



Priorities for the Biden-Harris Transition

December 2020

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice (NETWORK) and our 100,000 supporters across the United States congratulate President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris on their election and look forward to working with this new administration.

Inspired by our founding Catholic Sisters, NETWORK has faithfully embodied Gospel justice for nearly 50 years by lobbying for critical federal programs that prioritize the common good and support people and families at the economic margins. We strive to ensure that every person can achieve economic security through livable incomes and meaningful employment and all have access to safe housing and equitable health care. We advocate for immigration policy that provides clear access to legal status and citizenship, and we support just tax policies and democratic processes, which support this vision of a government by and for the people.

Addressing the Suffering in our Nation

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the ways our nation fails to structure a society that cares for those most in need. In addition to the staggering loss of life that disproportionately affected the poor and communities of color and overwhelmed our healthcare system, the United States has lost millions of jobs, leaving people food insecure and unable to pay their mortgages or rent. Unfortunately, this is not a surprise. Over the years, we have witnessed the consistent and willful dismantling of our social safety net that caused our lack of preparedness and the current deluge of unmet need just as much as the COVID-19 virus.

The inequities and injustices inherent in our system cannot be solved in the first 100 days of a new administration. They require a commitment to systemic change from all branches of government and considerable time and resources to correct. Still, the immediate suffering of many can be alleviated through executive action and support for legislative action (**in bold**). We ask you to consider the following priorities:

COVID-19 Priorities

Meet the Basic Needs of All

- Implement a 6-month moratorium on foreclosures and evictions.
- Reject proposed rules that decrease food access.
- **Increase Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits by 15%.**
- Reduce the incarcerated population and, where possible, remove the barriers for formerly incarcerated people to access safety net programs.

Economic Assistance for All

- Provide additional cash relief payments.
- Remove Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) exclusions.
- Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC).
- Close paid leave loopholes that currently allow employers of over 500 employees to abstain from providing paid leave.
- Make structural Unemployment Insurance (UI) reforms to make benefits stronger and empower companies to retain workers.
- Enact a tiered system of expanded UI and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits tied to the health of the economy.

Access to Health Care for All

- Rescind DHS and DOS's public charge rules and replace them with Interim Final Rules based on the 1999 field guidance.
- Increase funding for penal institution hospitals and infirmaries and eliminate costs for inmate care.
- Coordinate access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other supplies to include the most vulnerable: the incarcerated, migrants in detention, and the Indian Health Service.
- Prioritize global vaccine distribution according to susceptibility of infection, to include prisoners, migrants, and underserved neighborhoods.

Additional Priorities

Racial Justice

- Create a White House Racial Equity Office within the Executive Office of the President.
- Appoint a Senior Adviser to the President on Racial Equity.

Immigration

- Restore Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in full and renew Temporary Protected Status (TPS) protections.
- Enact a 100-day moratorium on deportations and rescind Executive Order 13768 prioritizing undocumented individuals for removal and replace with guidelines prioritizing national and community security threats.
- End the Migrant Protection Protocols and restore our asylum laws, prioritizing asylum-seekers waiting in Mexico.

Strengthening Democracy

- Require federal agencies serving populations underrepresented on voter rolls to provide voter registration services to their clients.
- Establish an independent, central body within the executive branch that functions as a “people’s lobbyist office,” aimed at protecting the public good against regulatory capture and the prioritization of corporate interests.
- Issue an executive order establishing an advisory panel to recommend candidates committed to the mission of the Federal Election Commission and enforcement of campaign finance laws for nomination as commissioners.

Restorative Justice

- Immediately place a moratorium on federal executions and death penalty sentences.
- Reduce the prison population through the application of the Justice Collaborative's Decarceral Guidelines by releasing elderly, medically vulnerable, and those within 18 months of release and transfer those in pretrial detention to home confinement.
- Establish federal guidelines for law enforcement prohibiting chokeholds and establishing a clear national standard for use of force in policing.
- Re-establish "patterns and practice" investigations of state, local, and federal law enforcement agencies to ensure compliance with civil rights standards.

Health Care

- Protect and strengthen the Affordable Care Act (ACA) by withdrawing lawsuits threatening the ACA, eliminating junk plans, and expanding enrollment opportunities.
- Withdraw harmful Medicaid policies and encourage Medicaid expansion in the states.

Economic Justice

- Enact an executive order to raise the wage of government contract workers to \$15 per hour.
- Direct the IRS and Treasury, in coordination with the DOJ Civil Rights division, to assess the impact of the tax code on racial inequities and ensure that tax enforcement does not vary by race or ethnicity.
- Re-prioritize IRS enforcement resources to collect existing tax liability of high-income entities.