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Bernie Sanders

On the Issues

The American people must make a fundamental decision. Do we continue the 40-year decline of our middle class and the growing gap between the very rich and everyone else, or do we fight for a progressive economic agenda that creates jobs, raises wages, protects the environment and provides health care for all? Are we prepared to take on the enormous economic and political power of the billionaire class, or do we continue to slide into economic and political oligarchy? These are the most important questions of our time, and how we answer them will determine the future of our country.

March 2016

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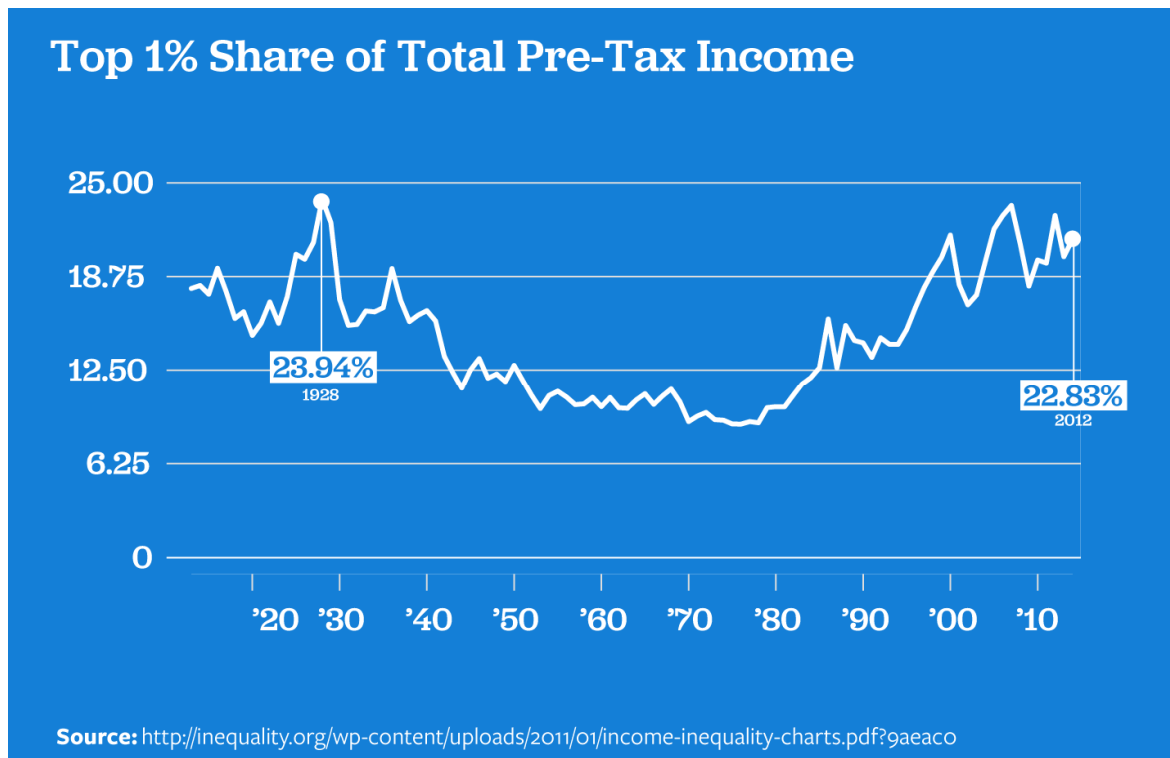
<https://berniesanders.com/issues/income-and-wealth-inequality>

Income and Wealth Inequality

Today, we live in the richest country in the history of the world, but that reality means little because much of that wealth is controlled by a tiny handful of individuals.

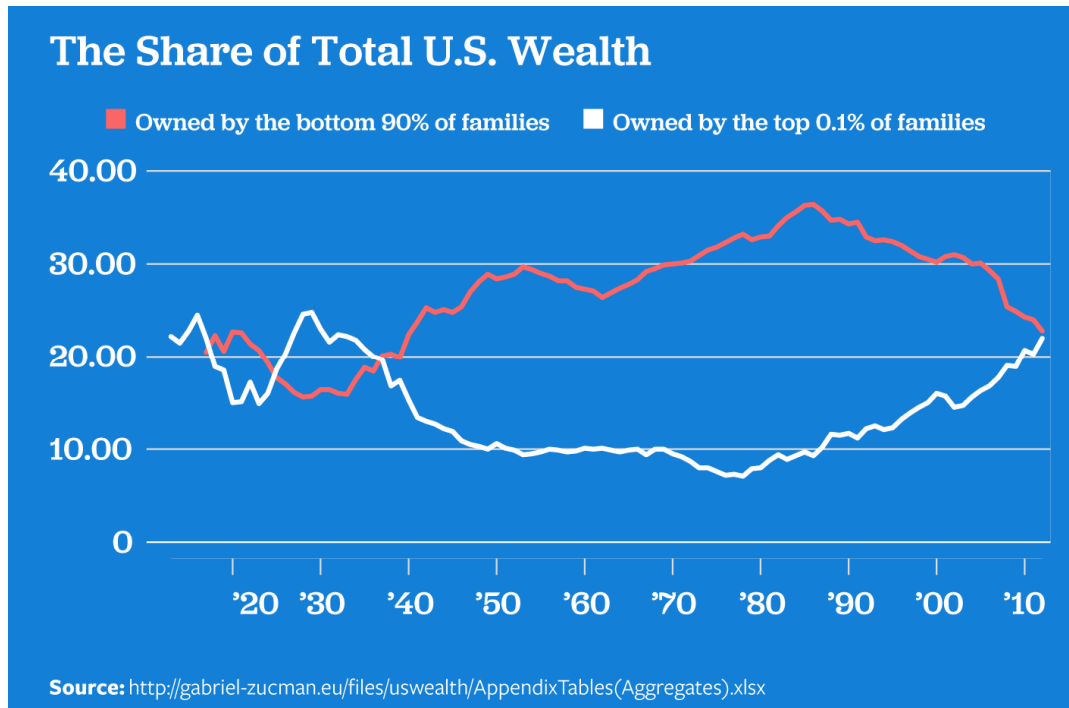
The issue of wealth and income inequality is the great moral issue of our time, it is the great economic issue of our time, and it is the great political issue of our time.

America now has [more wealth and income inequality](#) than any major developed country on earth, and the [gap between the very rich and everyone else](#) is wider than at any time since the 1920s.



The reality is that since the mid-1980s there has been an enormous transfer of wealth from the middle class and the poor to the wealthiest people in this country. That is the Robin Hood principle in reverse. That is unacceptable and that has got to change.

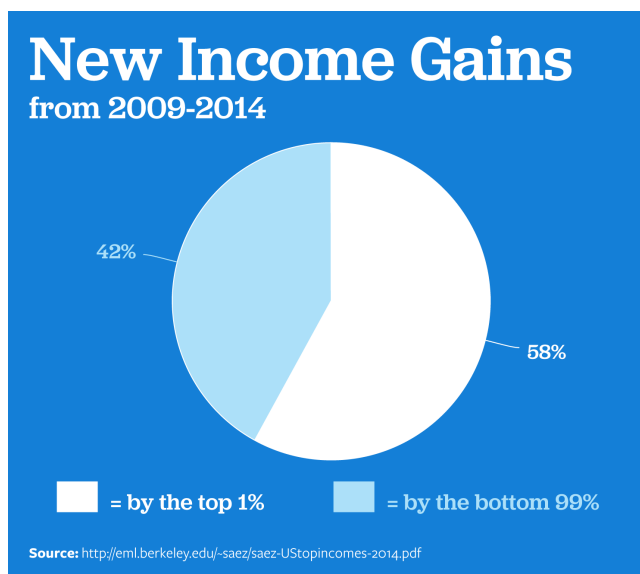
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There is something profoundly wrong when the top one-tenth of one percent owns almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent.

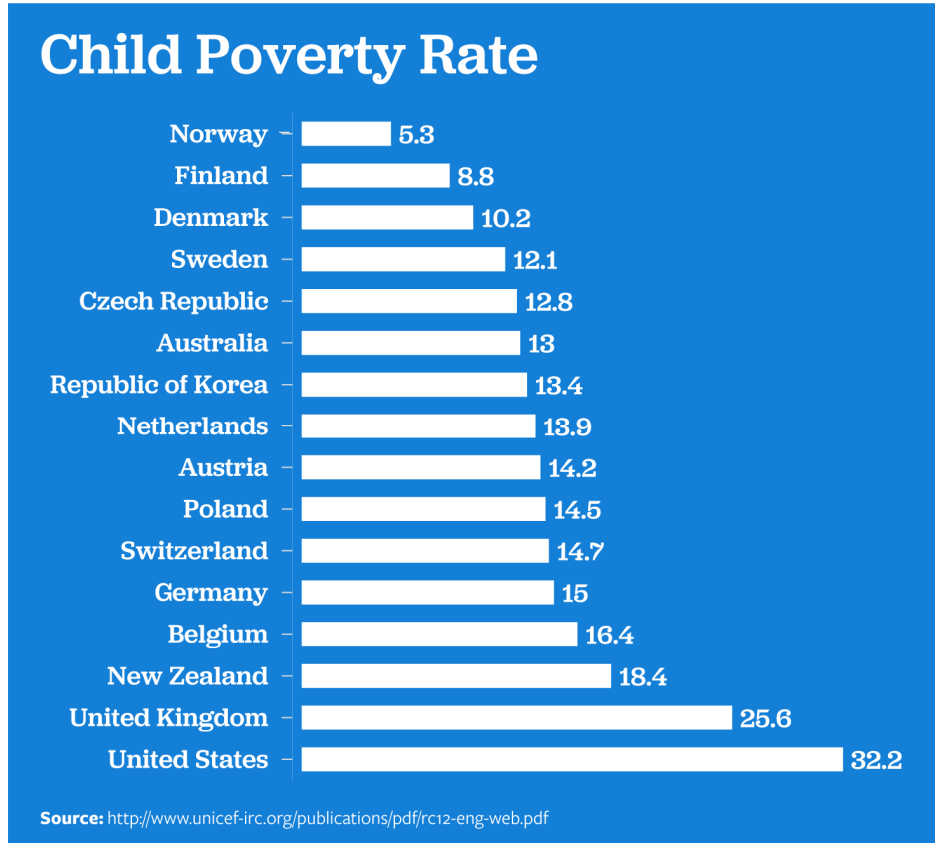
“Just as the commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill’ sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say ‘thou shalt not’ to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills. How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points?” – Pope Francis

There is something profoundly wrong when 58 percent of all new income since the Wall Street crash has gone to the top one percent.



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Despite huge advancements in technology and productivity, millions of Americans are working longer hours for lower wages. The real median income of male workers is \$783 less than it was 42 years ago; while the real median income of female workers is over \$1,300 less than it was in 2007. That is unacceptable and that has got to change.



There is something **profoundly wrong** when we have a proliferation of millionaires and billionaires at the same time as millions of Americans work **longer hours for lower wages** and we have the **highest childhood poverty rate** of nearly any developed country on earth.

There is something profoundly wrong when one family owns more wealth than the bottom 130 million Americans.

The reality is that for the past 40 years, Wall Street and the billionaire class has rigged the rules to redistribute wealth and income to the wealthiest and most powerful people of this country.

This campaign is sending a message to the billionaire class: “you can’t have it all.” You can’t get huge tax breaks while children in this country go hungry. You can’t continue sending our jobs to China while millions are looking for work. You can’t hide your profits in the Cayman Islands and other tax havens, while there are massive unmet needs on every corner of this nation. Your greed has got to end. You cannot take advantage of all the benefits of America, if you refuse to accept your responsibilities as Americans.

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As president, Senator Bernie Sanders will reduce income and wealth inequality by:

1. Demanding that the wealthy and large corporations pay their fair share in taxes. As president, Sen. Sanders will stop corporations from shifting their profits and jobs overseas to avoid paying U.S. income taxes. He will create a progressive estate tax on the top 0.3 percent of Americans who inherit more than \$3.5 million. He will also enact a tax on Wall Street speculators who caused millions of Americans to lose their jobs, homes, and life savings.
2. Increasing the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$15 an hour by 2020. In the year 2015, no one who works 40 hours a week should be living in poverty.
3. Putting at least 13 million Americans to work by investing \$1 trillion over five years towards rebuilding our crumbling roads, bridges, railways, airports, public transit systems, ports, dams, wastewater plants, and other infrastructure needs.
4. Reversing trade policies like NAFTA, CAFTA, and PNTR with China that have driven down wages and caused the loss of millions of jobs. If corporate America wants us to buy their products they need to manufacture those products in this country, not in China or other low-wage countries.
5. Creating 1 million jobs for disadvantaged young Americans by investing \$5.5 billion in a youth jobs program. Today, the youth unemployment rate is off the charts. We have got to end this tragedy by making sure teenagers and young adults have the jobs they need to move up the economic ladder.
6. Fighting for pay equity by signing the Paycheck Fairness Act into law. It is an outrage that women earn just 78 cents for every dollar a man earns.
7. Making tuition free at public colleges and universities throughout America. Everyone in this country who studies hard should be able to go to college regardless of income.
8. Expanding Social Security by lifting the cap on taxable income above \$250,000. At a time when the senior poverty rate is going up, we have got to make sure that every American can retire with dignity and respect.
9. Guaranteeing healthcare as a right of citizenship by enacting a Medicare for all single-payer healthcare system. It's time for the U.S. to join every major industrialized country on earth and provide universal healthcare to all.
10. Requiring employers to provide at least 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave; two weeks of paid vacation; and 7 days of paid sick days. Real family values are about making sure that parents have the time they need to bond with their babies and take care of their children and relatives when they get ill.
11. Enacting a universal childcare and prekindergarten program. Every psychologist understands that the most formative years for a human being is from the ages 0-3. We have got to make sure every family in America has the opportunity to send their kids to a high quality childcare and pre-K program.

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12. Making it easier for workers to join unions by fighting for the Employee Free Choice Act. One of the most significant reasons for the 40-year decline in the middle class is that the rights of workers to collectively bargain for better wages and benefits have been severely undermined.
13. Breaking up huge financial institutions so that they are no longer too big to fail. Seven years ago, the taxpayers of this country bailed out Wall Street because they were too big to fail. Yet, 3 out of the 4 largest financial institutions are 80 percent bigger today than before we bailed them out. Sen. Sanders has introduced legislation to break these banks up. As president, he will fight to sign this legislation into law.

VIDEO: Bernie Brief: Income Inequality | Ep. 1
www.youtube.com/watch?v=VePpQBCbKBw

<https://berniesanders.com/issues/its-time-to-make-college-tuition-free-and-debt-free>

It's Time to Make College Tuition Free and Debt Free

In a highly competitive global economy, we need the best-educated workforce in the world. It is insane and counter-productive to the best interests of our country and our future, that hundreds of thousands of bright young people cannot afford to go to college, and that millions of others leave school with a mountain of debt that burdens them for decades. That shortsighted path to the future must end.

As President, Bernie Sanders will fight to make sure that every American who studies hard in school can go to college regardless of how much money their parents make and without going deeply into debt.

Here are the six steps that Bernie will take as President to make college debt free:

1. MAKE TUITION FREE AT PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

This is not a radical idea. Last year, Germany eliminated tuition because they believed that charging students \$1,300 per year was discouraging Germans from going to college. Next year, Chile will do the same. Finland, Norway, Sweden and many other countries around the world also offer free college to all of their citizens. If other countries can take this action, so can the United States of America.

In fact, it's what many of our colleges and universities used to do. The University of California system offered free tuition at its schools until the 1980s. In 1965, average tuition at a four-year public university was just \$243 and many of the best colleges – including the City University of New York – did not charge any tuition at all. The Sanders plan would make tuition free at public colleges and universities throughout the country.

2. STOP THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FROM MAKING A PROFIT ON STUDENT LOANS.

Over the next decade, it has been estimated that the federal government will make a profit of over \$110 billion on student loan programs. This is morally wrong and it is bad economics. As President, Sen. Sanders will prevent the federal government from profiteering on the backs of college students and use this money instead to significantly lower student loan interest rates.

3. SUBSTANTIALLY CUT STUDENT LOAN INTEREST RATES.

Under the Sanders plan, the formula for setting student loan interest rates would go back to where it was in 2006. If this plan were in effect today, interest rates on undergraduate loans would drop from 4.29% to just 2.37%.

4. ALLOW AMERICANS TO REFINANCE STUDENT LOANS AT TODAY'S LOW INTEREST RATES.

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It makes no sense that you can get an auto loan today with an interest rate of 2.5%, but millions of college graduates are forced to pay interest rates of 5-7% or more for decades. Under the Sanders plan, Americans would be able to refinance their student loans at today's low interest rates.

5. *ALLOW STUDENTS TO USE NEED-BASED FINANCIAL AID AND WORK STUDY PROGRAMS TO MAKE COLLEGE DEBT FREE.*

The Sanders plan would require public colleges and universities to meet 100% of the financial needs of the lowest-income students. Low-income students would be able to use federal, state and college financial aid to cover room and board, books and living expenses. And Sanders would more than triple the federal work study program to build valuable career experience that will help them after they graduate.

6. *FULLY PAID FOR BY IMPOSING A TAX ON WALL STREET SPECULATORS.*

The cost of this \$75 billion a year plan is fully paid for by imposing a tax of a fraction of a percent on Wall Street speculators who nearly destroyed the economy seven years ago. More than 1,000 economists have endorsed a tax on Wall Street speculation and today some 40 countries throughout the world have imposed a similar tax including Britain, Germany, France, Switzerland, and China. If the taxpayers of this country could bailout Wall Street in 2008, we can make public colleges and universities tuition free and debt free throughout the country.

<https://berniesanders.com/issues/money-in-politics>

Getting Big Money Out of Politics and Restoring Democracy

On November 19, 1863, standing on the bloodstained battlefield of Gettysburg, Abraham Lincoln delivered one of the most significant and best remembered speeches in American history. At the conclusion of the Gettysburg Address, Lincoln stated “that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain...that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom...and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

In the year 2016, with a political campaign finance system that is corrupt and increasingly controlled by billionaires and special interests, I fear very much that, in fact, government of the people, by the people, and for the people is beginning to perish in the United States of America.

We cannot allow that to happen.

Six years ago, as a result of the disastrous *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision, by a 5-to-4 vote, the U.S. Supreme Court essentially said to the wealthiest people in this country: you already own much of the American economy. Now, we are going to give you the opportunity to purchase the U.S. Government, the White House, the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House, Governors’ seats, legislatures, and State judicial branches as well.

The *Citizens United* decision hinges on the absurd notion that money is speech, corporations are people, and giving huge piles of undisclosed cash to politicians in exchange for access and influence does not constitute corruption.

During this campaign cycle, billions of dollars from the wealthiest people in this country are already flooding the political process. Super PACs – a direct outgrowth of the *Citizens United* decision – are enabling the wealthiest people and the largest corporations in this country to contribute unlimited amounts of money to campaigns.

The situation has become so absurd that super PACs, which theoretically operate independently of the actual candidates, have more money and more influence over campaigns than the candidates themselves.

We know, for example, that the Koch brothers, the second wealthiest family in America, have made public that they and their network intend to spend at least \$750 million on politics during this election. This is more money than either the Democratic Party or the Republican Party will spend.

Let’s be honest and acknowledge what we are talking about. We are talking about a rapid movement in this country toward a political system in which a handful of very wealthy people and special interests will determine who gets elected or who does not get elected. That is not what this country is supposed to be about. That was not Abraham Lincoln’s vision of a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

As former President Jimmy Carter recently said, unlimited money in politics, “violates the essence of what made America a great country in its political system. Now, it’s just an

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oligarchy, with unlimited political bribery being the essence of getting the nominations for president or to elect the president. And the same thing applies to governors and U.S. Senators and congress members. So now we've just seen a complete subversion of our political system as a payoff to major contributors, who want and expect and sometimes get favors for themselves after the election's over."

The need for real campaign finance reform is not a progressive issue. It is not a conservative issue. It is an American issue. It is an issue that should concern all Americans, regardless of their political point of view, who wish to preserve the essence of the longest standing democracy in the world, a government that represents all of the people and not a handful of powerful and wealthy special interests.

Real campaign finance reform must happen as soon as possible. That is why we must overturn, through a constitutional amendment, the disastrous *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision as well as the *Buckley v. Valeo* decision. That is why we need to pass legislation to require wealthy individuals and corporations who make large campaign contributions to disclose where their money is going. More importantly, it is why we need to move toward the public funding of elections.

Our vision for American democracy should be a nation in which all people, regardless of their income, can participate in the political process, can run for office without begging for contributions from the wealthy and the powerful.

Our vision for the future of this country should be one in which candidates are not telling billionaires at special forums what they can do for them.

Our vision for democracy should be one in which candidates are speaking to the vast majority of our people – working people, the middle class, low-income people, the elderly, the children, the sick, and the poor – and discussing with them their ideas as to how we can improve lives for all of the people in this country.

As President, I will:

- Only appoint Supreme Court justices who will make it a priority to overturn *Citizens United* and who understand that corruption in politics means more than just quid pro quo.
- Fight to pass a constitutional amendment making it clear that Congress and the states have the power to regulate money in elections. I have been a proud sponsor and leading champion of such an amendment in the Senate.
- Fight for a publicly financed, transparent system of campaign financing that amplifies small donations, along the lines of the Fair Elections Now Act that I have been pleased to co-sponsor, and an effective public financing system for president.
- Insist on complete transparency regarding the funding of campaigns, including through disclosure of contributions to outside spending groups, via legislation, action by the Securities and Exchange Commission, Federal Election Commission, and Federal Communication Commission, and an executive order requiring government contractors to disclose their political spending.

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- Fight to eliminate super PACs and other outside spending abuses.
- Work to aggressively enforce campaign finance rules.

Getting big money out of politics is vital, but much more needs to be done to restore our democracy. Notably, we must ensure that all Americans are guaranteed an effective right to vote. Campaign finance reform must be accompanied by efforts to strengthen voting rights – restoring the full protections of the Voting Rights Act, expanding early voting and vote-by-mail, implementing automatic voter registration, ending gerrymandering and making Election Day a national holiday, among others. When nearly two-thirds of the electorate did not vote in 2014 midterm elections, it is clear we need radical change to bring more people into the political system. Our democracy cannot be truly representative unless elected officials hear from all of their constituents, not just the wealthy and the powerful.

Returning to a government of, by, and for the people – not the billionaires and giant corporations – will not be easy. We need not some, but all of the measures highlighted here. As president, I will be able to accomplish some of these on my own. But others will require agreement of Congress or, in the case of a constitutional amendment, two-thirds of the Congress and three-quarters of the states. We aren't going to get there just by electing a president who believes in and is committed to restoring our democracy. We're going to get there by building a movement – a movement with enough power not only to elect a president but to insist that all of our elected representatives return power to the people, a movement that not only identifies the deep corruption of our politics but rejects cynicism and instead insists on solutions, action and accountability.

<https://berniesanders.com/issues/creating-jobs-rebuilding-america>

Creating Jobs Rebuilding America

Our nation's infrastructure is collapsing, and the American people know it. Every day, they drive on roads with unforgiving potholes and over bridges that are in disrepair. They wait in traffic jams and ride in railroads and subways that are overcrowded. They see airports bursting at the seams.

For too many years, we have dramatically underfunded the physical infrastructure that our economy depends on. That is why I have proposed the Rebuild America Act, to invest \$1 trillion over five years to modernize our infrastructure. It would be paid for by closing loopholes that allow profitable corporations to avoid paying taxes by, among other things, shifting their profits to the Cayman Islands and other offshore tax havens.

Importantly, the Rebuild America Act will support more than thirteen million good-paying jobs – jobs that our economy desperately needs.

— Senator Bernie Sanders

PUTTING 13 MILLION AMERICANS TO WORK

A PLAN TO REBUILD AMERICA

For most of our history, the U.S. proudly led the world in building infrastructure that grew our economy, gave our businesses a competitive advantage, and provided our workers a decent standard of living. Sadly, that is no longer the case.

Today, the U.S. spends less than 2 percent of GDP on infrastructure, less than at any point in the last twenty years. Meanwhile, Europe spends close to twice our rate, and China spends close to four times our rate. It is no wonder the World Economic Forum's *Global Competitiveness Report* now ranks our overall infrastructure at 12th in the world – down from 7th place just a decade ago.

The results are all around us:

- One of every 9 bridges in our country is structurally deficient, and nearly a quarter are functionally obsolete. Almost one-third of our roads are in poor or mediocre condition, and more than 42 percent of all urban highways are congested. Transit systems across the country struggling to address deferred maintenance and 45% of American households lack any meaningful access to transit at all.

Senator Sanders' Rebuild America Act would more than double the current level of funding for the highway and transit accounts of the Highway Trust Fund, and would create a National Infrastructure Bank to leverage private capital to finance more than \$125 billion in new projects.

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- Much of our nation's rail network is obsolete, even though our energy-efficient railroads move more freight than ever and Amtrak's ridership has never been higher. While we debate the merits of high-speed rail, countries across Europe and Asia have gone ahead and built vast high-speed rail networks with trains that run

at 125-200 miles per hour. Meanwhile, the Acela – Amtrak's fastest train – travels at an average speed of just 65 miles per hour.

The Rebuild America Act will invest \$75 billion to upgrade our passenger and freight rail lines, to move people and goods more quickly and efficiently. It's time for America to catch up with the rest of the world.

- America's airports are bursting at the seams as the numbers of passengers and cargo have grown to all-time highs. Moreover – and rather incredibly – our airports still rely on antiquated 1960s radar technology, because we have chronically underfunded a new satellite-based air traffic control system.

The Rebuild America Act will invest \$12.5 billion to improve airports across the country, and \$17.5 billion to bring our air traffic control system into the 21st century by accelerating deployment of NextGen technology to make our skies safer and our airports more efficient.

- Bottlenecks at our marine seaports – which handle 95% of all overseas imports and exports – prevent goods from getting to their destinations on time. The same is true for our inland waterways – which carry the equivalent of 50 million truck trips of goods each year.

The Rebuild America Act will invest an additional \$15 billion over five years to clear the backlog of projects to improve inland waterways, coastal harbors and shipping channels. Our businesses simply can't compete in the global economy if they can't move their goods and supplies to, from and within our country more efficiently.

- Right now, more than 4,000 of the nation's 84,000 dams are considered deficient, and one of every eleven levees have been rated as "likely to fail" during a major flood.

The Rebuild America Act will invest \$12 billion a year to repair and improve the high-hazard dams that provide flood control, drinking water, irrigation, hydropower, and recreation across the country; and the flood levees that protect our cities and our farms.

- Much of our drinking water infrastructure is nearing the end of its useful life – we lose more than 2 trillion gallons of treated drinking water each year through leaking pipes, faulty meters and nearly a quarter-million water main breaks. Our wastewater treatment plants aren't in much better shape: almost ten billion gallons of raw sewage are dumped into our nation's waterways each year when plants fail or pipes burst.

The Rebuild America Act will invest \$6 billion a year so states can improve the drinking water systems that provide Americans with clean, safe water; and \$6 billion a year to improve the wastewater plants and stormwater infrastructure that protect water quality in our nation's rivers and lakes.

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- America's aging electrical grid – which consists of a patchwork of power generation, transmission, and distribution facilities, some of which date back to the early 1900s – simply isn't up to 21st century challenges, including resiliency to cyber-attacks. It is no wonder the World Economic Forum ranks our grid at just 24th in the world in terms of reliability, just behind Barbados.

The Rebuild America Act will invest \$10 billion a year for power transmission and distribution modernization projects to improve the reliability and resiliency of our ever more complex electric power grid. This investment will also position our grid to accept new sources of locally generated renewable energy, and it will address critical vulnerabilities to cyber-attacks.

- The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development ranks the U.S. 16th in the world in terms of broadband access. We are only marginally better in terms of average broadband speed – 12th in the world. Today, businesses, schools and families in Bucharest, Romania have access to much faster internet than most of the United States. That is unacceptable and has got to change.

The Rebuild America Act will invest \$5 billion a year to expand high-speed broadband networks in under-served and unserved areas, and to boost speeds and capacity all across the country. Internet access is no longer a luxury: it is essential for 21st century commerce, education, telemedicine, and public safety.

If \$1 trillion over five years sounds like a lot of money, consider that the American Society of Civil Engineers says we need to invest \$3.6 trillion by 2020 just to get our nation's infrastructure to a state of good repair. That is \$1.6 trillion *short* of current spending levels.

Moreover, there is an economic cost of not acting. Several studies have concluded that our deteriorating infrastructure already costs our economy close to \$200 billion per year.

Further, investing in infrastructure is not just about “bricks and mortar.” At its core, it is about jobs and the economy.

While the economy has improved significantly since the worst days of the recession, our nation still faces a major jobs crisis. We need to create millions of decent paying jobs, and we need to create them now. And infrastructure spending is one of the best ways to do just that.

The Rebuild America Act would put more than thirteen million Americans to work in decent-paying jobs. These are jobs in sectors of the economy that haven't fully recovered from the recession, like construction, and they are jobs that cannot be shipped offshore or outsourced overseas.

Moreover, each and every project will require equipment, supplies and services – from architects, engineers, and building materials and supply companies. Thirteen million Americans will spend their hard-earned salaries in their communities, supporting restaurants and local stores.

It is no wonder groups from across the political spectrum – from organized labor to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce – agree that investing in infrastructure makes sound economic sense. When spending goes up, both GDP and household incomes grow. Even the

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International Monetary Fund – long a proponent of economic austerity – now says that well-designed infrastructure projects spur almost \$3 in economic output for each dollar spent.

Every family, every community and every business relies on our nations' physical infrastructure to survive and to thrive. We expect that our roads, bridges and trains will get us to our destination without injury, and that our airports are modern and safe. We expect that our tap water is clean, and that our dams and levees won't burst when it rains.

The good news is that it is not too late to get back on track. Let's make a significant investment in the physical infrastructure on which our economy and our society depend upon. Let's create the millions of jobs we desperately need by making our tax code fair and just. Let's Rebuild America

— Senator Bernie Sanders

<https://berniesanders.com/issues/a-living-wage>

A Living Wage

Millions of Americans are working for totally inadequate wages. We must ensure that no full-time worker lives in poverty. The current federal minimum wage is starvation pay and must become a living wage. We must increase it to \$15 an hour over the next several years.

Join Bernie's campaign to stand up for higher wages for American workers.

We must also establish equal pay for women. It's unconscionable that women earn less than men for performing the same work.

Millions of American employees have been working 50 or 60 hours a week while receiving no overtime pay. That is why Bernie has been encouraging the Obama Administration to ensure that more workers receive overtime pay protection. The Administration's new rule extending that protection to everyone making less than \$947 a week is a step in the right direction. It is a win for our economy and for our workers.

Lastly, we must support and strengthen the labor movement to ensure that workers have a say in their own economic futures. That's why Bernie has been a strong supporter of the Employee Free Choice Act, which would make it easier for workers to organize and bargain collectively.

Key Actions

- Proposed a national \$15 per hour minimum wage.
- Led the effort to increase the minimum wage for federal contract workers to \$10.10 an hour.
- Introduced the "Workplace Democracy Act" to strengthen the role of unions and the voices of working people on the job.
- As mayor of Burlington, was a strong collaborator with unions.
- Leading the fight in the Senate for a \$15 an hour minimum wage and a union for fast food workers, and federal contract workers.

<https://berniesanders.com/people-before-polluters>
<https://berniesanders.com/issues/climate-change>

#PeopleBeforePolluters

Combating Climate Change to Save the Planet

The scientists are virtually unanimous that climate change is real, is caused by human activity and is already causing devastating problems in the United States and around the world. And, they tell us, if we do not act boldly the situation will only become much worse in years to come in terms of drought, floods, extreme storms and acidification of the oceans. Sadly, we now have a Republican Party that is more concerned about protecting the profits of Exxon, BP and Shell and the coal industry than protecting the planet. While fossil fuel companies are raking in record profits, climate change ravages our planet and our people – all because the wealthiest industry in the history of our planet has bribed politicians into ignoring science.

Policy initiatives

Combating Climate Change to Save the Planet

<https://berniesanders.com/people-before-polluters/billionaire-fossil-fuel-lobby>

Reclaim Our Democracy From the Billionaire Fossil Fuel Lobby

The fossil fuel industry spends billions and billions of dollars lobbying and buying candidates to block virtually all progress on climate change. At the national level where companies have to report what they spend on lobbying and campaign contributions, the oil companies, coal companies and electric utilities spent a staggering \$2.26 billion in federal lobbying since 2009 and another \$330 million in federal campaign contributions. Even in Washington, that's a lot of money.

But that's just the part we know about. Thanks to the disastrous Citizens United Supreme Court decision, the fossil fuel industry can pour unlimited amounts of money into the political system without having to disclose how much or where they spend it.

So what does the fossil fuel industry get in exchange for all that money? They get friends who help them keep \$135 billion dollars in tax subsidies and corporate welfare over the next decade. They write legislation to build the Keystone XL pipeline. They block efforts to move us beyond oil by blocking the development and deployment of clean, sustainable energy.

This makes it harder to take action to fight climate change. But the solutions are possible. Together there is nothing we can't achieve.

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As president, Bernie will:

- Ban fossil fuels lobbyists from working in the White House. Massive lobbying and unlimited super PAC donations by the fossil fuel industry gives these profitable companies disproportionate influence on our elected leaders. This practice is business as usual in Washington and it is not acceptable. Heavy-handed lobbying causes climate change skepticism. It has no place in the executive office.
- End the huge subsidies that benefit fossil fuel companies. When fossil-fuel companies are racking up record profits, it is absurd to provide massive taxpayer subsidies to pad their already enormous earnings. After all, it is immoral that some in Congress advocate harsh cuts in Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security while those same people vote to preserve billions in tax breaks for the most profitable corporations in America.
- Create a national environmental and climate justice plan that recognizes the heightened public health risks faced by low-income and minority communities. Low-income and minority neighborhoods will continue to be the hardest hit if we don't act to stop climate change now. Ten years ago, Hurricane Katrina decimated the Gulf Coast, flooding 80 percent of the city of New Orleans. Some areas of the city were submerged in as much as 10 feet of water, and 28 percent of residents had no way to leave the city. Almost 100,000 African American residents who left New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina never returned. The reality of the impacts of the storm on the African American community in New Orleans exposed the broader trend that low-income and minority communities face the brunt of climate change impacts first and worst.
- Bring climate deniers to justice so we can aggressively tackle climate change. It is an embarrassment that Republican politicians, with few exceptions, refuse to even recognize the reality of climate change, let alone are prepared to do anything about it. The reality is that the fossil fuel industry is to blame for much of the climate change skepticism in America. Bernie recently called for the Department of Justice to investigate Exxon Mobil, which may have not only known about the dangers of climate change, but has spent millions of dollars to spread doubt about the causes and impacts of burning fossil fuels.
- Fight to overturn Citizens United. In a 5-4 decision in 2010 in the Citizens United case, the Supreme Court opened the floodgates for corporations and the super wealthy to spend unlimited and undisclosed money to buy our elected officials. The Supreme Court essentially declared that corporations, including fossil fuel corporations, have the same rights as natural-born human beings. This decision has enabled billionaires and special interests to increasingly control the political campaign finance system, and amounts to legalized bribery.

Bernie Sanders — On the Issues

Bernie's Record:

Bernie introduced a constitutional amendment that prohibits for-profit corporations from making contributions or expenditures into political campaigns. In other words, Bernie's amendment reaffirms what's already in the Constitution: the right to vote belongs to people, and not corporate entities whose money is drowning out the rest of us.

- Back legislation to publicly finance elections. Bernie wants to move toward public funding of elections to promote a more even playing field where anyone can run for office without having to beg for money from the wealthy and the powerful. Public funding of elections increases voter participation, helps lower the influence of outside money and lowers the amount of time politicians spend fundraising, allowing them to implement solutions, as they were elected to do. He envisions a future of inclusivity that would restore our American democracy by ensuring each citizen has equal power in determining the future leaders of our nation.

<https://berniesanders.com/people-before-polluters/accelerate-a-just-transition-away-from-fossil-fuels/>

Accelerate a Just Transition Away From Fossil Fuels

Scientists warn us if we continue burning fossil fuels, we will experience cataclysmic change, in terms of more disease, more hunger, more drought, more famine, rising sea levels, more floods, more ocean acidification, more extreme weather disturbances and more human suffering. That means we must leave the vast majority of global reserves of coal, natural gas and oil in the ground.

Bernie's Record:

Bernie recently co-sponsored the Keep It in the Ground Act to ban future fossil fuel leases on our public lands. His legislation would keep over 90 percent of the potential carbon emissions from fossil fuels on our federal lands and waters underground forever.

Bernie believes we must transition away from fossil fuel consumption to prevent the worst impacts of climate change. But our transition away from fossil fuels must be fair to those currently working in the energy sector, which means those workers and their families must be able to depend on safe, living-wage jobs.

As president, Bernie will:

- Embrace a science-based standard for carbon pollution emissions reductions. We have a very limited window of time to transition away from fossil fuels toward clean energy for all Americans to prevent a global temperature increase that will cause cataclysmic impacts. Bernie knows that to maintain a safe and healthy planet for our kids and grandchildren we must listen to the scientists who say we must decrease carbon pollution emissions by at least 80 percent from 1990 levels by 2050.
- Put a price on carbon. Bernie agrees with leading economists on both ends of the political spectrum: a tax on carbon is one of the most straightforward and cost-effective strategies for quickly fighting climate change.

Bernie's Record:

Bernie is introducing the gold standard climate change bill that will tax polluters causing the climate crisis and return billions of dollars to working families to ensure the fossil fuel companies don't subject Americans to unfair rate hikes. The carbon tax will also protect low-income and minority communities that are most impacted by the transformation of our energy system and protect the most vulnerable communities in the country suffering the ravages of climate change.

- Protect the health of our children. Kids are uniquely threatened by air pollution from sources like coal plants and oil refineries. Children's lungs are more sensitive to air pollution than adults. Climate change exacerbates existing air pollution problems, which will only increase the health impacts on children, especially those with respiratory diseases like asthma. As a father of four and a grandfather of seven, Bernie cares about leaving clean air and a healthy, livable planet for all of our kids and grandchildren.

Bernie Sanders — On the Issues

- Create clean, domestic energy alternatives to power our cars and trucks. The transportation sector accounts for about 26 percent of carbon pollution emissions. We must move our transportation sector beyond oil by running our cars and trucks on electricity generated by solar and wind power. We need efficient public transportation, advanced renewable fuels and high-speed passenger and cargo rail.
- Ban Arctic oil drilling. Bernie knows that drilling in the Arctic Circle and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge at a time when we face a serious climate emergency is unthinkable. Research shows that drilling in the Arctic is inconsistent with efforts to prevent catastrophic global temperature increases. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which spans 19.6 million acres in Alaska and boasts the greatest biodiversity of any protected area north of the Arctic Circle, is too precious to put at risk from the detrimental consequences of oil production and extraction.
- Ban offshore drilling. If we are serious about moving beyond oil toward energy independence, lowering the cost of energy, combatting climate change and cutting carbon pollution emissions, then we must ban offshore drilling. If there is a lesson to be learned from the 2010 BP oil spill disaster, it is that Congress must not open new areas to offshore oil drilling.
- Stop dirty pipeline projects like the Keystone XL. Back in August 2011, Bernie was the first national politician to publicly oppose Keystone XL, because he saw that it would move us in exactly the wrong direction, toward greater dependence on fossil fuels, specifically tar sands oil, but also on one of the dirtiest and most expensive fossil fuels imaginable. Bernie was again the first presidential candidate to oppose the Bakken oil pipeline that would cross Iowa and the first to oppose the Northeast Energy Direct Pipeline that would bring fracked natural gas through New Hampshire. We need to invest in clean energy infrastructure, not lock ourselves into long-term payments and significant carbon pollution emissions for pipelines that could cause disastrous oil spills.
- Stop exports of liquefied natural gas and crude oil. The Department of Energy has found that exporting even half of the natural gas already approved for export could raise U.S. prices by up to 54 percent. Oil and natural gas exports must be in the interest of consumers, the economy, our manufacturing sector and national security – not merely the interest of fossil fuel companies' bottom line. Especially while we still import oil, we should be transitioning toward clean, sustainable energy instead of incentivizing more extraction and consumption of fossil fuels.
- Stand with Vermont and other states to ban fracking for natural gas. Fracking threatens our air and water. Disposal of wastewater from fracking causes earthquakes. Oklahoma became the number one place for earthquakes on Earth this year because gas companies inject fracking fluid back into the ground. Fracking is a large-scale industrial process that doesn't belong in anyone's backyard or deserve exemption from laws that protect the health of our children. That's why communities all over the country from New York to California and Texas to Colorado have stood up to the oil and gas industry and said they don't want fracking in their backyards. Bernie was very proud when Vermont became the first state to ban fracking. We have clean energy solutions to climate change, and fracking is not one of them.

Bernie Sanders — On the Issues

- Ban mountaintop removal coal mining and invest in Appalachian communities. Across the Appalachian Mountain Range, coal companies are blowing up entire mountaintops to get at the thin coal seams below. The communities in the region are paying for this destructive practice in their health, their culture and their natural heritage. Bernie is in staunch opposition to this dirty and damaging practice and believes we must invest in Appalachian communities to help them transition to a clean, prosperous, and healthy future.
- Close the loopholes that allow the chemical, oil and gas industries to pollute our air and water. Bernie served as mayor of Burlington, Vermont, which sits on one of the largest freshwater lakes in the United States, Lake Champlain. Bernie understands the importance of clean water practices and recognizes how it impacts communities. The federal Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act have reduced pollution, but they are always under attack by polluters who put profits before the health of our children and grandchildren.
- Increase fuel economy standards to 65 miles per gallon by 2025. Recent fuel economy standards put us on track to reach 54.5 miles per gallon in 2025, which moves us in right direction, but still leaves us lagging behind the rest of the world. Japan is set to reach that level five years before us, and Europe will do even better, reaching over 65 miles per gallon by 2020. Bernie knows we can do more and make our cars internationally competitive by raising our fuel economy standards to 65 miles per gallon by model year 2025. This will save car owners money at the pump, cut carbon pollution emissions and create good-paying American jobs.
- Protect public lands by promoting natural resource conservation and habitat preservation. Conservation of our public lands such as our National Parks and Forests are an American tradition and a vehicle for economic growth. Our conserved public land also serves an important role in not only preventing climate change but also in mitigating the catastrophic effects of climate change like floods, hurricanes and other extreme weather that have been increasing in frequency. Bernie is committed to ensuring that Americans have access to urban, suburban and rural recreational green space that are vital to our national heritage and our country's tradition of recreation and conservation.

<https://berniesanders.com/people-before-polluters/invest-in-clean-sustainable-energy>

Invest in Clean, Sustainable Energy

Choosing to lead the clean energy technology revolution to stop the worst effects of climate change means America will remain a worldwide leader in job creation, domestic manufacturing, local community revitalization and clean energy technology development and implementation.

The solar industry is adding workers at a rate nearly 20 times faster than the overall economy. Solar industry employment has grown by 86 percent in the past five years, resulting in nearly 80,000 domestic living-wage jobs.

For every dollar invested in energy efficiency, families and businesses can enjoy up to \$4 in energy savings, and for every billion dollars invested in energy efficiency upgrades we can create up to 7,000-8,000 new jobs, roughly ten times as many jobs as we would create from the same investments in coal. Investments in clean energy technologies will also keep jobs in America and prevent harm to the economy by preventing the worst impacts of climate change.

Bernie strongly supports efforts to develop and deploy clean, sustainable energy technologies like energy efficiency, solar, wind and geothermal.

As president, Bernie will:

- Work toward a 100 percent clean energy system and create millions of jobs. Scientists tell us we have a short time to make an aggressive cut in our carbon pollution emissions. Transitioning toward a completely clean energy system for electricity, heating, and transportation is not only possible and affordable it will create millions of good jobs, clean up our air and water and decrease our dependence on foreign oil.
- Invest in clean, sustainable energy sources powered by the sun, wind and Earth's heat. Massive and sustained investment in clean energy technology development and implementation can get us where scientists tell us we need to be. It's no great secret that clean energy technologies are a good investment. We actually get more energy out of the money invested in sustainable energy technologies than we do out of fossil fuel. Clean energy technology has no associated fuel costs, which means there are no price spikes like we see with oil and gas. The cost of deploying solar panels has gone down by more than 80 percent since 2008, thanks to tax credits and federally funded research and development. Our national solar capacity will soon provide enough energy to power four million homes.

Similarly, wind tax credits spurred the development of wind farms that now provide enough power for 16.7 million American homes. In fact, wind provided almost 30 percent of all new domestic power capacity in the last five years. Last year, nearly 30 percent of the electricity used in Iowa came from the wind. The decreasing cost of wind and solar demonstrates that we can have a 100 percent clean energy future.

Bernie Sanders — On the Issues

- Invest in advanced renewable fuels and keep our energy dollars at home. Renewable fuels have become a key component of our national strategy to move beyond oil in the fight against climate change. Renewable fuels must be produced in a way that achieves our environmental and energy security goals. We must both ensure that our renewable fuels production is truly sustainable, and we must also prevent the oil companies from derailing our progress in developing cleaner and more sustainable alternatives to gasoline and diesel. We should emphasize new, clean technologies like cellulosic ethanol and algae-based fuels. Advanced biofuels have enormous potential to deliver dramatic reductions in carbon pollution and strengthen rural economies, all while keeping our energy dollars here at home instead of sending them overseas to oil oligarchs in Russia and the Middle East.
- Invest in solar energy and put money back in the pockets of consumers. Bernie believes that solar energy is one of the most promising sources of clean energy for America's future. That's why he supports making billions of dollars of investments in renewable energy, like solar. Bernie recently introduced the Low Income Solar Act to increase low-income families' access to solar energy by making it more affordable for people who own their own home and incentivize access to community solar projects. Investing in solar energy is just as important for the economy as it is for the Earth. Bernie supports solar net metering, which means that people who invest in solar should be able to offset the cost – or in some cases even make money – on their electric utility bill. He recognizes that as we lower the cost of solar energy and increase our use of solar, we can create hundreds of thousands of good-paying manufacturing and installation careers in this country.
- Invest in making all American homes more energy efficient. Energy Efficiency is a “low-hanging fruit” because the investments made in energy efficiency are so effective in reducing carbon pollution emissions, and the return on investment is so quick. For every dollar invested in energy efficiency technologies, like weatherization and efficient light bulbs, energy customers can enjoy up to four dollars in savings. Bernie has long been a champion of the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) that help rural and low-income families make their homes more energy efficient and lower their energy bills. At a time when we spend on average of \$350 billion a year on foreign oil, we must take every possible step to invest in cheaper energy here in the United States. That's why Bernie recently introduced the Residential Energy Savings Act to provide federal loans to states to perform energy efficiency updates to provide homeowners with valuable energy savings.

Bernie's Record:

Bernie secured \$3.2 billion dollars for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant initiative in the stimulus bill, which was consistently rated a top-15 job creating program in the years after it was implemented. This grant helped to install over 9,500 solar systems and perform energy upgrades on approximately 86,000 buildings, which is saving consumers many billions of dollars in energy costs while also making our air cleaner by reducing pollution.

Bernie Sanders — On the Issues

- Support American workers moving into clean energy jobs. Our transition to a clean energy economy has created hundreds of thousands of jobs all over the United States, and Bernie's climate change plan will create millions more. But we must ensure our transition from fossil fuels to clean energy is a just transition for workers. That's why Bernie is introducing the Clean Energy Workers Just Transition Act, which provides the most comprehensive package of benefits for workers, including extended unemployment benefits, education opportunities, health care and job training for those transitioning to a career in the clean energy industry. Additionally, the bill ensures that workers in the clean energy industry will be able to organize a union to ensure living wages and safe working conditions. It also makes billions of dollars of investments in communities most affected by a transition to a clean energy future.
- Invest in an affordable energy storage solution that will allow us to fulfill our clean energy needs. Affordable energy storage technologies like batteries allow clean energy technologies like wind and solar to be integrated onto the electric grid – even when the wind is not blowing and the sun is not shining. Effective storage systems can affordably balance energy supply with demand by capturing energy at times when there is excess energy on the system for use during hours of high demand. Battery storage continues to develop and is becoming increasingly more affordable for families all over the country.
- Build geothermal power plants to create full time family-wage jobs for operations, engineering, maintenance, and administration. Bernie believes that geothermal energy should play an important role in our country's future energy portfolio. Geothermal systems can use the constant underground heat to provide heating when it is cool outside and to pull heat from buildings when it is warm outside. Geothermal energy power plants are less expensive than new modern natural gas plants and can be called on to produce power when the sun isn't shining and the wind isn't blowing. Geothermal conserves energy, reduces pollution and saves money all at once.
- Utility-Scale Clean Energy Generation. There are hundreds of thousands of roofs with solar panels, but research and technology developments have significantly improved sustainable energy technologies that are making large-scale clean energy an affordable reality. For example, advancements in utility-scale concentrated solar allows power from the sun to be stored for later use, even when the sun is not shining. Most importantly, concentrated solar power installations create permanent jobs and provide economic support for surrounding communities, which tend to be rural.
- Enable greater consumer choice in energy. Americans should have the ability to choose affordable clean technologies for their home and businesses. Additionally, the electric utilities and fossil fuel industries should not be able to get in the way of that choice. Grid modernization technologies enable greater consumer choice and ultimately utility bill savings by making it easier for families to connect clean energy resources to the grid.

Bernie Sanders — On the Issues

- Begin a moratorium on nuclear power plant license renewals in the United States. Bernie believes that solar, wind, geothermal power and energy efficiency are proven and more cost-effective than nuclear – even without tax incentives – and that the toxic waste byproducts of nuclear plants are not worth the risks of the technology’s benefit. Especially in light of lessons learned from Japan’s Fukushima meltdown, Bernie has also raised questions about why the federal government invests billions into federal subsidies for the nuclear industry. We can have an affordable carbon-free, nuclear-free energy system and we must work for a safe, healthy future for all Americans.
- Provide global clean energy funding to vulnerable countries. The United States should lead the international community in funding technology development and deployment solutions for the most vulnerable developing countries as part of any international agreement.

<https://berniesanders.com/people-before-polluters/revolutionize-our-electric-and-transportation-infrastructure>

Revolutionize our Electric and Transportation Infrastructure

In the United States, the transportation sector accounts for about 26 percent of carbon pollution emissions. That's the second largest contribution to our total carbon emissions after the electricity sector, which accounts for about 31 percent.

When we built out our state-of-the-art rail system in the early 1860's we became global leaders. But now our rail system pales in comparison to Japan, Germany and even China in terms of our high-speed passenger and cargo rail systems. Bernie will invest in interstate and intercity high-speed rail systems to bring people and commodities to their destinations more efficiently to save time and money.

We must also invest in electric vehicle charging infrastructure, just as we built an interstate highway system in the 1950s and 1960s. Many customers are interested in moving beyond oil toward an electric car, but the concerns of cost and whether there will be access to a charging station prevent many people from being able to choose this low-carbon option.

Both our transportation and electricity infrastructures must be updated. We still have electric lines and bridges that were built around the time Thomas Edison invented the light bulb. Modernizing the electrical grid helps balance higher amounts of clean energy, decreases outages and improves efficiency.

Bernie believes that infrastructure investments can create jobs and lead to a cleaner future.

As president, Bernie will:

- Build electric vehicle charging stations. In a country where nearly 30 percent of carbon pollution emissions come from the transportation sector, it is imperative that we end our dependence on gasoline. Vehicles that run on electricity are more efficient than internal combustion engines and can be powered with renewable energy resources like wind and solar. We need to support the development of vehicle charging stations that will allow us to drive cleanly and sustainably.
- Build high-speed passenger and cargo rail. Our nation's rail system is largely obsolete, even though our energy-efficient railroads move more freight than ever, and Amtrak's ridership has never been higher. While Amtrak's fastest train travels at an average speed of just 65 mph, high-speed rail now crisscrosses most of Europe, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and China with trains that run up to 200 mph. Once we have a state-of-the-art rail system, we will not only be able to move passengers and cargo faster and more efficiently, we will make significant cuts in carbon pollution emissions that cause climate change and create millions of permanent family-wage jobs for electricians, pipe fitters and sheet-metal workers.

Bernie's Record:

Bernie introduced the Rebuild America Act to invest \$75 billion to improve rail so America can begin to catch up with the rest of the world.

Bernie Sanders — On the Issues

- Make our cities more walkable and take more cars off the road. Public transit can move more people in fewer vehicles, which is good for clean air and reducing carbon pollution emissions. Public transportation saves enough electricity to power nearly 5 million homes in the United States. Despite the potential for public transit and biking to save Americans money and reduce emissions, the United States has a long way to go to make the roads safe for those who choose these alternative modes of transportation.
- Update and modernize the energy grid. Some of our grid infrastructure has not been updated since it was first built in the 1920s and 1930s. This causes hundreds of avoidable power failures and interruptions each year. Today, power failures cost the economy \$164 billion annually, stemming from impacts like lost productivity and wasted food. Those costs are only expected to increase as climate change causes more extreme weather, which can knock the power out. Additionally, our grid is highly centralized and therefore susceptible to cyber and physical attacks. Technology development in clean energy resources and electric grid improvements have enabled “smart” technologies, programs and policies to create a safer, more sustainable energy system. The “smart grid” offers real benefits for consumers and the environment.

Bernie’s Record:

Bernie introduced the Rebuild America Act, which would invest \$10 billion a year for power transmission, distribution and modernization projects that will improve the reliability and resiliency of our ever more complex electrical grid. The bill will also help increase access to broadband internet, which can also enable better, safer and more reliable electrical service.

<https://berniesanders.com/people-before-polluters/lead-the-international-community-to-solve-climate-change-and-prevent-international-conflict>

Lead the International Community to Solve Climate Change and Prevent International Conflict

Climate change is not just an “environmental issue,” but a global security issue as well. Climate change is an international crisis that threatens vulnerable communities all over the world.

The CIA and the Department of Defense both say that climate change is one of the great security issues facing this planet. As we see more and more drought, as people around the world are unable to grow the food they need to survive, people will migrate for survival. Instability can cause international conflict.

The United States must lead the world by working with China, Russia, India and the rest of the international community to transform our energy system away from fossil fuels toward energy efficiency and sustainable energy. We need a global commitment to reduce carbon pollution emissions.

The U.S. needs to lead the international community in the fight against climate change to maintain American economic strength and global security.

The United States has a unique opportunity to lead the international community in innovating strategies to cut climate pollution to avoid the most devastating damage of global climate change and adapt to the impacts that we cannot avoid. Our progress in reducing pollution levels over the last ten years has given us the credibility to demand that major developing nations also take bold action. In the past year, we have seen historic new commitments from countries like China and India who are for the first time putting forth their own aggressive climate agendas.

As president, Bernie will:

- Convene a climate summit with the world’s best engineers, climate scientists, policy experts, activists and indigenous communities in his first 100 days. The United Nations Paris climate talks in December are an important milestone toward solving climate change, but even optimistic outcomes of these talks will not put the world on the path needed to avoid the most catastrophic results of climate change. We must think beyond Paris. In the first 100 days of Bernie’s Presidency, he will convene a summit of the world’s best climate experts to chart a course toward the healthy future we all want for our families and communities.
- Lead countries in cutting climate change. Climate change is the greatest global challenge, and must be met with global solutions. The United States has contributed greatly to climate change, but also has the greatest opportunity and know-how to lead in implementing climate change solutions. The argument that we shouldn’t act until other countries do is falling by the wayside as China, India and many other countries have come to the table with initial commitments to take significant action to solve climate change.

Bernie Sanders — On the Issues

- Plan for peace to avoid international climate-fueled conflict. Changes in rainfall patterns, higher temperatures and more frequent natural disasters such as droughts and flooding due to climate change pose a direct threat to our global food and energy supply. In the United States, this could mean higher food and energy prices. In some developing countries, the effects could be even worse, and lead to temporary or more permanent situations where not enough food or water is available for everyone. This has the potential to result in an international climate-fueled conflict. Bernie believes that we must plan for peace now in order to prepare for this sort of dire conflict that is already beginning to unfold in parts of the world.

<https://berniesanders.com/a-fair-and-humane-immigration-policy>
<https://berniesanders.com/issues/a-fair-and-humane-immigration-policy>

A Fair and Humane Immigration Policy

Background

We are a nation of immigrants. I am proud to be the son of an immigrant. My father came to this country from Poland without a nickel in his pocket. Their story, my story, our story is a story of America: hard-working families coming to the United States to create a brighter future for their children. But even as this tradition is carried on proudly by so many families all across the United States, we have eleven million people in this country who are undocumented – who came here to improve their lives, to escape oppression, to flee desperate poverty and violence – and are systematically shut out from that same opportunity.

In 2008, I traveled to the tomato fields of southern Florida and met with migrant workers who were paid starvation wages for backbreaking work and were being ruthlessly exploited. After the visit, I invited leaders of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers to Washington to testify during a Senate committee hearing regarding abusive labor practices. As a result of the tremendous grassroots effort of this coalition, working conditions in Immokalee improved and workers received a wage increase.

But how many more Immokalees are out there?

Many in the business community argue for a massive expansion of temporary guest worker programs. That is not the answer. As the Southern Poverty Law Center has documented, employers routinely cheat guest workers out of wages, hold employees captive by seizing documents, coerce workers to live in inhumane conditions, and deny medical treatment for on-the-job injuries.

It is time for this injustice to end.

We cannot and should not sweep up millions of men, women, and children – many of whom lived here for many years, contribute to our society, and are integrated into the fabric of American life – and throw them out of the country unjustly. It is categorically unacceptable that so many voices insisted that the large numbers of desperate, vulnerable, and unaccompanied children primarily from Central America who crossed our borders last year should be turned away and sent back to the countries they fled. Sadly, many of these same voices now advocate for the United States to turn our backs on desperate refugees fleeing violence and terrorism in Syria. Now is not the time for us to succumb to racism and bigotry. We cannot allow ourselves to be divided by the anti-immigrant and xenophobic hysteria that Republican presidential candidates are ginning up.

America has always been a haven for the oppressed. We cannot and must not shirk the historic role of the United States as a protector of vulnerable people fleeing persecution.

Bernie Sanders — On the Issues

Establishing an immigration policy that stops the criminalization of communities of color and keeps families together will be a top priority of my Administration. Our immigration policy will put the sanctity of families at the forefront and will be grounded in civil, human, and labor rights. With bold action that moves our nation towards common sense immigration policies, we can reverse the decline of our middle class, allow the United States to compete economically in the 21st Century and build upon the best parts of our tradition of embracing diversity and harnessing it for the common good.

The Plan

In 2013, Senator Sanders voted for the comprehensive immigration reform bill that would have legalized millions of aspiring Americans. That legislation, however, contained a series of compromises that should now be rejected. In a Sanders Administration, a legislative solution to modernize our immigration system will be a top priority. In addition, Senator Sanders will not stand idly by waiting around for Congress to act. Instead, beginning in the first 100 days of his administration, Senator Sanders will work to take extensive executive action to accomplish what Congress has failed to do and to build upon President Obama's executive orders.

Unfortunately, our nation's foreign policy towards Latin America has made difficult economic and political problems even worse. Supporters of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) claimed that unfettered free trade would increase the standard of living in Mexico and significantly reduce the flow of undocumented immigrants into this country. As history has demonstrated, the opposite is true. Since the implementation of NAFTA, the number of Mexicans living below the poverty line has increased by over 14 million. Not surprisingly we saw 185 percent increase in the number of undocumented immigrants from Mexico between 1992 and 2011.

A political revolution that mobilizes millions of Americans inclusive of Latinos and immigrants will ensure that Congress acts on what the majority of Americans demand – comprehensive and humane immigration reform policies.

Through legislation and executive action, Senator Sanders will implement a humane and secure immigration policy that will:

- Dismantle inhumane deportation programs and detention centers;
- Pave the way for a swift and fair legislative roadmap to citizenship for the eleven million undocumented immigrants;
- Ensure our border remains secure while respecting local communities;
- Regulate the future flow of immigrants by modernizing the visa system and rewriting bad trade agreements;
- Enhance access to justice and reverse the criminalization of immigrants;
- Establish parameters for independent oversight of key U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agencies.

Bernie Sanders — On the Issues

1. Deportation and Detention

The growth of the immigrant detention/deportation machine and the expansion of border militarization has perpetuated unjust policies and resulted in the separation of hundreds of thousands of immigrant families.

Immigration Enforcement

- **Expand DACA and DAPA** – As President, Senator Sanders will expand President Obama’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans (DAPA) to provide broad administrative relief to the parents of DREAMers, the parents of citizens, the parents of legal permanent residents, and other immigrants who would have been given legal protections by the 2013 Senate-passed immigration bill.

This would allow all undocumented people who have been in the United States for at least five years to stay in the country without fear of being deported. This broad administrative relief is [well within the President’s executive authority](#).

Over [85% of the nation’s aspiring Americans have resided in the United States for at least five years](#).

Under this plan, close to nine million individuals would be able to apply for deferred action.

- **Protect Immigrant Workers Exercising their Rights.** Legislatively, a Sanders Administration would establish a whistleblower visa for workers reporting labor violations. Administratively, Senator Sanders would establish an affirmative process for these individuals to request deferred action. Many employers regularly abuse immigrant workers knowing employees will not hold them accountable for fear of deportation.
- **Provide Permanent Immigration Relief to Families.** As President, Senator Sanders would [expand the Administration’s parole-in-place policies](#) to include undocumented relatives of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents and also provide deferred action for relatives who came to the U.S. on a visa but fell out of status. Today, this policy is only available to current and aspiring service members and their families. Expanding parole-in-place would eliminate the barriers that prevent certain relatives of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents from obtaining lawful permanent resident status (or a “green card”) under federal law.
- **Decouple Local Law Enforcement from Immigration Enforcement.** In too many instances, deportation programs like the Priority Enforcement Program (PEP), the 287(g) program, and the Criminal Alien Program have unjustly turned local law enforcement officials into immigration officers. Racial profiling and the criminalization of communities of color form the foundation of these deportation programs which will be eliminated under a Sanders Administration. As President, Senator Sanders will implement the recommendations of President Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing to [“decouple federal immigration enforcement from routine local policing.”](#)

Bernie Sanders — On the Issues

- **Employ Humanitarian Parole to Reunite Families.** As President, Senator Sanders will expand the use of humanitarian parole to ensure the return of unjustly deported immigrants. The United States must do the right thing and guarantee the swiftest possible reunification of these broken families.
- **Promote Cooperation Between Immigrants and Local Law Enforcement.** Senator Sanders wholeheartedly rejects the “[The Great Sanctuary City Slander](#)” as the politics of fear, and supports enacting community trust policies. These policies will strengthen relationships between community members and local law enforcement, respect the constitutional rights of immigrants, and reflect the will of a locally elected electorate.
- **Expand Access to Counsel for Immigrants.** Based on the constitutionally enshrined principle of habeas corpus, a Sanders Administration will increase access to legal counsel for detained immigrants. This expansion is critical in light of instances where [ICE coerced large numbers of immigrants to sign their own deportation order](#). A Sanders Administration will vigorously implement the [protection against coerced or “unwitting deportation”](#) established as part of *Padilla v Kentucky* (2010).
- **Properly Fund Our Nation’s Immigration Courts.** To ensure that our immigration system respects constitutional protections, as President Senator Sanders will work with Congress to provide additional funding and immigration judges to the Executive Office for Immigration Review and restore discretion to judges and allow them to consider the unique circumstances of an individual’s case.
- **Close Loopholes that Allow Racial Profiling by Federal Authorities.** Senator Sanders will fight to end racial profiling. Immigrants should never face deportation as a result of racial or ethnic profiling. A Sanders Administration will work to revise the U.S. Department of Justice’s *Guidance Regarding the Use of Race by Federal Law Enforcement Agencies*. Under the current guidance, the Department of Justice carved out significant exceptions for federal law enforcement agencies like the FBI, TSA and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to profile racial, religious, and other minorities at or in the vicinity of the border. Furthermore, the Guidance does not apply to most state and local law enforcement agencies.

Detention

- **End For-Profit Detention.** As President, Senator Sanders will fight to end federal, state and municipal contracts with for-profit private prisons within two years. Termination of these contracts will eliminate the incentive for the private prison industry to support punitive, over-inclusive laws that lead to the detention of 34,000 immigrants on any given day. A Sanders Administration will also work with Congress to enact the Justice is Not for Sale Act, which would reinstate a federal parole program that will include immigrants.
- **End Family Detention.** As President, Senator Sanders will end family detention. He will work to ensure that detention centers do not hold families and [adhere to the letter and spirit of the Flores Order](#). The detention of families, most of which come to our country seeking protection under our laws, is an affront to the values our nation was founded upon.

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- **Propose Budgets with Smart, Targeted Enforcement.** Senator Sanders will demand Congress defund the detention bed quota. Detention should be based on actual need and not arbitrary numbers set by Congress. At the other end of the deportation pipeline, Senator Sanders will, like President Obama, request Congress defund the Department of Justice's State Criminal Alien Assistance Program.
- **Make Detention Practices Accountable.** In the narrow, rare circumstances where detention may continue, a Sanders Administration will significantly improve conditions inside detention facilities, especially for vulnerable populations including pregnant women, LGBT individuals, and detainees with disabilities. Moreover, a Sanders Administration will immediately address the racial bias on display in the [disproportionate detention of Mexican nationals](#). This deplorable reality bears witness to bias displayed at both the arrest stage and then again when making custody determinations.
- **Alternatives to Detention.** A Sanders Administration will promote alternatives to detention, which can cost as little as 70 cents a day. The use of these substitutes to detention would allow thousands of non-violent immigrant detainees to reunite with their families as they wait for their day in court.
- **Guarantee Due Process and Bond Hearings.** As president, Senator Sanders will ensure that immigrants have their day in court, including bond hearings and access to due process protections.

2. Eleven Million New Americans

Senator Sanders will make a path to citizenship for the undocumented population the building block of a new humane immigration system and not as a pretext to ramp up enforcement that separates families. Recognizing the difficult path to legislate a comprehensive solution to our nation's outdated immigration system, Senator Sanders will lead a political revolution that mobilizes millions of Americans, particularly Latinos and immigrants, to ensure that Congress acts on what the majority of Americans demand – a comprehensive and humane immigration reform policy.

- **Establish Broad Eligibility for Relief.** Senator Sanders will work to ensure that the roadmap to citizenship is inclusive, particularly [for women](#) and does not contain arbitrary cut off eligibility dates and application periods. Such dates risk excluding hundreds of thousands of people that have arrived in the United States “too late” but have become part of the American fabric. Moreover, in light of our nation's deep-rooted belief in rehabilitation and acknowledgement of the criminalization of communities of color, the roadmap to citizenship must allow non-violent individuals with prior contacts with our criminal justice system to apply for relief. For example, non-violent immigration-related offenses should not automatically disqualify a worker or their family from obtaining immigration relief. Old convictions like those that [led to the deportation of an Iowa City pastor](#), should not disqualify individuals from the roadmap to citizenship.

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- **Establish a Reasonable and Fair Wait for Citizenship.** Future legislation must contain a roadmap to citizenship that allows aspiring Americans to become lawful permanent residents and become citizens within five years. The registered provisional immigrant status in the 2013 Senate immigration bill was a compromise that delayed eligibility for citizenship and created additional, unnecessary bureaucracy.
- **Minimize Financial Penalties and Fees.** As DACA has demonstrated, monetary costs often represents the greatest obstacle for eligible individuals to come forward and apply for immigration relief. Immigrants will already have to pay thousands of dollars in regular administrative fees to apply for permanent administrative relief. Future immigration reform should not add onerous fines on top of those administrative fees. Consequently, Senator Sanders will work to ensure that the financial penalties in a roadmap to citizenship are fair.
- **End the Three-Year, Ten-Year, and Permanent Bars.** A Sanders Administration will work with Congress to end the lengthy, [forced and prolonged exit from the country that many immigrants endure when trying to leave the country to adjust their status](#) by rescinding the three-year, ten-year and permanent bars.
- **Provide Expansive Relief to DREAMers.** Future legislation must immediately declare DREAMers eligible to serve in the uniformed services, receive financial aid, and become eligible for in-state tuition if they meet a state's residency requirements. Additionally, future immigration reform should provide expeditious citizenship to DREAMers.

3. Border Security and Militarization

Senator Sanders believes that we can ensure that our borders are modern and secure. Indeed, we must continually modernize our border security measures and maintain security, all while protecting the rights and needs of our border communities. Border communities have much to offer the nation economically and culturally, but these contributions have been stunted or overshadowed by a negligent buildup of border enforcement. Communities along our border, particularly along the southern border, have become militarized and are being patrolled by a highly weaponized Customs and Border Protection Agency (CBP).

- **A 21st Century Border Must Use Resources Efficiently and Effectively.** Appropriations must be re-directed away from boondoggle walls to high grade cameras, thermal imaging, movement sensors and other technologies. More resources must also be allocated to CBP training and oversight, and to rebuild crumbling infrastructure along the border region. Senator Sanders will work to ensure that the CBP is a highly functioning law enforcement body.
- **Reject Piecemeal Border Enforcement.** Senator Sanders rejects the argument that the border must be further militarized before the implementation of a roadmap to citizenship. We must remove the insecurity that border communities face as we modernize and make our border security operations more efficient.
- **Reduce Border Deaths.** Senator Sanders will work to reduce the unacceptable and inhumane number of deaths on the border. One practice that has no place in a humane immigration system is the use of remote deportations. Dumping someone in

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an unfamiliar location can be lethal as the State Department has recognized that parts of Mexico are run by “organized criminal groups.”

- **End Operation Streamline and Barriers to Asylum.** Senator Sanders would end Operation Streamline and remove the barriers established in 1996 that prevent those removed under Expedited Removal from applying for asylum.
- **Implement the “Best Interests of the Child” Standard.** It is imperative that a “best interests of child” standard is used in all decision-making and implement child welfare screenings that are conducted by CBP officers along with child welfare experts. In addition, Senator Sanders will ensure that all children at our borders will be provided procedural protections by providing counsel, and legal orientation programs in the child’s native language.
- **Turn Back the Militarization of the Southern Border.** The militarization of the border has reached new heights. Senator Sanders will work to ensure that we have a modern, secure, efficient border, avoiding the militarization of our border communities.
- **Hold CBP Accountable.** Professionalism, accountability, and transparency at the CBP must be a central agency mission. Senator Sanders will require CBP agents to wear body cameras, make complaints public, expand training, and hold agents accountable for excessive force just like any other law enforcement agency. In addition, Senator Sanders will advance [legislation supported by a bi-partisan coalition of border communities and leaders](#) aimed at improving training, increasing accountability, and ensuring the input and consultation of border community residents. The number of deaths of civilians, including numerous U.S. citizens, by CBP are unacceptable. [The CBP internal affairs office must be fully funded and staffed.](#) Steps taken by the CBP surrounding excessive force on the southern border must be expanded and we must eliminate [racial profiling, violence and prolonged detention.](#)
- **End the “Constitution Free” Zone.** Senator Sanders will ensure that border security resources are invested where needed. In order to set the tone for a more efficient and humane immigration policy, Senator Sanders will update antiquated federal regulations that define the border region for certain purposes as extending 100 miles from the actual border and direct those resources where they are most needed. For example, Senator Sanders will conduct an immediate review of [the nearly 170 Border Patrol checkpoints](#) in the interior of the U.S. and redirect resources where most needed.

4. FUTURE FLOW OF IMMIGRANTS

A humane immigration system must honestly look at creating viable, legal channels that match our labor market needs. We must seriously reassess our foreign and international trade policies in light of the effects they have on migration and U.S. workers. A failure to do so will contribute to future flows that even the best-designed system will have extreme difficulty in addressing.

- **Keep Families Together.** A humane immigration system must, at its core, recognize that family is integral to a worker’s pursuit of happiness and economic productivity. Additionally, family members are often either workers themselves or, in the case of children, future workers. The preservation of family-based visas is at the center of a

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more humane, reformed immigration system which recognizes that workers with families nearby are healthier and that their families, particularly children, benefit immensely. Prioritizing the unity of families is a time-tested American value.

- **Protect Women from Discrimination.** Senator Sanders rejects the so-called “merit-based” “social engineering” immigration policies that discriminate against women. In addition to upholding the family-based visa system, he will work to ensure that mothers, sisters and wives who come into the United States with their families have the same right to work as their male relatives while enhancing protections for survivors of gender-based violence and human trafficking.
- **Strengthen and Expand Our Support for Refugees.** In light of the Syrian refugee crisis, a Sanders Administration would continue to welcome refugees to the US and meet our international responsibilities. When hundreds of thousands of people have lost everything and have nothing left but the shirts on their backs, we should not turn our backs on refugees escaping violence, whether it be Syrians in the Middle East or young children in Latin America. We need to continue our efforts to provide refugees fleeing violence with the opportunity for a new life, and explore additional ways to address the humanitarian crisis.
- **End the Economic Exploitation of Immigrant Workers.** The visa system must be fundamentally reformed to prevent employers from abusing and exploiting guest workers, especially in the context of H-2B, H1-B, and J-1 workers. Binding workers to a specific employer or not allowing their family members to work creates a situation ripe for abuse and exacerbates an already unequal relationship between the employer and the employee. We must substantially increase prevailing wages that employers pay temporary guest workers. To build on Senator Sanders’ previous legislation, Senator Sanders will ensure that if there is a true labor shortage, employers must offer higher, not lower wages.
- **Protect and Expand the Legal Rights of Immigrant Workers.** Regardless of status, immigrant workers should not fear holding employers accountable for exploitation. Senator Sanders will work with Congress to authorize and substantially increase funding for the Legal Services Corporation to provide legal representation to guest workers exploited by employers. Moreover, Senator Sanders will work toward requiring employers to reimburse guest workers for housing, transportation expenses, and workers’ compensation.
- **Operate Smart and Fair Employment Verification.** The regime of employer sanctions enacted through President Reagan’s immigration reform legislation has morphed from the terror of workplace raids to the “silent raids” of I-9 audits. In both scenarios, workers usually lose out in the end, particularly when employers turn over their employees to ICE during labor disputes. An electronic verification system like E-Verify should protect workers’ due process rights, and contain the strongest possible protections against abuse.
- **Reduce Health Care Costs.** Senator Sanders strongly believes that all immigrants, including undocumented workers and their families, must be able to purchase health insurance through the Affordable Care Act’s (ACA) marketplace exchanges. Aspiring Americans represent a large portion of the remaining uninsured and allowing these Americans to purchase health insurance with their own money is critical to reducing health care costs and moving forward with universal health care coverage. Moreover,

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Senator Sanders will direct the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to promulgate regulations that restore access to the ACA for all immigrants with deferred action, including DACA and DAPA recipients, by classifying them as “lawfully present.”

- **Defend the Diversity Visa from Attacks.** Humane immigration reform must protect and expand the diversity visa. Too often, Congress seeks to end the Diversity Visa program on the grounds that immigration is a zero-sum game. The Diversity Visa program is an enormous and inexpensive source of goodwill, affords potential immigrants with no family ties an opportunity to join our great nation, and is particularly important to African immigrants.
- **Ensure Access to Asylum for Persecuted Immigrants.** Senator Sanders will direct his Attorney General to replicate former Attorney General Janet Reno’s efforts to help extend asylum to victims of domestic violence and by classifying unaccompanied minors coming from Latin American and victims of criminal gang activity as distinct groups of people fleeing persecution. This classification will reduce the barriers for these groups to successfully apply for and receive asylum. Additionally, Senator Sanders will restore the credible fear of persecution standard to its pre-2014 level, allowing more people to present their claims to an immigration judge instead of being summarily deported. A Sanders Administration will require DHS to screen arriving immigrants, especially juveniles and families, for humanitarian and immigration relief.

5. Balanced Trade Agreements

Inequality across the world is universally acknowledged as the driving force behind migration. This inequality does not develop organically and the United States must be introspective about its role. For example, the ill-conceived NAFTA, devastated local economies and pushed millions to migrate.

- **Establish Fair and Equitable Trade Policies.** Senator Sanders will rewrite our trade policies to end the race to the bottom and work to lift the living standard of Americans and workers throughout the world. Not only have our trade policies with Mexico, Central America, and China led to the loss of millions of decent-paying jobs and thousands of factories, but they have led to destitution for local communities around the world. Accordingly, our nation must level the playing field for workers everywhere. Those who wish to remain in their home country should be able to earn livable wages and not migrate for economic survival. Furthermore, Sanders will work tirelessly to build an international coalition to fight global poverty and address crises to humanely manage migration patterns. Multi-faceted policies that look beyond our borders are critical to addressing the root causes of migration and economic inequality.

6. IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

Integration into the great American mosaic is extremely important. Yet our immigrant integration policies, often not a priority in our national discourse, gravitate towards forced assimilation and, even as our society became more inclusive, provided little support, guidance, or even a welcome path to becoming an American.

- **Fully Fund and Prioritize Immigrant Integration.** Senator Sanders recognizes that integration is a two-way process that benefits newcomers and Americans alike. Helping immigrants become part of our ever-changing national fabric is essential to a

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true national security policy, one where aspiring Americans deeply believe in the values of our nation. Senator Sanders will call for greater investment in immigrant integration as the returns on modest investments are often substantial, both culturally and economically.

- **Expand Access to Naturalization.** There are approximately nine million lawful permanent residents who are eligible to naturalize and become citizens but do not due to financial obstacles. As such, it is well past time to for Congress to appropriate resources to strengthen the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) budget and to reduce application fees. High fees for immigration benefits, especially naturalization, act as a deterrent for aspiring Americans to embrace U.S. citizenship and are not in keeping with the American immigrant tradition.
- **Connect Integration with Educational Programs.** Immigrant integration occurs in our schools, our workplaces, and in the community at large. Senator Sanders' policies to make public colleges and universities tuition free, raise the minimum wage, expand Social Security, and make it easier for workers to form unions will benefit all Americans, regardless of immigration status. In addition, Senator Sanders will foster increased access to English as a Second Language instruction, and early learning programs for children.

VIDEO: Bernie Sanders on Immigration
Bernie Sanders Introduces Comprehensive Immigration Plan
www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tMtgzdKgJo

America has always been a haven for the oppressed. We cannot and must not shirk the historic role of the United States as a protector of vulnerable people fleeing persecution.

– Sen. Bernie Sanders

<https://berniesanders.com/issues/racial-justice>

Racial Justice

We must pursue policies to transform this country into a nation that affirms the value of its people of color. That starts with addressing the five central types of violence waged against black, brown and indigenous Americans: physical, political, legal, economic and environmental.

Physical Violence

Perpetrated by the State

Sandra Bland, Michael Brown, Rekia Boyd, Eric Garner, Walter Scott, Freddie Gray, Jessica Hernandez, Tamir Rice, Jonathan Ferrell, Oscar Grant, Antonio Zambrano-Montes, Samuel DuBose and Anastacio Hernandez-Rojas. We know their names. Each of them died unarmed at the hands of police officers or in police custody. The chants are growing louder. People are angry and they have a right to be angry. We should not fool ourselves into thinking that this violence only affects those whose names have appeared on TV or in the newspaper. African-Americans are twice as likely to be arrested and almost four times as likely to experience the use of force during encounters with the police. African-American and Latinos comprise well over half of all prisoners, even though African-Americans and Latinos make up approximately one quarter of the total US population.

Perpetrated by Extremists

We are far from eradicating racism in this country. Today in America, if you are black, you can be killed for getting a pack of Skittles during a basketball game. Or murdered in your church while you are praying. This violence fills us with outrage, disgust and a deep, deep sadness. These hateful acts of violence amount to acts of terror. They are perpetrated by extremists who want to intimidate and terrorize black, brown and indigenous people in this country.

Addressing Physical Violence

It is an outrage that in these early years of the 21st century we are seeing intolerable acts of violence being perpetrated by police and racist acts of terrorism by white supremacists.

A growing number of communities do not trust the police. Law enforcement officers have become disconnected from the communities they are sworn to protect. Violence and brutality of any kind, particularly at the hands of the police meant to protect and serve our communities, is unacceptable and must not be tolerated. We need a societal transformation to make it clear that black lives matter and racism will not be accepted in a civilized country.

- We must demilitarize our police forces so they don't look and act like invading armies.
- We must invest in community policing. Only when we get officers into the communities, working within neighborhoods before trouble arises, do we develop the relationships necessary to make our communities safer together. Among other things, that means increasing civilian oversight of police departments.

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- We must create a police culture that allows for good officers to report the actions of bad officers without fear of retaliation and allows for a department to follow through on such reports.
- We need police forces that reflect the diversity of our communities, including in the training academies and leadership.
- At the federal level, we need to establish a new model police training program that reorients the way we do law enforcement in this country. With input from a broad segment of the community including activists and leaders from civil rights organizations we will reinvent how we police America.
- We need to federally fund and require body cameras for law enforcement officers to make it easier to hold them accountable.
- We need to require police departments and states to collect data on all police shootings and deaths that take place while in police custody and make that data public.
- We need new rules on the allowable use of force. Police officers need to be trained to de-escalate confrontations and to humanely interact with people who have mental illnesses.
- States and localities that make progress in this area should get more federal justice grant money. Those that do not should get their funding slashed.
- We need to make sure federal resources are there to crack down on the illegal activities of hate groups.

Political Violence

Disenfranchisement

In the shameful days of open segregation, literacy laws and poll taxes were used to suppress minority voting. Today, through other laws and actions — such as requiring voters to show photo ID, discriminatory drawing of Congressional districts, restricting same-day registration and early voting and aggressively purging voter rolls — states are taking steps which have a similar effect.

The patterns are unmistakable. 11 percent of eligible voters do not have a photo ID—and they are disproportionately black and Latino. In 2012, African-Americans waited twice as long to vote as whites. Some voters in minority precincts waited upwards of six or seven hours to cast a ballot. Meanwhile, thirteen percent of African-American men have lost the right to vote due to felony convictions.

Yet in 2013, the Supreme Court struck down a key part of the seminal Voting Rights Act, even while saying “voting discrimination still exists; no one doubts that.”

This should offend the conscience of every American.

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The fight for minority voting rights is a fight for justice. It is inseparable from the struggle for democracy itself.

Addressing Political Violence

- We need to re-enfranchise the more than two million African-Americans who have had their right to vote taken away by a felony conviction, paid their debt to society, and deserve to have their rights restored.
- Congress must restore the “pre-clearance” formula under the Voting Rights Act, which extended protections to minority voters in states and counties where they were clearly needed.
- We must expand the Act’s scope so that every American, regardless of skin color or national origin, is able to vote freely.
- We need to make Election Day a federal holiday to increase voters’ ability to participate.
- We must make early voting an option for voters who work or study and need the flexibility to vote on evenings or weekends.
- We must make no-fault absentee ballots an option for all Americans.
- We must automatically register every American to vote when they turn 18 or move to a new state. The burden of registering voters should be on the state, not the individual voter.
- We must put an end to discriminatory laws and the purging of minority-community names from voting rolls.
- We need to make sure that there are sufficient polling places and poll workers to prevent long lines from forming at the polls anywhere.

Legal Violence

Millions of lives have been destroyed because people are in jail for nonviolent crimes. For decades, we have been engaged in a failed “War on Drugs” with racially-biased mandatory minimums that punish people of color unfairly.

It is an obscenity that we stigmatize so many young Americans with a criminal record for smoking marijuana, but not one major Wall Street executive has been prosecuted for causing the near collapse of our entire economy. This must change.

If current trends continue, one in four black males born today can expect to spend time in prison during their lifetime. Blacks are imprisoned at six times the rate of whites and a report by the Department of Justice found that blacks were three times more likely to be searched during a traffic stop, compared to white motorists. Together, African-Americans and Latinos comprised 57 percent of all prisoners in 2014, even though African-Americans and Latinos make up approximately one quarter of the US population. These outcomes are not reflective

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of increased crime by communities of color, but rather a disparity in enforcement and reporting mechanisms. African-Americans are twice as likely to be arrested and almost four times as likely to experience the use of force during encounters with the police. This is an unspeakable tragedy.

It is morally repugnant that we have privatized prisons all over America. Corporations should not be allowed to make a profit by building more jails and keeping more Americans behind bars. We have got to end the private for-profit prison racket in America. Earlier this year, Sen. Sanders introduced legislation that will end the private prison industry.

The measure of success for law enforcement should not be how many people get locked up. We need to invest in drug courts as well as medical and mental health interventions for people with substance abuse problems, so that people struggling with addiction do not end up in prison, they end up in treatment.

For people who have committed crimes that have landed them in jail, there needs to be a path back from prison. The federal system of parole needs to be reinstated. We need real education and real skills training for the incarcerated.

We must end the over-incarceration of nonviolent young Americans who do not pose a serious threat to our society. It is an international embarrassment that we have more people locked up in jail than any other country on earth – more than even the Communist totalitarian state of China. That has got to end.

We must address the lingering unjust stereotypes that lead to the labeling of black youths as “thugs” and “super predators.” We know the truth that, like every community in this country, the vast majority of people of color are trying to work hard, play by the rules and raise their children. It’s time to stop demonizing minority communities.

In many cities all over our country, the incentives for policing are upside down. Departments are bringing in substantial sums of revenue by seizing the personal property of people who are suspected of criminal involvement. So-called civil asset forfeiture laws allow police to take property from people even before they are charged with a crime, much less convicted of one. Even worse, the system works in a way that makes it very difficult and expensive for an innocent person to get his or her property back. We must end programs that actually reward officials for seizing assets without a criminal conviction or other lawful mandate. Departments and officers should not profit off of such seizures.

Local governments that rely on tickets and fines to pay bills can become dependent on implicit quotas for law enforcement. When policing is a source of revenue tied to the financial sustainability of agencies, officers are pressured to meet internal goals which can lead to unnecessary or unlawful traffic stops and citations which disproportionately affect people of color. Implicit quota systems promote racial stereotyping and breed distrust between officers and communities of color.

Furthermore, we must ensure police departments are not abusing avenues of due process to shield bad actors from accountability. Local governments and police management must show zero tolerance for abuses of police power at all levels. All employees of any kind deserve due process protections, but it must be clear that departments will vigorously investigate and, if necessary, prosecute every allegation of wrongdoing to the fullest extent.

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Addressing Legal Violence

- We need to ban prisons for profit, which result in an over-incentive to arrest, jail and detain in order to keep prison beds full.
- We need to turn back from the failed “War on Drugs” and eliminate mandatory minimums which result in sentencing disparities between black and white people.
- We need to take marijuana off the federal government’s list of outlawed drugs.
- We need to allow people in states which legalize marijuana to be able to fully participate in the banking system and not be subject to federal prosecution for using pot.
- We need to invest in drug courts and medical and mental health interventions for people with substance abuse problems, so that they do not end up in prison, they end up in treatment.
- We need to boost investments for programs that help people who have gone to jail rebuild their lives with education and job training.
- We must investigate local governments that are using implicit or explicit quotas for arrests or stops.
- We must stop local governments that are relying on fines, fees or asset forfeitures as a steady source of revenue.
- Police departments must investigate all allegations of wrongdoing, especially those involving the use of force, and prosecute aggressively, if necessary. If departments are unwilling or unable to conduct such investigations, the Department of Justice must step in and handle it for them.

Economic Violence

Weeks before his death, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke to a union group in New York about what he called “the other America.”

“One America is flowing with the milk of prosperity and the honey of equality,” King said. “That America is the habitat of millions of people who have food and material necessities for their bodies, culture and education for their minds, freedom and human dignity for their spirits ... But as we assemble here tonight, I’m sure that each of us is painfully aware of the fact that there is another America and that other America has a daily ugliness about it that transforms the buoyancy of hope into the fatigue of despair.”

The problem was structural, King said: “This country has socialism for the rich, rugged individualism for the poor.”

But what King saw in 1968 — and what we all should recognize today — is that it is necessary to try to address the rampant economic inequality while also taking on the issue of

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societal racism. We must simultaneously address the structural and institutional racism which exists in this country, while at the same time we vigorously attack the grotesque level of income and wealth inequality which is making the very rich much richer while everyone else — especially those in our minority communities — are becoming poorer.

In addition to the physical violence faced by too many in our country we need to look at the lives of black children and address some difficult facts. Black children, who make up just 18 percent of preschoolers, account for 48 percent of all out-of-school suspensions before kindergarten. We are failing our black children before kindergarten. Black students are expelled at three times the rate of white students. Black girls are suspended at higher rates than all other girls and most boys. According to the Department of Education, African-American students are more likely to suffer harsh punishments — suspensions and arrests — at school. Black students attend schools with higher concentrations of first-year teachers when compared with white students. Black students are more than three times as likely to attend schools where fewer than 60 percent of teachers meet all state certification and licensure requirements.

Communities of color also face the violence of economic deprivation. Let's be frank: neighborhoods like those in west Baltimore, where Freddie Gray resided, suffer the most. However, the problem of economic immobility isn't just a problem for young men like Freddie Gray. Despite hard-work and the will to get ahead, millions of Americans spend their entire lives struggling to survive on the economic treadmill.

We live at a time when most Americans have less than \$10,000 in savings and millions of working adults have no idea how they will ever retire in dignity. An unforeseen car accident, a medical emergency, or the loss of a job could send their lives into an economic tailspin. And the problems are even more serious when we consider race.

Let us not forget: It was the greed, recklessness and illegal behavior on Wall Street that nearly drove the economy off of a cliff seven years ago. While millions of Americans lost their jobs, homes, life savings and ability to send their kids to college, African-Americans who were steered into expensive subprime mortgages were the hardest hit.

Most black and Latino households have less than \$350 in savings. The black unemployment rate has remained roughly twice as high as the white rate over the last 40 years, regardless of education. Real African-American youth unemployment is over 50 percent. African-American women earn 64 cents for every dollar white men make. This is unacceptable. The American people in general want change — they want a better deal. A fairer deal. A new deal. They want an America with laws and policies that truly reward hard work with economic mobility. They want an America that affords all of its citizens with the economic security to take risks and the opportunity to realize their full potential.

Addressing Economic Violence

- We need to give our children, regardless of their race or income, a fair shot at attending college. That's why all public universities should be made tuition free. We should pay for that with a tax on Wall Street speculators.
- We must invest \$5.5 billion to create 1 million jobs for disadvantaged young Americans who face high unemployment rates and job-training opportunities for hundreds of thousands of young adults. We should pay for that by ending the loophole

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allowing Wall Street hedge fund managers to pay a lower tax rate than nurses or truck drivers.

- We must increase the minimum wage to a livable wage of \$15 an hour by 2020 — which will increase the wages of about half of African-Americans and nearly 60 percent of Latinos.
- We must invest \$1 trillion to put 13 million Americans to work rebuilding our crumbling cities, roads, bridges, public transportation systems, airports, drinking water systems and other infrastructure needs. We should pay for that by closing offshore tax loopholes.
- We must pass federal legislation to ensure pay equity for women.
- We must prevent employers from discriminating against applicants based on criminal history by “banning the box.”
- We must promote policies to give the formerly incarcerated an opportunity for education, including expanding the Second Chance Pell Pilot Program and reentry programs.
- We need to ensure access to quality affordable childcare for working families, especially for parents who work non-traditional hours.
- We must fundamentally re-write our trade policies and rebuild factories that were closed as a result of bad trade deals.

Environmental Violence

Perpetrated by Polluting Industries

People of color disproportionately experience a daily assault on their health and environment. Communities of color are the hardest hit by air and water pollution from industrial factories, power plants, incinerators, chemical waste and lead contamination from old pipes and paint. At the same time, they lack access to parks, gardens and other recreational green space.

Like income inequality, environmental inequality is rapidly growing in the United States.

Black children are five times more likely than white children to have lead poisoning. Indigenous peoples are impacted disproportionately by destructive mining practices and the dumping of hazardous materials on their lands. As demonstrated by Hurricane Katrina, poor communities of color have a harder time escaping, surviving and recovering from climate-related disasters. Taken together, it is clear that people of color experience a disparate exposure to environmental hazards where they “work, live, and play.”

Nationwide, the health of communities is consistently ignored in favor of the profits of corporate polluters. The fact that people of color breathe 46 percent more nitrogen dioxide — which causes respiratory diseases and heart conditions — than whites helps explain why one in six African-American kids has asthma.

The environmental violence being inflicted on people of color who are denied the full rights of citizenship — especially migrant workers and new immigrants — is especially pronounced.

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Low-income Latino immigrants are more likely to live in areas with high levels of hazardous air pollution than anyone else. In fact, the odds of a Latino immigrant neighborhood being located in an area of high toxic pollution is one in three.

Latinos and African-Americans are more likely to work in hazardous jobs that place them at higher risk for serious occupational diseases, injuries and muscular-skeletal disabilities. The fatality rate among Latino workers is 23 percent higher than the fatal injury rate for all US workers. Often reluctant to complain about poor working conditions for fear of deportation or being fired, Mexican migrant workers are nearly twice as likely as the rest of the immigrant population to die at work. This is unacceptable and must be addressed.

Taken together, these injustices are largely the product of political marginalization and institutional racism. The less political power a community of color possesses, the more likely they are to experience insidious environmental and human health threats. The environmental violence being inflicted on these communities of color is taking a terrible toll, and must be made a national priority. Access to a clean and healthy environment is a fundamental right of citizenship. To deny such rights constitutes an environmental injustice that should never be tolerated.

Addressing Environmental Violence

- We must protect low-income and minority communities, who are hit first and worst by the causes and impacts of climate change, while also protecting existing energy-sector workers as they transition into clean energy and other jobs.
- We must have equal enforcement of environmental, civil rights and public health laws.
- We need to address the inadequate environmental cleanup efforts of Superfund hazardous waste sites in communities of color.
- We must stop the unequal exposure of people of color to harmful chemicals, pesticides and other toxins in homes, schools, neighborhoods and workplaces and challenge faulty assumptions in calculating, assessing and managing risks, discriminatory zoning and land-use practices and exclusionary policies.
- Federal agencies must develop and implement clear, strategic plans to achieve climate and environmental justice and provide targeted action where the needs are greatest.
- The environmental analysis for a permit for a polluting facility must consider the disparate and cumulative environmental burden borne by a community.
- States should evaluate and report progress made on addressing climate and environmental injustice.
- We need to mitigate climate change and focus on building resilience in low-income and minority communities.
- We must promote cleaner manufacturing processes, renewable energy systems and safe product designs that end pollution and the use of toxic chemicals, while providing safe jobs and other economic benefits for people of color.

<https://berniesanders.com/issues/fighting-for-womens-rights>

Fighting for Women's Rights

Despite major advances in civil and political rights, our country still has a long way to go in addressing the issue of gender inequality. Many of the achievements that have been made for women's rights in the 20th century have been under attack by the Republican party — denying women control over their own bodies, preventing access to vital medical and social services, and blocking equal pay for equal work.

When it comes to the [rights of women](#), we cannot go backwards. We have got to [go forward](#).

We are not going back to the days when women had to risk their lives to end an unwanted pregnancy. The decision about abortion must remain a decision for the woman and her doctor to make, not the government.

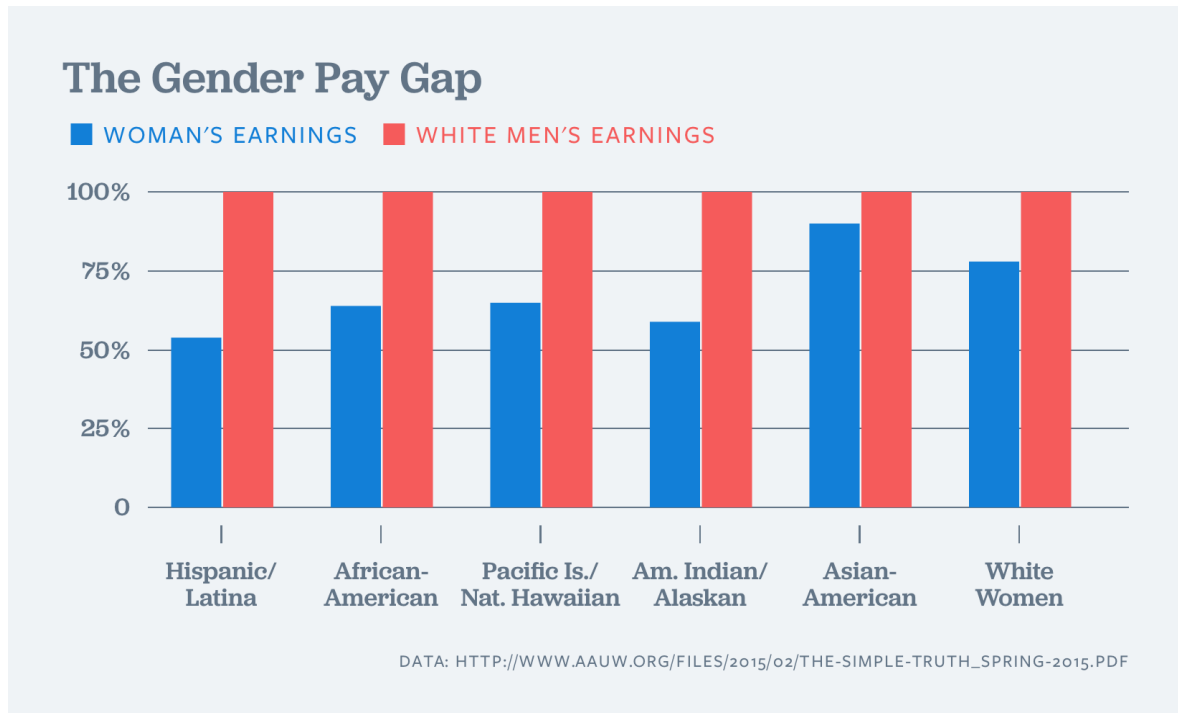
We are not going to allow the extreme right-wing to defund Planned Parenthood, we are going to expand it. Planned Parenthood provides vital healthcare services for millions of women, who rely on its clinics every year for affordable, quality health care services including cancer prevention, STI and HIV testing and general primary health care services. The current attempt to malign Planned Parenthood is part of a long-term smear campaign by people who want to deny women in this country the right to control their own bodies.

We are not going back to the days when women did not have full access to birth control. Incredibly, almost all of the Republicans in the Senate are in favor of giving any employer who provides health insurance, or any insurance company, the ability to deny coverage for contraception or any other kind of procedure if the employer had a "moral" objection to it. That is unacceptable.

We will not go back to the days when survivors of domestic violence had no access to services or recourse against their abusers, because domestic violence was swept under the rug, as a shameful, private issue. Worse yet, it was not so long ago that spousal abuse was legal in many states. We must expand services provided through the Violence Against Women Act and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, and fight any attempts to undermine these laws.

We are not going back to the days when it was legal for women to be paid less for doing the same work as men.

It is wrong that women working full-time only earn 79 cents for every dollar a man earns. We have got to move forward and pass the [Paycheck Fairness Act](#) into law.



And, not only are we going to expand policies that advance gender equality, we are going to fight to pass the long-overdue Equal Rights Amendment and vigorously defend the critical laws and programs which protect all working people in our country.

At a time when elderly women are more likely than men to be living in poverty, not only do we say NO to cuts in Social Security, we will expand Social Security.

When 35 million Americans [lack health insurance](#), not only do we say NO to cuts in Medicare and Medicaid, we will expand these programs that are so important to families.

The right-wing in this country is [waging a war against women](#) and by working together, we will ensure [that is a war they are going to lose](#).

As president, Senator Bernie Sanders will:

1. *Fight for pay equity for women.*

It is a national disgrace that women only earn 79 cents for every dollar a man earns. The gender pay gap is even worse for women of color. Today, African American women earn just 64 cents for every dollar a white male earns, while the figure for Hispanic women is just 54 cents. As president, Sen. Sanders will sign the Paycheck Fairness Act into law to end wage discrimination based on gender.

2. *Expand and protect the reproductive rights of women.*

Sen. Sanders has consistently fought against Republican attacks on the fundamental rights of women to control their own bodies. As president, Sen. Sanders would expand, not cut, funding for Planned Parenthood, the Title X family planning program, and other initiatives that protect women's health, access to contraception, and the availability of a safe and legal abortion.

3. *Only nominate Supreme Court justices who support Roe v. Wade and the reproductive rights of women.*

As president, Sen. Sanders will only nominate Supreme Court justices who understand that Roe v. Wade is the law of the land and recognize the rights of women to have access to family planning services.

4. *Make quality childcare and Pre-K available to all Americans.*

Sen. Sanders is working on a plan to make high-quality childcare and Pre-K available to every American, regardless of income. It is unacceptable that the cost of a quality childcare program is out of reach for millions of Americans.

5. *Increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2020.*

According to the most recent statistics, women make up two-thirds of all minimum wage workers. Increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour would significantly boost the wages of more than 15 million women and help close the gender wage gap.

6. *Raise the tipped minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2023.*

The federal tipped minimum wage of just \$2.13 an hour hasn't been raised since 1991. More than two-thirds of tipped workers are women. Increasing the tipped minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2023 would lift millions of women out of poverty and significantly reduce the gender pay gap.

7. *Provide at least 12 weeks of paid family leave, 2 weeks of paid vacation, and one week of paid sick days to American workers.*

As president, Sen. Sanders would end the international embarrassment of the United States being the only major country on earth that does not guarantee paid leave to workers. The Republicans talk a lot about "family values." Well, it is not a family value to force the mother of a new born baby to go back to work a few days after she gives birth, because she doesn't have the money to stay home and bond with her baby. That is not a family value. That is an insult to everything that we know a family is about. Sen. Sanders would require employers to provide at least 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave. At a time when over 65 percent of women work more than 40 hours a week, we must require employers to provide at least two weeks of paid vacation. And, we must require employers to provide at least one week of paid sick leave so that women can stay home to take care of a sick child, among other things.

8. *Expand the WIC program for pregnant mothers and infants.*

As the Ranking Member of the Budget Committee, Sen. Sanders helped lead the effort in the Senate against Republican attempts to cut the WIC program that provides nutrition assistance to pregnant mothers, women, and infants. As president, Sen. Sanders would substantially increase funding for this program so that every low-income mother and her children receive the nutrition they need to live healthy lives.

9. *Make healthcare a right.*

As president, Sen. Sanders would fight for a Medicare for All single-payer healthcare system to make healthcare a right for all Americans. If the United States joined every major country on earth and enacted a universal healthcare program, women would benefit the most. Today, women have much higher healthcare expenses than men and pay a greater portion of their healthcare costs out of their own pockets. Women make up two-thirds of the low-wage workforce and only about 23 percent of low-wage jobs provide health insurance. It is time for a Medicare for All single-payer healthcare system.

10. *Expand Social Security.*

As president, Sen. Sanders will fight to expand Social Security benefits by an average of \$65 a month; increase cost-of-living-adjustments to keep up with rising medical and prescription drug costs; and expand the minimum Social Security benefit to lift seniors out of poverty. Women will benefit the most by expanding Social Security. More than twice as many elderly women lived in poverty than men in 2013. Without Social Security, nearly half of all elderly women would be living in poverty.

<https://berniesanders.com/issues/fighting-for-lgbt-equality>

Fighting for LGBT Equality

Senator Sanders has been a longtime supporter of LGBT rights. In 1983, during his first term as Mayor of Burlington, Sen. Sanders supported the city's first ever Pride Parade. He later signed a city ordinance banning housing discrimination.

When he served in the House of Representatives, then-Congressman Sanders voted against "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" in 1993 and the so-called "Defense of Marriage Act" in 1996. Sen. Sanders hailed the landmark Supreme Court decisions in 2013 and 2015 which struck down DOMA and recognized same-sex marriage is a right in all 50 states, calling the decisions a "victory for same-sex couples across our country as well as all those seeking to live in a nation where every citizen is afforded equal rights."

The United States has made remarkable progress on gay rights in a relatively short amount of time. But there is still much work to be done.

In many states, it is still legal to fire someone for being gay. It is legal to deny someone housing for being transgender. That is unacceptable and must change. We must end discrimination in all forms.

Sen. Sanders is currently a cosponsor of the Equality Act, which would expand the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other anti-discrimination laws to include protections for sexual orientation and gender identity. He has consistently supported legislation that would guarantee LGBT Americans would be treated as equal citizens, and has a lifetime perfect score from the Human Rights Campaign.

As President, Sen. Sanders will:

1. Sign into law the Equality Act, the Every Child Deserves a Family Act, and any other bill that prohibits discrimination against LGBT people.
2. Work with HHS to ensure LGBT Americans have access to comprehensive health insurance which provides appropriate coverage and do not have to fear discrimination or mistreatment from providers.
3. Continue the great work of the State Department's Special Envoy for LGBT Rights and ensure the United States helps protect the rights of LGBT people around the world.
4. Advance policies to ensure students can attend school without fear of bullying, and work to reduce suicides.
5. Require police departments to adopt policies to ensure fairer interactions with transgender people, especially transgender women of color who are often targeted by police unfairly, and institute training programs to promote compliance with fair policies.

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6. Bar discrimination against LGBT people by creditors and banks so that people will not be unfairly denied mortgages, credit cards, or student loans.
7. Veto any legislation that purports to “protect” religious liberty at the expense of others’ rights.

<https://berniesanders.com/issues/caring-for-our-veterans>

Caring for our Veterans

While serious people can have legitimate differences about when our country should go to war, there should never be a debate whether we fulfill the promises made to the men and women who served this country in the military. As a nation, we have a moral obligation to provide the best quality care to those who have put their lives on the line to defend us.

Sen. Sanders believes that just as planes and tanks and guns are a cost of war, so is taking care of the men and women who we sent off to fight the war. It includes caring for the spouses and children who have to rebuild their lives after the loss of a loved one. It includes caring for the hundreds of thousands of veterans with multiple amputations or loss of eyesight, post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury. It includes veterans who are having difficulty keeping jobs in order to pay their bills, and it includes the terrible tragedy of veterans committing suicide.

As the former Chairman and a current member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, one of Sen. Sanders' highest priorities in Congress has been ensuring that our veterans receive the care and benefits they have earned.

Amid reports of unacceptable wait times at many VA medical facilities last year, Sen. Sanders spearheaded a bipartisan effort to pass the most comprehensive veterans' legislation in decades. The landmark Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act increases accountability within the VA and ensures that all veterans have access to timely health care.

The law written by Sanders strengthens the VA health care system by authorizing 27 new medical facilities and by providing \$5 billion to hire more doctors and nurses to care for the surging number of veterans returning from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It provides incentives to attract young doctors to the VA. It makes it easier for some veterans to see private doctors or go to community health centers, Department of Defense facilities or Indian Health Centers. It expanded VA educational benefits and improved care for survivors of sexual trauma while serving in the military.

Sen. Sanders wants to build on a program he has championed in Vermont, where the National Guard operates an innovative outreach program to provide pre-deployment and post-deployment support to family members and service members. This effort has been hugely successful in terms of making sure that veterans know about and receive the health care, mental health counseling, family assistance, transition assistance and other benefits they need to make sure they can live a healthy and productive life.

Moving forward, Sen. Sanders wants to expand veterans' benefits by making comprehensive dental care available to all veterans at VA medical centers, and by expanding caregiver provisions. He believes we must do more to meet the mental health needs of our veterans, especially those who have served in harm's way. We must fully restore cuts to military pensions that were insisted upon by Republicans in the last budget deal.

Instead of cutting benefits for the [men and women who have served our country](#), we should ask the most profitable corporations and the wealthiest among us to pay their fair share.

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Sen. Sanders also strongly believes that we must end the travesty of veterans' homelessness. While huge gains have been made over the past six years, the fact that on any given night there are fifty thousand homeless veterans on the street is a national disgrace. We also need to make further improvements to the VA disability claims process, which while significantly streamlined, still takes far too long for many veterans.

Key Actions:

- Authored the historic Veterans' Access, Choice and Accountability Act to improve care and increase accountability at the VA.
- Co-sponsored the Post-9/11 GI Bill to allow a new generation of veterans, servicemembers and dependents to seek a college degree.
- Co-sponsored the Women Veterans Access to Quality Care Act, to ensure VA facilities meet the needs of women veterans, and require every VA medical center to have obstetricians or gynecologists on staff.
- Introduced legislation to restore all cuts to military pensions.

As President, Sen. Sanders will:

1. Fully fund and expand the VA so that every veteran gets the care that he or she has earned and deserves.
2. Substantially improve the processing of Veterans' claims for compensation.
3. Expand the VA's Caregivers Program.
4. Expand mental health service for Veterans.
5. Make comprehensive dental care available to all veterans at the VA.

<https://berniesanders.com/medicareforall>
<https://berniesanders.com/issues/medicare-for-all>

Medicare for All: Leaving No One Behind

It has been the goal of Democrats since Franklin D. Roosevelt to create a universal health care system guaranteeing health care to all people. Every other major industrialized nation has done so. It is time for this country to join them and fulfill the legacy of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Lyndon B. Johnson and other great Democrats.

The Affordable Care Act was a critically important step towards the goal of universal health care. Thanks to the ACA, more than 17 million Americans have gained health insurance. Millions of low-income Americans have coverage through expanded eligibility for Medicaid that now exists in 31 states. Young adults can stay on their parents' health plans until they're 26. All Americans can benefit from increased protections against lifetime coverage limits and exclusion from coverage because of pre-existing conditions. Bernie was on the U.S. Senate committee that helped write the ACA.

But as we move forward, we must build upon the success of the ACA to achieve the goal of universal health care. Twenty-nine million Americans today still do not have health insurance and millions more are underinsured and cannot afford the high copayments and deductibles charged by private health insurance companies that put profits before people.

The U.S. spends more on health care per person, and as a percentage of gross domestic product, than any other advanced nation in the world, including Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. But all that money has not made Americans healthier than the rest of the world. Quite simply, in our high-priced health care system that leaves millions overlooked, we spend more yet end up with less.

Other industrialized nations are making the morally principled and financially responsible decision to provide universal health care to all of their people—and they do so while saving money by keeping people healthier. Those who say this goal is unachievable are selling the American people short.

Americans need a health care system that works for patients and providers. We need to focus our federal investments on training the health care providers. We need to ensure a strong health care workforce in all communities now and in the future. We need to build on the strength of the 50 years of success of the Medicare program. We need a health care system that significantly reduces overhead, administrative costs and complexity. We need a system where all people can get the care they need to maintain and improve their health when they need it regardless of income, age or socioeconomic status. We need a system that works not just for millionaires and billionaires, but for all of us.

Under Bernie's plan, Americans will benefit from the freedom and security that comes with finally separating health insurance from employment. That freedom would not only help the American people live happier, healthier and more fulfilling lives, but it would also promote innovation and entrepreneurship in every sector of the economy. People would be able to start new businesses, stay home with their children or leave jobs they don't like knowing that they would still have health care coverage for themselves and their families. Employers could be free to focus on running their business rather than spending countless hours figuring out

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how to provide health insurance to their employees. Working Americans wouldn't have to choose between bargaining for higher wages or better health insurance. Parents wouldn't have to worry about how to provide health insurance to their children. Americans would no longer have to fear losing their health insurance if they lose their job, change employment or go part-time. Seniors and people with serious or chronic illnesses could afford the medications necessary to keep them healthy without worry of financial ruin. Millions of people will no longer have to choose between health care and other necessities like food, heat and shelter, and will have access to services that may have been out of reach, like dental care or long-term care.

Simply put, Bernie's plan will provide all Americans with the sense of freedom and peace of mind that comes from knowing you always have access to the health care you need.

The Plan

Better Coverage

Bernie's plan would create a federally administered single-payer health care program. Universal single-payer health care means comprehensive coverage for all Americans. Bernie's plan will cover the entire continuum of health care, from inpatient to outpatient care; preventive to emergency care; primary care to specialty care, including long-term and palliative care; vision, hearing and oral health care; mental health and substance abuse services; as well as prescription medications, medical equipment, supplies, diagnostics and treatments. Patients will be able to choose a health care provider without worrying about whether that provider is in-network and will be able to get the care they need without having to read any fine print or trying to figure out how they can afford the out-of-pocket costs.

What It Means for Patients

As a patient, all you need to do is go to the doctor and show your insurance card. Bernie's plan means no more copays, no more deductibles and no more fighting with insurance companies when they fail to pay for charges.

Getting Health Care Spending Under Control

We outspend all other countries on the planet and our medical spending continues to grow faster than the rate of inflation. Creating a single, public insurance system will go a long way towards getting health care spending under control. The United States has thousands of different health insurance plans, all of which set different reimbursement rates across different networks for providers and procedures resulting in high administrative costs. Two patients with the same condition may get very different care depending on where they live, the health insurance they have and what their insurance covers. A patient may pay different amounts for the same prescription depending solely on where the prescription is filled. Health care providers and patients must navigate this complex and bewildering system wasting precious time and resources.

By moving to an integrated system, the government will finally have the ability to stand up to drug companies and negotiate fair prices for the American people collectively. It will also ensure the federal government can track access to various providers and make smart investments to avoid provider shortages and ensure communities can access the providers they need.

Major Savings for Families and Businesses

Bernie's plan will cost over \$6 trillion less than the current health care system over the next ten years.

The United States currently spends \$3 trillion on health care each year—nearly \$10,000 per person. Reforming our health care system, simplifying our payment structure and incentivizing new ways to make sure patients are actually getting better health care will generate massive savings. This plan has been estimated to save the American people and businesses over \$6 trillion over the next decade.

The typical middle class family would save over \$5,000 under this plan.

Last year, the average working family paid \$4,955 in premiums and \$1,318 in deductibles to private health insurance companies. Under this plan, a family of four earning \$50,000 would pay just \$466 per year to the single-payer program, amounting to a savings of over \$5,800 for that family each year.

Businesses would save over \$9,400 a year in health care costs for the average employee.

The average annual cost to the employer for a worker with a family who makes \$50,000 a year would go from \$12,591 to just \$3,100.

How Much Will It Cost and How Do We Pay For It?

How Much Will It Cost?

This plan has been estimated to cost \$1.38 trillion per year.

The Plan Would Be Fully Paid For By:

- **A 6.2 percent income-based health care premium paid by employers.**
Revenue raised: \$630 billion per year.
- **A 2.2 percent income-based premium paid by households.**
Revenue raised: \$210 billion per year. This year, a family of four taking the standard deduction can have income up to \$28,800 and not pay this tax under this plan.

A family of four making \$50,000 a year taking the standard deduction would only pay \$466 this year.

- **Progressive income tax rates.**
Revenue raised: \$110 billion a year. Under this plan the marginal income tax rate would be:
 - 37 percent on income between \$250,000 and \$500,000.

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- 43 percent on income between \$500,000 and \$2 million.
- 48 percent on income between \$2 million and \$10 million. (In 2013, only **113,000 households**, the top 0.08 percent of taxpayers, had income between \$2 million and \$10 million.)
- 52 percent on income above \$10 million. (In 2013, only **13,000 households**, just 0.01 percent of taxpayers, had income exceeding \$10 million.)
- **Taxing capital gains and dividends the same as income from work.**
Revenue raised: \$92 billion per year. Warren Buffett, the second wealthiest American in the country, has said that he pays a lower effective tax rate than his secretary. The reason is that he receives most of his income from capital gains and dividends, which are taxed at a much lower rate than income from work. This plan will end the special tax break for capital gains and dividends on household income above \$250,000.
- **Limit tax deductions for rich.**
Revenue raised: \$15 billion per year. Under Bernie's plan, households making over \$250,000 would no longer be able to save more than 28 cents in taxes from every dollar in tax deductions. This limit would replace more complicated and less effective limits on tax breaks for the rich including the AMT, the personal exemption phase-out and the limit on itemized deductions.
- **The Responsible Estate Tax.**
Revenue raised: \$21 billion per year. This provision would tax the estates of the wealthiest 0.3 percent (three-tenths of 1 percent) of Americans who inherit over \$3.5 million at progressive rates and close loopholes in the estate tax.
- **Savings from health tax expenditures.**
Revenue raised: \$310 billion per year. Several tax breaks that subsidize health care (health-related "tax expenditures") would become obsolete and disappear under a single-payer health care system, saving \$310 billion per year.

Most importantly, health care provided by employers is compensation that is not subject to payroll taxes or income taxes under current law. This is a significant tax break that would effectively disappear under this plan because all Americans would receive health care through the new single-payer program instead of employer-based health care.

<https://berniesanders.com/issues/fighting-for-disability-rights>

Fighting for Disability Rights

“The Americans with Disabilities Act established a clear national mandate that we as a nation have a moral responsibility to ensure that all Americans have access to the programs and the support needed to contribute to society, live with dignity, and achieve a high quality of life.”

— Senator Bernie Sanders

When the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed 25 years ago, it was hailed as the world’s first comprehensive declaration of equality for people with disabilities. Today, as a result of this landmark legislation, millions of people with disabilities are no longer denied the opportunity to get on a bus, go to a decent school, make a decent living, attend a baseball game, and live successful and productive lives. Instead of being isolated and hidden from society, kids with disabilities are now in classrooms all over America and graduating from high school and college with the respect and admiration of their classmates, teachers, and families.

This transformation in our culture and society did not happen by accident, and it did not happen overnight – it happened because a grassroots movement demanded change. Despite the progress that has been made over the past two decades, we unfortunately still live in a world where people with disabilities have fewer work opportunities and where the civil rights of people with disabilities are not always protected and respected.

Bernie has been a champion for the rights of people with disabilities and he will continue to fight to ensure that our society is one where people with disabilities can live full and productive lives.

As President, Bernie will:

1. Protect and expand the Social Security Disability Insurance Program (SSDI)

SSDI is vitally important to more than 11 million Americans, including more than one million veterans and nearly two million children. The average disability benefit is about \$1,200 a month. For many people, that is their entire income.

2. Increase employment and educational opportunities for persons with disabilities.

In the year 2016, it is unacceptable that over 80 percent of adults with disabilities are unemployed. We need to fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and vocational education programs. We also need to expand funding for Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs), which aim to provide “one-stop shopping” for information on long-term services and support.

3. Fight for the U.S. ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Bernie will continue to fight for equal access and equal rights for people with disabilities. That's why Bernie strongly supports the ratification of this important treaty.

Nearly one-in-five Americans have a disability. Disability may occur at any stage of life, to anyone, and how our government and elected leadership respond to the issues facing people with disabilities and their families – from housing and transportation, to autonomy, to employment and education and access to services – shapes the fabric of our society.

At a time when millions of disabled Americans are struggling to keep their heads above water economically, Bernie believes that we must expand the social safety net in this country so that every American can live in dignity.

As the lead Democrat on the Budget Committee, Bernie fought against the Republican budget that would make lives much more difficult for persons with disabilities by throwing 27 million Americans off of health insurance, cutting Medicaid by \$500 billion, turning Medicare into a voucher program, and making savage cuts in education, affordable housing, vocational assistance, and nutrition programs.

Instead of slashing Medicaid, instead of privatizing Medicare, Bernie believes what the United States must do is join every other major nation on earth and recognize that health care is a right of citizenship for every American, regardless of age.

That's why Bernie is fighting for a Medicare-for-all single-payer health care plan for every man, woman, and child in this country.

As Franklin Delano Roosevelt reminded us: "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much, it is whether we provide enough for those who have little." And that is a test that we as a nation must once again meet and master.

<https://berniesanders.com/issues/strengthen-and-expand-social-security>

Strengthen and Expand Social Security

Social Security is the most successful government program in our nation's history. Before it was signed into law, nearly half of senior citizens lived in poverty. Today, the elderly poverty rate is 10 percent. Although still much too high, that's a dramatic improvement.

Through good times and bad, Social Security has paid every nickel owed to every eligible American – on time and without delay. As corporations destroyed the retirement dreams of millions over the past 30 years by eliminating defined benefit pension plans, Social Security was right there paying full benefits. As millions of Americans lost their life savings after Wall Street's recklessness crashed the economy in 2008, Social Security was right there paying full benefits.

Today, Social Security is more important than ever. Over half of workers between the ages of 55-64 have no retirement savings. More than a third of senior citizens depend on Social Security for virtually all of their income. One out of every five senior citizens is trying to scrape by on an average income of just \$8,300 a year.

Given these facts, our job cannot be to cut Social Security. Our job must be to expand it so that every American can retire with dignity and respect.

Virtually every Republican candidate for president disagrees. Many of them claim Social Security is "going broke," that it's causing the deficit to explode, and its trust fund is full of IOUs.

They want the American people to believe Social Security is in crisis and must be cut.

They are dead wrong.

Here are the facts:

- Social Security has a \$2.8 trillion surplus. It can pay every benefit owed to every eligible American for the next 19 years (and more than three-quarters after that).
- Social Security's assets aren't "just paper," as conservatives sometimes put it. Social Security invests in U.S Treasury bonds, the safest interest-bearing securities in the world. These are the same bonds wealthy investors have purchased, along with China and other foreign countries. These bonds are backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. government, which in our long history has never defaulted on its debt obligations.
- Right now a billionaire pays the same amount of money into Social Security as someone who makes \$118,500 a year. That's because there is a cap on taxable income that goes into the Social Security system.

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Sen. Sanders has introduced legislation to end this absurdity, by lifting this cap so that everyone who makes over \$250,000 a year pays the same percentage of their income into Social Security as the middle class and working families.

This would not only extend the solvency of Social Security for the next 50 years, but also bring in enough revenue to expand benefits by an average of \$65 a month; increase cost-of-living-adjustments; and lift more seniors out of poverty by increasing the minimum benefits paid to low-income seniors.

Not only is this the right thing to do from a moral perspective, it is also what the vast majority of the American people want us to do. 61 percent of the American people support expanding Social Security benefits by lifting the cap on taxable income, according to an NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll earlier this year.

At a time when millions of Americans are working longer hours for lower wages, even as virtually all of the new income in this country is going to the top one percent, Sen. Sanders' legislation will begin to reduce the obscene level of income inequality in America.

It's time to expand Social Security to make sure that everyone in this country can retire with the dignity and respect they deserve.

VIDEO: Bernie Brief: Social Security | Ep. 2
www.youtube.com/watch?v=FAcv7g3O_iM

<https://berniesanders.com/issues/fighting-to-lower-prescription-drug-prices>

Fighting to Lower Prescription Drug Prices

Access to health care is a human right, and that includes access to safe and affordable prescription drugs. It is time to enact prescription drug policies that work for everyone, not just the CEOs of the pharmaceutical industry.

The Problem

Americans pay, by far, the highest prices for prescription drugs in the entire world. When we talk about health care, we are talking about the need of the American people to be able to afford the medicine their health care providers prescribe. A life-saving drug does no good if the people who need it cannot afford that drug.

Yet, last year, nearly one in five Americans between the ages of 19 and 64 – 35 million people – did not get their prescriptions filled because they did not have enough money. In the wealthiest country in the history of the world, Americans should not have to live in fear that they will go bankrupt or die because they cannot afford to take the medication they need.

In any given month, more than half of all American adults take at least one prescription drug. There is no question that medicines help millions of people live healthier and longer lives, and can also prevent more expensive illnesses and treatments. However, it is unacceptable that the United States now spends more than \$370 billion on prescription drugs and spending is rising faster than at any point in the last decade.

Instead of listening to the demands of the pharmaceutical industry and their 1,400 lobbyists, it is time that Congress started listening to the American people, who overwhelmingly believe that the cost of medication is too expensive. More than 70 percent of Americans believe drug costs are unreasonable and that drug companies are putting profits before people.

The Sanders Plan To Lower Prescription Drug Prices

Americans filled 4.3 billion prescriptions last year. The Sanders plan includes six policies to get better deals for the American people. Sanders' plan will:

1. Negotiate A Better Deal

- Require Medicare to use its bargaining power to negotiate with the prescription drug companies for better prices – a practice that is currently banned by law.
- Last year there were more than 37 million Medicare beneficiaries enrolled in private Part D plans. 90 percent of seniors take at least one prescription. Many seniors – almost two-thirds – take three or more prescription drugs.
- Not only would negotiation substantially reduce prices seniors and people with disabilities pay for drugs, it could save Medicare between \$230 billion to \$541 billion dollars over the next decade.

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- 83 percent of Americans support allowing the federal government to negotiate with drug companies for better prices.

2. Import Prescriptions from Canada

- Allow individuals, pharmacists, and wholesalers to import prescription drugs from licensed Canadian pharmacies.
- The United States spends more than \$1,000 per person per year on prescription drugs – that’s nearly 40 percent more than Canada, the next highest spender.
- In 1999, Sanders became the first Member of Congress to take a busload of Americans across the border into Canada to purchase prescription drugs. Americans should not have to pay higher prices for the exact same drugs than our Canadian neighbors simply because Congress is bought and paid for by the powerful pharmaceutical industry.
- 72 percent of Americans support this policy of allowing Americans to easily import safe and affordable prescription drugs from Canada.
- Prohibit the United States from agreeing to provisions in international trade deals that would raise drug prices in the United States or extend the monopoly period when a brand name drug company has no generic competition.
- Suspend the government’s authority to destroy packages of imported drugs at the border until new legislation is passed ensuring that Americans can import safe and affordable drugs from Canada.

3. Restore Discounts for Low-Income Seniors

- Close the Medicare Part D donut hole for brand and generic drugs by 2017, three years earlier than under current law.
- The private Medicare Part D benefit contains a “donut hole.” It’s a coverage gap, wherein seniors and people with disabilities must pay for their medications even while they are paying monthly premiums. Under current law, this gap in coverage will close by 2020. Sanders’ plan closes the gap by 2017.
- Require generic drug companies to pay an additional rebate to Medicaid if their drug prices rise faster than inflation.
- Brand name drug makers have to pay a rebate to Medicaid if their drug prices rise faster than inflation. This provision ensures generic drug companies are subject to the same rules. Nearly 10 percent of generic drugs more than doubled in price last year. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, this policy will save the federal government \$1 billion over 10 years.
- Restore Medicare prescription drug discounts for low-income seniors and people with disabilities.
- Pharmaceutical companies got a huge victory ten years ago, when prescription drug coverage for low-income seniors and people with disabilities was moved from

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Medicaid to Medicare. Because Medicaid gets a much better price for prescription drugs than private Medicare Part D plans, this policy change meant that drug companies would gain even larger profits on the backs of low-income seniors at the taxpayers' expense.

- The Sanders plan will restore these rebates for low-income seniors, saving \$103 billion over 10 years, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

4. Prohibit Deals that Keep Generic Drugs Off the Market

- Prohibit anti-competitive deals – “pay-for-delay” deals – between brand and generic drug makers.
- Brand name drug companies sometimes try to delay their competition by paying generic drug makers to stay off the market. When these deals occur, drug prices stay high, costing patients and taxpayers more money.
- The Sanders plan prohibits these pay-for-delay deals. According to the Federal Trade Commission, these anticompetitive deals cost consumers and taxpayers at least \$3.5 billion in higher drug costs every year.

5. Enact Stronger Penalties for Fraud

- Terminate exclusivity—a government-awarded monopoly period—from a drug company convicted of fraud.
- The Sanders plan holds the pharmaceutical industry accountable when they defraud the American people. Today, nearly every major pharmaceutical company has been convicted of either civil or criminal fraud for violations including off-label promotion, kickbacks, anti-monopoly practices, and Medicare fraud.
- Even though the Justice Department has won suits requiring companies to pay hundreds of millions of dollars in fines, the prescription drug companies simply treat those fines as the cost of doing business.

6. Require Pricing and Cost Transparency

- Require drug companies to publicly report information that affects drug pricing.
- Companies routinely distort the true cost of drug research and development to justify skyrocketing prescription drug prices. Under the Sanders plan, drug makers would be required to report certain price information to the federal government and the public on their products, including the total expenditures on research and development and clinical trials, as well as the portion of their drug development expenses offset by tax credits or paid for by federal grants.
- Companies would also be required to report not only the price information charged to federal payers, such as Medicare, but would also have to submit price, profit, and sales information for other countries in which the drug is sold.

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- 86 percent of Americans, including 82 percent of Republicans, think drug companies should be required to release information to the public on how they set their prices.

This is not a partisan issue. Most Americans – Republicans, Democrats, and independents – want Congress to do something about drug prices. Tens of thousands of Americans now spend more than \$100,000 a year on prescription medications. Drug costs are out of control because that's the way pharmaceutical companies want it. Other countries have national health insurance plans that negotiate better prices for all of their residents. In this country, however, drug lobbyists have been able to block all of these common-sense solutions that we must work to pass into law. That is unacceptable and that has got to change.

<https://berniesanders.com/issues/improving-the-rural-economy>

Improving the Rural Economy

As someone who has represented a rural state for more than 24 years, improving the lives of rural Americans is a top priority for Senator Sanders.

Family farms and ranches are the backbone of rural America and the U.S. economy. Farmers are also among our nation's foremost stewards of our lands and water.

Throughout his career, Senator Sanders has successfully fought for innovative rural economic development initiatives, including investments in farm-to-school and farm-to-table initiatives; agri-tourism programs; school gardens; large scale bio-mass fired electric plants; shared agricultural processing and storage facilities; and anaerobic digesters to process cow manure into methane gas.

Senator Sanders understands that agriculture programs need to be counter-cyclical to assure market-derived commodity income at levels that advance and sustain family-scale farming.

Senator Sanders will fight for farm policies that will foster the entry of a new generation of owner-operators. He will not back away from land stewardship standards that include the commonwealth of clean water for all.

As president, Senator Sanders will adopt policies that will:

- Make sure that family farmers and rural economies thrive;
- Expand support for young and beginning farmers;
- Produce an abundant and nutritious food supply;
- Establish an on-going regeneration of our soils; and
- Enlist farmers as partners in promoting conservation and stewardship to keep our air and water clean and to combat climate change.

Family Farms Instead of Factory Farms

Senator Sanders believes that we need more family farms, not more factory farms.

It is unacceptable that just four corporations control 82% of the nation's beef cattle market, 85% of soybean processing, and 63% of pork processing. It is unacceptable that there are over 300,000 fewer farmers than there were 20 years ago.

It is unacceptable that the top 10% of farms collect 75% of farm subsidies, while the bottom 62% do not receive any subsidies. We have to adopt policies that will turn this around.

Supporting Agriculture

In 1966, farmers received 40 cents for every dollar Americans spent on food. Today, they only receive 16 cents on the dollar.

As President, Senator Sanders will reverse this trend by:

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1. **Fighting for America's small and mid-sized farms.** Abraham Lincoln called the United States Department of Agriculture the "People's Department" and Senator Sanders will ensure that the agency lives up to this name by expanding its services for new and underserved farmers.
2. **Encouraging the growth of regional food systems.** Farmers throughout the country are boosting their bottom line and reinvigorating their communities by selling directly to local consumers, institutions, and restaurants. Senator Sanders will invest in this movement, helping Americans support local farms.
3. **Reversing trade policies like NAFTA** that have flooded the American market with agricultural goods produced in countries with less stringent environmental, labor, and safety regulations.
4. **Enforcing our country's antitrust laws against large agribusiness and food corporations.** A few large companies dominate many agricultural industries, allowing them to force unfair prices on farmers. Senator Sanders will stand up to these corporations and fight to ensure that farmers receive fair prices.

INVESTING IN RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR A CLEANER ENVIRONMENT AND NEW INCOME FOR FARMERS

Senator Sanders supports major investments in wind, solar, biomass, geothermal, and other sources of renewable energy. These investments are not only important to combat global warming, they are also critically important in improving the farm economy.

The good news is that farmers and ranchers all over this country are leading the charge toward a more sustainable energy future.

Today, more than 57,000 farms are taking advantage of renewable energy production — which has more than doubled since 2007.

Nowhere is that more true than in Iowa. Today, farmers and rural landowners in Iowa receive over \$17 million in lease payments from wind developers — and have the potential to nearly triple over the next 15 years.

Today, Iowa reliably generates over 28% of its electricity from wind — which supports 7,000 good-paying jobs in-state.

Senator Sanders would substantially increase investments in wind energy and would make the Wind Production Tax Credit permanent. By making these investments, wind could supply over 40 percent of Iowa's electricity in the next five years. By 2030 wind energy in Iowa could supply enough electricity for 6.3 million average American homes.

And, it's not only wind. Biofuels like ethanol have been an economic lifeline to rural and farm communities in Iowa and throughout the Midwest, supporting over 850,000 workers, all while keeping our energy dollars here at home instead of going into the pockets of oil barons in the Middle East and Russia.

Senator Sanders strongly supports the Renewable Fuels Standard that is helping us move beyond oil.

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Moreover, when we talk about harnessing energy from the sun, the good news is that solar panels accounted for more than 60% of renewable energy production systems on farms. According to the Solar Energy Industries Association, the cost of residential solar has come down 75% since 2009.

Over half of the electric generating capacity added to the grid last year was renewable energy from new wind and solar projects. There is enough solar power in America to power four million homes. And, as we generate new sustainable energy, we also generate new opportunities. Today, the rate of job growth in the solar industry is ten times higher than the national average.

While this is a step in the right direction, much more needs to be done to ensure our planet remains habitable, improve the environment, and help our farmers in Iowa and across the country. Substantially increasing our investments in renewable energy will be a major priority in a Sanders administration.

BERNIE'S PLAN TO REBUILD RURAL AMERICA

Addressing the infrastructure crisis facing the country – and creating the millions of jobs our economy desperately needs – has been an essential plank of Senator Sanders' campaign.

Senator Sanders' Rebuild America Act will make substantial infrastructure investments in Iowa and throughout rural America.

Improving our electric grid. Senator Sanders understands that we desperately need to improve our aging rural electrical grid, which consists of a patchwork system of interconnected power generation, transmission, and distribution facilities, some of which date back to the early 1900s.

Today, the World Economic Forum ranks our electric grid at just 24th in the world in terms of reliability, just *behind* Barbados.

As part of the Rebuild America Act, Senator Sanders would invest \$50 billion on power transmission and distribution modernization projects to improve the reliability and resiliency of our ever more complex electric power grid. This investment will also position our grid to accept new sources of locally generated renewable energy, and it will address critical vulnerabilities to cyber-attacks.

Investing in broadband and high-speed Internet services. Another critically important rural infrastructure issue that often goes overlooked is the expansion of broadband. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development ranks the U.S. 16th in the world in terms of broadband access.

Today, people living in Bucharest, Romania have access to much faster Internet than most of the United States. That's unacceptable and must change.

Senator Sanders' Rebuild America Act would invest \$25 billion over five years to expand high-speed broadband networks in under-served and un-served areas, and would boost speeds and capacity all across the country, particularly in rural areas.

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High-speed Internet access is no longer a luxury. It is essential for 21st century commerce, education, telemedicine, and public safety. And, it's especially important for rural America to stay connected and to do business with the rest of the world.

Improving our dams and levees. Senator Sanders' plan also addresses dams and levees. Right now, more than 4,000 of the nation's 84,000 dams are considered deficient.

Even worse, one of every eleven levees have been rated as "likely to fail" during a major flood. Most of those facilities are in rural areas.

The Rebuild America Act will invest \$12 billion a year to repair and improve the high-hazard dams that provide flood control, drinking water, irrigation, hydropower, and recreation across rural America; and the flood levees that protect our farms and our towns and cities.

<https://berniesanders.com/issues/reforming-wall-street>

Reforming Wall Street

Wall Street cannot continue to be an island unto itself, gambling trillions in risky financial decisions while expecting the public to bail it out.

It is time to [break up the largest financial institutions](#) in the country.

The six largest financial institutions in this country today hold assets equal to about 60% of the nation's gross domestic product. These six banks issue more than two-thirds of all credit cards and over 35% of all mortgages. They control 95% of all derivatives and hold more than 40% of all bank deposits in the United States.

We must break up too-big-to-fail financial institutions. Those institutions received a \$700 billion bailout from the US taxpayer, and more than \$16 trillion in virtually zero interest loans from the Federal Reserve. Despite that, financial institutions made over \$152 billion in profit in 2014 – the most profitable year on record, and three of the four largest financial institutions are 80% bigger today than they were before we bailed them out.

Our banking system must be part of the productive, job-creating economy. The Federal Reserve, a government entity which serves as the engine of the banking industry, must eliminate its internal conflicts of interest, provide stricter oversight, and insist that the banks serve the economy in a way that works for everyone, not just a few.

If a bank is [too big to fail](#), it is [too big to exist](#).

These institutions have acquired too much economic and political power, endangering our economy and our political process.

KEY ACTIONS

- Introduced the “Too Big to Fail, Too Big to Exist Act,” which would break up the big banks and prohibit any too-big-to-fail institutions from accessing the Federal Reserve’s discount facilities or using insured deposits for risky activities.
- Led the fight in 1999 defending Glass-Steagall provisions which prevented banks (especially “too big to fail” ones) from gambling with customers’ money, and currently is a co-sponsor of the Elizabeth Warren/John McCain bill to reinstate those provisions.
- Has proposed a financial transaction tax which will reduce risky and unproductive high-speed trading and other forms of Wall Street speculation; proceeds would be used to provide debt-free public college education.
- Is co-sponsoring Sen. Tammy Baldwin’s bill to end Wall Street’s practice of paying big bonuses to bank executives who take senior-level government jobs.
- Introduced a tax on Wall Street speculation to make public colleges and universities tuition-free.

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- Supports capping credit card interest rates at 15%.
- Sponsored an amendment calling for an audit the Federal Reserve. The audit found that far more had been spent in the Wall Street bailout than previously disclosed, and that considerable funds had been spent to bail out foreign corporations.
- Warned about the risks of deregulation eight years before the fiscal crisis of 2008.
- Has proposed limiting the ability of bankers to get rich from taxpayer bailouts of their institutions.

<https://berniesanders.com/issues/real-family-values>

Real Family Values

The right has claimed the mantle of “family values” for far too long. When my Republican colleagues use the term they’re usually talking about things like opposition to contraception, denying a woman’s right to choose, opposition to gay rights, and support for abstinence-only education.

Family values: let’s talk about what those words mean.

When a mother can’t spend time with her newborn child during the first weeks and months of life, that is not a family value.

When a husband can’t get time off from work to care for his cancer-stricken wife, that is not a family value.

When a mother is forced to send her sick child to school because she can’t afford to stay home, that is not a family value.

When parents and children can’t spend any time on vacation together during the course of an entire year, that is not a family value.

In fact, these things are an attack on everything the family stands for.

When it comes to supporting real family values, the United States lags behind virtually every major country on earth. We are the *only* advanced economy that doesn’t guarantee its workers some form of paid family leave, paid sick leave or paid vacation time.

Or, to put that another way: Workers and families in every other major industrialized country in the world get a better deal than we do here in the United States.

That’s wrong. It’s a travesty. And it should be an embarrassment to anyone who claims to speak for family values in this country.

Time for parents and children

It’s an outrage that millions of women in this country are forced back to work after giving birth, simply because they don’t have the income to stay home with their newborn babies.

Virtually every psychologist who has studied this issue agrees that the first weeks and months of life are enormously important to a newborn’s emotional and intellectual development. It’s understood that mothers and fathers should spend this time bonding with the new person they have brought into the world.

The Family and Medical Leave Act we signed into law in 1993 is inadequate for the task. Today, according to the Department of Labor, nearly eight out of ten workers who are eligible to take time off under this law cannot do so because they can’t afford it. Even worse, 40 percent of American workers aren’t even eligible for this unpaid leave.

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In my view, every worker in America should be guaranteed at least twelve weeks of paid family and medical leave. That's why I am a proud cosponsor of the FAMILY Act, introduced by Senator Gillibrand, which does just that. Under this measure, every employee would receive twelve weeks of paid family and medical leave: to take care of a baby, to help a family member who has been diagnosed with cancer or another serious medical condition, or to care for themselves if they become seriously ill.

This would be funded through an insurance program, like Social Security. Workers would pay into it with every paycheck, at the price of roughly one cup of coffee per week. There is no reason not to pass this bill now.

Sick leave for all

We must also make sure that workers in this country have paid sick leave. It is insane that low-wage workers for companies like McDonald's must work when they are sick just because they can't afford to stay home.

That's bad for the workers – and it's also a public health issue.

The Healthy Families Act, introduced by Sen. Patty Murray, would fix that. It would guarantee seven days of paid sick leave per year for American workers. It would benefit 43 million Americans who don't have access to paid sick leave today. It would also establish a minimum standard for employers who already do offer sick leave.

We need a vacation

Millions of Americans are working longer hours for lower wages. They are overworked, underpaid, and under enormous stress. Today 85 percent of working men and 66 percent of working women are working more than 40 hours a week. Millions of people are working incredible hours – some with two or three jobs – just trying to care for themselves and their families.

That is why I have introduced legislation which would require employers to provide at least 10 days of paid vacation per year. This is already done in almost every country in the world. My proposal would allow workers to take two weeks of paid leave each year – to rest and recuperate, travel, visit loved ones, or simply spend time at home bonding with their families.

Companies like Virgin Group and Netflix have adopted generous paid vacation policies aimed at boosting productivity and increasing worker loyalty. But nearly one in four workers gets no paid vacation time at all.

Studies show that nine out of every ten Americans report that their happiest memories come from vacations. Vacations have been shown to reduce stress, strengthen family relationships, increase productivity, and even prevent illness.

American workers are being denied a benefit that workers in every other advanced economy already enjoy. Europe, Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand ... we are the only nation that doesn't require employers to provide at least 10 days of paid vacation time.

There is no reason for that. Our country is every bit as prosperous as theirs – and it is prosperous because the men and women of this country work so hard.

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I'm not asking for the most generous vacation policy in the world. This is nothing like what they get in France, Austria or Belgium. But I intend to push for a standard which befits a great nation.

There is no reason not to pass this bill. It would benefit workers while also helping employers, the economy, and society as a whole.

Real family values

Last place is no place for America. It is time to join the rest of the industrialized world and live up to our ideals by ensuring that every worker in this country has access to paid family leave, paid sick time and paid vacations – just like they do in every other wealthy country on the planet.

The next time you hear a politician talking about “family values,” you may want to ask whether they support measures which really help American families. These bills will help families spend more time together, in greater happiness and security.

Those are values every family can believe in.

<https://berniesanders.com/issues/war-and-peace>

War and Peace

“We live in a difficult and dangerous world, and there are no easy or magical solutions. As President and Commander-in-Chief, I will defend this nation, its people, and America’s vital strategic interests, but I will do it responsibly. America must defend freedom at home and abroad, but we must seek diplomatic solutions before resorting to military action. While force must always be an option, war must be a last resort, not the first option.

As a member of Congress, I have supported the use of force only when it was a last resort and America’s vital interests were at stake. I opposed the first Gulf War, as did many other Members of Congress, because I believed that there was a way to achieve our goals without bloodshed, through sanctions and concerted diplomatic action. I supported the use of force to stop the ethnic cleansing in the Balkans. And, in the wake of the attacks on September 11, 2001, I supported the use of force in Afghanistan to hunt down the terrorists who attacked us. I regret that President Bush did not use that authority properly, and that American combat troops remained there too long. I voted against the war in Iraq, and knew it was the right vote then, and most people recognize it was the right vote today. The only mission President Bush and his neo-conservative friends accomplished was to destabilize an entire region, and create the environment for al-Qaeda and ISIS to flourish.

While we must be relentless in combating terrorists who would do us harm, we cannot and should not be policeman of the world, nor bear the burden of fighting terrorism alone. The United States should be part of an international coalition, led and sustained by nations in the region that have the means to protect themselves. That is the only way to defeat ISIS and to begin the process of creating the conditions for a lasting peace in the region.”

– Sen. Bernie Sanders

Foreign Policy: Strength through Diplomacy

Senator Sanders believes that the test of a great and powerful nation is not how many wars it can engage in, but how it can resolve international conflicts in a peaceful manner. From the Middle East, to Ukraine, to North Korea, to the South China Sea, to civil war in the world’s newest nation – South Sudan, we face a multitude of serious foreign policy challenges.

Senator Sanders will protect America, defend our interests and values, embrace our commitments to defend freedom and support human rights, and be relentless in combating terrorists who would do us harm. However, after nearly fourteen years of ill-conceived and disastrous military engagements in the Middle East, it is time for a new approach. We must move away from policies that favor unilateral military action and preemptive war, and that make the United States the de facto policeman of the world.

Senator Sanders believes that foreign policy is not just deciding how to react to conflict around the world, but also includes redefining America’s role in the increasingly global economy. Along with our allies throughout the world, we should be vigorous in attempting to prevent international conflict, not just responding to problems. For example, the international trade agreements we enter into, and our energy and climate change policies not only have enormous consequences for Americans here at home, but greatly affect our relations with countries around the world. Senator Sanders has the experience, the record and the vision

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not just to lead on these critically important issues, but to take our country in a very different direction.

Iraq and Afghanistan

Sen. Sanders considers his vote against the Iraq War to be one of the most important he has cast, and believes that the invasion in Iraq was one of the worst foreign policy blunders in modern U.S. history. As a leader in the opposition to the war in Iraq, much of what then Congressman Sanders feared would happen has, in fact, occurred. Not only did the United States invade Iraq based on false information, but the war has radically destabilized the entire region and has been completely counterproductive in terms of fighting international terrorism.

As the former Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Senator Sanders knows what the cost of war is. He knows that 6,700 brave men and women lost their lives in those wars, that too many came home without legs, arms or eyesight. He also knows that some 500,000 servicemen and women returned home with PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury, and that the war disrupted the lives of tens of thousands of families.

Sen. Sanders voted to authorize military strikes against Afghanistan, after it became clear that the Taliban regime harbored and gave support to Osama bin Laden and the al-Qaeda terrorists who attacked America on 9/11. However, while we entered that war with significant clarity of purpose and moral authority, President Bush soon lost sight about what our goals were in Afghanistan. Instead of fighting those who attacked our country, he embroiled our troops in a quagmire in a far-away land.

Sen. Sanders called on both Presidents Bush and Obama to withdraw U.S. troops as soon as possible and for the people of Afghanistan to take full responsibility for their own security. After visiting Afghanistan, Sen. Sanders spoke-out against the rampant corruption he saw, particularly in regards to elections, security and the banking system.

Preventing a Nuclear Iran

The U.S. must do everything it can to make certain that Iran does not get a nuclear weapon, that a nuclear Iran does not threaten Israel, and to prevent a nuclear arms race in the region. Sen. Sanders supports the agreement between the U.S., Iran, Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia regarding Iran's nuclear weapons program, because it has the best chance of limiting Iran's ability to produce a nuclear weapon, while avoiding yet another war in the region.

While the agreement is not perfect, it is far better than the path we were on – with Iran developing nuclear weapons and the potential for military intervention by the U.S. and Israel growing greater by the day. If Iran does not live up to the agreement, sanctions can be reestablished and all other options remain on the table. It is incumbent upon us, however, to give the negotiated agreement a chance to succeed, and Sen. Sanders applauds President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their efforts.

Israel and Palestine

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been one of the world's most difficult and intractable disputes for more than sixty years. Moreover, the failure to resolve that crisis has helped fuel other conflicts in the region. Senator Sanders has long supported a two-state solution that

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recognizes Israel's right to exist in peace and security, and the Palestinians right to a homeland in which they control their political and economic future.

The most recent violence in Gaza represented a particularly ugly and violent time in the dispute. Senator Sanders strongly condemned indiscriminate rocket fire by Hamas into Israeli territory, and Hamas' use of civilian neighborhoods to launch those attacks. However, while recognizing that Israel has the right to defend itself, he also strongly condemned Israeli attacks on Gaza as disproportionate and the widespread killing of civilians as completely unacceptable.

The U.S. must play a leading role in creating a two-state solution, which will require significant compromises from both sides. The Palestinians must unequivocally recognize Israel's right to exist, and hold accountable those who have committed terrorist acts. The Israelis must end the blockade of Gaza, and cease developing settlements on Palestinian land. Both sides must negotiate in good faith regarding all other outstanding issues that stand in the way of a durable and lasting peace in the region. In the meantime, strict adherence, by all sides, to the tenets of international humanitarian law is necessary in order to avoid escalating the conflict yet again.

Combating Terrorism

We live in a dangerous world full of serious threats, perhaps none more so than the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and al-Qaeda. Senator Sanders is committed to keeping America safe, and pursuing those who would do Americans harm.

But we cannot combat international terrorism alone. We must work with our allies to root out terrorist funding networks, provide logistical support in the region, disrupt online radicalization, provide humanitarian relief, and support and defend religious freedom. Moreover, we must begin to address the root causes of radicalization, instead of focusing solely on military responses to those who have already become radicalized.

And while there is no question our military must be fully prepared and have the resources it needs to fight international terrorism, it is imperative that we take a hard look at the Pentagon's budget and the priorities it has established. The U.S. military must be equipped to fight today's battles, not those of the last war, much less the Cold War. Our defense budget must represent our national security interests and the needs of our military, not the reelection of members of Congress or the profits of defense contractors. The warning that President Dwight David Eisenhower gave us about the influence of the Military-Industrial Complex in 1961 is truer today than it was then.

Protecting America and American Values

Senator Sanders believes our country must remain vigilant to protect us from terrorist attacks at home, whether from organized international terrorist networks, or from "lone wolf" extremists. The threat is real, and he will aggressively pursue those who would do us harm. However, Sen. Sanders strongly believes that we must pursue policies that uphold the core values that make us proud to be Americans.

That is why Sen. Sanders voted against the Patriot Act when it was first passed, why he voted against the Patriot Act when it was renewed, and why he opposed the so-called USA

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Freedom Act this past spring. We must not trade away our constitutional rights and civil liberties for the illusion of security.

Instead, we must rein in the National Security Agency and end the bulk collection of phone records, internet history, and email data of virtually all Americans. Our intelligence and law enforcement agencies must have the tools they need to protect the American people, but there must be legal oversight and they must go about their work in a way that does not sacrifice our basic freedoms.

The same goes for our actions abroad. The U.S. must never again embrace torture as a matter of official policy. In an increasingly brutal world, the wanton use of torture by the Bush administration simply meant we lost our moral standing to condemn others who engage in merciless behavior. That is why Sen. Sanders has consistently spoken out against waterboarding and other forms of extreme “enhanced interrogation.”

We must also, finally, close the Guantanamo Bay detention center. The mere existence of this camp, and the misguided policies that led to its creation, continues to damage the United States’ moral standing in the world, undermines our foreign policy, and fans the flames of terrorism rather than deters it.

As President, Sen. Sanders will:

1. Move away from a policy of unilateral military action, and toward a policy of emphasizing diplomacy, and ensuring the decision to go to war is a last resort.
2. Ensure that any military action we do engage in has clear goals, is limited in scope, and whenever possible provides support to our allies in the region.
3. Close Guantanamo Bay, rein in the National Security Agency, abolish the use of torture, and remember what truly makes America exceptional: our values.
4. Expand our global influence by promoting fair trade, addressing global climate change, providing humanitarian relief and economic assistance, defending the rule of law, and promoting human rights.

<https://berniesanders.com/issues/war-should-be-the-last-option>

War Should Be the Last Option: Why I Support the Iran Deal

I support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the agreement that the U.S. negotiated with China, France, Germany, Russia, and the United Kingdom and Iran.

I support the agreement, and opposed the Republican's resolution of disapproval, as I believe this approach is the best way forward if we are to accomplish what we all want to accomplish — that is making certain that Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon — an occurrence which would destabilize the region, lead to a nuclear arms race in the area, and would endanger the existence of Israel.

It is my firm belief that the test of a great nation, with the most powerful military on earth, is not how many wars we can engage in, but how we can use our strength and our capabilities to resolve international conflicts in a peaceful way.

Those who have spoken out against this agreement, including many of my colleagues in the Senate, and those who have made every effort to thwart the diplomatic process, are many of the same people who spoke out forcefully and irresponsibly about the need to go to war with Iraq — one of the worst foreign policy blunders in the modern history of our country.

Sadly, people like former vice president Dick Cheney and many of the other neo-cons who pushed us to war Iraq were not only tragically wrong then, they are wrong now.

Unfortunately, these individuals have learned nothing from the results of that disastrous policy and how it destabilized the entire region.

I fear that many of my Republican colleagues do not understand that war must be a last resort, not the first resort.

It is easy to go to war, it is not so easy to understand the unintended consequences of that war.

As the former Chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, I have talked to veterans from World War II to Iraq, and I have learned a little bit about what the cost of war entails.

In Iraq and Afghanistan we have lost 6,700 brave men and women, and many others have come home without legs, without arms, without eyesight.

Let us not forget that 500,000 veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan came back to their families with post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.

The suicide rate of young veterans is appallingly high. The divorce rate is appallingly high, and the impact on children is appallingly high.

God knows how many families have been devastated by these wars.

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And we should not forget the many hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqi men, women, and children who died in that war, and those whose lives who have been completely destabilized, including those who are fleeing their country today with only the clothes on their back as refugees.

Yes, the military option should always be on the table, but it should be the last option.

We have got to do everything we can do to reach an agreement to ensure that Iran does not get a nuclear weapon without having to go to war.

I believe we have an obligation to pursue diplomatic solutions before resorting to military engagement – especially after nearly fourteen years of ill-conceived and disastrous military engagements in the region.

The agreement calls for cutting off Iran's pathways to the fissile materials needed for a nuclear weapon by reducing its stockpile of uranium by 98 percent, and restricting the level of enrichment of uranium to well below the level needed for weaponized uranium.

The agreement requires Iran to decrease the number of installed centrifuges by two-thirds, dismantle the country's heavy-water nuclear reactor so that it cannot produce any weapons-grade plutonium, and commit to rigorous monitoring, inspection, and verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Only after Iran has demonstrated to the international community its compliance with the tenets of the agreement – the U.S. and European Union will lift the sanctions that helped bring Iran to the negotiating table in the first place.

The agreement also contains a mechanism for the “snap back” of those sanctions if Iran does not comply with its obligations.

Does the agreement achieve everything I would like? Of course not.

But to my mind, it is far better than the path we were on with Iran developing nuclear weapons capability and the potential for military intervention by the U.S. and Israel growing greater by the day.

Let us not forget that if Iran does not live up to the agreement, sanctions may be reimposed. If Iran moves toward a nuclear weapon, all available options remain on the table. I think it is incumbent upon us, however, to give the negotiated agreement a chance to succeed, and it is for these reasons that I support the agreement.

<https://berniesanders.com/issues/making-the-wealthy-pay-fair-share>

Making the Wealthy, Wall Street, and Large Corporations Pay their Fair Share

At a time of massive wealth and income inequality, we need a progressive tax system in this country that is based on the ability to pay. It is unacceptable that major corporations have paid nothing in federal income taxes, and that corporate CEOs in this country often enjoy an effective tax rate that is lower than their secretaries.

Real tax reform means Wall Street, the wealthy and large corporations pay their fair share.

Today, we lose over \$100 billion a year in revenue because large corporations stash their cash in offshore tax havens around the world. That is unacceptable.

If we are serious about reforming the tax code and rebuilding the middle class, we have got to demand that the wealthiest Americans and largest corporations pay their fair share in taxes.

Sen. Sanders' tax reform plan accomplishes that goal by closing loopholes that benefit the wealthy and well connected, making the tax code more progressive, and establishing a tax on Wall Street speculators whose greed, recklessness and illegal behavior nearly destroyed the economy seven years ago.

1. Reforming the Corporate Tax Code

In 2010, the effective tax rate of large, profitable corporations in the U.S. was only 12.6 percent, not the 35 percent nominal tax Republicans and corporate tax lobbyists complain about.

In 1953, the corporate income tax accounted for 32 percent of all federal revenue. Today, despite record-breaking profits, corporate income taxes only bring in 11 percent of total federal revenue.

Even worse, several large corporations in recent years have exploited so many loopholes in the tax code that they have paid nothing in federal income taxes and have actually received tax rebates from the IRS.

Overall, General Electric, Boeing and Verizon paid no federal income taxes during the combined 2008 through 2013 tax years. During that period, those three corporate giants racked up combined profits totaling more than \$102 billion. In fact, they received income tax rebates from the Internal Revenue Service totaling more than \$4.1 billion, according to a report from Citizens for Tax Justice.

One of the major reasons for this tax avoidance is that corporations have been setting up thousands of shell corporations in the Cayman Islands and other offshore tax havens to avoid paying taxes in the U.S.

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A recent report by the Congressional Research Service shows that each and every year, large corporations are avoiding \$100 billion in U.S. taxes by stashing their profits in offshore tax havens.

This situation has become so absurd that one five-story office building in the Cayman Islands is the “home” to more than 18,000 corporations.

Click [here](#) to read an op-ed from Sen. Sanders on corporate tax dodging.

In order to crack down on corporate tax avoiders, Sen. Sanders would:

- **End the rule allowing American corporations to defer paying federal income taxes on profits of offshore subsidiaries.**

Under current law, U.S. corporations are allowed to defer or delay U.S. income taxes on overseas profits until this money is brought back into the United States. U.S. corporations are also provided foreign tax credits to offset the amount of taxes paid to other countries.

This offshore tax scheme has provided two perverse incentives for American corporations.

First, it motivates large companies to shift as much of their profits as possible overseas by setting up subsidiaries in the Cayman Islands and other tax haven countries.

Second, it allows corporations to receive huge tax breaks for establishing manufacturing facilities in countries with very low or no corporate tax rates.

Senator Sanders would end these loopholes by requiring U.S. companies to pay taxes on all of their income by ending the deferral of foreign source income.

Under Sanders' plan, corporations would pay U.S. taxes on their offshore profits as they are earned. This plan takes away the tax incentives for corporations to move jobs offshore or to shift profits offshore because the U.S. would tax their profits no matter where they are generated.

Senator Sanders would use the revenue gained by closing these loopholes to put at least 13 million Americans to work rebuilding our crumbling roads, bridges, railways, airports, public transit systems, ports, dams, wastewater plants, and other infrastructure needs.

- **Prevent corporations from avoiding U.S. taxes by claiming to be a foreign company through the establishment of a post office box in a tax haven country.**

Senator Sanders would prevent corporations that are American for all practical purposes from avoiding U.S. taxes by claiming to be a foreign company through the establishment of a post office box in a tax haven country.

Specifically, a corporation could not claim to be from another country if their management and control operations are primarily located in the U.S.

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- **Eliminate tax breaks for big oil, gas, and coal companies.**

Senator Sanders would fight to repeal dozens of loopholes and tax subsidies throughout the federal tax code that benefit oil, natural gas, and coal special interests, saving \$135 billion over the next decade. This revenue would be used to help create a clean-energy workforce of 10 million good-paying jobs by creating a 100% clean energy system.

- **Prevent American companies from avoiding U.S. taxes by corporate inversions.**

Another way American companies avoid U.S. taxes is through corporate inversions. Under this practice, an American company acquires or merges with a much smaller foreign business and then claims that the newly merged company is a foreign one for tax purposes — even though the majority of the ownership is unchanged and little or no personnel or operations have actually moved offshore. Senator Sanders would end this tax scam by treating corporations as American corporations for tax purposes when it is still majority owned by U.S. interests.

- **Close loopholes that allow U.S. corporations to artificially inflate or accelerate foreign tax credits.**

When U.S. corporations earn profits overseas, taxes paid to the foreign country are credited against U.S. tax liabilities. Under current rules and tax planning strategies, corporations are allowed to claim foreign tax credits for taxes paid on foreign income that is not subject to current U.S. tax. As a result, companies are able to use such credits to pay lower taxes on their U.S. taxable income than they would if it was all from U.S. sources — providing them with a competitive advantage over companies that invest in the United States.

Senator Sanders would reform current law to limit foreign tax credits to offset income only from the country in which it is earned.

2. Reforming the Estate Tax

The founders of our country declared their independence from what they viewed as a tyrannical aristocracy in England. More than two centuries later, today's tyrannical aristocracy is no longer a foreign power. It's an American billionaire class that has unprecedented economic and political influence over all of our lives.

Unless we reduce skyrocketing wealth and income inequality, the United States will be well on its way toward becoming an oligarchic form of society where almost all power rests with the billionaire class.

More than a century ago, President Theodore Roosevelt recognized the danger of massive wealth and income inequality and what it meant to the economic and political well-being of the country. In addition to busting up the big trusts of his time, he fought for the creation of a progressive estate tax to reduce the enormous concentration of wealth that existed during the Gilded Age.

“The absence of effective state, and, especially, national, restraint upon unfair money-getting has tended to create a small class of enormously wealthy and economically powerful men, whose chief object is to hold and increase their power,” the Republican president said. “The

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really big fortune, the swollen fortune, by the mere fact of its size acquires qualities which differentiate it in kind as well as in degree from what is passed by men of relatively small means. Therefore, I believe in ... a graduated inheritance tax on big fortunes, properly safeguarded against evasion and increasing rapidly in amount with the size of the estate.”

Roosevelt spoke those words on Aug. 31, 1910. They are even more relevant today.

A progressive estate tax on multi-millionaires and billionaires is the fairest way to reduce wealth inequality and to help invest in a Medicare-for-all plan to guarantee health care as a right, not a privilege.

The estate tax now applies only to the wealthiest 0.2 percent of Americans, but Republicans have proposed to repeal it altogether. The Republican proposal would cost \$269 billion over the coming decade and would help just 5,400 families next year. Nearly three-fourths of the benefits would go to those families inheriting estates worth more than \$20 million.

Instead of repealing the estate tax, we must strengthen it by making the wealthiest Americans pay their fair share.

As President, Sen. Sanders will fight for a progressive estate tax that will:

- **Exempt the first \$3.5 million of an individual’s estate from the estate tax.**

This plan would only impact the wealthiest 0.3 percent of Americans who inherit more than \$3.5 million. 99.7 percent of Americans would not see their taxes go up by one penny under this plan.

- **Establish a new progressive estate tax rate structure as follows:**
 - 45 percent on the value of an estate between \$3.5 million and \$10 million.
 - 50 percent for the value of an estate between \$10 million and \$50 million.
 - 55 percent for the value of an estate in excess of \$50 million.
- **Include an additional billionaire’s surtax of 10 percent.**

According to Forbes Magazine, there are only about 530 billionaires in the United States out of a population of 320 million, making them the wealthiest 0.0002 percent of America. These are the only Americans who would pay the billionaires’ surtax under this plan.

- **End tax breaks for dynasty trusts.**

Billionaires like Sheldon Adelson and the Walton family, who own the majority of Walmart, have for decades manipulated the rules for trusts to pass fortunes from one generation to the next without paying estate or gift taxes.

Specifically, Senator Sanders plan would:

- Strengthen the “generation-skipping tax,” which is designed to prevent avoidance of estate and gift taxes, by applying it with no exclusion to any trust set up to last more than 50 years.

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- Prevent abuses of grantor retained annuity trusts (GRATs) by barring donors from taking assets back from these trusts just a couple of years after establishing them to avoid gift taxes (while earnings on the assets are left to heirs tax-free).

The lawyer who invented this technique for the Walton's claims it has cost the Treasury \$100 billion since 2000.

- Prevent wealthy families from avoiding gifts taxes by paying income taxes on earnings generated by assets in "grantor trusts."
 - Sharply limit the annual exclusion from the gift tax (which was meant to shield the normal giving done around holidays and birthdays from tax and record-keeping requirements) for gifts made to trusts.
- **Close other loopholes in the estate and gift tax, including valuation discounts.**
 - **Protect farm land and conservation easements.**

Senator Sanders' plan would protect family farmers by allowing them to lower the value of their farmland by up to \$3 million for estate tax purposes.

This plan would also increase the maximum exclusion for conservation easements to \$2 million.

3. Tax Wall Street Speculators

One of the major reasons why the middle class is collapsing and the gap between the rich and everyone else is growing wider and wider is because of the greed, recklessness, and illegal behavior on Wall Street.

Millions of Americans lost their homes, life savings, and ability to pay for college because Wall Street gamblers crashed the economy in 2008.

During the financial crisis, the taxpayers of this country provided Wall Street with the largest bailout in the history of this world — \$700 billion from the Treasury Department and \$16 trillion in total financial assistance from the Federal Reserve.

While Wall Street has fully recovered from the recession and, in many cases has never had it so good, the typical middle class family is earning less income today than it did 26 years ago and students are drowning in debt. It is time for Wall Street to pay society back for the tremendous damage it did to the middle class of this country.

As President, Senator Sanders will fight for the creation of a tax on Wall Street to significantly reduce speculation and high frequency trading which nearly destroyed the economy seven years ago.

Importantly, this initiative would also raise the revenue necessary to make public colleges and universities tuition free, create jobs, rebuild our crumbling infrastructure, protect our environment, and make other investments in our future.

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This proposal would not tax investors, retirees, or parents saving to send their kids to college. Instead, it would impose a tax on Wall Street investment houses, hedge funds, and other speculators. If those Wall Street investment houses chose to pass the tax along to investors, this plan would provide a tax credit to individuals making under \$50,000 and couples making under \$75,000 to ensure that they would not be impacted.

Under this proposal, trades would be taxed at a rate of 0.5 percent for stocks, 0.1 percent for bonds, and 0.005 percent for derivatives. This means, for example, that a trade of \$1,000 in stocks would be subject to a tax of \$5. A trade of \$1,000 in swaps or other derivatives would be subject to a tax of five cents.

Even at such low rates, this plan would provide a huge benefit by reducing one particular type of trading that does not benefit our economy: high-frequency trading that rewards technological schemes rather than investing in productive businesses.

For example, some traders have focused their energy on obtaining information about trades a fraction of a second before others, sometimes by locating their computers physically closer to where trades are happening. These computers then rush to buy or sell before others can respond, turning what would otherwise be a ripple in the market into a tidal wave that destabilizes the financial system.

There is considerable precedence for this. The U.S. had a Wall Street speculation fee from 1914 to 1966. And, today some 40 countries throughout the world have imposed a financial transactions tax including Britain, Germany, France, Switzerland, China, India, South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and Brazil.

More than 1,000 economists have endorsed a tax on financial speculation and 11 European countries have committed to enacting a financial transaction tax. This idea is also supported by more than 170 organizations in the U.S., including the AFL-CIO, National Nurses United, the National Organization for Women, NETWORK, Oxfam America, Public Citizen, the Sierra Club and many others.

4. Lift the cap on taxable income that goes into the Social Security Trust Fund

Right now, someone who earns \$118,500 a year pays the same amount of money in Social Security taxes as a billionaire. This makes no sense.

As President, Sen. Sanders will apply the Social Security payroll tax on all income above \$250,000 to expand Social Security benefits and to ensure that Social Security remains solvent for the next 58 years. This plan would only impact the wealthiest 1.5 percent of wage earners; 98.5 percent of wage earners in the United States would not see their taxes go up by one dime under this plan.

5. Reforming the Personal Income Tax

Despite its complexity, our tax code fails in its basic task of raising enough revenue to finance adequate public investments. It also fails to raise revenue in a very progressive way. Citizens for Tax Justice [estimates](#) that in 2015, the richest one percent of Americans received more than 22 percent of the income in the U.S. and paid less than 24 percent of total taxes in the U.S. In other words, when all the federal, state and local taxes that Americans pay under current law are taken into account, our tax system is not progressive.

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Senator Sanders' personal income tax reform plan would make the wealthiest 2.1 percent of households in America pay their fair share by making three types of reforms. These changes would not affect any married couples with income below \$250,000 or singles with incomes below \$200,000.

- **End Tax Breaks for Capital Gains and Dividends for the Wealthy.**

This plan would repeal the special, low income tax rates on capital gains and stock dividends for married couples with incomes greater than \$250,000.

Capital gains and corporate stock dividends are taxed at lower rates than the wages and salaries most of us live on. This is why some billionaire investors like Warren Buffett are able to pay effective tax rates that are lower than what their secretaries pay. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that 68 percent of this tax break went to the richest 1 percent of Americans in 2013.

This plan would also repeal the break that excludes capital gains on bequests and gifts from taxable income. This exclusion in effect subsidizes wealthy families who hold onto assets in order to pass them onto the next generation, increasing the sort of dynastic wealth that is a feature of economic inequality. Large exemptions for homes and other assets would ensure low- and middle-income households are unaffected by this change.

This plan would also prevent the sort of complex schemes involving derivatives that have been used by some [prominent billionaires](#) to avoid taxes on capital gains. Another proposal of Senator Sanders would restrict a different technique, the so-called "like-kind exchanges," in which two people claim that they are trading similar property rather than conducting a sale that would subject capital gains to income tax.

- **Higher Income Tax Rates for the Richest Americans.**

The overall impact of this personal income tax plan would be to make sure that the wealthiest 2.1 percent of households in America pay their fair share.

This plan would replace the top three income tax rates (33%, 35%, and 39.6%) with more progressive rates:

- 37% on income between \$250,000 and \$500,000.
- 43% on income between \$500,000 and \$2 million.
- 48% on income between \$2 million and \$10 million. (In 2013, only [113,000 households](#), just 0.08 percent of all taxpayers, had income between \$2 million and \$10 million.)
- 52% on income of \$10 million and above. (In 2013, only [13,000 households](#), just 0.01 percent of taxpayers, had income exceeding \$10 million.)

- **Limit tax deductions for the rich.**

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Our tax code has several complex provisions to limit the benefits of tax breaks for the wealthy, including the Alternative Minimum Tax, the personal exemption phase-out (PEP) and the limit on itemized deductions. This plan would replace these provisions with a simpler one limiting the tax savings for each dollar of deductions to just 28 cents for high-income households.

This provision would not require complicated forms or software to calculate it. High-income people who are affected by it would simply turn to a new table provided in the form 1040 instructions and look up their adjusted gross income (AGI, a figure everyone already reports on their tax form) to learn what additional tax they owe.

High-income households would save no more than 28 cents for each dollar of deductions because the highest rate on “taxable income” (the income one is left with after subtracting all deductions) would be 28 percent.

These new tax rates would be created by an additional tax on AGI (the income one reports on a tax return before subtracting most deductions) applying only to households with incomes above \$250,000.

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<https://berniesanders.com/issues/how-bernie-pays-for-his-proposals>

How Bernie pays for his proposals

Bernie Sanders has a plan to pay for every spending program he has introduced to date.

Plan	Payment
<p>Rebuild America Act: Sen. Sanders has proposed a \$1 trillion plan to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure and put 13 million Americans to work.</p>	<p>Paid for by making corporations pay taxes on all of the “profits” they have shifted to the Cayman Islands and other offshore tax havens, which the Congressional Research Services estimates may currently create losses that approach \$100 billion annually, and other loopholes.</p>
<p>College for All: Sen. Sanders has proposed making public colleges and universities tuition-free and substantially reducing student debt, in a plan that would cost about \$75 billion a year.</p>	<p>Paid for by imposing a tax on Wall Street speculators that would generate about \$300 billion in revenue.</p>
<p>Expand and Extend Social Security: Sen. Sanders has proposed expanding Social Security and extending the solvency of this program until 2065.</p>	<p>Paid for by lifting the cap on taxable income above \$250,000 so that the wealthy pay the same percentage of their income into Social Security as working people.</p>
<p>Youth Jobs Program: Sen. Sanders has proposed a \$5.5 billion youth jobs program to create 1 million jobs for disadvantaged young Americans.</p>	<p>Paid for by ending the carried interest loophole that allows billionaire hedge fund managers to pay a lower tax rate than nurses and truck drivers.</p>
<p>Paid Family and Medical Leave: Sen. Sanders has proposed at least 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave to all workers.</p>	<p>Paid for by a payroll tax that would total \$1.61 a week for the typical American worker. According to Sen. Gillibrand’s office, this would be “a self-sufficient program that would not add to the federal budget.”</p>
<p>Protect Pensions: Sen. Sanders has introduced a plan to prevent cuts to the pensions of over 1.5 million Americans.</p>	<p>Paid for by closing two tax loopholes that allow the wealthy to avoid taxes on money they inherit and expensive artwork they collect.</p>

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<p>Renewable Energy and Clean Jobs Transition: Sen. Sanders has a plan to invest in clean, sustainable energy sources powered by the sun, wind and Earth's heat. He also has a plan to provide comprehensive benefits to workers as they transition to making the solar panels, wind turbines, and batteries of tomorrow.</p>	<p>Paid for by stopping taxpayer-funded giveaways to oil, gas and coal companies.</p>
<p>Sen. Sanders has introduced a plan to expand health care coverage to every American.</p>	<p>Paid for by a 6.2 percent income-based health care premium paid by employers, a 2.2 percent income-based premium paid by households, progressive income tax rates, taxing capital gains and dividends the same as income from work, limiting tax deductions for the rich, adjusting the estate tax, and savings from health tax expenditures.</p>

Cost and Revenue of Proposed Plans

Plan	Cost	Funding	Revenue
Rebuild America Act	\$1 trillion / 5 years	Taxing corporate offshore income [Congressional Research Service, 1/15/15]	\$1 trillion / 10 years
College for All	\$75 billion / year	Wall Street speculation tax [Political Economy Research Institute, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, 3/2/12]	About \$300 billion / year
Social Security Expansion Act	\$1.2 trillion / 10 years	Remove payroll tax cap for earnings above \$250,000 [Office of the Chief Actuary, Social Security Administration, 3/26/15]	\$1.2 trillion / 10 years
Employ Young Americans Now Act	\$5.5 billion / 2 years	Closing carried interest loophole [Joint Committee on Taxation, 9/16/15]	\$15.6 billion / 10 years
Offer 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave		Additional 0.2% Payroll Tax [Office of Senator Kirsten Gillibrand]	\$319 billion / 10 years

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Keep Our Pension Promises Act	\$29 billion / 10 years	Closing tax loopholes on estate taxes and artwork [Pension Rights Center, 7/7/15]	\$29 billion / 10 years
Responsible Estate Tax Act		Progressive estate tax on inheritances over \$3.5 million; closes estate tax loopholes.	\$214 billion /10 years
End Polluter Welfare Act	\$110 billion /10 years	Ends tax breaks and subsidies for fossil fuel companies	\$135 billion /10 years
Medicare for All Health Care Plan	\$1.38 trillion / year	Paid for by a 6.2 percent income-based health care premium paid by employers, a 2.2 percent income-based premium paid by households, progressive income tax rates, taxing capital gains and dividends the same as income from work, limiting tax deductions for the rich, adjusting the estate tax, and savings from health tax expenditures.	\$1.39 trillion / year