Credit (YCTC) in which families will receive an extra amount of CTC for each child under the age of six; and reducing the CTC phase-out threshold.

EDUCATION ISSUES

Public school construction, repair and renovation:

In 2014, a Department of Education study estimated that it would cost \$197 billion to bring all public schools into good condition. The 2016 *State of Our Schools* Report determined there is an annual state and local spending gap of \$46 billion on school facilities. A 2006 *Building Education Success Together* report found that high-poverty and minority-serving schools are unable to adequately invest in school facilities. Schools predominantly serving white students spend nearly 50% more on capital construction than those serving minority students, and wealthy districts spend nearly triple their high-poverty counterparts.

School facilities still pose significant health and safety threats to more than 50 million students and 3 million teachers in public schools. A 1996 GAO Report—the most recent GAO study on this issue—determined that poor school facility conditions were concentrated in high-poverty schools serving minority students. The GAO found then that over 15,000 schools were circulating air unfit to breathe. According to a 2014 CDC survey, only 46.5% of schools have a program in place today to address indoor air quality issues.

Too many schools lack access sufficient high-speed digital infrastructure needed to support 21st Century learning. A 2017 Education Super Highway report found that over 19,000 schools serving more than 11.6 million students "are without the minimum connectivity necessary for digital learning."

The *Rebuild America's Schools Act* would invest \$100 billion to create over 1.9 million jobs by addressing critical physical and digital infrastructure needs in schools. Upon enactment, this bill would:

- Create a \$70 billion grant program and \$30 billion tax credit bond program targeted at high-poverty schools with facilities that pose health and safety risks to students and staff;
- Leverage federal, state, and local resources for an overall investment of \$107 billion, creating over 1.9 million jobs based on an Economic Policy Institute analysis that each \$1 billion spent on construction creates 17,785 job;
- Develop a comprehensive national database on the condition of public school facilities; such a national database currently does not exist and would provide much-needed insight into the condition of our public schools; and
- Expand access to high-speed broadband to ensure that public schools have the reliable and high-speed Internet access they need for digital learning.

Ensure consistent, reliable and affordable internet service is available for all students:

Due to the growing use of the internet for everything from finding a job to participating in distanced learning, consistent, reliable and affordable internet service has become a necessity for all students. We need to provide free or low-cost broadband service to low-income families or those who have been recently laid off or furloughed, enhance the FCC's existing Lifeline subsidy program for qualified low-income Americans, and help the states improve the National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier. Specifically, we should: Entitle households in which a member has been laid off or furloughed to a \$50 benefit (or \$75 on tribal lands) to put toward the monthly price of internet service and require ISPs to serve eligible households at a price reduced by an amount up to the emergency benefit; Trigger eligibility based on qualification for the Lifeline program, the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), or Federal Pell Grants; Provide devices such as laptop or desktop computers or tablets to eligible households to ensure these families have the devices they need to look for a job, complete online homework assignments, or receive telehealth service; Require Lifeline service providers to make unlimited minutes and data available to those that currently rely on the Lifeline program to stay connected to phone or internet service, and provide additional support; and Provide funding to states to facilitate the linking of their SNAP databases with the FCC's National Lifeline Verifier database, which will allow recipients of that program to automatically qualify for Lifeline.

Oppose publically funded private school vouchers:

The NAACP has consistently supported investments in our public schools that will benefit all students, not just potentially a few. School vouchers do not offer a collective benefit. Vouchers take critical resources away from our neighborhood public schools, the very schools that are attended by the vast majority of African American students. Furthermore, private and parochial schools are not required to observe federal nondiscrimination laws even if they receive federal funds through voucher programs. In fact, many voucher proposals often contain language specifically intended to circumvent civil rights laws, and many proponents insist voucher funding does not flow to the school but instead to the parent or student precisely to avoid any civil rights obligations. This specificity in language allows private institutions to discriminate on the basis of religion, gender, disability and language proficiency – and even merit, again, despite the fact that they are receiving taxpayer funds.

Maintain the federal role in ensuring a decent public education available to all as well as the protection of civil rights:

The federal government has, for the past 50 years, played an important and historic role in public education, most notably through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). During the 50 years since the ESEA was originally passed the federal government has promoted educational opportunity and protected the rights and interests of students disadvantaged by discrimination, poverty, and other conditions that may limit their educational attainment. This role must be maintained in any bill to reauthorize the ESEA, along with ensuring that each state adopts college and career-ready state standards, aligned statewide annual assessments, and a state accountability system to improve instruction and learning for students in low-performing schools.

Furthermore, the mission and duty of the Department of Education's Office of Civil Right is to "ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence through vigorous enforcement of civil rights in our nation's schools." This enforcement has helped to ensure that all students have access to an education free from discrimination, harassment, and violence. These functions must not only be protected but allowed to operate to their fullest capacity to guarantee all students equal protection under the law.

Repeal law disallowing students convicted of minor drug offenses from receiving financial aid:

Under a current federal law that took effect in 1998, if you need some financial help in order to go to college, one drug conviction can make you temporarily ineligible, and multiple convictions may lead to a permanent bar on receiving aid. While the goal of this law, to ensure that drug dealers do not set up shop on our nations college campuses with federal backing, was laudable, the result is in fact racially and economically discriminatory and adversely impacts tens of thousands of lower-income young adults.

In fact, as a result of this law, more than 93 thousand young men and women, a disproportionate number of whom are racial and ethnic minorities and the vast majority of whom come from families with total annual incomes of less than \$30,000, though they've paid their debt to society, are being unfairly and unnecessarily denied access to a higher education, the only sure way to end the cycle of drug addiction, crime, violence poverty and incarceration. Instead of affecting major drug dealers, the group this law was intended to affect, this provision has in-fact primarily impacted students convicted of minor possession and nonviolent related offenses.

Increase funding for historically black colleges and universities:

There are 103 historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) across the nation. In 1965, Congress officially defined an HBCU as an institution whose principal mission was the education of black Americans and was accredited and established before 1964. HBCUs play a critical role in the American higher education system. For most of America's history, African Americans who received a college education could only get it from an HBCU. Today, HBCUs remain one of the surest ways for an African American, or student of any race, to receive a quality education. Although HBCUs amount to only 3.3 % of all institutions of higher education, HBCU's award nearly 50 percent of all bachelor's degrees received by black students in the natural sciences, a little more than 25 %of all bachelor's degrees award in engineering and nearly 25% of all bachelor's degrees to black Americans. Furthermore, fifty percent of African American teachers with four-year degrees graduate from an HBCU and HBCUs graduate disproportionate percentages of African Americans who go directly into graduate or professional schools. HBCUs are among the most diverse colleges and universities with 30% student diversity and 40% faculty diversity, on average. Perhaps one of the most amazing features about HBCUs is that even with all of these successes, HBCUs cost, on average, \$10,000 less than their private counterparts in higher education.

Despite the compelling and quantifiable positive attributes HBCUs provide to African Americans and our nation as a whole, HBCUs receive disproportionately fewer public and private dollars than other private

colleges and universities. The federal dollars awarded to HBCUs have not kept pace with the increasing campus costs associated with expenditures for technology, energy, security, and other expenses.

The *HBCU Investment Expansion Act* would allow municipal bonds issued by HBCUs to have “triple tax-exempt” status (local, state, and federal). While HBCUs are able to raise money by issuing bonds, researchers found that these universities face higher costs compared to other universities trying to raise funds with bonds. This legislation will level the playing field and help HBCUs get the funds they need to build new dorms, labs or classrooms without additional costs or fees.

Increase funding for Federal Pell Grants and expand eligibility:

A Pell Grant is money the federal government provides for moderate- and low-income students who need it to pay for college. Grants, unlike loans, do not have to be repaid. Students eligible for Pell grants receive a specified amount each year under this program. Pell Grants are critically important in ensuring access to postsecondary education for low- and middle-income students. The program is the foundation of the federal government’s historic commitment to higher education access. Each year, more than 7.5 million students rely on Pell grants to afford college. The vast majority of Pell recipients have family incomes under \$40,000. Pell grants make higher education accessible to groups which have historically been shut out of colleges and universities, including racial and ethnic minority American students: more than 60% of African-American undergraduates and more than half of Hispanic undergraduates rely on Pell Grants to attend school. All in all, more than one-third of all undergraduate students received a Pell grant for the 2013-2014 school year.

Sadly, the money available for Pell grants has been eroded for decades. Add to this the skyrocketing cost of college, and the result is that Pell grants do not go as far as they used to; in fact, the current maximum grant covers the lowest share of public college costs in over 40 years. The cost of obtaining a college degree has increased 1,120 percent over the past three decades, about five times the rate of inflation. The maximum grant in the first year of the program was \$452, which covered almost all of a student's tuition, since the average tuition at public universities in 1973 was \$490. By 2011 however, the average in-state tuition was \$8,244, while the maximum Pell Grant was \$5,550. Due largely to cuts in state education budgets, college tuition has grown by 50% from 2004 to 2014. As recently as in the 1980s, the maximum Pell Grant covered more than half the cost of attending a four-year public college. In the 2014-2015 school year, however, the maximum Pell Grant (\$5,730) is expected to cover less than one-third of the cost of a public 4-year college—the lowest purchasing power level since the start of the program. What’s more, Pell Grants are slated to lose its annual inflation adjustment after this year, and Congress continues to cut the money that is available for Pell grants: earlier this year, \$1.3 billion was cut and billions more is being proposed to be cut in 2018. Furthermore, eligibility for Pell grants has been restricted: inmates of state and federal prisons became ineligible for Pell grants in 1994.

The *Pell Grant Preservation and Expansion Act* would improve the purchasing power of Pell Grants (by providing an immediate \$500 increase to the maximum award and grow the value of the Pell Grant over time by permanently indexing it to inflation); shifts the Pell Grant program to fully mandatory funding; reduces the “work penalty” that many students face when working to support themselves and offset rising college costs; streamlines the financial aid process for the poorest students and ensures they can easily access a full Pell Grant; and extends eligibility for a Pell grant from the current 12 semesters to 14. The legislation also expands eligibility by extending Pell grant eligibility to undocumented students who were brought to this country as children (“DREAMers”), and restoring eligibility for defrauded students, incarcerated individuals, and students with non-violent drug convictions.

Making college affordable

Higher education is one of the surest paths to economic security and opportunity for Americans. College-degree holders earn over 65 percent more than workers with only high school degrees, and the unemployment rate for workers with a college degree is less than half that of high school graduates.

The cost of college, however, is astronomically high and has increased 300 percent in inflation-adjusted dollars over the past 30 years. Beyond tuition and fees, the total cost of attendance—room and board, books and supplies, and other expenses—puts higher education out of reach for many Americans. For others, soaring college costs force them to take on debt to cover their financial need. Currently, 44 million Americans have student loans. College debt has increased 170 percent since 2006 and now exceeds \$1.5 trillion dollars, which is second only to mortgage debt and surpasses even credit card debt.

Rising student debt is taking a toll on the economy. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, student loan debt is responsible for 35 percent of the decline in homeownership since 2007. The percentage of younger people who reported owning a business was cut in half between 2010 and 2013. And Pew Research Center found that about 50 percent of student borrowers say their loans increase their risk of defaulting on other bills. Without a solution, the economic impact of this crisis will continue to drag down new business starts, homeownership rates, and household wealth creation.

Congress must address the student debt crisis by creating a path for students to graduate without the burden of student debt. Through the *Debt-Free College Act*, the federal government would work in partnership with states to make debt-free college a reality for students within five years.

State disinvestment in public higher education has driven up tuition prices, which has undermined public colleges' role as an affordable option for students. State appropriations are now nearly 12 percent lower than before the recession in 2008. Public colleges have made up for those cuts by cutting costs and increasing tuition. As a result, public colleges now rely on tuition for 46 percent of their revenue, up from 36 percent in 2008, and that revenue increasingly comes from student loans.

The NAACP supports a state-federal partnership that brings states back to the table and leverages the nation's unparalleled public higher education system to make debt-free college a reality. Under the partnership, states would receive a one-to-one federal match to state higher education appropriations in exchange for a commitment to help students pay for the full cost of attendance without having to take on debt. The partnership provides incentives to states to increase higher education appropriations and drive down the rising costs leading to student debt.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Preserve clean water and clean air laws, rules, and regulations

Nearly six million Americans live within three miles of a coal power plant. Coal power plants tend to be disproportionately located in low-income communities and communities of color:

- People who live within three miles of a coal power plant have an average per capita income of \$18,400, which is lower than the U.S. average of \$21,587.
- Among those living within three miles of a coal power plant, 39 percent are people of color — a figure that is higher than the 36 percent proportion of people of color in the total U.S. population. Moreover, the coal plants that have been built within urban areas in the U.S. tend overwhelmingly to be located in communities of color.

Living in such close proximity to coal plants has serious consequences for those communities. Coal plants are single-handedly responsible for a large proportion of toxic emissions that directly poison local communities in the United States. While the full extent to which coal-fired power plants are associated with fatalities is difficult to precisely quantify, a conservative estimate is offered by a 2010 report by the National Research Council (NRC), which calculates that approximately 1,530 excess deaths per year are caused solely by particulate matter pollution from U.S. coal-fired power plants, and that “aggregate damages associated with emissions of SO₂, NO_x, and PM from [the 402 largest U.S.] coal-fired facilities in 2005 were approximately \$62 billion.” The authors of this NRC report also note that other analyses calculated figures for total costs and mortality caused by U.S. coal plants that were as much as six times higher.

Reduce U.S. contribution to climate change, while ensuring job creation for racial and ethnic minorities

Everyone is already starting to feel the effects of a warming planet, via heat waves, increased air pollution, drought, or more intense storms. But the impacts - on health, economics, and overall quality of life - are far more acute on society's disadvantaged, including racial and ethnic minorities. For instance, African Americans living in Los Angeles are almost twice as likely to die as other Los Angelenos during a heat wave. Segregated in the inner city, they're more susceptible to the "heat island" effect, where temperatures are magnified by concrete and asphalt. Yet they're less likely to have access to air conditioning or cars. Minorities and the poor already breathe dirtier air than other Americans and are more likely to lack health insurance. As higher temperatures hasten the chemical interactions that produce smog, they're going to feel the most impact.

A majority of industries considered heavy emitters of greenhouse gases have a workforce that is comprised of at least 60 percent racial and ethnic minorities. Any climate plan that fails to transition those workers to new "green energy" jobs threatens to widen the racial economic divide.

Promote environmental justice

"Environmental justice" refers to the fair distribution of environmental benefits and burdens. A disproportionate quantity of minority communities play host to landfills, incinerators, and other potentially toxic facilities. Environmental discrimination can also be the placement of a harmful factory in a place comprised mainly of racial or ethnic minorities. This can be seen as environmental discrimination because it is placing a harmful entity in a place where the people often don't have the means to fight back against big corporations.

Environmental discrimination has historically been evident in the process of selecting and building environmentally hazardous sites, including waste disposal, manufacturing, and energy production facilities. The location of transportation infrastructures, including highways, ports, and airports, has also been viewed as a source of environmental injustice. Among the earliest documentation of environmental racism was a study of the distribution of toxic waste sites across the United States. Due to the results of that study, waste dumps and waste incinerators have been the target of environmental justice lawsuits and protests.

Invest in America's public drinking water and wastewater treatment plants

Our nation's drinking water infrastructure is in a state of emergency. Families across the country have lost access to clean, safe, and affordable drinking water. Fourteen million U.S. households are struggling to pay for water that too often isn't even safe to drink. Decades of federal underinvestment has left many communities, particularly low-income and racial and ethnic minority neighborhoods, with leaky and contaminated water systems. It's past time that we ensure everyone in this country has access to the most basic human need: clean drinking water. The WATER (Water Affordability, Transparency, Equity and Reliability) Act will provide a major federal investment to renovate our nation's old water pipes, stop sewage overflows, address water contamination and help avert a looming water affordability crisis. Specifically, the WATER Act will:

- The Water Act of 2019 will: Provide \$35 billion a year to drinking water and wastewater improvements;
- Create up to nearly 1 million jobs across the economy and protect American workers;
- Prioritize disadvantaged communities with grants and additional support;
- Expand technical assistance to small, rural and indigenous communities;
- Dedicate and increase grants for indigenous communities;
- Fund projects to address water contamination from per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS);
- Help homeowners replace lead service lines;
- Provide more than \$1 billion a year to update water infrastructure in public schools;
- Upgrade household wells and septic systems;
- and promote safe, affordable, publicly controlled water for all.

HEALTH ISSUES

Retain affordable health care coverage for all Americans

The 2010 passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) radically transformed our nation's health by adding over 20 million more Americans to the rolls of the insured. The uninsured rate for African Americans dropped by almost half, from 27% in 2010 to 14.5% in 2015. Amazingly, and for the first time in our nation's history, a black child was no longer more likely to be uninsured than a white child.

Sadly, there are those who appear determined to turn back the clock and reverse this progress. On May 4, 2017, the US House of Representatives passed the *American Health Care Act*, which will eliminate health care coverage for an estimated 23 million Americans. The Senate bill, the *Better Care Reconciliation Act* (BCRA), will eliminate health care coverage for an estimated 22 million Americans. It repeals the ACA, and millions more – especially low- and moderate-income and older Americans—end up paying thousands more in premiums for skimpier health plans. BCRA is nothing more than a huge tax cut for the wealthiest few, paid for by billions of dollars in cuts to Medicaid, which currently provides critical health care to 74 million Americans—or one-in-five of all people in this country.

Full funding for AIDS / HIV prevention, treatment & education:

Every hour, two young Americans become newly infected with HIV. This means that every day, almost 50 young Americans lives are condemned to a hell that few of us can even imagine, with no hope of ever seeing or contributing to the future. Furthermore, AIDS and HIV are disproportionately invading and destroying communities of color in the United States as well as around the world. AIDS is the number one killer of African American men ages 25 to 44 and the number one killer of African American women ages 15 to 44. While African Americans make up approximately 12% of the entire U.S. population, we account for 45% of all cases of AIDS reported in 1997. There are fewer HIV-positive people in seven of the 15 target countries of the Global AIDS Initiative than there are HIV-positive African Americans here at home.

Hispanic Americans, like African Americans, are also disproportionately affected. While Latino Americans comprise only 12% of the overall population, they account for 21% of the AIDS cases reported in 1997. AIDS is the second leading cause of death for Hispanic Americans between the ages of 25 and 44. Compounding the horror, African American children account for 58% of pediatric AIDS cases in the United States. Hispanic American children account for 23% of the cumulative pediatric AIDS cases.

While much was done to increase AIDS awareness in ethnic minority communities in the United States, there is still much more to do. Thus the NAACP Washington Bureau is committed to working with Congress and the Administration to increase monies for AIDS prevention and treatment. The Washington Bureau is committed to working with the NAACP Health Department to see that everything that can be done is done to stop the dramatic increase of AIDS in our communities.

For more than two decades, however, Washington has been fighting the AIDS epidemic with one hand tied behind its back. Studies have shown that Syringe Exchange Programs (SEPs) are effective in reducing HIV and hepatitis infection rates among injection drug users and their sexual partners. Furthermore, SEPs promote public health and safety by taking syringes off the streets, and protect innocent bystanders, including children, from injuries. SEPs also provide critical health care services including HIV testing, counseling, education, and referral to drug addiction treatment centers. Sadly, since 1988 Congress has banned local and state public health authorities from using federal funds for Syringe Exchange Programs.

In the summer of 2009, the House of Representatives took a historic step by removing the ban on federal funding for SEPs. Unfortunately, in doing so the House added a restriction that requires that federally supported SEPs not operate within 1,000 feet of various places frequented by youth. The NAACP strongly opposed the 1,000-foot restriction as it would have made it nearly impossible to utilize federal resources for most SEPs and severely hamper efforts to implement such programs, especially in congested urban areas where health officials assert the need is greatest. It would have also prevented

local authorities from making their own decisions on how to best utilize federal funds in the fight against the spread of HIV / AIDS. Officials in cities like Chicago, New York and Washington say there are few, if any, places that could house a needle exchange under that rule. Fortunately, Congress has decided to lift the 23-year old ban on federal funding for needle exchange programs and not impose the “1,000 foot rule.” Language lifting the ban and allowing local public health and law enforcement officials to determine where needle exchange programs should be housed – and where they shouldn’t be – was included in the Omnibus Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2010. This bill passed the Congress and was signed into law by President Obama in December, 2009.

End childhood obesity:

Childhood obesity occurs among African American children at disproportionate rates: African American children and adolescents are more likely to be overweight and obese than their Caucasian peers. Currently, over 35% of African American children ages 2 to 19 are overweight or obese, compared with less than 32% of the general population in the same age range. Furthermore, although the percentage has decreased, the current obesity rate, as defined as being in the 95th percentile for BMI (Body Mass Index) among African American youths is still higher by almost 4% than the national average of 16.9%. The consequences of this disparity are as glaring and as dangerous as you might expect. Overweight and obese children are more likely to suffer from serious, lifelong illnesses than their healthy-weight peers. The higher prevalence of overweight and obesity among African American children places them at a greater risk of developing chronic diseases including Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and other cardiovascular disease risk factors, asthma, sleep apnea, and social discrimination.

To address these problems the NAACP Washington Bureau has supported legislation which has been introduced and promoted which increases access to healthy food in many of the neighborhoods where fresh produce is rarely seen, and among many of the federal programs which serve primarily low income and disproportionately racial and ethnic minority children (such as school lunch programs); it improves prevention and treatment measures; and it promotes physical activity.

Protect Medicare & Medicaid

Created in 1965, Medicaid currently serves more than 50 million Americans. It was originally intended to provide health care to low-income Americans who would not otherwise be able to afford it. Medicaid is jointly funded by the states and the federal government, and is managed by the states.

Dramatic cuts to Medicaid would be disproportionately severe among racial and ethnic minority Americans since we currently comprise 56% of the Medicaid population. Specifically, in 2009, 27% of African Americans—10 million people, including 6 million children—were covered by Medicaid. African Americans account for 1 in 5 Medicaid enrollees. In 2009, 27% of Hispanic Americans—13 million people, including 9 million children—were covered by Medicaid; Hispanics account for 1 in 4 Medicaid enrollees.

To compensate for the steep reductions in federal funding, states would be forced to make up the difference by contributing more or, if they cannot or will not provide additional funding they will likely cap enrollment, substantially scale back eligibility, and / or curtail benefits. Since most states in our country are suffering from budget shortfalls now, it is unlikely they will be able to compensate for any reduction in the federal contribution. Those most at risk of not receiving adequate health care under this proposal are seniors (communities of color currently make up roughly 43% of the elderly Medicaid population); people with disabilities (communities of color currently make up roughly 43% of the Medicaid population with disabilities); children (59% of children currently enrolled in Medicaid represent communities of color); working parents and pregnant women (communities of color represent 61% of the adult (parents and pregnant women) Medicaid population).

Restore Medicaid Eligibility to COFA residents living in the USA:

Under the agreement with the U.S., the people of the Compacts of Free Association (COFA) communities (Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands) are granted broad migration rights to live and work in the U.S. in exchange for U.S. use of and access to strategic military defense points for missile testing and space operations in the Freely Associated States. Before 1996, those residing in the U.S. under COFA had access to Medicaid through their designation as legally residing non-citizen nationals. Unfortunately, the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) stripped COFA communities of their eligibility for most means-tested federal benefits, including Medicaid, by unintentionally excluding them from the category of “qualified immigrants” for purposes of eligibility. The NAACP believes that Congress must restore Medicaid coverage for communities lawfully residing in the United States.

Health Equity:

Despite efforts through the Affordable Care Act to eliminate health disparities, the color of your skin and your zip code can still play a significant role in your health outcome. The population of racial and ethnic minorities is expected to increase over the next few decades, yet racial and ethnic minorities have the poorest health status and face substantial cultural, social, and economic barriers to obtaining quality health care. Communities of color face significant barriers to culturally- and linguistically-appropriate care. Around the U.S. and in the U.S. territories, marginalized and underserved communities suffer from discrimination, inequity, and a lack of access to quality, culturally-competent care.

Many diseases, from asthma to diabetes to cancer to maternal mortality are much more prevalent among people of color across the nation due to a myriad of factors. These factors include not only a lack of access to health care, but also the social determinants of health—including the environment, the physical structure of communities, nutrition and food options, educational attainment, employment, race, ethnicity, sex, geography, language preference, immigrant or citizenship status, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, or disability status—that directly and indirectly affect the health, health care, and wellness of individuals and communities. These are but a few of the barriers to wellness faced by our communities.

The NAACP is working along with Members of Congress who represent racial and ethnic minorities to develop, every Congress, the “Health Equity and Accountability Act.” This legislation, which is usually introduced fairly late in the Congress (it has been introduced for many years) changes with every Congress, depending on the circumstances of the day, so a working group (of which the NAACP is a member) to develop the most current, and often urgent, responses. Usually included in the legislation are provisions calling for workforce diversity; an expansion of health care coverage; an expansion of access; mandated culturally- and linguistically-appropriate care, data collection and reporting which focuses on many of the causes identified as leading to health care disparities; and an investment in the treatment and prevention of diseases which disproportionately impact racial and ethnic minorities, such as cancer HIV / AIDS, and sickle cell anemia. The NAACP supports legislation which builds on past successes, including: expanding and updating the list of high-impact minority diseases; recognizing the role of health care disparities in any delivery system; and prevention.

Health care for all Americans:

A universal health care system such as Medicare for All would support the health and economic security of all Americans, including patients of color, as well as controlling the costs of prescription drugs, both currently important issues. Despite gains in recent years, almost 30 million people in the United States still lack health insurance, and tens of millions of households have health insurance but cannot afford to receive the medical care they need and deserve. A disproportionate number of these are households of color. While disparities in health care outcomes may persist, evidence shows us that they decrease dramatically when health insurance coverage increases. Communities of color need a health care system that rectifies long-standing structural biases and challenges. Medicare for All is that system. Medicare for All universal health care would support the health and economic security of patients of

color, alongside controlling the costs of prescription drugs, thereby addressing both glaring affordability and access issues for low and moderate-income patients of color.

HOUSING

Enact a comprehensive program to combat homelessness:

About 3.5 million people in America are likely to experience homelessness in a given year. Of these, 39%, or 1.35 million are children. People of color – particularly African Americans – are a disproportionately large percentage of the homeless population. A 2002 study showed that the urban homeless population is estimated to be 50% African American, 35% white, 12% Hispanic American, 2% Native American and 1% Asian American. Approximately 40% of men who are homeless are American veterans. The composition of the average homeless family is a single parent household headed by an African-American female. Unfortunately, these numbers appear to be on the increase.

To try to address this problem the NAACP supports the comprehensive legislation which includes resolutions putting Congress on record as supporting housing as a basic human right, Universal Health Care and a Living Wage; a dramatic expansion of federal resources for affordable housing and homelessness programs; a dramatic expansion of health care and services for people experiencing homelessness; greater income and work supports for people experiencing homelessness; temporary worker protections; and civil rights protections for people experiencing homelessness.

Provide additional funds for testers to uncover housing discrimination in America:

Currently, despite the enactment of the Fair Housing Law more than 40 years ago, experts estimate that as many as 4 million fair housing violations occur each year. Yet less than 8% of these violations are actually reported to federal, state or local housing authorities and only a handful of those are investigated and result in charges. The result is, sadly, that housing discrimination is alive and well and allowed to flourish in America today.

The NAACP therefore supports increases in funding for both the Fair Housing Initiatives Program (“FHIP”) and the Fair Housing Assistance Program (“FHAP”), through which the federal government provides assistance to states and local governments to investigate and enforce Fair Housing complaints within their jurisdictions.

Universal, decent & affordable housing:

For close to half of American families, owning an affordable home or even finding a safe and affordable rental unit is financially unattainable. In fact, the problem is getting worse. The number of American families with “worst case” housing needs continues to grow, while the inventory of affordable housing shrinks. Furthermore, statistics show that race and age play a significant role in the ability of a family to own a home. While 71% of Caucasian households own their own home, only 47% of African American and 46% of Hispanic American families own their residences.

Renting a home has also become harder in the last decade. Between 1996 and 1998, rents rose by 1.6% while the median income of renter households grew by only .3%. From 1995 to 1997, the income of the poorest 25% of renter households fell by 2.6%, while rental costs increased by 4.5%. At the same time, well over 100,000 units of housing for very low-income families was demolished without replacement. Lack of safe affordable housing has an enormous impact on American families and our communities. Families with high housing costs are forced to choose between paying for housing and putting food on the table. Children who live in substandard housing are more likely to suffer from debilitating conditions such as asthma and lead poisoning.

In 2008, the NAACP-supported National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF) was created at the federal level. The NHTF will provide funds to states and local municipalities across the nation for the production, construction, preservation and rehabilitation of badly needed homes that are affordable and secure for

the lowest-income Americans. In his budget request for fiscal year 2010, President Obama requested that Congress fund the NHTF at \$1 billion as an initial capitalization.

Under the legislation that created the NHTF, 90% of the funds must be used for rental housing that extremely low income families can afford. Data from a 2008 survey shows that nationwide, for every 100 extremely low income renter households, there were only 37 homes available which they could afford, for less than 30% of their income.

The NHTF would also create American jobs: it is estimated that a \$1 billion investment in the NHTF will create 15,100 construction jobs and 3,800 jobs in on-going operations. Furthermore, when low-income Americans are not spending over 30% of their income on housing, they can afford to spend more on food, child care, transportation, and other basic human needs.

PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Our nation needs strong comprehensive federal leadership to help all Americans weather the current pandemic, which is began in earnest in March, 2020. As of August 24, 2020, there have been almost 6 million diagnosed cases of Coronavirus in the U.S. and over 180 thousand reported deaths. Tens of millions of our fellow countrymen and women have lost their jobs in the coronavirus recession; as many as 40 million American men, women, and children are facing eviction in the coming months with thousands more facing foreclosure on their homes; and tens of thousands of businesses are closed – many for good.

The Coronavirus pandemic has hit communities of color – particularly African Americans – disproportionately hard. African Americans are infected with COVID-19 at nearly three times the rate of white Americans, and are twice as likely to die from the virus. Furthermore, systemic racism hasn't just evidenced itself in the health care system: because of the long and enduring history of bigotry and inequality in our nation, the impact of the pandemic is being felt much more acutely by African Americans in almost every aspect of life. From unemployment to rental evictions to hunger to the ability for our children to learn remotely to safely casting a ballot, and that is just naming a few areas, African Americans are having to deal with the pain of the pandemic on our lives at disproportionately higher cases than white Americans – too many of whom are suffering as well.

It is because of this unprecedented pain and suffering that is being felt by hundreds of millions of Americans – a pain that is being amplified in communities of color across our country – that we need bold, and comprehensive innovative federal action and we need it now. Americans are suffering, and it appears it will only get worse. These unprecedented times require extraordinary, bold, new, comprehensive and well-honed leadership and empathy by our federal government.

VOTING RIGHTS

Repair, restore, and strengthen the 1965 Voting Rights Act:

The *Voting Rights Act of 1965* (VRA) was enacted to insure that no one, including federal, state or local government may in any way impede people from registering to vote or voting because of their race or ethnicity. Most provisions in the VRA, and specifically the portions that guarantee that no one may be denied the right to vote because of his or her race or color, are permanent.

Section 5 of the VRA requires certain states or jurisdictions, which have an established history of laws or policies which result in the disenfranchisement of a group of racial or ethnic minority voters to obtain advance approval or “preclearance” from the US Department of Justice or the US District Court in D.C. before they can make any changes to voting practices or procedures. Examples of these changes also

include “redistricting,” or the re-drawing of congressional district boundaries or any change in the date, time, place, or manner under which an election is held. Federal approval is to be given as soon as the state or jurisdiction proves that the proposed change would not abridge the right to vote on account of race or color.

In 2013 the United States Supreme Court heard the case of *Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder*, which challenged the constitutionality of the “preclearance” provisions of the VRA. On June 25, 2013, the Supreme Court issued its decision in which the Court did not invalidate the principle that preclearance can be required. The Supreme Court did decide, however, that Section 4(b) of the VRA, which establishes the formula that is used to determine which states and jurisdictions must comply with Section 5’s preclearance, is antiquated and thus unconstitutional and can no longer be used. Thus, although Section 5 survives, it is currently not being used and will not be used until Congress enacts a new formula to determine who should be covered by it.

The *Voting Rights Advancement Act* would: modernize the preclearance formula to cover states with a pattern of discrimination that puts voters at risk; ensure that last-minute voting changes won’t adversely affect voters; protect voters from the types of voting changes most likely to discriminate against people of color and language minorities; enhance the ability to apply a preclearance review when needed; expand the effective Federal Observer Program; and improve voting Rights protections for Native Americans and Alaska Natives. Furthermore, this legislation includes all of the priorities necessary for a strong VRA restoration as established by the NAACP National Board of Directors.

We must tell Congress – both the House and the Senate – that the time to act is now! We must not delay and allow one more American to face unnecessary, unconstitutional, and undemocratic obstacles as they try to vote.

Expand access to the polls for all eligible voters

In 2002, following the 2000 Presidential election debacle, Congress passed the *Help America Vote Act*. The NAACP supported the *Help American Vote Act* as we saw it as an important step toward ensuring that every eligible American who wants to vote can, and that every vote is counted. While we have seen some real progress since the enactment of the *Help America Vote Act*, the 2004 and 2008 Presidential elections and the 2006 mid-term election clearly demonstrated that there is still much more to be done.

To address many of these problems, the NAACP calls for stronger federal laws to protect and enhance the rights of all Americans to cast a free and unfettered vote and to ensure that their vote is counted. Specifically, the NAACP supports the Voter Empowerment Act, would expand and protect voters’ access to the polls and would increase accountability and integrity among election officials and poll workers. It also would expand eligibility to allow all ex-offenders who have been released from prison (even those who may still be on probation or parole) to register and vote in federal elections.

Specifically, the *Voter Empowerment Act* would:

- guarantee early voting – require that every state establish early voting sites that are open at least 15 days prior to a general election day;
- require automatic registration – the bill would use modern technology to automatically and permanently register all eligible voters;
- allow same-day registration throughout the country – it would ensure allow voters to register to vote on election day at their polling place;
- ensure on-line voter registration – the *Voter Empowerment Act* would ensure that on-line voter registration is a viable option nationally;
- outlaw “voter caging” – makes illegal a practice by which mail is sent to a registered voter's address and, if the mail is returned as "undeliverable" or if it is delivered and the voter does not respond, his or her registration is challenged;

- clarify and strengthen the use of provisional ballots – ensures that provisional ballots are counted;
- make voter intimidation and deception punishable by law – with strong and tough penalties so that people who commit these crimes suffer more than just a slap on the wrist, and establish a process for reaching out to misinformed voters with accurate information so they can cast their votes in time;
- encourage youth voters – the Voter Empowerment Act requires colleges and universities to offer and encourage voter registration to all students;
- assure voting by overseas residents – it increases assurances that Americans who may be living overseas, especially those serving our country in the armed services, can cast a valid vote and be assured that their vote was counted.

The right of all eligible citizens to vote and to have their vote count is the cornerstone of our democracy, and it is a fundamental civil right guaranteed by our Constitution. The NAACP believes strongly that it is the obligation of Congress to ensure that everything that can be done will be done to ensure that every eligible American is allowed to vote and to be sure that his or her vote has been counted.

Automatic Voter Registration:

Automatic voter registration (AVR) makes two transformative, yet simple, changes to voter registration: Eligible citizens who interact with government agencies are registered to vote unless they decline, and agencies transfer voter registration information electronically to election officials. AVR is already the law in several states, with even more considering it. This policy has been found to boost registration rates, clean up the rolls, make voting more convenient, and reduce the potential for voter fraud, all while lowering costs.

Oppose photo identification requirements for voting:

The right of all eligible citizens to vote and to have their vote count is the cornerstone of our democracy, and it is a fundamental civil right guaranteed by our Constitution. The NAACP believes strongly that it is the obligation of Congress to ensure that everything that can be done will be done to ensure that every eligible American is allowed to vote and to be sure that his or her vote has been counted.

Unfortunately, some Members of Congress are also seeking to limit voting rights by introducing legislation to require that all Americans present a government-approved photo identification before voting. Specifically, some bills would place an added burden of requiring a government-approved photo identification before voting. This flies in the face of our Constitutionally guaranteed right to cast a free and unfettered ballot, as well as the intent of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which prohibits state and local governments from establishing laws or policies which would have a discriminatory effect on the ability of certain groups to vote. This requirement would have a disparate impact on the ability of certain groups, most notably racial and ethnic minority Americans, the elderly and low-income Americans, many of whom are less likely to have or carry a photo ID or have the means to secure such an identification. Lastly, these bills do nothing to address many of the actual, documented problems of election and voter fraud which continue to plague our electoral process and our democracy, including the improper purges of voters, distributing false information about when and where to vote, stuffing ballot boxes, and tampering with registration forms, most of which are perpetrated by corrupt election officials, not voters.

Make no-excuse mail-in voting a more secure option for those who want to use it:

There has been some version of absentee voting by mail since the Civil War, when troops voting from the battlefield helped Abraham Lincoln win reelection. While many states today allow you to vote by mail (and thus avoid the potential crowds at the polling place on Election Day), the NAACP supports voting by mail without an excuse to be an option for all Americans.

This means that all American voters should be able to request a mail in or absentee ballot without having to provide a reason as to why they wish to cast their vote in this manner and they should be certain that their vote counted. This also means we need a strong and reliable postal service, and voters should still be able to cast their ballot in person if they so desire.

Congressional voting rights / statehood for the District of Columbia:

The residents of the District of Columbia are unique in this country in that they pay federal taxes yet have no voting rights on the floor of the United States House of Representatives or the U.S. Senate. Furthermore, D.C. residents are the only Americans whose laws can be overturned by Congress, in violation of American principles of local self-rule. Due to the unfair and undemocratic nature of this situation, which results in more than half a million people disenfranchised (and more than 60% of those people are people of color), the NAACP has consistently supported statehood for the District of Columbia.

Campaign Finance Reform:

It is no secret that the role of money in politics is ever increasing, who stands for office, who wins, and, most critically, the eventual public policy Congress enacts. Big money is the main reason Congress is increasingly out of step with the interests of hard working, everyday Americans, particularly on issues of economic insecurity, and particularly with racial and ethnic minorities and low-income Americans. It is becoming increasingly clear that income and wealth inequality is rooted in political inequality. Until we break this dependence on big money special interests in our campaign system, the policy agenda for everyday Americans will be thwarted – whether it be improving Americans’ economic security, fighting for workers’ rights, improving stewardship of environment, you name it. The two basic imperatives of a healthy democracy— the right to vote and the right to have your voice be heard, for your vote to *mean something*, our protections against big money buying elections —desperately need to be strengthened. Too many candidates are too busy talking to Political Action Committees (PACs) or special interests to listen to their local community-based constituents.

To address this compelling problem, the NAACP supports the *Government By the People Act* in the U.S. House of Representatives; and *the Fair Elections Now Act* in the U.S. Senate as well as a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution which would allow the U.S. Congress and States to limit campaign contributions. The *Government By the People Act* and the *Fair Elections Now Act* are comprehensive reform packages designed to combat the influence of big money politics, raise civic engagement and amplify the voices of everyday Americans. Specifically, this legislation would provide all Americans with a \$25 refundable tax credit to help spur contributions to candidates for Congressional office and establish a fund to multiply the impact of small dollar donations (\$150 or less per election cycle) by matching the donations, as long as the candidate receiving the donations agrees to forgo big money donations from special interests. The legislation would also prevent Super PACs and Dark Money interests from drowning out the voices of constituents by providing citizen-funded candidates who are able to raise at least \$50,000 in additional small-dollar donations within the final 60 days before an election to be eligible for additional resources.

The NAACP supports legislation which would restore the confidence of the voters that their federally elected officials are listening to them. It would also allow candidates to spend less time talking to special interests and more time listening to their potential constituents.

Promote civic participation and rehabilitation by reinstating voting rights for felony offenders who are no longer incarcerated:

Felony disenfranchisement laws, which vary from state to state, currently disqualify almost 4 million, or 1 in 50, American adults from voting. 13% of African American males are prohibited from voting because of these laws. Three-fourths of these disqualified voters are not in prison, but are on probation, parole or are ex-offenders. Moreover, the removal of voting privileges is imposed regardless of the nature or seriousness of the offense; thus in some states, you can lose your right to vote forever because you once

wrote a bad check. The *Democracy Restoration Act* would allow felons who are no longer incarcerated to reintegrate themselves back into society and vote in federal elections, as would a provision in the *Voter Empowerment Act*.

Ensure an accurate, fair, and credible 2020 Census:

The federal government has always played a vital role in developing the data that Americans rely on to make well-informed decisions. As mandated in the U.S. Constitution, the U.S. Census Bureau counts the U.S. population every 10 years. The 2020 Census must count roughly 334 million people in homes and group facilities across our country as of Census Day, which is April 1, 2020. The information which is gathered will be used for everything from determining political representation at the federal, state, and local levels to the allocation of tax dollars. Businesses and industry also use census data to plan investments which result in economic development, jobs, and prosperous communities.

Given that Census data is used for the apportionment of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, as well as the drawing of districts including those for the US House, state legislatures, city councils, school boards and other municipal bodies, the NAACP and other civil rights organizations are reliant on as accurate a count as possible to ensure the Constitutional principle of “one person, one vote.” Census and American Community Survey (or “ACS”, which is an ongoing survey that provides vital information on a yearly basis about our nation and its people) data are also used to implement the Voting Rights Act and to ensure that citizens whose first language is not English can participate in the electoral process.

The decennial census figures are also used by the federal government when allocating roughly \$450 billion a year, or nearly one-third of all federal grants to state and local governments. Congress also uses the decennial census figures, along with those derived through the ACS to allocate grants for almost everything, including for school districts; homeland security; transportation; Medicaid; community development; housing; business and industry loans; water and waste disposal systems; public safety; and so much more.

End “prison-based gerrymandering”

The American constitution requires a census every 10 years to count all residents in the United States, regardless of background. Not only is the census central to apportioning political power, but the data also influence the allocation of more than \$800 billion every year for services like schools, fire departments, and hospitals and much more.

The majority of state and federal prisons are built in disproportionately white rural areas; given that the U.S. Census Bureau counts people in prison as residents of the community that contains the prison, not the community that they are legal residents of, and that African-Americans are incarcerated at a rate six (6) times higher than whites, these areas benefit financially and politically from how the Census Bureau counts prisoners. Counting incarcerated people as residents of the prison community has a particularly negative effect on the voting strength of African-American communities.

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Eliminate U.S. trade and travel embargos on Cuba:

On December 17, 2014, President Obama announced that the Administration would re-establish diplomatic ties in efforts to normalize relations with Cuba. His actions are in direct correlation with long-established NAACP advocacy policies. Specifically, the President’s actions will:

- Re-establish diplomatic relations;
- More effectively empower the Cuban people by adjusting regulations;
- Facilitate an expansion of travel to Cuba;
- Expand general licenses for travel to Cuba will be made available for all authorized travelers;
- Authorize expanded sales and exports of certain goods and services from the U.S. to Cuba;
- Authorize American citizens to import additional goods from Cuba; and

- Initiate new efforts to increase Cubans' access to communications and their ability to communicate freely.

On June 16, 2017, President Donald Trump announced his intention to reverse policies which had opened diplomatic, economic, and travel ties between the United States and Cuba. In doing so, President Trump reversed much of the progress which had been achieved by President Barack Obama when, in 2014, he announced that the United States would re-establish diplomatic relations with Cuba, which resulted the opening of the American embassy in Havana and of the Cuban embassy in Washington, D.C. The 2014 NAACP-supported action by President Obama also resulted in the transformation of our relationship with Cuba by expanding trade, loosening travel restrictions, and strengthening diplomatic ties. Both Americans and Cubans have benefitted from these policies, with more Americans traveling directly to Cuba and returning to the U.S. with Cuban goods. The June 2017 actions by President Trump will limit travel to Cuba and restrict U.S. business dealings with Cuba a move that will cost jobs, hurt our economy, and distance ourselves from one of our closest neighbors.

After 50 years, the current U.S. restrictions on trade and travel between the United States and Cuba have proven most effective in creating tremendous and on-going hardships for the people of Cuba and hurting American businesspeople and travelers. The continuation of the embargo on trade between the United States and Cuba has, in fact, proven itself to be counterproductive as it has made the United States the scapegoat for most of the problems facing Cuba today and in many ways strengthened the resolve of the Cuban people to retain their current government. Furthermore, the United States can best support democratic change in Cuba by promoting trade and commerce, travel, communications, and cultural, academic, and scientific exchanges. Expanding bilateral trade with the Cuban people is one of the most effective ways of influencing change from within Cuba's society and promoting progress on human rights and democratic rule.

It is also true that since many United States trading partners, including all other countries in the Western Hemisphere, trade with Cuba, the affect of the United States policy is to disadvantage United States farmers and businesses that could otherwise compete in the Cuban market. These facts have led many leading newspapers, including the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, the Chicago Tribune and the Orlando Sentinel Tribune, to come out in opposition to current U.S. policy towards Cuba. As the Orlando Sentinel recently argued, "The ban on U.S. travel is futile, self-defeating, a waste of scarce resources and inconsistent with other American policies."

Peace in Sudan:

The government of Sudan has allowed an orchestrated campaign of genocide against the black African population in the Darfur region of western Sudan. Furthermore, the Sudanese government has severely restricted humanitarian and human rights workers' access to the area in an attempt to inflict further harm on the Fur, Masaalit and Zaghawa people who live in the region.

Despite the fact that the US Congress and the Bush Administration both declared that the situation in Sudan is genocide, little has been done to ease the killing and misery that rocks the region. Most recently, the United Nations' International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur found that the Sudanese government committed war crimes, including a pattern of killings, rape, pillage and forced displacement but the report stopped short of calling the situation "genocide."

The United States needs to become aggressively involved in addressing this humanitarian crisis. The perpetrators of these crimes must be taken before the International Criminal Court. Furthermore, the United States should seek a United Nations Security Council resolution authorizing a multinational force to intervene in Darfur with a mandate to protect civilians and enforce the ceasefire that the government and the rebels signed last year (which has been largely ignored to date). While a United Nations force would be ideal, it would clearly take time to put together. In the meantime, the 1,000 African Union troops who are currently in the region should be given a greater mandate, and additional resources, and

manpower, to protect civilians. Lastly, the refugees must be given the opportunity to return to their homes in safety.

The NAACP supports involvement by the United States and international community to prevent a new wave of violence and human rights violations. Specifically, the U.S. should use high-level diplomacy to:

- Press for free and on-time referenda on the status of South Sudan and Abyei, and ensure that Sudanese parties and the international community to respect the outcomes.
- Demand unimpeded access for peacekeepers and humanitarian aid organizations throughout Sudan, and push for robust international human rights monitoring.
- Secure commitments from governments in North and South Sudan to protect human rights before, during and after the referendum, including citizenship rights of Southerners living in the North, and vice versa.
- Push Sudanese parties to reach agreements on key post-referendum issues such as oil and wealth sharing and border demarcation, as well as citizenship and protections for human rights.
- Publically denounce all acts of violence against civilians and violations of agreements by all parties in Sudan, and hold North and South accountable by offering both incentives for peace, and consequences for backsliding.

Enhance aid, trade and development programs throughout Africa and the Caribbean

While legislation was signed into law to expand importation of goods into the United States from countries of sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and Central America in 2004, several NAACP concerns were left unanswered. Thus, while the NAACP is pleased to see the United States Congress and the Administration recognizing the importance and the potential of these two areas, we hope over the next few years to address concerns such as a protection of workers' rights and the forgiveness of African nations' debt.

Establish a Department of Peace

From the growing rate of domestic incarceration to increasing problems of international violence, the United States has no more serious problem in our midst than the problem of violence itself. Prison-building is our largest urban industry, and we spend over 400 billion dollars a year on military-related expenditures. Yet there is within the workings of the U.S. government, no platform from which to seriously wage peace. We place no institutional heft behind an effort to address the causal issues of violence, diminishing its psychological force before it erupts into material conflict. From child abuse to genocide, from the murder of one to the slaughter of thousands, it is increasingly senseless to merely wait until violence has erupted before addressing the deeper well from which it springs.

The problem of violence has many layers, as will the solution. While no one action -- governmental or otherwise -- will provide a single solution to such an entrenched and deeply rooted problem, we must treat the problem itself as an all-systems breakdown requiring an all-systems response. The campaign to establish a U.S. Department of Peace is only one aspect of a fundamental response to the problem of violence, but it is critical. It represents an important collective effort, as American citizens, to do everything we possibly can to save the world for our children's children.

Domestically, the Department of Peace will develop policies and allocate resources to effectively reduce the levels of domestic and gang violence, child abuse, and various other forms of societal discord. Internationally, the Department will advise the President and Congress on the most sophisticated ideas and techniques regarding peace-creation among nations.

Increase stability in and humanitarian assistance to Haiti:

The catastrophic earthquake that struck Haiti in January 2010 decimated the nation's infrastructure, institutions, service delivery systems and traumatized millions of Haitian families with a residual impact on Haitian communities in the U.S. In this hour of grave crisis, it is imperative that African Americans, other people of African descent and all people of goodwill mobilize/organize to relieve the enormous

suffering, aid the recovery process and commit to a long term effort to rebuild/reconstruct the first Black Republic as a beacon of hope and promise for the world.

The NAACP also strongly supports a creating a Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program (FRPP) to expedite parole into the U.S. of many of the 106,000 beneficiaries of *DHS-approved* family-based visa petitions. Such a program would be akin to the Cuban FRPP, under which tens of thousands of Cuban refugees have been allowed to join their families in the United States while awaiting their green card. Currently many of these individuals are forced to languish on wait lists in Haiti for any time between 2.5 to 11 years.

IMMIGRATION

Reform our nation's immigration laws and enact comprehensive immigration laws which retain entry into the U.S. from all regions of the world:

Americans deserve an immigration system that protects all workers and guarantees the safety of our nation without compromising our fundamental civil rights, human rights and civil liberties. Our nation's immigration policies must be consistent with deeply held NAACP humanitarian and civil rights values and with the need to treat all individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender or religion with respect and dignity. The overhaul of our nation's immigration law is long overdue, as the current system is a blueprint for exploitation of workers both foreign-born and native, is feeding a multi-million criminal enterprise.

The NAACP strongly believes that immigration "reform" cannot focus solely on enforcement but must address current and historic discrimination problems in our immigration system. The U.S. Government immigration reform efforts must be coupled with policies to promote meaningful job training programs, job creation programs and small business development, as well as federal education assistance so that all Americans regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion or national origin will have an opportunity to advance in living wage positions. The federal government must find a way to reward companies that do not decide to place profits above American-based employees and move their operations overseas, thereby removing jobs and other business opportunities from the United States.

There are a large number of immigrants of African descent from Haiti, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Asia, Central and South America and the Caribbean Islands, the NAACP affirms that any immigration reform must take into consideration the need for just treatment for all people throughout the African Diaspora. The NAACP calls on the United States Congress to increase the minimum wage by instituting a fair "livable wage" which ensures that all American workers, be offered jobs which include livable wages, healthcare benefits, and safe working conditions, legally compliant working hours as well as other benefits and protections afforded hard working American citizens. The NAACP rejects the principle that immigrants are taking jobs that Americans, specifically African American and other unemployed workers, do not want and calls on the federal government (U.S. President, Congress, U.S. Department of Labor) to identify the job categories that are currently unemployable as well as the geographical locales that are either currently experiencing or are likely susceptible to economic dislocation and high worker displacement and provide over five-years a \$3,000 annual tax credit (annually adjusted for inflation) to all American citizens employed in a job category or geographical locale identified by the federal government as an unemployable job category or geographical locale. The NAACP supports comprehensive, fair, and non-discriminatory legislative proposals that allow people to earn the right of citizenship through hard work, after the commitment of several years, and meeting several monetary, security and related requirements.

The NAACP strongly opposes any efforts to criminalize undocumented status of immigrants. The NAACP strongly opposes efforts to penalize individuals or institutions for providing non-compensatory humanitarian assistance to their fellow human beings, regardless of the citizenship status of the person in need of help. The NAACP supports safe, procedurally sound and humane methods to adequately

manage the migration of undocumented immigrants into the U.S. The NAACP supports that U.S. immigration policies shall be consistently applied to all immigrants regardless of national origin. The NAACP believes that immigration reform policies should emphasize family unification by not subtracting the visas given to immediate relatives of U.S. citizens from visas available to all family immigrants thereby reducing the family backlogs in which people wait for far too many years to reunite with their closest family members. The NAACP is opposed to proposals to allow the Department of Homeland Security to detain individuals indefinitely.

We are also stringently opposed to any practice or policy which mandates the separation of families. While there is no law requiring the separation of children from their families simply because their parents were seeking a better life in the U.S., there is no law against this brutality either. We need solid, durable, and clear-cut policy and we need it now.

Allow Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) status people to stay in the U.S.

“Temporary Protected Status” (TPS) and “Deferred Enforced Departure” (DED) visas are given to foreign nationals to live and work in the U.S. after their nation of origin has been hit by a natural disaster (such as an earthquake or hurricane) or man-made problem (such as civil war) or some other condition makes returning very dangerous (such as a cholera outbreak). There are currently at least 400,000 people living and working in the U.S. with TPS or DED status.

In the first two years of his presidency, President Trump begin proceedings to terminate most TPS and DED visas, despite continued dangers in their native countries. The NAACP, in contrast, supports legislative initiatives to provide these people continued visas and paths to citizenship.

Protect DREAMERS:

The NAACP supports the DREAM Act; legislation which impact nearly 800,000 people under the age of 31 who were brought to the US as children and grew up here; many have known no other country. The *DREAM Act* would allow these young people to earn lawful permanent residence and eventually American citizenship if they: are longtime residents who came to the U.S. as children; graduate from high school or obtain a GED; pursue higher education, work lawfully for at least three years, or serve in the military; pass security and law enforcement background checks and pay a reasonable application fee; demonstrate proficiency in the English language and a knowledge of United States history; and have not committed a felony or other serious crimes and do not pose a threat to our country.

UPDATED: 10/7/2020 12:40 PM