



# NEW DEMS' AMERICAN PROMISE

Lower Costs, Less Chaos, Real Solutions

The New Democrat Coalition Governing Agenda

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# NEW DEMS' AMERICAN PROMISE

## Lower Costs, Less Chaos, Real Solutions

Trust in Washington has hit its lowest point in 70 years, and it's easy to see why: the American people increasingly see higher costs, less opportunity, and a system rigged against them. But New Dems believe the government can do big things again, make our economy work for working people, and restore faith in government. That's our American Promise.

## Give All Americans a Fair Shot to Get Ahead

### LOWER COSTS

- End Trump's illegal tariffs and deliver the promised refunds.
- Extend the Affordable Care Act tax credits.
- Require data centers to pay for their own energy.

### POWER THE WORKFORCE

- Deliver a national paid family and medical leave program.
- Reward businesses that create new apprenticeships and job pathways.
- Give power and protection back to America's labor unions.

### REBUILD RURAL AMERICA

- Invest in family farms and rip through red tape to unleash their potential.
- Surge resources to build rural housing and broadband.
- Create new trading partnerships for farmers and ranchers.

## Tackle America's Most Difficult Challenges

### BETTER CARE & LOWER COSTS

- Restore healthcare for the 12 million Americans who lost access to Medicaid and Medicare.
- Lower drug prices for Americans with private insurance through out-of-pocket cost caps.
- Protect access to reproductive healthcare nationwide.

### FAST & FAIR IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

- Surge resources for innovative border technologies and address the immigration case backlog.
- Make immigration enforcement targeted and humane.
- Create a pathway to permanent legal status for Dreamers.
- Incentivize legal migration to fill workforce needs and power our economy.

### END THE HOUSING CRISIS

- Build four million new homes in 10 years by cutting through red tape and leveraging federal resources.
- Utilize federal tax credits to accelerate affordable housing production.
- Invest in new construction technologies and support the development of innovative housing models.

### INVEST IN AMERICA'S FUTURE

- Incentivize innovation through public-private partnerships that ensure America outcompetes China.
- Harness the potential of AI while establishing guardrails that protect workers and consumers.
- Bolster STEM learning and degrees to build the next generation of innovators.

## Restore Faith in Government & Fight Corruption

- Protect and restore the Voting Rights Act.
- Ban insider trading, prediction market schemes, and crypto scams by Members of Congress and senior officials.
- Reassert the powers of Congress and establish a binding code of ethics for the Supreme Court.

**This is our plan to put America back on track, built on real results-driven legislation – not empty promises.**

**Let's do this!**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>I. Give All Americans a Fair Shot to Get Ahead</b>	<b>8</b>
Affordability Agenda	9
Tax Framework	13
Workforce & Education Agenda	18
Rural Revitalization Agenda	23
<b>II. Tackle America's Most Difficult Challenges</b>	<b>28</b>
Housing Affordability Agenda	29
Healthcare Action Plan	31
Immigration & Border Security Framework	38
Framework to Achieve Energy Independence, Security, and Affordability	44
Agenda to Support our Veterans	47
Innovation Agenda	50
<b>III. Restore Faith in Government &amp; Fight Corruption</b>	<b>56</b>
Anti-Corruption Agenda	57
<b>IV. Legislative Roadmap</b>	<b>60</b>



# NEW DEMS' AMERICAN PROMISE

Lower Costs, Less Chaos, Real Solutions

## The New Democrat Coalition Governing Agenda Executive Summary:

For far too many, the American Dream feels out of reach. Working families and young people just starting out are struggling to afford the basic necessities, let alone think about buying their first home, saving for their future, or investing in their children's education. Seniors who have worked hard for a lifetime are now worried they won't have enough saved to secure their retirement. People have lost faith in their government's ability to do even the small, simple things, let alone the big things that have always inspired generations and moved our country forward.

New Dems are committed to turning things around, to doing the big, important things, while also making it easier for hardworking Americans and their families to not just make ends meet—but get ahead.

Our Governing Agenda is focused on giving everyone in America the opportunity to:

- Pursue their own happiness and discover their own pathways to prosperity;
- Provide their family a comfortable home, good education and quality, affordable healthcare;
- Secure a dignified and comfortable retirement; and
- Have confidence in their government and pride in their country.

These are the things that always made America great and that every American should be able to count on.




Unfortunately, despite their promise to lower costs “on day one,” the Trump Administration and Congressional Republicans have put the American Dream even further out of reach. They have failed to lower the rising cost of living and have instead actively pushed up the cost of groceries, utilities, healthcare, housing, and more. They have gutted education funding, slashed healthcare for millions of Americans, cut food assistance, and killed manufacturing jobs—just to give their billionaire donors more than a trillion dollars in tax cuts. Meanwhile, Trump has corrupted the federal government to serve himself, his family, and his billionaire friends, not the American people.

The American people are looking for new leadership in Washington that will put working people first and renew the promise of the American Dream. They want public servants who will put the country back on track, crack down on rising costs, end the chaos, and take on the rampant corruption that has defined the first two years of this Trump Administration.

**That's what New Dems are all about. We're making a commitment to America: when Democrats are in power, we will work to deliver real solutions, not empty promises.**

Last year, as President Trump began his second term, New Dems released our **Vision for a Path Forward**, our Coalition's platform to reestablish America as a nation of progress—with liberty and justice for all.

We laid out three pillars to inform our policy frameworks:

-  Economic growth and opportunity;
-  Healthy and safe communities; and
-  Strong national security and defense.

New Dem Members then crafted specific policy frameworks to address key issues from healthcare and housing to tax reform and innovation. To help develop these frameworks, New Dem members toured the country and hosted meetings in Washington DC to hear directly from the American people. For the first time ever, “**New Dems on the Road**” convened policy discussions across the nation to hear from hardworking men and women about their challenges and solicit their ideas to help lower costs and improve their lives.

**What follows is our plan to once again make America a land of opportunity where our government, economy, and institutions empower the American people to achieve a healthy, safe, and prosperous life.**

## I. Give All Americans a Fair Shot to Get Ahead

New Dems know that affordability is an essential part of the American Dream, and essential to giving all hardworking Americans a fair shot at success. An opportunity to get ahead is a promise we make to the American people: that if they work hard and play by the rules, they can provide a prosperous, healthy, and safe life for themselves and their families.

Unfortunately, for too long, politicians of all stripes have dismissed the economic pain felt by working people and failed to address the rampant inflation, lack of opportunity, and rising cost of living that have made life more difficult.

The **New Dem Affordability Agenda** will help us renew the promise of economic growth and lower the cost of living to put the American Dream back within reach for hardworking Americans. We will get this done by focusing on lowering five of the core costs that are hurting hardworking Americans: groceries and household goods, healthcare, housing, energy, and family care.

Lowering costs is only part of the battle. New Dems are also focused on giving hardworking Americans a raise and a seat at the table. Our policies laid out in our **Workforce & Education Agenda** will increase the minimum wage nationwide and create more good-paying jobs at all skill levels. We offer solutions that will enhance college and non-college pathways to success while offering robust support for workers from their first day in the classroom to their last day on the job.

We must also ensure Americans feel secure in their retirement. That means putting money back in the pockets of workers throughout their careers, a core tenet of the **Tax Framework's** effort to make the tax code responsible, efficient, and fair for working families and individuals.

Every American deserves a fair shot to get ahead, including communities that have too often been overlooked or left behind. The New Dem **Rural Revitalization Agenda** will help to rebuild struggling rural areas by growing local and farm economies, expanding access to affordable housing and high-quality healthcare, and breaking down historic barriers to success.

## II. Tackle America's Most Difficult Challenges

Since our nation's founding, the United States has always achieved big things. We landed a man on the moon, eradicated polio, built the interstate highway system, and won World Wars. Sadly, many of the institutions around us are now so broken it's hard to imagine that our nation can still tackle the many challenges facing us today.

New Dems are resolved to fix our broken institutions and build a government that actually works for the American people. New Dems have a strategy to break through the barriers and advance commonsense solutions on housing, healthcare, immigration, energy, and more.

America is facing a worsening **Housing** crisis fueled by a severe shortage of homes that is driving up prices and putting the promise of homeownership out of reach for current and future generations. New Dems' **Housing Affordability Agenda** will help lower housing costs by laying the foundation to build four million homes in the next four years, by expanding the mortgage and financial products available to buyers and renters, and by improving housing data and transparency to ensure resources are dedicated to the areas of highest need.

On **Healthcare**, New Dems are proposing a system in which all Americans have access to and can afford the medical care they need, no matter their income or where they live. Our **Healthcare Action Plan** would do more than just tweak the status quo. It would help create a stronger, fairer, and more affordable system that ends the pain and uncertainty caused by historic healthcare failures in America.

Congress's repeated failure to enact decisive, bipartisan immigration reforms has created the broken **Immigration** system we see today and emboldened an Executive Branch that pushes the boundaries of presidential power. Our **Immigration & Border Security Framework** will ensure fast, fair, and final enforcement, invest in smart border security, grow the economy by growing the labor force, and expand legal avenues to citizenship for long-time residents living in legal limbo.

**Energy** costs are skyrocketing. New Dems know that to meet the moment, America needs to build infrastructure faster and more cost-effectively to lower energy bills, keep the lights on, and power economic opportunity. Our New Dem **Framework to Achieve Energy Independence, Security, and Affordability** would build more energy generation by streamlining the permitting process, and increase the capacity of our energy grid to support a massive influx of energy demand caused in part by data centers.

Our **Agenda to Support our Veterans** would ensure that our nation's veterans, who face a broken benefits and healthcare system and have often returned from service feeling abandoned by the government they served, finally receive the lifelong support, resources, and benefits they earned through their military service.

Lastly, on the issue of **Innovation**, New Dems are working to renew our commitment to the innate American quality of invention that has produced some of the greatest innovations in world history. To ensure America leads the world in innovation in the years to come, our **Innovation Agenda** would accelerate our investments in innovation infrastructure and R&D, while creating a regulatory structure that encourages growth while protecting our national cybersecurity and consumer privacy.

### III. Restore Faith in Government & Fight Corruption

The American people have lost faith in the government's ability to deliver on its promises and achieve lasting change. It's hard to blame them. The Trump Administration and Republicans in Congress have failed to address the nation's biggest challenges. To put it bluntly, the government has overpromised and underdelivered.

New Dems believe the first step to delivering real results is to enact the policies we've laid out in this agenda, real solutions to lower costs, improve healthcare, address our immigration system, put homeownership back in reach, secure our energy independence, and more.

We also know that good policy is not enough. To restore trust in government, we must also root out the unprecedented corruption under the Trump Administration. President Trump and the Trump family have earned billions of dollars through corrupt deals and crypto scams. He has pardoned known fraudsters and criminals, and twisted the justice system to protect himself and his allies while persecuting his enemies. When Democrats take back the House and hold the gavels, New Dems will protect the interests of the American people and prevent public servants from enriching themselves on the backs of hardworking people.

The 250th anniversary of America’s founding this year offers the opportunity for everyone to reflect on what makes this country great, and for lawmakers to commit to advancing policies that protect the lives and liberty of every American, make our nation stronger, and secure America’s place as the most prosperous and trusted nation in the world. Our new **Anti-Corruption Agenda** – presented for the first time in this document – lays out commonsense policies that will help New Dems lead the charge in Congress to crack down on corruption and build a government that works for working people again.

Working together, taking our directions from the constituents we serve, and building strong coalitions across the Democratic party and with our colleagues across the aisle, New Dems believe we can prove once again that America has the strongest, most capable government in the world.

## The Road Ahead

With this comprehensive plan as our guide, New Dems will stay focused on the challenges everyday Americans really care about, lowering costs and building an economy that allows anyone willing to work for it the ability to get ahead. We’re not looking to restore the status quo; we’re offering solutions to the biggest challenges facing our nation and working to create the better future hardworking Americans have been promised for years.

## Acknowledgments:

This Agenda would not be possible without the dedicated work of the New Dem Leadership Team, our Working Group and Task Force chairs, and New Dem staff.

### New Dem Leadership Team:

- Chair:** Rep. Brad Schneider
- Vice Chairs:** Rep. Nikki Budzinski, Policy  
Rep. Salud Carbajal, Outreach  
Rep. Josh Harder, Member Services  
Rep. Marc Veasey, Communications  
Rep. Marilyn Strickland, Whip

### Freshman Leadership

- Representative:** Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet
- At Large:** Rep. Jennifer McClellan  
Rep. Andrea Salinas  
Rep. Greg Stanton

**New Dem Staff:** Anne Sokolov, Executive Director; Leighton Huch, Deputy Executive Director; Paul Iskajyan, Communications Director; Phil McLaughlin, Member Services Director; Lois Lim, Senior Policy and Outreach Advisor; Alec Escobar, Deputy Communications Director; Hannah Woehrlé, Communications Fellow; Tala Alahmar, Policy Fellow

**GIVE ALL AMERICANS  
A FAIR SHOT TO  
GET AHEAD**

# Affordability Agenda

## INTRODUCTION

New Dems believe everyone in America should be able to afford the essentials for a quality life — housing, healthcare, food, childcare, education, retirement, and more — with enough left over to buy that new car, take that vacation, and save for your future.

Unfortunately, over the past year, this core component of the American dream has only fallen further out of reach under the cost-raising, corrupt, billionaire-first agenda of President Trump and Congressional Republicans. Their landmark legislative “achievements” have included tax breaks for the richest Americans financed by increased healthcare and food costs for working Americans, a national sales tax in the form of Trump’s illegal tariffs, and a war in Iran that has skyrocketed gas prices and upended the global economy.

New Dems have heard from our constituents first-hand about the debilitating effects of rising costs on their lives over the past year. We’ve heard about the price of household essentials, with beef up 15 percent, furniture up 25 percent, and clothing up 24 percent year over year and continuing to rise. Since Trump took office, household electric bills have increased 13 percent, companies announced 1.2 million layoffs in 2025, and the median age of a first-time home buyer is higher than ever before. The Big Ugly Bill ripped healthcare coverage from more than 15 million Americans and doubled or tripled monthly insurance premiums for 22 million more.

Led by our Economic Growth & Cost of Living Working Group Chair Chrissy Houlahan (PA-06), New Dems zeroed in on five of the primary costs that are hurting them the most: healthcare, housing, energy, family care, and household essentials like groceries. It was these core categories that formed the foundation of the New Dem Affordability Agenda, our Coalition’s solution to lower everyday costs in the short and long-term, promote competition to boost consumer choice, break down regulatory barriers across the government that prevent us from meeting the needs of the American people, and act in a fiscally responsible way.

The American people recognize that under Trump and Congressional Republicans, our economy is headed in the wrong direction. New Dems intend to chart a path to a better future for the American people, not by simply reversing the Trump Administration’s unaffordable and ineffective agenda, but by developing and implementing concrete policies that lift up all Americans. That’s what the Affordability Agenda is all about.



Economic Growth & Cost of Living Working Group Chair Chrissy Houlahan (PA-06) speaks at a press conference announcing the New Dem Affordability Agenda in February.

## POLICY PRIORITIES



**Groceries & Household Essentials:** *Everyday costs for Americans—groceries, the internet, furniture, and more—are increasingly unaffordable. This agenda will advance durable policies that make groceries, internet bills, and household essentials more affordable for working families.*

1. Invest and grow through smarter, durable trade policy to lower costs for consumers and give American industries certainty.
  - a. Restore Congress's power and responsibility to oversee international trade and roll back the Unaffordable Trump Tariffs that are raising the cost of living for families and the cost of production for American businesses, farmers, and producers.
  - b. Secure global markets for U.S. products and industries by preventing predatory foreign trade practices and protecting American workers from being undercut by foreign countries.
2. Help bring down the costs of groceries and promote a more affordable and competitive marketplace by supporting family farms, investing in small- and medium-sized producers, manufacturers and retailers, and holding corporations accountable for unwarranted price hikes.
  - a. Invest in programs and technical assistance supporting small- and mid-size agricultural producers, like the Meat and Poultry Processing Expansion Program, to drive competition and lower prices amongst agricultural producers.
  - b. Help small- and mid-size ranchers meet U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) certification standards by providing technical assistance, getting more food onto shelves, increasing competition, and lowering costs.
  - c. Create a federal land-link pilot program, helping retiring farmers pass their land and knowledge to beginning farmers to lower food costs and keep more land in production.
  - d. Address land speculation by foreign and large investors and provide flexibility in USDA lending and subsidy programs for small- and mid-size farmers to keep farmland affordable.
  - e. Invest in, and reverse harmful Republican cuts to, federal nutrition programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to help low-income families afford food.
3. Restart the Affordable Connectivity Program, which provided a discount on broadband services to eligible low-income households, to lower internet bills.
4. Crack down on corporate bad actors that drive-up costs in order to promote competition and fair pricing of goods.
5. Increase the minimum wage and ensure workers' voices have a seat at the table so they receive the benefits and pay they deserve.



**Healthcare:** *We are guided by a simple principle: every American deserves quality, affordable healthcare, from providers they trust, when and where they need it.*

1. Foster robust competition and transparency across the healthcare delivery system to protect families from crushing debt and bankruptcy.
  - a. Extend Medicare's \$2,100 annual prescription drug out-of-pocket cap and its \$35 monthly insulin cap to individuals with private insurance.
  - b. Require transparency across the prescription drug industry – from pharmaceutical companies to pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) – to stop price gouging and lower drug costs for families.
  - c. Fully protect patients from surprises on their medical bills by increasing enforcement of the No Surprises Act (P.L. 116-260) ban on surprise billing.
  - d. End the harmful practice of reporting medical debt to credit bureaus and end overly aggressive debt collection practices like those that block families from getting stable housing.
2. Protect and strengthen the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Medicare, and Medicaid as cornerstones of American health and financial security.
  - a. Extend the ACA premium tax credits (PTCs) to ensure healthcare is affordable for millions of families.
  - b. Reverse Republicans' harmful cuts to Medicaid, modernize the program so it can expand coverage, and remove unnecessary red tape that prevents people from getting care.

- c. Leverage Medicare's buying power to negotiate lower prices on more drugs, bypassing middlemen and passing savings directly to seniors and taxpayers.
- d. Streamline and modernize the prior authorization process so that patients don't have to navigate red-tape to get insurance companies to cover doctor-prescribed treatment.
- e. Safeguard Medicare's guaranteed benefits and take steps to preserve the program's sustainability for decades to come.
- f. Crack down on fraud and abuse in Medicare and Medicaid without cutting benefits or reducing access for the people who rely on these programs.
- g. Reinstate Medicaid funding for reproductive health organizations.



**Housing:** *America needs to build nearly four million homes to meet demand. This agenda aims to make housing cheaper and more available by getting more housing built, on the market, and into the hands of families.*

1. Cut red tape and increase the flexibility of federal resources for state and local governments to expeditiously build and rehabilitate more housing across the country.
2. Convert vacant commercial properties and underutilized properties like empty parking lots into housing units.
3. Invest federal resources in innovative construction technologies, like the use of robotics, 3D printing, and modules, to accelerate the building of new homes.
4. Eliminate unfair tax breaks for private equity and large investors that give them a competitive advantage over families in the housing market.
5. Increase the number of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits allocated to each state to accelerate construction of affordable housing units across the country.
6. Ensure innovative housing models like Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), which are small, secondary homes on the same property as a main house, are supported by the federal finance system.
7. Incentivize local communities to build new housing units by providing funding for community benefits like co-locating housing construction to public transportation, job hubs, and education.



**Energy:** *New Dems are committed to addressing the root causes of rising utility bills and growing energy demand by advancing an all-of-the-above energy strategy.*

1. Ensure sufficient, reliable, and affordable energy is available and delivered when and where it is needed by guaranteeing a level playing field for all forms of energy (whether solar, wind, hydro, geothermal, natural gas, or nuclear).
2. Defend clean energy investments that create jobs, expand domestic manufacturing, drive innovation, lower energy bills, and support energy upgrades for homeowners.
3. Reform permitting rules to make it easier, faster, and cheaper to build energy transmission and generation infrastructure.
4. Invest in biofuels to lower costs at the gas pump, grow markets for American farmers, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
5. Develop and implement policies that incentivize and lower barriers for grid transmission development to efficiently get energy from where it is generated to where it is needed.
6. Change how electric grid costs are allocated to protect consumers from unfairly bearing the costs of manufacturing and data center development.
7. Require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to solicit recommendations on protecting residential ratepayers from increased costs associated with large energy loads to protect families from unfairly carrying data center energy costs.
8. Develop a National Data Center Strategy at the Department of Energy to ensure that the benefits and costs associated with data center development are spread amongst communities, not overburdening certain areas.
9. Invest in energy efficiency and home heating and cooling through programs like the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to lower home energy costs for working families.
10. Ensure that not one drop of our strategic petroleum reserves is sent to foreign adversaries like China, as has been done during the past two administrations.



**Families:** *The cost of raising children and aging with dignity has become unaffordable and inaccessible. This agenda highlights policies that lower costs and make life better for middle class families and hardworking Americans.*

1. Create a national paid family and medical leave program that covers all working people regardless of where they live or work, including updating the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to reflect the needs of today's workforce.
2. Ensure leave programs allow more entrepreneurs and employees of small businesses to access this critical benefit without risking their jobs or financial stability.
3. Support parents by expanding access to the Child Tax Credit (CTC), Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC), and Dependent Care Assistance Program (DCAP), to reduce child poverty, provide meaningful support to working families, and help parents afford high-quality childcare.
4. Provide a tax refund for expenses related to family caregiving so that taking care of aging, disabled, or sick loved ones doesn't break the bank.
5. Create a senior care cost reduction program that provides a stipend to low-income seniors to help offset the costs of assisted living expenses.
6. Encourage public-private partnerships that expand care options and paid leave access, providing flexible, locally tailored solutions while leveraging federal support.
7. Support state-driven childcare affordability innovations by launching federal pilot programs that explore cost-sharing partnerships among families, employers, and government to lower monthly childcare expenses and strengthen workforce participation.
8. Ensure universal pre-K access to support working parents and bolster learning opportunities and school readiness for children.
9. Strengthen and stabilize the home health and long-term care workforce by investing in targeted training, credentialing, and career pathways for home health aides and direct care workers.

## NEXT STEPS

New Dems are laser-focused on making life more affordable for everyday Americans. We will continue engaging with our House and Senate colleagues to enact meaningful legislation to lower costs—and we will continue urging the White House to repeal harmful policies that have led to higher prices for everything from groceries, clothing, furniture, and more. Congress and the President have the power right now to take actions that will directly make life easier for people across the country. New Dems will be relentless in pursuing the enactment of these policies and in pushing our colleagues to act.

# Tax Framework

## INTRODUCTION

The New Democrat Coalition supports growth-oriented, fiscally responsible tax reform that will improve the lives of all hard-working Americans and their families. We believe smart tax policies will not just help individuals and families make ends meet, they will empower them to get ahead.

Unfortunately, the actions of President Trump and Congressional Republicans over the past year have increasingly burdened hardworking people in America with higher costs. With their Big Ugly Bill, Republicans executed the largest transfer of wealth in American history from the working class to the richest billionaires in the country, slashing funding for vital healthcare and food assistance programs that benefit everyday Americans to partially pay for a staggering \$4.5 trillion in tax breaks that largely benefit the top one percent.

The most regressive legislation we've ever seen will see the poorest households in the country lose \$1,600 in income each year while billionaires rake in millions of dollars in tax breaks— all while ballooning the federal deficit by more than \$4 trillion, burdening the American people for generations. The impacts of the Big Ugly Bill are amplified by the President's nonsensical and illegal tariff regime, which amounts to a sales tax on American consumers and businesses that is crushing entrepreneurs, eliminating jobs, and is expected to cost families an average of \$2,500 in 2026 alone. New Dems are committed to rolling back Trump's tariffs and ensuring refunds are paid out to the small businesses that bore the brunt of Trump's illegal taxes – not just wealthy corporations that can afford drawn-out court battles.

## NEW DEMS ON THE ROAD FEATURE: GARNER, NC



Rep. Nikema Williams (GA-05) and New Dem Clean Energy Deployment Task Force Chair Deborah Ross (NC-02) in Garner, NC.

New Dems heard about the impacts of Trump's tariffs and tax policy in several New Dems On the Road events. In July, Clean Energy Deployment Task Force Chair Deborah Ross (NC-02) hosted a discussion in her North Carolina district, where Members heard from utility providers about how the Republican clawback of the Inflation Reduction Act's clean energy tax credits will hurt American energy security and independence, ultimately raising energy prices on the American people.

This March, New Dems hosted a small business roundtable to hear from small business owners on the specific challenges that they have faced since Trump took office and how his tariff policy has affected their ability to stay in business. Some of these challenges include their ability to source products, keep competitive pricing, hire staff, and more.

Last year New Dems laid out our vision for the future of tax policy in the New Dem Tax Framework, developed by Tax Task Force Chair Steven Horsford (NV-04), in coordination with the broader Economic Growth & Cost of Living Working Group led by Working Group Chair Chrissy Houlahan (PA-06).

# NEW DEMS ON THE ROAD FEATURE: SEATTLE, WA



Rural Revitalization Working Group Chair Kim Schrier (WA-08), Rep. Suzan DelBene (WA-01), and New Dem Leadership Member Andrea Salinas (OR-06) in Seattle, WA.

In November, Rural Revitalization Working Group Chair Kim Schrier (WA-08) convened a roundtable in Seattle, Washington where New Dem Members heard directly from small business leaders about how the President's chaotic trade policies are bad for business and local economies.

The Framework's proposals—rooted in fairness, inclusion, and economic opportunity—won't stop at rolling back Trump's illegal tariffs, or at righting the ship after the chaos of Republicans' tax cuts for billionaires paid for by higher costs on working Americans. This framework will help create a stronger and fairer system by driving economic growth, creating good, well-paying jobs, expanding American innovation, and helping to address national priorities such as lowering childcare costs, making quality healthcare more affordable, and tackling our national housing shortage.

## NEW DEM PRINCIPLES FOR TAX REFORM

1. Our nation's tax policies should lower costs and make life better for middle class families and hardworking Americans:
  - a. Relief should be targeted to reduce costs Americans face every day, from childcare to housing to healthcare, to help families achieve their economic dreams.
  - b. Give a hand up to working families and individuals hoping to climb the economic ladder, not a handout to those already at the top.
  - c. Hard work and innovation should be rewarded, not stifled.
2. Good tax policy should expand economic opportunity & grow American jobs and businesses:
  - a. Lift up small businesses and new entrepreneurs in more places.
  - b. Drive innovation, entrepreneurship, and job creation so that our nation's innovators and entrepreneurs can continue to succeed and compete globally.
  - c. Encourage investment in growing industries, like technology and manufacturing, and jobs throughout the U.S.
3. Smart tax policies can promote fiscal responsibility and long-term economic security:
  - a. A stable fiscal foundation is essential to sustained economic growth and national security.
  - b. Tax policy should be fiscally responsible, evidence-based, and transparent about the true costs of tax reform, while lowering our deficits and slowing the growth of our debt.

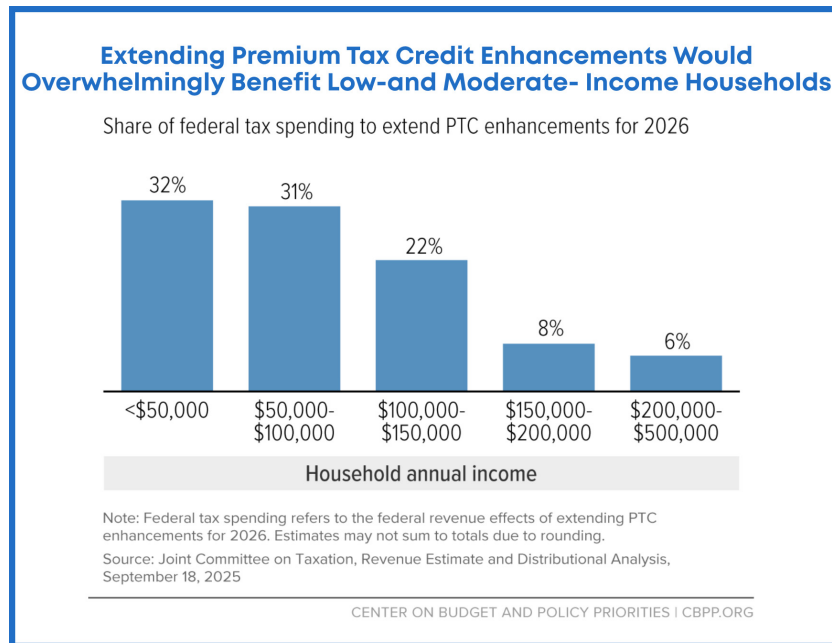


Vice Chair for Outreach Salud Carbajal (CA-24), Trade and Tariffs Task Force Chair Don Beyer (VA-08), Rep. Lucy McBath (GA-07), Rep. Kelly Morrison (MN-03), and New Dem Leadership Member Andrea Salinas (OR-06) hear from small business owners about how Trump's Tariffs have made it harder for them to keep their doors open.

## POLICIES

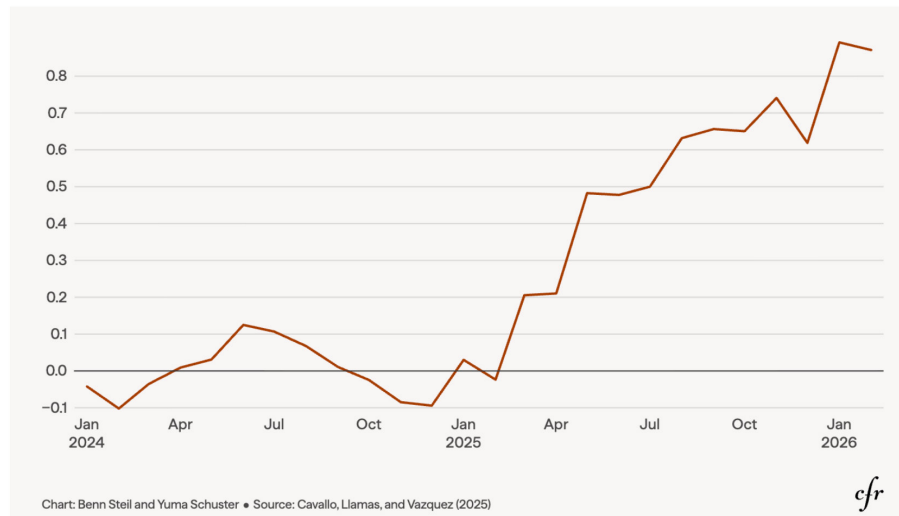
### 1. Lower Costs and Make Life Better for Middle Class Families and Hardworking Americans.

- a. Support American Families and Children
  - i. Extend the expanded, refundable Child Tax Credit (CTC) to reduce child poverty and provide meaningful support to working families.
  - ii. Update and modernize the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC) and the Dependent Care Assistance Program (DCAP) to help parents afford high-quality childcare.
  - iii. Strengthen and broaden the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) to encourage investment and expand the availability of affordable housing for residents across the country.
  - iv. Extend the enhanced Affordable Care Act (ACA) premium subsidies to lower out-of-pocket healthcare costs and ensure continued access to affordable coverage for millions of working-class Americans.
  - v. Protect the cost-saving energy tax credits in the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) that promote America's clean energy dominance, strengthen energy production and generation, and lower energy costs for Americans.



- b. Reward Work and Support Economic Mobility
  - i. Strengthen the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to ensure it continues to reward work, reduce poverty, and boost take-home pay for low- and moderate-income workers.
  - ii. Simplify and expand access to work-related tax benefits, including commuting and caregiving expenses, to reflect the modern workforce and support labor force participation.
- c. Make Higher Education and Training More Affordable
  - i. Reform higher education tax incentives to better support students pursuing both traditional degrees and non-degree credentials.
  - ii. Update the tax code to recognize modern training and credentialing programs to support lifelong learning and upskilling that help workers get high-quality jobs and thrive in a changing economy.
  - iii. Expand and simplify tax deductions and exclusions related to student loan repayment and employer contributions to provide tax relief for student loan borrowers.

## Impact of Tariffs on Consumer Price Index (Percentage Points)



## 2. Expand Economic Opportunity & Grow American Jobs and Businesses.

### a. Strengthen Innovation and Investment

- i. Support tax incentives for domestic research and development (R&D), manufacturing, and intellectual property (IP) creation and retention.
- ii. Restore full and immediate expensing for R&D costs. The TCJA provision to amortize R&D costs over 5 years hurts U.S. innovation, particularly for startups and small businesses, and must be repealed.
- iii. Provide American manufacturers and businesses certainty around capital investment planning by fixing harmful changes to the business interest deduction and preserving full and immediate expensing of equipment and machinery purchases.

### b. Support Small Business and Entrepreneurs

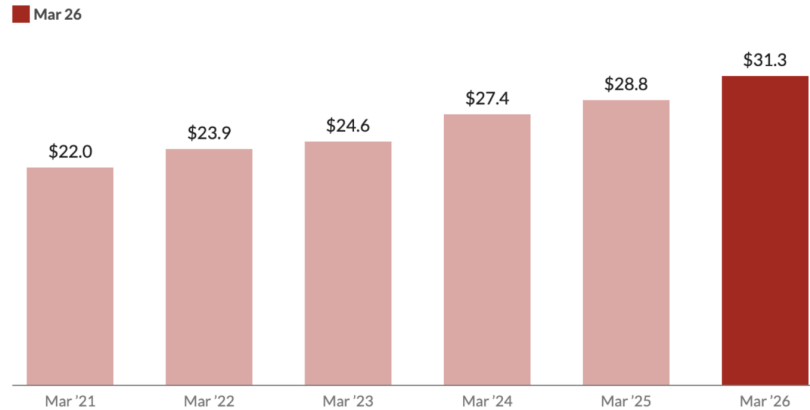
- i. Modernize and simplify small business tax provisions to reduce compliance burdens and help startups and small businesses scale and compete. Growth and opportunity require robust new business formation all across the country.
- ii. Increase access to capital by expanding targeted tax incentives for investment in small businesses, particularly those investing in underserved or long-neglected communities and emerging industries.
- iii. Create robust tax credits for paid family and medical leave that allow more entrepreneurs and employees of small businesses to gain access to this critical benefit.

### c. Promote Long-Term, Broad-Based Growth

- i. Create incentives to invest domestically and boost the competitiveness of the U.S. manufacturing sector, rather than raising tariffs that are increasing the cost of operating in the U.S.
- ii. Ensure international tax rules encourage U.S. investment and onshoring, keep IP in the U.S., and American companies are globally competitive, while maintaining a fair and stable system that prevents a race to the bottom. Taxation of multinational corporations should not encourage offshoring, profit-shifting, or inversions.

## The National Debt is on an Unsustainable Path

Debt Held by the Public (Trillions of \$)



Source: Department of the Treasury • Embed • Download image



### 3. Promote Fiscal Responsibility and Long-Term Economic Security.

- Reject irresponsible tax policies that primarily benefit the wealthiest individuals at the expense of working families and future generations. Tax reform should promote economic growth without exacerbating the long-term fiscal situation or cutting essential programs like Medicaid and SNAP.
- Higher deficits directly impact the cost of living for American workers and families. Higher debt contributes to increased near-term inflation and can result in higher interest rates in the long term, making it more expensive to buy a home, or a car, or to start a business.
- High deficits and debt also threaten the ability of the federal government to invest in our priorities in the future – the more the U.S. spends on interest on the debt, the less it can spend on children, on SNAP, on Medicaid, on Medicare, and on defense.
- Tax reform should prioritize policy that promotes investment, increases revenues, and ensures long term economic growth by reducing deficits.

## NEXT STEPS

Building on this framework, New Dems will translate these policy ideas into legislation that reflects our commitment to economic growth, fairness, and fiscal responsibility. We will develop a strategic plan to advance key elements of this legislation in the 119th Congress, leveraging opportunities for bipartisan consensus while laying the groundwork for broader reform. At the same time, we know that comprehensive tax reform will require a governing majority. New Dems are focused on winning back the majority in 2026 so we are in a stronger position to pass comprehensive, pro-growth tax reform that delivers for working families and strengthens America's long-term competitiveness.

# Workforce & Education Agenda

## INTRODUCTION

In March, Gallup released the results of a poll on the professional and personal status of the U.S. workers that summed up the state of the American workforce in 2026: for the first time since Gallup began measuring life evaluation, more U.S. workers are struggling in their lives (49%) than thriving (46%). Across the country, hardworking Americans don't see their incomes keeping up with rising costs and are witnessing mass layoffs across industries. High-quality education is out of reach for far too many, including non-college pathways to high-quality, well-paying jobs at all skill levels.

The modern American student and worker are staring down one of the most difficult labor markets we've seen in decades. And that's all without accounting for the Trump Administration and Congressional Republicans' impact on jobs and education. Thanks in large part to Trump's chaotic economic agenda and unmitigated assault on our federal workforce, our nation experienced the worst non-recession year for job creation in more than two decades, and job growth has all but zeroed out in the first few months of 2026. Meanwhile, Trump has taken an axe to public education – dismantling the Department of Education and slashing critical funding for classrooms and the students who need resources the most – making post-secondary education less accessible, and undermining our workforce development system.

New Dems are offering a different path forward, one where we actually strengthen our public schools, expand concrete pathways to great jobs, and ensure that the current and next generations are prepared to excel and adapt to the massive transformations changing the nature of work in America. The New Dem Education and Workforce Agenda, put together by the Workforce & Education Working Group led by Chair Frank Mrvan (IN-01), lays out the Coalition's forward-looking agenda to support the American people from their first day in the classroom to their last day on the job.

The Education and Workforce Agenda ensures a balanced approach to supporting K-12 and higher education, strengthening apprenticeships and credentialing programs, and delivering robust worker supports to finally give our students and workers the support they need and deserve.

## NEW DEMS ON THE ROAD FEATURE: GARY, IN



Workforce & Education Working Group Chair Frank Mrvan (IN-01) and New Dem Vice Chair for Policy Nikki Budzinski (IL-13) in Gary, IN.

In July 2025, Chair Frank Mrvan hosted New Dem Vice Chair for Policy Nikki Budzinski (IL-13) in Gary, Indiana, to meet with representatives of organized labor, higher education institutions, and local nonprofits about the federal government's role in strengthening the workforce through education and training initiatives. Together, they discussed how a four-year college degree isn't the only pathway to success, and how Northwest Indiana excels through supporting registered apprenticeships, nonprofits, and programs at local high schools and institutes of higher education.

## PRINCIPLES

1. American students deserve world-class public education from early childhood onward that is accessible, affordable, and designed to make every American college and career ready:
  - a. Protect investment in public schools so every child in every zip code, including those in rural areas and at Tribal schools, has access to the high-quality education they need to succeed in the 21st century economy.
  - b. Accelerate academic recovery in math and reading to improve student achievement.
  - c. Lower the student costs of higher education to put a degree, skills certification, or apprenticeship in reach for low-income and middle-class families, while ensuring apprenticeships, colleges and universities provide quality outcomes for all their students.
  - d. Expand earn while you learn opportunities.
  - e. Expand the use of registered apprenticeship programs both inside and outside the building and construction trades in the fifty percent of jobs that need more than a high school diploma and less than a college degree.
  - f. Provide incentives to colleges and universities to offer stackable skill certifications and support registered apprenticeships to better meet workforce needs.
  - g. Remove the stigma and class distinctions tied to apprenticeships, including through promoting labor and employer programs that introduce youth to valuable apprenticeship models.
2. Our education system should be as innovative and future-ready as the technological transformations shaping our economy:
  - a. Ensure the responsible use of emerging technologies like AI by protecting everyone's safety and personal data and preventing unethical use by students or educators in schoolwork or instruction, all while upholding academic integrity and rigor.
  - b. Integrate AI into U.S. education so American workers are at the forefront of developing and deploying these technologies, as well as prepared to create and fill the new jobs they will generate.
  - c. Deploy these technologies in ways that advance equity and fairness in public education and prevent them from widening rather than helping close the digital divide and other inequities in our schools.
  - d. Utilize these technologies to create classroom environments where students think critically, engage in real-life hands-on learning that builds the skills needed for careers, civic participation, and life, and where educators are empowered to make informed educational decisions.
  - e. Encourage certified professionals to decide when, whether, and how to incorporate technology in pursuit of their larger educational priorities, with technologies and vendors serving, not driving, those decisions.
  - f. Ensure AI tools in classrooms support, not replace, educators by involving teachers, parents and guardians, and researchers in AI integration design and deployment. Equip teachers to harness potential benefits of AI for their craft, such as tailoring instruction, reducing paperwork, and increasing administrative efficiency.
  - g. Communicate school AI policies with commonsense guardrails clearly to parents, guardians, and families so they can make informed decisions and understand how these tools may be used in classrooms for their students' success, including AI literacy, ethical reasoning, and creative problem solving.
3. Our training and credentialing infrastructure should be as robust and responsive as the public university system:
  - a. Make earn-and-learn models, such as registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships implemented by unions and joint labor-management partnerships, viable options for those in high school and beyond.
  - b. Involve industry and labor unions in the design, development, and implementation of programs, and expand the apprenticeship model.
  - c. Invest in scaling proven programs that have strong outcomes, quality jobs, and meet the workforce needs of businesses while building pipelines to address future workforce needs.
  - d. Reduce barriers to starting and finishing workforce training programs by providing access to key supports and benefits, like childcare and transportation, to recruit and support people from non-traditional backgrounds.
  - e. Expand virtual options for rural, frontier, and Tribal students to expand training options and diverse curriculum options.
  - f. Utilize the apprenticeship model where students can earn while they learn.

4. Educational systems and workforce development efforts should complement—not oppose—one another. We should provide incentives for outcomes and stackable certifications that lead to clear, job-ready skills employers actually need.
  - a. Support coordination between employers, labor, educational institutions, and training providers so that workers gain in-demand skills for family wage jobs.
  - b. Make learning a lifelong endeavor by providing accessible reskilling and upskilling opportunities throughout workers’ careers.
  - c. Invest in making credentials portable and stackable so that workers can continue to build on their skills over time and achieve long-term success.
  - d. Support higher education as a public good that benefits all Americans, including through lifesaving research and innovation.

## GOALS

1. World-class public education, as measured by:
  - a. Higher K-12 academic achievement;
  - b. Expanded career opportunities (e.g., post-secondary education and military);
  - c. Improved college completion rates by supporting higher education students with professional workforce and wraparound services and by allowing higher educational institutions to count certifications in completion data;
  - d. Lower student loan debt while maintaining high-quality higher education, including by providing apprenticeship model opportunities that allow students to earn while they learn.
2. Destigmatizing non-degree pathways, as measured by:
  - a. Stronger return on investment from credential and training programs;
  - b. Larger number of registered apprentices per year in proven, high-quality programs both inside and outside the building and construction trades;
  - c. Higher wages, benefits, and labor force participation rates.
3. Robust worker supports, as measured by:
  - a. Improved workforce program completion rates with a focus on job quality;
  - b. Increased employer and labor engagement in skills training;
  - c. Fewer long-term workers who have been laid off or are about to be laid off;
  - d. High re-employment rate for displaced workers who go through job re-training programs with realistic job training and pathways for jobs that are available in the region.

## POLICIES

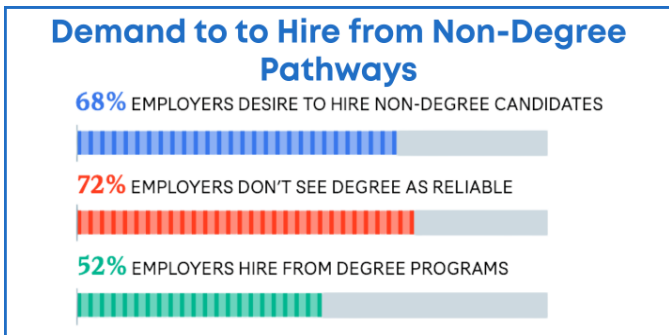
- I. **Improve the public education system to better serve American families from kindergarten through college.**
  - a. **Sustain strong federal support for public elementary and secondary schools.**
    - i. Integrate AI training, with clear guidance, into education and training to ensure American students learn the skills to succeed and safely navigate in a world increasingly shaped by AI. This must be done in coordination with teachers and localities to ensure that the programs are appropriately integrated.
    - ii. Protect critical federal funding for public education, including for Title I funding for schools and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to safeguard resources for our most vulnerable students. And ensure that the federal government pays its fair share to support students.
    - iii. Support our nation’s hard-working educators through investment in teacher workforce development programs that strengthen recruitment, preparation, and retention of effective classroom teachers. Utilize the apprenticeship model for training new teachers to develop a trained workforce with real life and classroom experience without massive debt.
    - iv. Incentivize high-dosage tutoring, instruction grounded in the Science of Reading, and other evidence-based practices to enhance academic recovery and improve student achievement in reading and math.
    - v. Scale rigorous, evidence-backed Career and Technical Education (CTE) models, such as high-quality technical high schools, career academies in public high schools, pre-apprenticeships, and registered apprenticeship programs, with priority given to programs operated by unions and joint labor-management partnerships, so students can explore multiple pathways to good jobs.
    - vi. Work with students, parents, and guidance counselors to expose young Americans to opportunities in the building and construction trades to destigmatize that very lucrative job pathway.

- vii. Expand Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs to rural areas and Tribal schools so that every student, irrespective of zip code, can access high-quality CTE opportunities.
  - viii. Ensure federal dollars are made available to support domestically sourced capital investment in maintenance and technological upgrades to school buildings that satisfy safety, security, and critical infrastructure needs.
- b. **Make post-secondary education, whether at a university, college, or community college, more affordable and get more students across the finish line to a degree, apprenticeship completion, or certification.**
- i. Restore the purchasing power of the federal Pell Grant by increasing awards and indexing to inflation to help low-income families pay for college and reduce student debt.
  - ii. Promote universal affordable access and options for public two-year and four-year colleges for low-income and middle-income students.
  - iii. Expand partnerships with businesses and labor organizations to provide earn while you learn apprenticeship opportunities both inside and outside the building and construction trades.
  - iv. Ensure students and families have the information they need to make the best decisions about which postsecondary program to attend through passage of the College Transparency Act (CTA), which would create a secure, public postsecondary student data system on student enrollment and outcomes.
  - v. Scale effective reforms to boost college retention and graduation rates by expanding the Postsecondary Student Success Grant program (PSSG), which funds student-success initiatives that help more learners stay in school and earn credentials. Allow colleges and universities to include apprenticeship completion and certifications in graduation rate data.
  - vi. Ensure sustained access to affordable student loan repayment plan options tied to a borrower's income.
  - vii. Increase access to high quality graduate programs by aligning annual federal student loan limits with the postsecondary program's ability to provide positive outcomes for its graduates.
- II. **Grow non-college pathways to good jobs.**
- a. **Expand the integration of earn and learn models and apprenticeship programs within post-secondary education and better integrate them into our workforce training infrastructure.**
- i. Expand the use of registered apprenticeships across key sectors of the economy by making registered apprenticeship programs easier to start and scale for employers while ensuring quality, rigor, as well as strong and enforceable labor standards and worker protections.
  - ii. Better integrate pathways to registered apprenticeships into high school curriculum through vehicles like pre-apprenticeships and career and technical education programs, while maintaining strong and enforceable guardrails to prohibit youth on high-risk jobsites.
  - iii. Invest in growing and replicating innovative, proven workforce models and pilot programs on a larger scale, focusing on bringing those models to rural and Tribal schools.
  - iv. Ensure sustained funding to scale high-quality registered apprenticeships and other union-led training programs.
- b. **Ensure credentialing programs are leading to in-demand careers in high-quality, good-paying jobs.**
- i. Coordinate among employers, workers, labor unions, joint labor-management partnerships, training providers, and educational institutions to define what it means to receive high-quality credentials that lead to a strong return on investment – and focus resources on those pathways.
  - ii. Reauthorize and fully-fund the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), through provisions that ensure full and equal labor participation in governing structures including state and local workforce boards and industry-sector partnerships as well as Rapid Response programs, expanded labor consultation and concurrence requirements, strong and enforceable labor standards and worker protections including child labor protections, robust performance standards that ensure quality training leads to family sustaining employment.
  - iii. Raise the bar on performance outcomes from training and credential providers, make it easier for workers to find high-quality opportunities, incentivize providers to expand into rural areas, and maintain strong guardrails to prevent low-quality or predatory programs.
  - iv. Support and foster local efforts between employers, labor unions, joint labor-management partnerships, and educational institutions to provide credentials that directly correspond to in-demand positions.

### III. Support workers from their first job to their last.

#### a. Provide workers with the wraparound support they need to afford training programs and continue to develop critical skills.

- i. Ensure workers have the support they need to start and finish training programs by providing income support, making childcare and other early learning programs more affordable and accessible, increasing workers' access to paid leave, and investing in reliable transportation options.
- ii. Better integrate public benefits offerings with workforce training options for displaced workers to streamline service delivery.
- iii. Eliminate benefits cliffs, such as by disregarding income from "earn and learn" training programs for purposes of public assistance eligibility.
- iv. Make everyday costs like healthcare, groceries, and housing more affordable for Americans by ensuring that wages keep up with costs.
- v. Increase the federal minimum wage and tie it to the cost of living.



#### b. Focus on building a resilient workforce development system that prepares workers for a changing job market.

- i. Create incentives for businesses to upskill their current employees and make sure workers benefit from those incentives (i.e. increase employee pay and benefits), while also bolstering reskilling programs for displaced workers that lead to quality, family sustaining jobs.
- ii. Make lifelong learning a priority by providing workers with opportunities to develop the skills they need to thrive in the face of an evolving economy.
- iii. Fully consult business and labor organizations in the design, development, and implementation of worker training programs, including the identification of growth areas and "in-demand" training programs that lead to quality jobs.
- iv. Utilize AI in partnership with government, business, and labor organizations to both better understand the types of jobs and skills that will be in-demand in the future and prepare workers to use new technologies. Expand the role of Wagner-Peyser Employment Service staff, merit-hired state employees responsible for delivering job placement and related employment services, in these initiatives.
- v. Deploy milestone-based funding to invest in new talent pipelines for new and developing industries with good jobs.

#### c. Hold employers accountable for creating good jobs and supporting their workers.

- i. Ensure companies benefiting from federal funding and tax incentives comply with all applicable federal laws including all federal labor laws administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) through representation of compliance requirements.
- ii. Ensure companies benefiting from federal funding and tax incentives provide quality training, family-sustaining wages and benefits, safe working conditions, and maintain union neutrality.
- iii. Strengthen federal labor enforcement to ensure businesses meet basic obligations around fair pay, workplace safety, and respect for workers' right to organize and collectively bargain.

## NEXT STEPS

Following the President's Executive Order 14242 on March 20, 2025 to dismantle the Department of Education, the Administration has moved quickly to unwind and reassign the Department's core functions, undermining decades of progress for American students. Congressional Republicans continue to promote policies that strip students of resources, protections, and pathways needed to succeed in the 21st century. New Dems are leading the fight to safeguard and expand high-quality education and training for American students and workers of all backgrounds and abilities.

To move this agenda forward, New Dems will not only work to investigate and demand transparency on the Administration's plans to break apart the Department of Education, but will also continue to collaborate with educators, industry partners, and workforce organizations to support student and worker transitions to today's technological advancements.

New Dems remain committed to work across the aisle to build bipartisan reforms that strengthen America's public education, improve non-college pathways, and expand worker support. Congress must act to preserve and restore the Department of Education's core mission, and ensure every American learner and worker has access to the world-class education and training needed to succeed.

# Rural Revitalization Agenda

## INTRODUCTION

New Dems know that for too long, rural communities across the country have been overlooked. The local economies that feed the nation and power our national economy have felt left behind, as politicians on both sides of the aisle have pushed outdated policies, harmful trade agendas, and unreliable federal resources. Despite underinvestment and underappreciation, rural communities have shown a resilience and resolve that must be matched with a renewed commitment from the federal government to revitalizing the heartland.

New Dems are committed to this project and, last year, laid out our path forward to restore the strength of rural communities in our Rural Revitalization Agenda, developed by the Rural Revitalization Working Group, chaired by Rep. Kim Schrier (WA-08).

Targeted reinvestment in rural America is needed now more than ever. The Trump Administration is crushing American farmers, with Trump's illegal trade war raising their operating costs and driving essential customers like China to foreign competitors. Net farm income is expected to drop by \$4 billion in 2026, and 2025 saw a 46 percent year-over-year increase in farm bankruptcies – and that is all before the war in Iran sent the price of gas skyrocketing and jeopardized the global fertilizer supply.

Meanwhile, the Medicaid cuts Congressional Republicans jammed through in their Big Ugly Bill to finance billionaire tax cuts are gutting vulnerable communities. Rural Americans disproportionately rely on Medicaid, and 1 in 3 rural hospitals are expected to close due to the cuts. Thanks to Republicans refusing to extend the Affordable Care Act tax credits, an estimated four million rural Americans are paying higher monthly premiums. Congressional Republicans also slashed nearly \$200 billion from SNAP, which not only impacts the 1 in 7 rural households who rely on it to put food on the table, but the farmers who power the program.

In June, New Dem Outreach Vice Chair Salud Carbajal (CA-24) gathered together more than a dozen New Dems alongside nonprofit, union, and industry leaders to discuss the devastating effects of Republican SNAP cuts state-run nutrition programs, families, children, food banks, farmers, and rural economies. New Dems heard about the efforts of resilient organizations to feed hungry families, and about what New Dems could do to fight back in Congress.

## NEW DEMS ON THE ROAD FEATURE: FREDERICK, MD



New Dem Vice Chair for Policy Nikki Budzinski (IL-13) and Rural Broadband Task Force Chair April McClain Delaney (MD-06) in Frederick County, MD.

New Dems got out into rural communities to hear directly from local leaders, utility providers, small businesses, and more about the struggles they are facing and what solutions they need from lawmakers in Washington. Last summer, Rural Broadband Task Force Chair April McClain Delaney (MD-06) hosted Vice Chair for Policy Nikki Budzinski (IL-13) in Frederick County, Maryland to tour a local broadband construction site and discuss pathways to ensure last-mile broadband access for rural areas. Constituents shared stories about how important broadband is in their everyday lives, and lamented the Trump Administration's attack on the critical Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program.

Then in November, Working Group Chair Kim Schrier convened a roundtable with small business owners from across Washington, who shared the many obstacles they face getting off the ground in rural areas, including limited broadband access, outdated infrastructure, and complex federal programs.

These stories heavily influenced the New Dem approach, which is laser-focused on increasing federal support for local and farm economies while breaking down barriers to success, addressing the ailing rural healthcare system, and ensuring every American has access to the technology they need to succeed in the 21st-century economy.

## PRINCIPLES

1. Empower rural communities for long-term prosperity
  - a. Align federal policies to keep land affordable and in production.
  - b. Promote affordable housing and economic opportunities that will keep families together in rural communities.
  - c. Expand workforce development and training in rural communities to prepare workers for an evolving job market.
  - d. Honor our relationships with Tribal Nations by positioning the federal government to be a partner in development.
  - e. Strengthen technical assistance capacity for small and rural communities to navigate federal programs and fully access available resources.
2. Support the care economy and fight for rural healthcare
  - a. Combat rural hunger through federal nutrition programs.
  - b. Address rural childcare needs and ensure it remains affordable, accessible, and high-quality.
  - c. Stabilize rural hospitals and undo disastrous cuts to federal healthcare programs like Medicaid.
  - d. Invest in the rural workforce to connect local talent to high-paying, impactful jobs.
3. Invest in the farm economy so the whole nation can thrive
  - a. Pass bipartisan legislation that authorizes and invests in the Farm Bill programs left behind in the Republican reconciliation process and reinvests in national anti-hunger programs.
  - b. Support new economic opportunities in rural areas such as agritourism, new and specialty crops, and by streamlining regulations to help small and mid-sized producers thrive.
  - c. Create a strong federal support system for farmers from the time they start farming to when disaster strikes, ensuring a durable agriculture economy for all communities.
4. Close the digital gap by supporting programs that connect all of America to the internet
  - a. Strive to ensure every American has affordable and reliable high-speed internet.
  - b. Connect areas that do not have broadband internet, or need upgrades to boost internet speed.
  - c. Reform programs to maximize efficiency and lower barriers to internet access.



New Democrat Coalition Vice Chair for Outreach Salud Carbajal (CA-24), alongside House Agriculture Committee Vice Ranking Member Shontel Brown (OH-11) and Subcommittee on Nutrition and Foreign Agriculture Ranking Member Jahana Hayes (CT-05), host a roundtable discussion on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) with representatives from nonprofit organizations, advocacy groups, unions, and industry.

## POLICIES

### I. Empower rural communities for long term prosperity

New Dems aim to empower rural communities by expanding access to affordable land, supporting small and beginning farmers, and addressing rising costs like healthcare, food, childcare, and housing. This involves reforming US Department of Agriculture (USDA) lending, curbing land speculation, establishing a federal land-link program for new producers, strengthening consultation with Tribal Nations, and increasing federal rural development funding. We also support updating the federal workforce system and strengthening training pathways to ensure rural communities thrive in the modern economy.

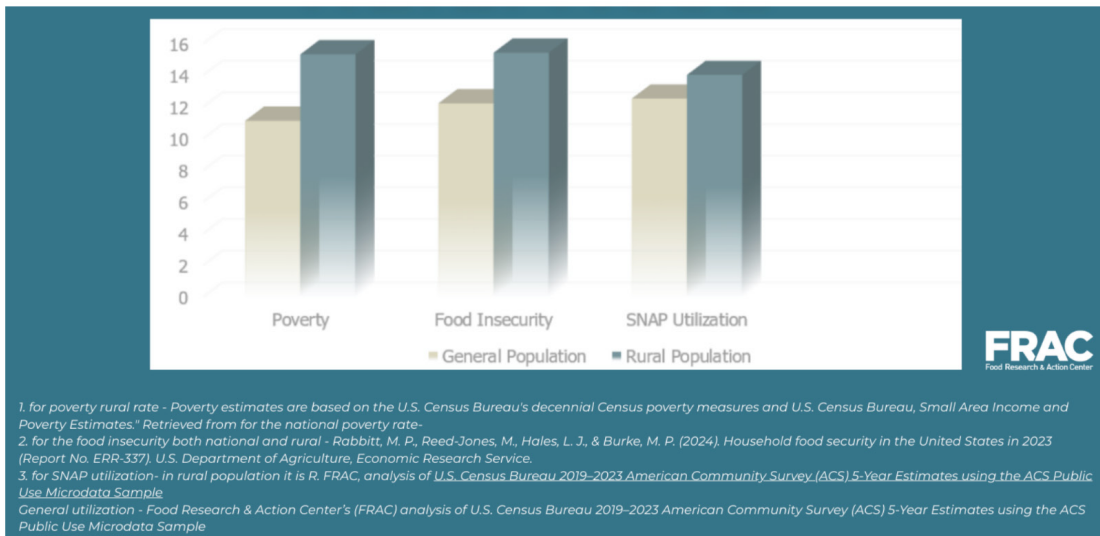
- a. Expand access to affordable land by revising USDA lending and subsidy programs with higher credit limits, more flexibility on guarantees, and faster approval times to favor small and mid-size producers over large corporate owners.
- b. Curtail or penalize land speculation by big investors and foreign nations to lower the cost of land for American purchasers.
- c. Keep land in production and support beginning and disadvantaged farmers by piloting a federal land-link program to connect retiring or transitioning farmers with beginning farmers or neighboring farmers seeking land.
- d. Support business development in rural areas by providing resources for rural development programs at the USDA.
- e. Promote fair trade opportunities for agriculture and industry to help build and bolster new markets for rural economies and invest in American workers.
- f. Keep rural communities together and make sure families don't have to leave home to find a home by increasing funding for rural housing through programs like the Section 504 Home Repair Program, establishing new federal resources to promote affordable housing like shared equity homeownership models, and assisting low- and moderate- income households in rural areas through [H.R. 5728, the Rural Homeownership Continuity Act](#).
- g. Modernize the rural workforce and invest in rural jobs by reauthorizing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to expand workforce training, apprenticeships, and adult education in rural and Tribal communities. This involves partnering with employers and educators to build local talent pipelines, create quality jobs in emerging and traditional industries, and expand place-based supports and sector-based partnerships to connect rural workers to growing industries and good-paying jobs close to home.
- h. Honor our relationships with Tribal Nations by formalizing additional consultation mechanisms in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, improve data reporting on federal funding to Tribes, and developing interagency collaboration mechanisms to lower administrative burdens on Tribes.
- i. Expand technical assistance so rural communities and Tribal Nations can better access federal investments and rebuild critical rural infrastructure.

### II. Support the care economy and fight for rural healthcare

Federal investments should be combating rural hunger through federal nutrition programs, addressing childcare needs via USDA-prioritized projects, modernizing the rural workforce with expanded training and job creation, and stabilizing rural hospitals and maternity care by reversing cuts and supporting healthcare infrastructure and staff. We must also strengthen the rural health workforce and maintain virtual care through expanded placements, EMS investment, and extended telehealth flexibilities.

- a. Fight rural hunger by supporting federal nutrition programs, including by undoing harmful cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
- b. Address rural childcare needs by directing the USDA to authorize and prioritize projects that address the availability, quality, and cost of childcare in agricultural and rural communities.
- c. Stabilize rural hospitals and maternity care by undoing disastrous cuts to Medicaid, pausing scheduled Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital cuts, sustaining rural Medicare add-on payments (including the Low-Volume Hospital adjustment and the Medicare-Dependent Hospital program), targeting support to Rural Emergency Hospitals and obstetrics units to prevent service losses and closures, and supporting the nursing workforce in line with [H.R. 3333, the MORE Nurses Act](#).
- d. Strengthen the rural health workforce and maintain virtual care options by expanding National Health Service Corps and Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education placements in shortage areas, investing in rural Emergency Medical Services recruitment and training, and extending key Medicare telehealth flexibilities for quality primary care and behavioral health.

## Rural Communities Have a Greater Need for Federal Resources



### III. Invest in the farm economy so the whole nation can thrive

Congress needs to strengthen the farm economy, provide stability to our farmers, and fight hunger. We can do this by providing new opportunities in farm country like agritourism and cutting red tape, expanding job creation through initiatives like the RECOMPETE Program, and investing in buying local foods.

- a. Pass bipartisan legislation that authorizes and invests in the Farm Bill programs left behind in the Republican reconciliation process and reinvests in national anti-hunger programs.
- b. Address rural food insecurity by investing in the Healthy Food Financing Initiative, the Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program and the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program.
- c. Support agritourism, outdoor recreation, and local businesses by bolstering the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in line with [H.R. 3470, the AGRITOURISM Act](#).
- d. Cut red tape for ranchers by exempting routine activities like fence repair or water improvement from bureaucratic restrictions.
- e. Meet the needs of rural communities by providing flexible funding to create jobs and economic opportunities through the RECOMPETE Program.
- f. Improve forestry management by allowing Tribes and counties to retain forestry revenues and use those funds to conduct restoration projects on private forestry lands.
- g. Encourage responsible agriculture practices by investing in USDA's conservation programs that promote the use of cover crops to improve soil health, reduce erosion, enhance water quality, and increase long-term farm resiliency.
- h. Expand biofuel and clean fuel markets to increase farm income, reduce carbon emissions, strengthen domestic energy security, and grow new rural manufacturing capacity.

#### **IV. Close the digital gap by supporting programs that connect all of America to the internet**

We can ensure every American has access to high-speed internet and the opportunities it provides. By streamlining and consolidating programs, providing money for rural households to get connected to the internet, and reducing the burden on local governments to access funds, Congress can close the digital gap.

- a. Bridge the digital divide and promote opportunity by providing monthly subsidies for broadband service and one-time discounts for internet-enabled devices, similar to how the Affordable Connectivity Program operated.
- b. Consolidate federal broadband programs and standardize definitions, eligibility criteria, and maps to reduce inefficiencies and give providers clarity on where their services are needed and to give potential program beneficiaries transparency on what resources they can get.
- c. Provide a common application for federal broadband programs and enable better data sharing between agencies, such as the Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of the Treasury, Department of Commerce, and Federal Communications Commission, to simplify the application process for providers in rural communities and to minimize duplicative subsidized networks.
- d. Enhance stability in the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program by issuing guidance on how funds can be used for non-deployment purposes such as cybersecurity, outreach, and subscription subsidies. Current confusion around eligibility undermines the program and heightens the risk of funds being misused.
- e. Reauthorize broadband programs such as the Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program in line with H.R. 5037, the Middle Mile for Rural America Act, which would expand broadband access into rural areas.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The New Democrat Coalition looks forward to engaging in discussions with our colleagues in the Democratic Caucus and across the aisle to bolster programs targeting rural areas, support producers and consumers to make sure Americans don't go hungry, and address disparities to unlock the full potential of rural regions as vital contributors to the nation's prosperity.

# **TACKLE AMERICA'S MOST DIFFICULT CHALLENGES**

# Housing Affordability Agenda

## INTRODUCTION

The dream of homeownership for an average working family is falling further out of reach for far too many Americans. While they pour thousands of dollars into rent that is already unaffordable, home prices and mortgage rates continue to skyrocket, locking out millions of households from owning a piece of the American dream and building wealth for future generations. It's no surprise that the average age of a typical first-time homebuyer is now 40 years old, compared to 28 in 1991.

While President Trump ran on bringing down home prices and building more housing, his administration and Congressional Republicans have not treated this crisis with the urgency that it requires. The country faces a near-4-million-home shortage that is driving up prices for everyone. Instead of addressing the barriers to building these much-needed units and helping potential buyers afford down payments, President Trump has driven up construction costs through his tariffs and immigration policies.

New Dems have consistently advocated for smart solutions to make communities where everyone has access to safe, decent, affordable housing and the amenities needed to thrive. That's why last year, New Dems released our Housing Affordability Agenda, developed by Housing, Infrastructure, & Transportation Working Group Chair Norma Torres (CA-35) and Housing Task Force Chair Emilia Sykes (OH-13).



New Dem Members join housing policy experts for a robust conversation about what Congress can do to help build more homes and address the national housing affordability crisis.

In January, Housing, Infrastructure, & Transportation Working Group Chair Norma Torres and Housing Task Force Chair Emilia Sykes along with New Dem Vice Chair for Outreach Salud Carbajal (CA-24) and a dozen additional New Dem Members, hosted a roundtable discussion with housing policy experts specializing in home and apartment construction, low-income housing, housing redevelopment, modular housing, and financing. The members heard directly about how this crisis has hurt millions of families and helped inform the policies we propose to make the dream of home ownership a reality again.

By working together, we can tackle this crisis and make all communities places where everyone has access to safe, decent, affordable housing and the amenities needed to thrive. Together, we can create a brighter future and restore hope for everyone pursuing the American Dream. New Dems remain committed to working with our colleagues in the Senate and across the aisle to find common ground on policies that will lower housing costs, increase housing accessibility, strengthen fair housing enforcement, and ensure a strong economy empowers all Americans to succeed.

## PRINCIPLES

1. Build more homes and get them on the market fast
  - a. Quickly increase supply where there is the greatest demand;
  - b. Incentivize the sale of homes so they don't sit vacant for months; and
  - c. Make it easier to redevelop or rehabilitate housing stock.
2. Make it easier to buy or rent a home
  - a. Improve mortgage products so buyers can access lower rates; and
  - b. Examine the drivers of insurance risk to address root causes and lower costs;
3. Improve housing data and transparency so we can surge resources where needed
  - a. Collect data across the federal government to see where people are being displaced from evictions, foreclosures, and disasters; and
  - b. Enhance insurance to data is improve transparency on rate changes.

## POLICIES

1. **Build more homes and get them on the market fast to meet housing demand and fill the gap of millions of missing homes. Federal policy should lower barriers, incentivize housing development, and position the federal government as a partner in land use.**
  - a. H.R. 2840, Housing Supply Frameworks Act - Rep. Brittany Pettersen (CO-07)
  - b. H.R. 891, Pro-Housing Act of 2025 - Rep. Pat Ryan (NY-18)
  - c. H.R. 2854, Neighborhood Homes Investment Act - Rep. John Larson (CT-01), Rep. Terri Sewell (AL-07), Rep. Jimmy Panetta (CA-19)
  - d. H.R. 3459, Empty Lots to Housing Act - Rep. Kevin Mullin (CA-15), Rep. Scott Peters (CA-50), Rep. Shri Thanedar (MI-13)
  - e. H.R. 2088, Thriving Communities Act - Rep. Norma Torres (CA-35)
  - f. H.R. 4576, Build More Housing Near Transit Act - Rep. Scott Peters (CA-50)
2. **Make it easier to buy or rent a home by increasing the number of units on the market through innovative financial products. This should include incentives and new financing for more housing, preventing consolidation of housing into the hands of investors over families, and strengthening federal support of housing finance.**
  - a. H.R. 1340, More Homes on the Market Act - Rep. Jimmy Panetta (CA-19)
  - b. H.R. 2725, Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act of 2025 - Rep. Suzan DelBene (WA-01), Rep. Don Beyer (VA-08), Rep. Jimmy Panetta (CA-19)
  - c. H.R. 892, Mortgage Rate Reduction Act - Rep. Pat Ryan (NY-18)
  - d. H.R. 4353, HOMES Act - Rep. Emilia Sykes (OH-13)
  - e. H.R. 4568, Supporting Upgraded Property Projects and Lending for Yards (SUPPLY) Act - Rep. Sam Liccardo (CA-16)
3. **Improve housing data and transparency so we can surge resources where needed by improving federal data collection efforts, supporting transparency measures so consumers can make informed decisions, and helping to improve record-keeping of land titles.**
  - a. H.R. 3988, FIND Housing Loss Act - Rep. Johnny Olszewski (MD-02)
  - b. H.R. 3694, VALID Act - Rep. Brittany Pettersen (CO-07), Rep. Nikema Williams (GA-05)
  - c. H.R. 1640, HEIRS Act - Rep. Nikema Williams (GA-05), Rep. Lizzie Fletcher (TX-07)

## NEXT STEPS

The New Democrat Coalition looks forward to engaging with our partners in the House and Senate on related topics, including increasing the supply of homes and supporting consumers to make sure they can afford a home. We also look forward to advancing legislative proposals on specific issues such as removing the HUD chassis rule on manufactured housing, exempting some housing projects from environmental review, and removing tariffs and other supply chain barriers for housing inputs like lumber and certain metal products.

# Healthcare Action Plan

## INTRODUCTION

Healthcare in America is in a state of crisis. Of all the extreme policies pushed by President Trump and Congressional Republicans in 2025, their most devastating effort may be the coordinated dismantling of our healthcare system, making life-saving care less affordable, less accessible, and less accurate nationwide. From the Big Ugly Bill's destructive cuts to Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that will kick 15 million people off their insurance, to the decision to double or triple monthly costs for more than 20 million Americans by ending ACA end tax credits, to the conspiracy-theorist-in-chief Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s dangerous assault on public health, this generation of Americans are receiving more expensive and lower quality care – if they can even access it at all – leading to an estimated 51,000 additional preventable deaths every year.

The American people are suffering under Trump's anti-health agenda. Recent polling shows that the primary driver of affordability concerns – which itself is the number one issue at kitchen tables across the country – is the rising cost of healthcare. Two-thirds of Americans are worried about being able to afford healthcare for them and their family, and a majority say the cost of care has increased since Trump returned to office. Sadly but unsurprisingly, one-third of Americans are cutting back on other expenses, driving less, cutting back on utility usage, and even skipping meals to offset rising healthcare costs.

New Dems have joined our Democratic colleagues in the fight against this agenda throughout the 119th Congress, including by advancing a discharge petition through the House that would extend the ACA tax credits. We also recognize that we cannot truly address the systemic issues in our healthcare system until we control the agenda in Washington, and that's why we've laid out our roadmap to lower costs, protect coverage, and expand access in the Healthcare Action Plan.

The Action Plan represents the best policy ideas from across the Coalition to finally build a healthcare system that works for all Americans, compiled by Chair Terri Sewell's (AL-07) Healthcare Working Group last fall. New Dems aren't offering flashy policies that look good on paper but fail to deliver real results. We're offering commonsense, durable changes to the system that can actually make a difference in the lives of the American people.



Healthcare Working Group Chair Terri Sewell (AL-07) speaks at a press conference announcing the New Dem Healthcare Action Plan in December.

# NEW DEMS ON THE ROAD FEATURE: WILMINGTON, DE



Economic Growth & Cost of Living Working Group Chair Chrissy Houlahan (PA-06), Care Economy Task Force Chair Sarah McBride (DE-AL), and House Democratic Whip Katherine Clark (MA-05) in Wilmington, DE.

New Dems consistently heard about struggles from constituents in the development of the Action Plan, and convened policy roundtables in Washington to discuss the path forward on key pain points like the ACA tax credits. In May of last year, Care Economy Task Force Chair Sarah McBride (DE-AL) convened a roundtable in Delaware, with Economic Growth & Cost of Living Working Group Chair Chrissy Houlahan (PA-06), and House Democratic Whip Katherine Clark (MA-05), to discuss the importance of supporting caregivers and lowering costs, especially in the case of small business owners who are facing increased burdens when providing insurance to their employees.

Almost half of all ACA enrollees are small business owners, employees, or self-employed – and New Dems heard directly from one of these Americans during a live edition of the Fly-In podcast last October during the longest shutdown in history. Stephanie Murphy, a freelance writer with Type 1 diabetes, joined the podcast and detailed her difficulties maintaining her insurance, emphasizing that her already high monthly costs were expected to double in 2026 thanks to Congressional Republicans refusing to extend the ACA premium tax credits.

New Dems are fighting to ensure every American can get the care they need, when and where they need it. What follows is a plan built on a commitment to affordability, accessibility, and accuracy – from restoring funding for Medicaid and ACA and banning surprise medical bills, to safeguarding women’s healthcare and rural hospitals, combatting reckless misinformation, and investing in the future of care innovation.

## PRINCIPLES

1. We believe every American should have quality, affordable healthcare with predictable costs, free from the risk of financial strain, crushing debt, or even personal bankruptcy.
  - a. Affordable healthcare enables consumers to plan and budget with confidence.
  - b. Patients deserve transparency and simplicity instead of hidden charges and confusing bills.
  - c. No one should face financial ruin because of an unexpected illness or accident.
2. We are committed to improving Americans’ healthcare and protecting and strengthening the Affordable Care Act, Medicare, and Medicaid as cornerstones of American health and financial security.
  - a. Seniors, children, people with disabilities, small businesses, and working families should never have to fear that the rug will be pulled out from under them by politicians.
  - b. These programs should be stable, sustainable, and shielded from partisan brinkmanship.
  - c. Resources must be managed responsibly to preserve trust and ensure long-term security.



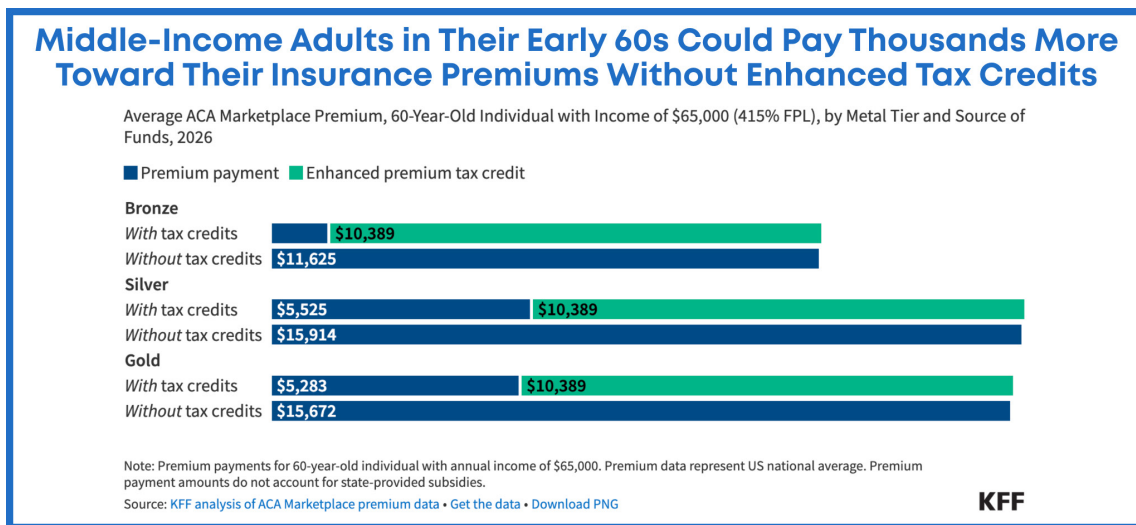
New Democrat Coalition Chair Brad Schneider (IL-10), Vice Chair for Communications Marc Veasey (TX-33), and Rep. Greg Landsman (OH-01) speak to Stephanie Murphy, a freelance writer with Type 1 diabetes, on a special live edition of The Fly-In podcast about healthcare access.

3. We affirm that, no matter where they live, all Americans deserve timely, reliable access to doctors and other medical professionals, hospitals, and medicines close to their homes.
  - a. Every community should have access to essential services, from emergency care to maternity care to behavioral health.
  - b. The healthcare system should invest in providers and innovative technologies that bring care closer to people.
  - c. Care should be equitable and available to all, regardless of geography, income, or background.

## POLICIES

### I. Lower Costs for Working Families

Healthcare costs are the single largest financial burden facing many working- and middle-class families today. Since 2000, premiums and deductibles have grown far faster than wages, leaving millions of Americans paying more for less coverage. No family should fall into debt or go bankrupt simply because they got sick or needed care.



- a. Preserve and stabilize the enhanced premium tax credits and the caps on premiums in the Affordable Care Act, ensuring reduced healthcare costs for millions of Americans.
- b. Reduce the cost of care by driving greater efficiency, transparency, and competition throughout the healthcare system, ensuring patients consistently pay fair and reasonable prices for the services they need.
- c. Build on the Affordable Care Act, ensuring that no family is forced to spend more than a reasonable share of their income on health insurance premiums and deductibles—no matter how they get their coverage—so that care is affordable and accessible for all.
- d. Close the last major gap in protecting patients from surprise billings by increasing enforcement of the No Surprises Act (P.L. 116-260) and banning unexpected, high-cost charges for emergency ground ambulance transportation and guaranteeing patients and providers are shielded from financial shock in crisis situations.
- e. End the harmful practice of reporting medical debt to credit bureaus, improve standards and resources for financial assistance to prevent medical debt, and end aggressive debt collection practices that block families from getting stable housing and other forms of financial equity.
- f. Extend Medicare's \$2,000 annual prescription drug out-of-pocket cap—rising to \$2,100 in 2026 under the Inflation Reduction Act (P.L. 117-169)—and its \$35 monthly insulin cap to individuals with private insurance.
- g. Increase transparency across the prescription drug supply chain, including Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs), drug manufacturers, wholesalers, pharmacies, direct-to-consumer platforms, and pharmacy services administrative organizations, to expose opaque pricing practices and ensure affordable prices for patients.

## II. Close Coverage Gaps and Expand Access to Care

The Affordable Care Act transformed the American health insurance landscape, cutting the uninsured rate from over 13% in 2013 to about 8% in 2024. Yet despite this historic progress, over 27 million Americans still lack coverage—and that number is poised to rise. Congressional Republicans' Big Ugly Law (P.L. 119-21), combined with recent policy changes pushed by the Trump Administration and Congressional Republicans, threatens to leave millions more without the care they rely on.

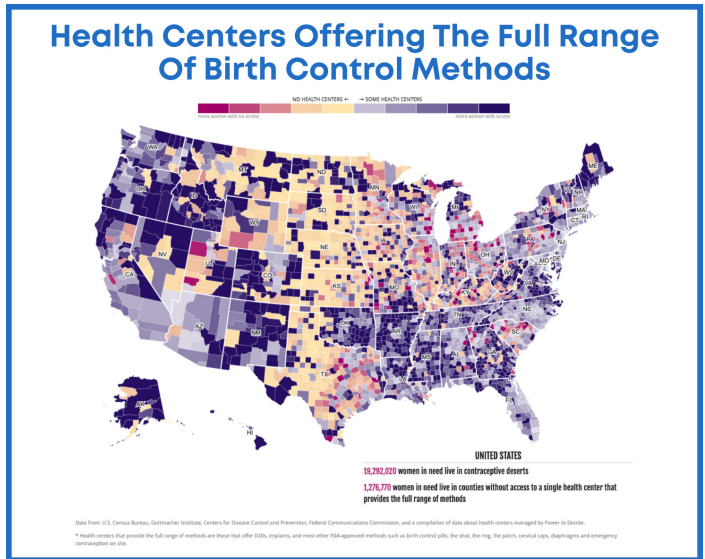
Beyond those 27 million uninsured, millions of Americans with coverage continue to face barriers to care—from provider shortages to rural hospital closures to outdated enrollment systems. When healthcare is accessible, it prevents crises, saves lives, and makes our health system stronger for everyone

- a. Restore the Trump Administration's \$90 million cut to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Navigator program—previously restored by the Biden Administration in 2021—to ensure consumers, especially those in rural and underserved communities, can access free, unbiased health insurance assistance and services.
- b. Protect rural and safety-net hospitals from closure and ensure access to essential services like maternity care, emergency care, and behavioral health.
- c. Provide long-term, stable federal funding for community health centers, safety-net hospitals, and rural health clinics to sustain affordable, high-quality care in every community.
- d. Streamline enrollment for people to obtain health insurance by allowing people to check a box on their tax forms to determine eligibility for Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), or ACA Marketplace coverage.
- e. Expand training programs, loan repayment incentives, and pipeline partnerships to address shortages of physicians, nurses, behavioral health providers, and other essential professionals.
- f. Provide grants through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to colleges and universities to establish or expand allopathic (M.D. granting) or osteopathic (D.O. granting) medical schools in underserved communities or at minority-serving institutions (MSIs), including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).
- g. Make permanent the telehealth flexibilities that increased access to care and serve as a crucial lifeline for rural communities.
- h. Ensure the 340B Drug Pricing Program is a vital source of affordable medicines for vulnerable patients, operates with strong transparency and accountability guardrails, and delivers expanded access, improved care, and reduced costs for patients and vulnerable communities.
- i. Promote the availability and competition of affordable prescription drug options which offer identical clinical value to reference brand-name treatments.
- j. Expand cancer prevention and detection through the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program and research into Multi-Cancer Early Detection (MCEdDs).
- k. Strengthen the global and domestic fight against HIV by sustaining federal investments in prevention, testing, and treatment, including support for models like at-home testing and Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) access.
- l. Ensure adequate and consistent reimbursement and coverage for substance use disorder treatment for private and public insurers so that every individual struggling with addiction has access to the critical medical care they need, expand federal incentives to increase the workforce trained in addiction care, and increase federal investments to support the continuum of care needed in prevention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction to address the opioid and overdose epidemic.
- m. Expand behavioral health screenings, increase funding for federal programs that support access to mental health services, and invest in care coordination to ensure those who need mental health services receive care.
- n. Integrate behavioral health into primary care settings, such as through Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCCs), to expand access, enhance care coordination, and support a whole-person centered approach to treatment.
- o. Expand access to non-emergency medical transportation, including medical ride-sharing platforms, to help patients in all communities overcome transportation barriers to care.

### III. Putting Patients Over Profits

Medicare and Medicaid are cornerstones of America's healthcare system, serving more than 140 million people combined. Yet these programs remain under constant threat from partisan cuts and political brinkmanship. Most recently, Republicans passed legislation slashing over \$1 trillion from Medicaid—putting 330 hospitals at risk of closure, threatening the jobs of 477,000 health workers, and endangering 570 nursing homes across the country. Yale Public Health estimates these cuts could imperil the lives of 51,000 people. Preserving these programs is about more than defending benefits—it is about protecting the lives of seniors, people with disabilities, working families, and children.

- a. Reverse Republicans' harmful cuts to Medicaid and modernize the program so it can expand coverage, improve access to providers, streamline enrollment, and remove unnecessary red tape that prevents people from getting care.
- b. Protect and strengthen Medicare by safeguarding its guaranteed benefits, enhancing the quality and coordination of care for seniors, ensuring the program can negotiate lower drug prices, and taking steps to preserve the program's financial security and sustainability for decades to come.
- c. Streamline and modernize the Prior Authorization process, including within Medicare Advantage, to reduce administrative burdens and enable safe, timely care, while opposing efforts that would deny seniors necessary care in Traditional Medicare or move toward privatizing the program.
- d. Crack down on fraud and abuse in Medicare and Medicaid by bolstering program integrity resources, improving oversight, and targeting bad actors—without cutting benefits or reducing access for the people who rely on these programs.



### IV. Protect Women's Health for Every Generation

Adult women comprise 52% of the total Medicaid population and made up the majority of adults covered in 2023. Yet in the United States today, women are dying from preventable causes at alarming rates, and access to contraception, abortion, fertility care, and maternal health services is under relentless attack. Protecting and expanding these essential services is critical to ensuring women's health, safety, and security across every stage of life.

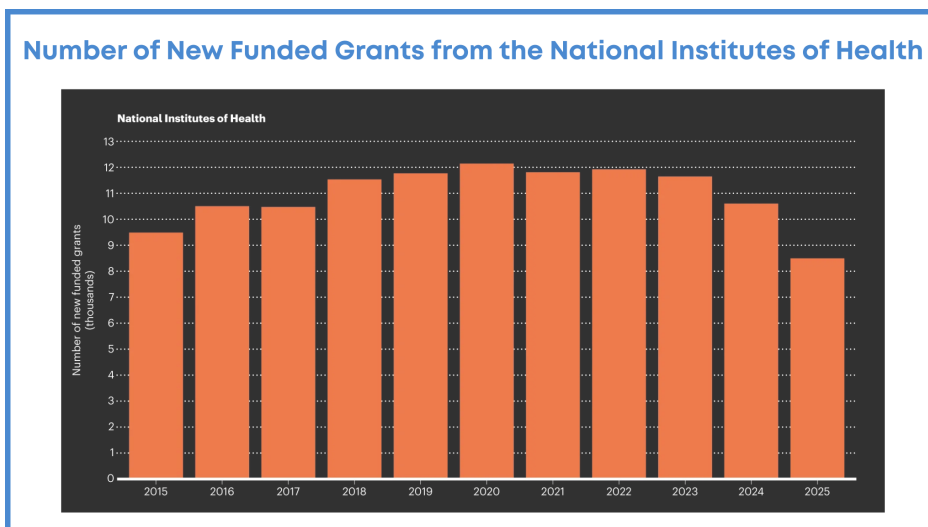
- a. Protect access to contraception, abortion, and family planning services by upholding federal protections like the Emergency Medical Treatment & Labor Act (EMTALA), sustaining Title X and the Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant, and reinstating Medicaid funding for reproductive health organizations cut by the Big Ugly Bill (P.L. 119-21).
- b. Support maternal and child well-being with expanded postpartum services, maternal mental health resources like the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline, Medicaid coverage for quality maternity care including doula services, and enhanced data systems including the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) and state maternal mortality review committees.
- c. Safeguard access to fertility care by protecting Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) like In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) and sustaining research programs such as the National ART Surveillance System.
- d. Support research, improved diagnostics, and early detection of uterine fibroids, Asherman's Syndrome, and other conditions affecting women's reproductive organs.
- e. Reinstating the \$15 million rescission to Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) funding and expand resources and support for survivors of domestic violence.
- f. Promote early childhood health and family stability by strengthening the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program.

- g. Update IRS guidelines to fully reflect modern family-building needs by expanding the definition of infertility to include same-sex couples and ensuring that the full range of In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) and surrogacy-related medical expenses are tax-deductible.

## V. Encourage Research and Innovation

To usher in a new era of medical discovery and healthcare innovation, the United States must be well equipped to support research, develop breakthrough treatments, and ensure that innovation benefits all Americans. Recent cuts to medical research funding have threatened our nation’s leadership in healthcare innovation. The Trump Administration’s actions, including the termination of billions in NIH grants and destabilizing changes to indirect research cost agreements, have disrupted critical scientific work and undermined public health efforts. These decisions have especially impacted research on long COVID, HIV/AIDS, and mRNA vaccine development, areas essential to our pandemic preparedness and overall health resilience.

- a. Restore and increase federal investment in biomedical and public health research to accelerate the development of new treatments, vaccines, cures, and technologies that improve patient outcomes and save lives.
- b. Support inclusive clinical trials and research infrastructure encompassing diverse populations, modalities, and locations, to ensure innovations are safe, effective, and accessible for all communities.
- c. Expand public-private partnerships with universities, research institutions, and industry to translate discoveries into tangible therapies, medical devices, and digital health solutions.
- d. Invest in health data systems, electronic health records, and digital tools like Artificial Intelligence (AI), while ensuring patient safety and privacy.
- e. Protect and enhance graduate medical education funding to cultivate the next generation of clinicians and researchers.
- f. Promote equitable innovation by directing research toward women’s health, behavioral health, rare diseases, and emerging fields such as cell and gene therapies, to ensure research addresses the full spectrum of patient needs.
- g. Support small and mid-size biotechnology companies in their efforts to develop innovative treatments and medicines for a wide range of illnesses and diseases.
- h. Support innovation in health delivery models, including telehealth, value-based care, and community-based interventions, to improve access, quality, and affordability.
- i. Strengthen intellectual property protections to support the translation of early-stage research into new treatments and cures, while preserving guardrails that prevent anti-competitive practices and protect affordability, reinforcing America’s long-term medical competitiveness.



## VI. Combat Misinformation and Protect Public Health

In an age where social media platforms have become go-to sources for health information, misinformation can spread faster than facts, influencing behaviors around diet, vaccination, and substance use. For decades, special interests and bad-faith actors have distorted facts about vaccines, nutrition, and therapies, undermining evidence-based policies and endangering public health. The United States cannot afford to let falsehoods dictate policy or put our children at risk. We have already seen the costs of such myths and misinformation with thousands of preventable COVID-19 deaths and growing public distrust in science and public health institutions.

- a. Protect every child by countering dangerous vaccine disinformation with evidence-based information and ensuring equitable access to lifesaving vaccines.
- b. Crack down on deceptive marketing of harmful products, including nutrient-poor foods and tobacco alternatives, especially to children.
- c. Increase transparency around social media algorithms and industry relationships that influence diets, eating habits, smoking, substance use disorders, and chronic disease risk.
- d. Build resilience for the present and any future public health crises by promoting reliable sources of information and scientific literature.
- e. Strengthen digital literacy programs in schools and communities to help children and adults identify misinformation and make informed health decisions.
- f. Take steps to protect the public health workforce from politically motivated mass layoffs or restructuring, ensuring stable, trusted, and effective public health operations.
- g. Reaffirm the United States' commitment to global health by remaining an active member of the World Health Organization (WHO).

## NEXT STEPS

Beyond allowing ACA enhanced premium tax credits to expire, Congressional Republicans continue to promote policies that slash coverage, raise costs, and threaten women's health. As a result, working families are facing higher premiums, increased medical debt, and additional barriers to care. The New Democrat Coalition offers a clear alternative: lifesaving, common-sense reforms that protect coverage, lower costs, and strengthen public health.

To move this agenda forward, Members of Congress can:

- Act swiftly to extend the ACA's enhanced premium tax credits before they expire at year's end, protecting millions of Americans from further premium hikes and coverage losses.
- Educate Americans about the real-world consequences of harmful legislation like the Big Ugly Bill (P.L. 119-21), making clear how cuts to Medicaid and Medicare, as well as cuts that restrict access to reproductive healthcare and safety-net providers, raise premiums, undermine access to care, and deepen the financial strain on families.
- Collect and amplify constituent stories that demonstrate the harm of these proposals and the urgency of protecting Americans' healthcare.
- Work across the aisle to build support for bipartisan reforms that lower healthcare costs and improve outcomes for all families and communities.

Congress must act decisively to lower healthcare costs by extending the ACA enhanced premium tax credits, informing the American people, and passing legislation that ensures every American can access high-quality, affordable healthcare.

# Immigration & Border Security Framework

## INTRODUCTION

The American people have made it clear that they want a safe, orderly, and secure border and a humane and fair immigration policy that considers the full breadth of immigrants' economic, cultural, and social contributions. New Dems are committed to following through on this vision and ending the chaos that has plagued our immigration system for far too long.

This administration could have built on the success of a more secure border to go after drug and human trafficking with new technology, to properly train agents, and to begin to clear the backlog of over three million immigration cases. Instead, under President Trump, our communities have been overrun and our Constitution undermined by out-of-control immigration agents unconscionably targeting and brutalizing hardworking neighbors while killing innocent people simply exercising their constitutional rights. Congress has the power to end this abuse, but Congressional Republicans continue to bend the knee to Trump.

The killings of Alex Pretti and Renée Good remind us of the hard work ahead to rein in Department of Homeland Security (DHS) operations and ensure that masked agents can no longer sow chaos on our streets. That's why New Dems have repeatedly called for and continue to fight for commonsense reforms to these agencies, including independent investigations into ICE and CBP misconduct and banning the use of masks and arrests without judicial warrants.

Through this Framework, New Dems propose a blueprint to invest in smart border security, fix the outdated and broken immigration system to ensure fast, fair, and final enforcement, use commonsense reforms to grow the economy by growing the labor force, and expand legal avenues to citizenship for long-time residents living in legal limbo.



New Dem Immigration and Border Security Working Group Chair Gabe Vasquez (NM-02) speaks at a press conference discussing the New Dem Immigration & Border Security Framework in September.

## NEW DEMS ON THE ROAD FEATURE: PHOENIX, AZ



Legal Pathways Task Force Chair Lou Correa (CA-46) and New Dem Leadership Member Greg Stanton (AZ-04) in Phoenix, AZ.

In April of last year, New Dem Leadership Member Greg Stanton (AZ-04) and Legal Pathways Task Force Chair Lou Correa (CA-46) heard firsthand from Arizona businesses and Arizona immigrants about the importance of immigration to the local economy and how the Trump Administration's immigration overreach has hurt businesses and workers alike.

## PRINCIPLES

1. We believe Congress must urgently act to fix our outdated and ineffective immigration system, restore public trust, and ensure fair and consistent enforcement.
2. We support commonsense reforms that will grow our economy by promoting policies that align with workforce needs, fill job shortages, and strengthen our talent pipeline.
3. We are committed to expanding safe, legal avenues for immigration that will ease pressure at the border and keep our system fair and humane.

## POLICIES

### 1. Secure Our Nation's Border, Once and For All

**The Problem:** A single-minded focus on mass deportations is not a sustainable, long-term solution. Those who are convicted of a violent crime must be held accountable. Prioritizing enforcement against those who have followed the rules erodes trust in law enforcement and takes resources away from crime-fighting. It also fails to implement the long-term investments needed to ensure we have the technology, resources, and manpower to secure our border both at and between our ports of entry and faithfully enforce our immigration laws.

**Our Vision:** New Democrats believe that we must invest in 21st-century border security solutions across the whole of the U.S. border. This must include the most advanced technologies and ensuring we have the federal workforce needed to uphold our laws and stop the flow of illicit drugs while facilitating efficient cross-border commerce.

#### We Propose To:

- a. Increase the number of CBP officers at ports of entry by at least 500 to help halt the flow of illicit drugs such as fentanyl.
- b. Fund DHS at a sufficient level that ensures it can upgrade the technology used at the border including investment in radar surveillance systems, mobile remote video surveillance systems, manned and unmanned vehicles; aerial systems and drones; the CBP One app; and CBP's internal communications systems and improve infrastructure at the border including investment to upgrade roads and other pathways; clear invasive species that impede sightlines, and—in strategic locations where necessary— upgrade physical barriers.
- c. Increase funding for implementation and staffing related to the use of scanning technology to meet the goal of inspection of 100% of cargo entering the U.S. at ports of entry to combat the smuggling of illegal drugs and contraband into the country.
- d. Direct DHS to implement biometric monitoring at its ports of entry by 2030 in accordance with Congressional Mandate.
- e. Support both domestic and international efforts to dismantle cartels and criminal organizations that are responsible for tracking dangerous drugs, like illicit fentanyl, and human smuggling at the U.S. border.



New Dem Immigration and Border Security Working Group Chair Gabe Vasquez (NM-02) tours the Southwest border.

## 2. Fully Enforce Our Nation's Immigration Laws

**The Problem:** Under both Republican and Democratic administrations, the Executive Branch has increasingly relied on Executive orders and powers to enforce our immigration laws. Executive actions that undermine due process or judicial oversight do not just threaten protections for immigrants but also put at risk the constitutional rights of all Americans.

**Our Vision:** The American people must have confidence that the United States will enforce all immigration laws, but that it will also apply the law fairly and consistently. Undocumented immigrants who have committed felony crimes, and those who fail to earn legal status, should be deported or punished pursuant to current U.S. law. At the same time, the federal government must respect well-established legal rights and due process of immigrants.

### We Propose To:

- a. Provide sufficient resources and oversight for the removal of individuals convicted of violent crimes.
- b. Increase DHS oversight and ensure humane detention conditions for migrants in U.S. custody.
- c. Initiate legal proceedings for undocumented immigrants that do not qualify for temporary legal status.
- d. Modernize and implement compliance tools, like E-Verify, only after other reforms are implemented, to digitally ensure U.S. employers can determine the work eligibility of new hires, with assistance to small businesses and safe harbor for employers that attempt in good faith to comply.
- e. Provide judicial discretion for immigration judges to consider marital, veteran, and other ties to the United States and specific communities when deciding legal status cases.

## 3. Build the Workforce Our Economy Needs

**The Problem:** From agriculture to healthcare, nearly every sector of the American economy faces workforce challenges. Worker shortages are creating supply chain bottlenecks and driving up costs for our most essential goods and services.

**Our Vision:** New Democrats believe the United States must take significant steps to meet the needs of American businesses and reform our worker visa system to meet labor market demands—because it's good for business and for consumers.

### We Propose To:

- a. Establish a pathway for migrant farmworkers in the United States to earn legal status and make commonsense reforms to the H-2A visa program.
- b. Permanently authorize the Conrad 30 waiver program, which allows physicians studying in the United States on a J-1 visa a pathway into the country upon graduation.
- c. Create a new temporary non-immigrant visa category for year-round work in industries experiencing occupation shortages, including nurses, teachers, and hospitality and construction workers.
- d. Create a new caregiver visa to increase access to affordable child and elder care.
- e. Link the number of visas on employment, family reunification, and diversity bases to growth in the American population and economy.
- f. Continue oversight of all relevant programs to ensure that any increase of workforce visas does not negatively impact American workers or wages.

#### 4. Strengthen America's Economic Competitiveness and National Security

**The Problem:** Efforts to restrict and eliminate legal immigration pathways have set off a 'brain drain' from American businesses and universities, hurting America's competitiveness and benefiting countries like China who are actively recruiting American-educated talent.

**Our Vision:** To maintain the U.S.'s position as the innovation capital of the world and the epicenter of research, we must win the global competition for talent. New Democrats believe that the U.S. should streamline the immigration process for the best and brightest—making it as easy as possible for high-skilled workers, recent college graduates, and entrepreneurs to come, stay, and contribute to our economy.

##### We Propose To:

- a. Eliminate the per-country cap for employment-based (EB) immigration visas and raise the family-sponsored per-country visa cap from 7 percent to 15 percent.
- b. Increase the number of available EB visas to keep up with workforce demands.
- c. Expand employment-based pathways—including allocating 100,000 additional green cards per year for international graduates of U.S. colleges and universities, exempting the dependents of employment-based green card holders from numerical caps that apply to employment-based green cards.
- d. Establish a "startup visa" program that would provide legal permanent status for immigrants seeking to start businesses in the United States, thereby incentivizing the entry of global entrepreneurs and investment in the U.S. economy.
- e. Protect and strengthen programs for high-skilled workers and immigrant investors.
- f. Incentivize researchers in emerging areas, including Quantum and AI.

#### 5. Embrace Those Who are a Part of the American Fabric—A Pathway to Citizenship for Dreamers and TPS Holders

**The Problem:** Efforts to terminate Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for hundreds of thousands of immigrants who have fled unstable home countries—including our Afghan allies who fought the Taliban alongside U.S. troops—go against our American values. Congress has also continued to fail to codify a permanent solution for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, program recipients.

**Our Vision:** New Democrats agree with the vast majority of Americans that our nation is long overdue in providing certainty, stability, and opportunity for Dreamers and TPS holders. Dreamers strengthen America every day by getting an education, earning a living, and paying taxes. Nationwide, millions of small businesses, schools, and doctors' offices rely on these young people for a qualified, trained, and stable workforce. For those here under TPS, ending humanitarian protections means forcing them back to oppression and violence.

##### We Propose To:

- a. Grant Dreamers conditional permanent resident status if they sufficiently meet criteria, including passing security and law enforcement background checks; paying reasonable application fees; have received a high school diploma, GED, are in a program assisting them in obtaining a high school diploma or GED; or are working.
- b. Grant Dreamers lawful permanent resident status if they acquire a degree from an institution of higher education, or complete at least two years of a post-secondary level degree program while remaining in good standing; complete at least two years of military service or are honorably discharged; OR maintain continued employment for a minimum of three years, at least 75 percent of which the individual was authorized to work in the United States.
- c. Pursuant to current naturalization requirements, permit Dreamers to apply for U.S. citizenship upon maintaining permanent resident status for five years.
- d. Prioritize creating legal pathways for legal residents, spouses of U.S. citizens, and parents of U.S. citizen children if they have resided in the country for over three years and pass security and law enforcement background checks.
- e. Extend protections for those who have lawfully resided in the U.S., specifically Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) holders.
- f. Honor our promises to refugees, humanitarian parole from Haiti and other countries (CHNV), and our Afghan and Ukrainian allies.

## 6. Provide A Path to Legal Status for Those Who Pass a Background Check and Pay a Fine

**The Problem:** Currently, mass deportation efforts are not targeting individuals who have been convicted of crimes or represent a credible threat to public safety. Instead, DHS is sweeping up law-abiding individuals who have lived in this country for years—spreading fear in hard-working communities that want the opportunity to earn legal status.

**Our Vision:** If law-abiding undocumented immigrants have been in this country for more than five years, working and paying taxes, they should be afforded the opportunity to earn their way to legal status. However, they should have to satisfy certain requirements—including meeting strict eligibility criteria, paying a fine, and passing a criminal background check.

### We Propose To:

- a. Grant undocumented immigrants who arrived to the United States when they were over the age 18 and have been present for five years temporary legal status, only if they pay a fine, pass a criminal background check, have not been convicted of a felony offense in the United States or their country of origin, and are enrolled in school or work full time.
- b. At the end of five years, grant those individuals lawful permanent residence status if they continue to meet certain criteria.

## 7. Fix Our Broken Asylum System and Safeguard It from Abuse

**The Problem:** The U.S. immigration system is broken, resulting in long wait times for work visas, overloaded dockets in immigration court, and a lack of faith in our system.

**Our Vision:** New Democrats propose a structural overhaul of the broken and backlogged immigration court system, one that reestablishes trust and transparency. Additionally, we must encourage and provide resources for migrants to apply for asylum before they make the dangerous journey to our border.

### We Propose To:

- a. Provide funding to hire additional immigration judges and staff support to address the significant backlog of asylum cases and accelerate the adjudication process.
- b. Transition the nation's immigration court system into an independent judiciary, consistent with Article I of the U.S. Constitution.
- c. Expand the number of migrant processing coordinators to improve asylum processing at designated ports of entry.
- d. Establish new regional processing centers (RPCs) in Latin America to allow asylum-seekers to visit the nearest RPC before traveling, receive an interview, and if eligible, be processed for lawful entry into the United States, Canada, Spain and other participating nations.

## 8. Strengthen U.S. Bilateral Relationships and Address Root Causes of Migration

**The Problem:** The U.S. cannot solve this problem alone. Current efforts to implement aimless tariffs and isolate the U.S. from our allies only make it more difficult to address the root cause of migration, combat cartels and those taking advantage of our broken immigration system, and ensure our national and economic security.

**Our Vision:** New Democrats believe we must prioritize deep and sustained engagement with Latin American nations—especially Mexico—as well as regional non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector to address the root causes of migration and before migrants reach our border. We must also work with our ally Canada to prevent drug trafficking across the Northern Border.

**We Propose To:**

- a. Work with the Department of State, international NGOs, and local authorities to disrupt the flow of drugs and illicit fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances, including by sharing information on precursor chemicals, providing more detection tools, addressing gang recruitment, and encouraging local education for local work.
- b. Improve economic partnerships to deter China-Russia partnerships, including by exploring trade opportunities, access to financial markets, and foreign direct investment to solidify relationships.
- c. Support international efforts to combat cartels and criminal organizations responsible for drug and human trafficking across our southern border, as well as prevent opioid trafficking across our northern border.

**9. Improve Efficiency**

**The Problem:** Recent attacks on the federal workforce have only extended already long wait times, slowed visa processing, and added to mounting backlogs.

**Our Vision:** New Democrats believe that we must bring our immigration system into the 21st Century—that includes hiring the appropriate staff and modernizing technology to process visa applications and making necessary improvements to facilitate cross-border trade. This will enable those legally seeking asylum in the U.S. to receive a fast, fair, and final decision.

**We Propose To:**

- a. Fund strategic investments and upgrades to ports of entry to improve the efficiency of cross-border trade with our allies.
- b. Modernize immigration agencies to improve the efficiency of technology and visa processing.
- c. Direct the State Department, Department of Labor, and Department of Homeland Security to create a national strategy to match individuals with relevant skills to localities with labor needs, including an action plan when they are admitted into the U.S.

## NEXT STEPS

The New Dem Immigration and Border Security vision invests in strong, humane border security—a necessity—while building a commonsense 21st-century immigration system that helps Americans prosper. Meanwhile, the Trump Administration continues to weaponize ICE and CBP against the American people. New Dems are committed to enacting commonsense reforms to these agencies to rein in these abuses. Ultimately, Congress must do its job and come together to enact meaningful legislation.

# Framework to Achieve Energy Independence, Security, and Affordability

## INTRODUCTION

New Dems are focused on developing as many reliable energy sources as possible – with an emphasis on cost-effective and future-forward clean energy solutions – bringing them online as quickly as we can, and delivering reliable, affordable energy to every American household. Energy demand continues to grow, particularly due to a rise in manufacturing, data centers, and processing power required by emerging technologies like artificial intelligence. Meanwhile, the supply of energy and ability to move energy from where it is produced to where it is needed have not kept pace. These factors are already driving up costs for hardworking Americans across the country.

Unfortunately, our existing infrastructure and permitting processes are preventing the rapid acceleration we need to lower costs and ensure our long-term energy security. Political interference in the energy industry has canceled billions in wind and solar projects, costing thousands of jobs and driving up energy prices. Domestic and international energy security has been thrown into chaos due to rising oil prices from Trump’s war in Iran, further demonstrating the need for energy independence to insulate Americans from global price hikes. New Dems are leading the way through our Framework to Achieve Energy Independence, Security, & Affordability, developed by the Members of our Environment, Climate, & Clean Energy Working Group, led by Chair Scott Peters (CA-50).

Based on a set of permitting reform priorities established last Congress, New Dems gathered the expertise across a range of lawmakers, stakeholders, and communities to put together this comprehensive path forward.

In July, Rep. Deborah Ross (NC-02), who leads the New Dem Clean Energy Deployment Task Force, led an On the Road trip to her district in North Carolina. She convened a roundtable discussion where a group of industry representatives, utility providers, advocacy organizations, and local leaders emphasized that Congressional Republicans’ Big Ugly Bill would cost American families an average of \$400 more per year nationwide and kill more than 840,000 clean energy jobs over the next 5 years.

Over the course of additional meetings, covering key topics like permitting reform and data center development, New Dems expanded the initial six permitting priorities into this robust policy framework to lead the way in Congress on realizing our 21st-century energy economy.

## NEW DEMS ON THE ROAD FEATURE: METRO EAST, IL



Rep. Wesley Bell (MO-01), New Dem Vice Chair for Policy Nikki Budzinski (IL-13), and Environment, Climate, & Clean Energy Working Group Chair Scott Peters (CA-50) in Metro East, IL.

Last May, Environment, Climate, & Clean Energy Working Group Chair Scott Peters (CA-50) led a New Dems On the Road event in Metro East, Illinois alongside Vice Chair for Policy Nikki Budzinski (IL-13), where they met with local clean energy business owners, industry and union representatives, academic researchers, and utility service providers. At the roundtable, Members heard about the importance of an all-of-the-above energy strategy and tailored investments in key industries like those codified in the Inflation Reduction Act.

## PRINCIPLES

1. Unleash the full breadth of American energy prowess.
  - a. Promote economic growth;
  - b. Ensure Americans can afford their energy bills; and
  - c. Responsibly transition to a more efficient, cleaner and healthier society.
2. Enhance energy independence, resiliency, and security by bolstering American supply chains and the grid.
  - a. Promote community energy efficiency;
  - b. Enhance our industries against foreign competition; and
  - c. Keep the lights on and power moving wherever Americans need it.
3. Improve environmental review efficiency.
  - a. Be efficient and fast, making sure we build the infrastructure we need;
  - b. Value community engagement without compromising our ability to get things done; and
  - c. Fuel our economic competitiveness, opportunity, and growth.



Rep. Nikema Williams (GA-05) and Clean Energy Deployment Task Force Chair Deborah Ross (NC-02) host a Clean Energy Roundtable in Garner, NC.

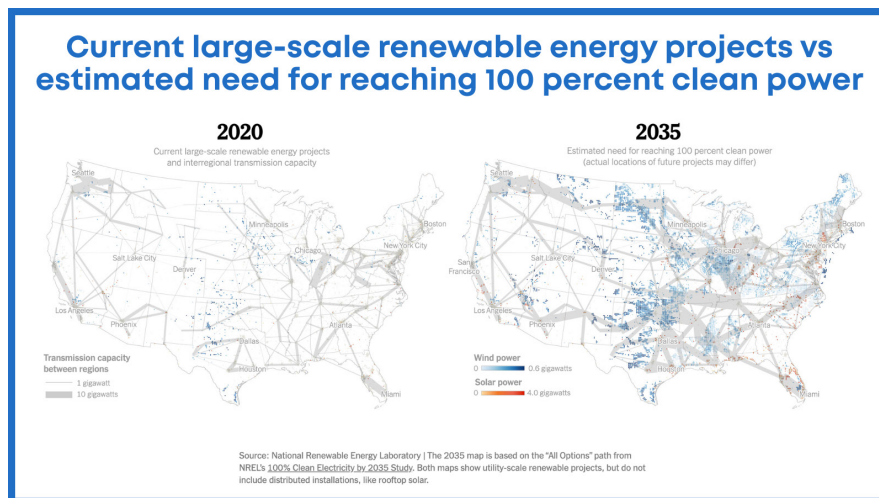
## GOALS

- Sustain economic growth by bringing more megawatts of power online, building more miles of transmission infrastructure, and getting more projects through environmental review;
- Quickly and safely connect new power generation onto the energy grid to enhance grid security, resiliency, and get energy to where it is needed;
- Make sure energy is abundant and cheap at home, and competitive against foreign energy in overseas markets; and
- Create a new ecosystem of family-sustaining jobs.

## POLICIES

1. **Unleash the full breadth of American energy prowess**
  - a. Defend clean energy tax credits that create jobs, expand domestic manufacturing, drive innovation, and lower energy bills.
  - b. Remove tax incentives for coal, including additions to the Advanced Manufacturing Production Credit.
  - c. Remove arbitrary barriers for offshore wind such as the Jan. 20, 2025 Presidential Memorandum that stops all offshore wind permitting and prohibits future lease sales.
  - d. Ensure an equal playing field for all forms of energy, for example, by lowering fees for solar and wind energy to match lower rates for oil and coal.
  - e. Maintain long-standing and durable regulations on fugitive methane emissions to reduce waste, make American industry cleaner, and enhance our global competitiveness.
  - f. Invest in biofuels, like sustainable aviation fuels, to lower costs at the pump for consumers, grow markets for American farmers, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
2. **Enhance energy independence, resiliency, and security by bolstering American supply chains and the grid**
  - a. Modernize mining laws and responsibly develop American critical minerals. Modifications should accelerate mineral production and recycling across the supply chain and provide greater certainty for project sponsors, while upholding strong environmental, labor, safety, Tribal consultation, and community engagement standards.

- b. Remove sourcing requirements on renewable energy that are burdensome, impossible to follow in practice, and increase energy costs while eliminating projects and jobs.
- c. Establish minimum levels of energy transfer capabilities between Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Order 1000 planning regions by directing FERC to assess the existing transfer capacity and requiring each region to coordinate with its neighbors to plan for the required interregional transmission.



- d. Improve interregional and interstate electric transmission capacity and ensure an equal playing field for energy transportation by ensuring that the siting and permitting process for transmission and the grid is on par with pipeline and liquified natural gas (LNG) development. Congress should consider giving FERC exclusive siting authority for interstate lines or lines in the national interest.
- e. Modernize American nuclear power and make it easier to develop advanced nuclear reactors by establishing an independent organization to manage the back end of the nuclear fuel cycle, provide for a collaborative siting process for nuclear waste facilities, and ensure adequate and reliable funding for managing nuclear waste.
- f. Provide an investment tax credit of 30% for regionally significant transmission projects, which will unlock energy deployment, improve grid resiliency, and reduce costs to consumers.

### 3. Improve environmental review efficiency

- a. Replace outdated paper systems with a centralized, cloud-based platform for all permitting processes. With digital permitting, agencies can process applications faster and collaborate more efficiently, cutting down approval timelines.
- b. Provide for pre-qualifications of projects where greenhouse gas reductions have the highest chance potential and where projects don't cause other environmental harms, such as projects that enhance energy grid resiliency, upgrade existing infrastructure with greater transmission capacity, are on pre-approved federal lands with low environmental sensitivity, or are covered by categorical exclusions.
- c. Ensure that Federal agencies are properly staffed to effectively enforce the law. While reforms to process are necessary, without trained staff to handle the increasing volume of permit applications there will be delays to project review and approval.
- d. Increase cross-agency standardization for programmatic reviews through use of tools such as common project-tiering.
- e. Create frameworks and incentives for early, affirmative public engagement in infrastructure planning, siting, and permitting to build local community support and ensure shared benefits.
- f. Expedite projects on previously developed areas through use of categorical exclusions or environmental assessments on already disturbed areas.
- g. Accelerate agency reviews through the use of shot-clocks for projects that strengthen the electric grid, specifically by requiring reviews to begin within a certain timeframe after receipt of a completed project proposal.

## NEXT STEPS

The New Democrat Coalition looks forward to engaging in discussions on related topics including agency implementation, providing certainty and combatting political interference in the energy leasing process, and accelerating the build out of a clean energy grid.

# Agenda to Support our Veterans

## INTRODUCTION

Our nation made a solemn promise to care for every man and woman who raised their hand to serve and their families. New Dems see it as Congress's duty to ensure that promise is kept and rectify the shameful policies that have left our veterans and their families behind.



New Dem National Security Working Group Chair and Navy Veteran Gil Cisneros (CA-31) honors the servicemembers in his district on Veterans Day.

Our veterans face unique challenges that require targeted interventions. While decreasing, over 30,000 veterans in the United States were homeless as of 2024. One in 10 veterans (1.7 million total) rely on Medicaid for their healthcare and are at risk of losing their coverage thanks to President Trump and Congressional Republicans' Big Ugly Bill. Another 1.2 million veteran households receive federally funded food assistance that Republicans gutted. At town halls, on street corners, and in the halls of Congress, New Dems listened as veterans described the daily challenges they face and crafted an actionable plan to help.

Last December, in a process led by many of our veteran members, New Democrat Coalition Veterans Task Force Chair Herb Conaway (NJ-03) and National Security Working Group Chair Gil Cisneros (CA-31), along with members of the working group crafted the coalition's plan to ensure our veterans and their families receive the lifelong support, resources, and benefits they earned through their military service. In the Agenda, New Dems acknowledge that the government has not lived up to its commitment to the men and women who have served in the Armed Forces, who are often unable to access the healthcare and benefits they were promised upon returning to civilian life.

To right this historic wrong, the Agenda offers a roadmap for Congress to uphold its commitment by ensuring every veteran and their family has the support they need from the beginning of their transition out of military service through the end of their lives. New Dems are committed to delivering the respect, dignity, and lifelong support our veterans deserve.

## PRINCIPLES

1. The government must provide the proper resources for a stable and secure transition out of military service and into civilian life.
2. When someone signs up to serve our country, our country commits to provide them with the healthcare they earn through that service. As with any contract, we must uphold our end of the bargain by ensuring veterans receive the timely and quality care they earned.
3. We owe it to our veterans to provide not only the benefits they've earned, but the economic opportunity to thrive in civilian life, wherever they live.

## GOALS

- Strengthen the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), so that servicemembers' transition to civilian life is as smooth, safe, and streamlined as possible.
- Strategically target investments and reforms to modernize VA facilities, research, training, and more to ensure that veterans have access to quality lifelong services and fully funded benefits.
- Prevent attempts to diminish the capabilities and capacities of the VA to provide services to our veterans, regardless of where they live.

## POLICIES

### 1. Strengthen programs to ensure a smooth and supportive transition to civilian life.

- a. Pursue policies that encourage units to prioritize attendance for TAP, a mandatory program for servicemembers preparing to leave active-duty, who often struggle with balancing on-time completion of the transition curriculum and carrying out on-duty mission requirements.
- b. Personalize TAP programming by helping servicemembers understand how the information provided in pre-transition counseling can be applied to create clear roadmaps for next steps post-separation from active duty.
- c. Continue to expand the Solid Start Program, which provides three personalized check-in calls during the first year of a veteran's separation, and improve integration of VA touchpoints with recently separated veterans to meet their individual needs as they navigate the return to civilian life.
- d. Tailor career and skills programming to include a focus on translating skills from military to civilian opportunities and ensure that recently-transitioned veterans have a pipeline to registered apprenticeships, accredited credentialing courses, and private sector opportunities.
- e. Improve the timeliness and accuracy of DOD data collection on individual TAP progress and expedite the transfer of data related to transitioning servicemembers to the VA.

### 2. Deliver on the promise to provide quality, accessible healthcare that veterans have earned through their service.

- a. Ensure veterans have access to quality, timely healthcare, free from long wait times, including mental health, suicide prevention, substance use disorder, and reproductive care, by investing in both direct care and community care.
- b. Overcome barriers to physically attending health appointments, including distance and/or lack of transportation, which disproportionately affect our rural veteran community, through innovative solutions such as high-quality telehealth, rideshares, and microtransit "last mile" rides. A veteran's zip code should not impede their access to services.
- c. Direct the VA to provide comprehensive oversight of community care to ensure that veterans using these providers receive the same level of service they would at direct care facilities.
- d. Fully fund the Toxic Exposures Fund (TEF) through advanced appropriations to ensure that the VA can continue to process claims and implement the PACT Act without veterans waiting for the treatment they need.
- e. Provide consistent funding for VA facilities and equipment to address both maintenance and new construction needs and to ensure that modern technologies are being utilized to the maximum extent possible.
- f. Pursue policies to boost the recruitment and retention of high-quality medical professionals within the VA medical system to address physician shortages. This could include tax credits that increase relative to years of continuous VA service.



New Democrat Coalition Chair Brad Schneider (IL-10) shakes hands with a Vietnam veteran at his 12th annual Veterans Event, recognizing the service and sacrifice of veterans across his district.

**3. Ensure veterans receive the benefits they have earned to help them maximize their economic opportunities.**

- a. Authorize and restore the Veterans Affairs Service Purchasing Program (VASP), which provided a last-resort option for veterans who were delinquent on their mortgage payments through VA-backed loans.
- b. Support and strengthen the GI Bill by providing adequate funding for full staffing resources to address backlogs, phoneline staffing, tuition payment processing, and Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) late payments.
- c. Crack down on predatory practices targeting veterans by reinstating criminal penalties for unaccredited claims representatives who charge unauthorized fees to veterans while assisting them with filing disability compensation benefits claims.
- d. Address the disproportionate rate at which veterans are rejected for small business loans while continuing to minimize risk for veteran entrepreneurs by identifying factors that may serve as a better proxy of creditworthiness, given the unique lifestyle of servicemembers.

## NEXT STEPS

The New Democrat Coalition is renewing our commitment to America's veterans. We will continue to engage in dialogues with our colleagues regardless of party or ideological identity, because veterans should never be used as a political football. New Dems will advance and support policies that advocate for the responsible use of military force, a smooth transition to civilian life, and a lifetime of access to the highest quality care and benefits that we can provide.

# Innovation Agenda

## INTRODUCTION

Since our founding nearly 30 years ago, New Dems have always strongly supported innovation, promoting federal policies that unleash the potential of American entrepreneurs and industries. We believe America has the greatest capacity for innovation and invention in the world. In the 20th century, we cured diseases, won World Wars, put a man on the moon, and created the internet – all the product of incredible partnerships, where the federal government and private sector innovators worked together to generate breakthroughs.

Sadly, the American people are losing faith in our nation's ability to accomplish extraordinary things that actually have a positive impact on their lives. They see technological advancements happening, but they don't see those reflected in the quality of their healthcare, the cost of their energy, the accessibility of education, or the availability of housing.

New Dems believe that all innovation should translate into concrete benefits for hardworking Americans. Under the Trump Administration, we're headed in the wrong direction. Our government's innovation engine has come under attack, jeopardizing our ability to lead the global 21st-century economy and ceding ground to adversaries like China. The Administration has declared war on higher education and clawed back funding from our best research universities, defunded R&D across the federal government, eliminated thousands of grants, and eliminated 25,000 scientists from federal agencies that oversee research. Meanwhile, Trump and his allies seem focused on boosting only the industries that personally enrich them, from dark money crypto schemes to foreign real estate deals. This is a recipe for decline, not dominance.

New Dems are committed to rebuilding our innovation economy by boosting investments, strengthening our workforce, and encouraging free markets and the flow of ideas in our Innovation Agenda. Created by the Innovation and Technology Working Group led by Chair Sam Liccardo (CA-16), the Innovation Agenda aims to unleash the potential of transformative technological advancements like artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and more to tackle our nation's biggest challenges while creating a regulatory environment that protects the American people from potential risks.

## NEW DEMS ON THE ROAD FEATURE: MENLO PARK, CA



Rural Revitalization Working Group Chair Kim Schrier (WA-08), New Dem Leadership Member Greg Stanton (AZ-04), Innovation & Technology Working Group Chair Sam Liccardo (CA-16), Vice Chair for Policy Nikki Budzinski (IL-13), New Dem Chair Brad Schneider (IL-10), and Rep. Kevin Mullin (CA-15) in Menlo Park, CA.

New Dems didn't develop these policies in a vacuum. Our members have welcomed stakeholderz to discuss the best approaches to data center development, regulating digital assets, harnessing artificial intelligence, and more. Last year, Innovation & Technology Working Group Chair Sam Liccardo welcomed a group of New Dems to his Silicon Valley district, where they heard from tech companies about the needs the industry will face not only in advancing research and promoting technological advancement, but also how the future of innovation will require investments in infrastructure, energy, housing, and upskilling the workforce.

## PRINCIPLES

America faces many existential threats that compel a new relationship between our government and our innovation economy. Federal laws must promote and facilitate the innovation necessary to tackle our world's great challenges, such as climate change, global disease and pandemics, and cybersecurity threats, and to do so in an intensely competitive global environment. We can and must empower innovation and the innovators, while at the same time protecting our citizens and strengthening our democracy and its institutions.

Doing so requires an approach that:

- Recognizes the security and economic imperative of U.S. global leadership and competitiveness;
- Contrasts the Trump Administration's approach with a renewed focus on openness to ideas, people, and markets;
- Anticipates the human cost of technological disruption, and invests in human capital to re-skill and upskill a workforce increasingly challenged by rapid change;
- Creates a robust and efficient regulatory environment that provides predictability and uniformity;
- Acknowledges the unique capital needs and structure of innovation-focused companies;
- Embraces the tech industry's historically enlightened self-interest in advocating for pro-immigration, -housing, and -climate policies; and
- Advocates for innovation and adaptation within the government, to disrupt rigid and bureaucratic processes, and expedite decision making.

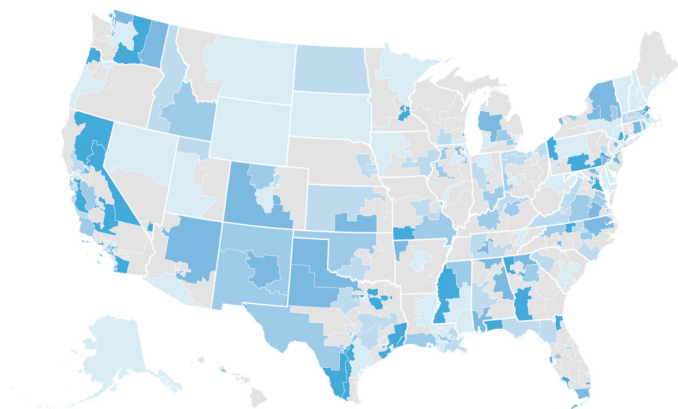
## POLICIES

### 1. Invest in American Innovation and Research & Development (R&D)

- a. Align U.S. policy to maximize public and private investment in R&D to win the global race in quantum computing, energy storage, AI, space, biotech, robotics, advanced manufacturing technologies, and other essential technologies of the future.
- b. Protect and bolster critical investments in U.S. innovation, including the CHIPS and Science Act and Inflation Reduction Act, and in basic science and research and experimental development at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Science Foundation (NSF), Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Commerce (DOC), National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and other key agencies, pushing back against the severe cuts of this Administration. Reforms to modernize funding should reduce bureaucratic obstacles and accelerate delivery.
- c. Protect pro-innovation tax incentives for private-sector investment in research and development, particularly for startups and small businesses.
- d. Reward universities for investing endowment returns in STEM research and expanding STEM education access, through deductions in the endowment tax.
- e. Expand and broaden access to capital for small businesses, startups, and innovative companies, such as through favorable tax treatment and scaled compliance costs.

### 23 Congressional Districts Had At Least 20 Percent of All National Science Foundation Grant Dollars Canceled

Share of canceled grant dollars compared with all grant dollars



Source: Authors' calculations using data from the National Science Foundation and Grant Watch.

- f. Incentivize greater domestic manufacturing capacity in biopharmaceuticals, defense technology, construction materials, and other strategically critical technologies, modeled on the success of the bipartisan CHIPS and Science Act for semiconductors.

## **2. Promote Smart Regulation and Open Markets**

- a. Regulatory approaches should embrace innovation, encourage competition, provide predictability, and expedite decision making.
- b. Trade policy must be restructured to focus on securing global markets for U.S. advanced industries, preventing predatory foreign trade practices, and fostering economic alliances that enhance American competitiveness.
  - i. Tariffs and trade barriers generally undermine the innovation economy, and should be deployed sparingly.
  - ii. Trade policy must reflect China's status as a competitive adversary, but recognize that stalling U.S.-China trade undermines U.S. growth, and hurts both American consumers and tech manufacturers.
  - iii. Support trade agreements that reduce tariffs and non-tariff trade barriers, assert a muscular response against intellectual property (IP) theft, counter national security threats, dismantle digital services taxes, enable the free flow of information across borders, and provide consistent, stable expectations for industry.
  - iv. Leverage market access agreements to encourage and incentivize trading partners to adopt high labor and environmental standards.
  - v. Ensure export controls balance national security with the imperative for flexibility and global competitiveness.
- c. Competition
  - i. Define predictable boundaries for antitrust enforcement that focus on anti-competitive conduct harmful to consumers, not on firm size.
  - ii. Maintain the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement to ensure equitable and effective IP protection globally.
  - iii. Encourage interoperability of gatekeeper platforms, such as with open APIs and data portability.
- d. Digital Assets & Financial Technology
  - i. Create predictable regulatory jurisdictions founded on long-established definitions of commodities and securities that protect retail consumers and enable transparency.
  - ii. Ensure the global primacy of the digital dollar through stablecoin legislation.
  - iii. Support financial stability through strong reserve and liquidity requirements.
  - iv. Prevent criminals and bad actors from accessing the digital asset ecosystem by enacting strong anti-money laundering (AML) requirements.
  - v. Provide regulatory uniformity and clarity for fintech services, such as through a federal charter, that enable reductions in speed, delay, and vulnerability, but with appropriate and robust oversight, consumer protection, and risk management requirements.
- e. Health Research & Lowering Costs
  - i. Shed antiquated or duplicative regulations on clinical trials and drug development, such as suggested by the National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology.
  - ii. Protect Medicare's ability to negotiate prices for very mature drugs, while maintaining incentives for innovative medicines to enable patient access.
  - iii. Maintain incentives to invest in medications for hard-to-treat and rare diseases.

## **3. Build an Inclusive and Globally Competitive Workforce**

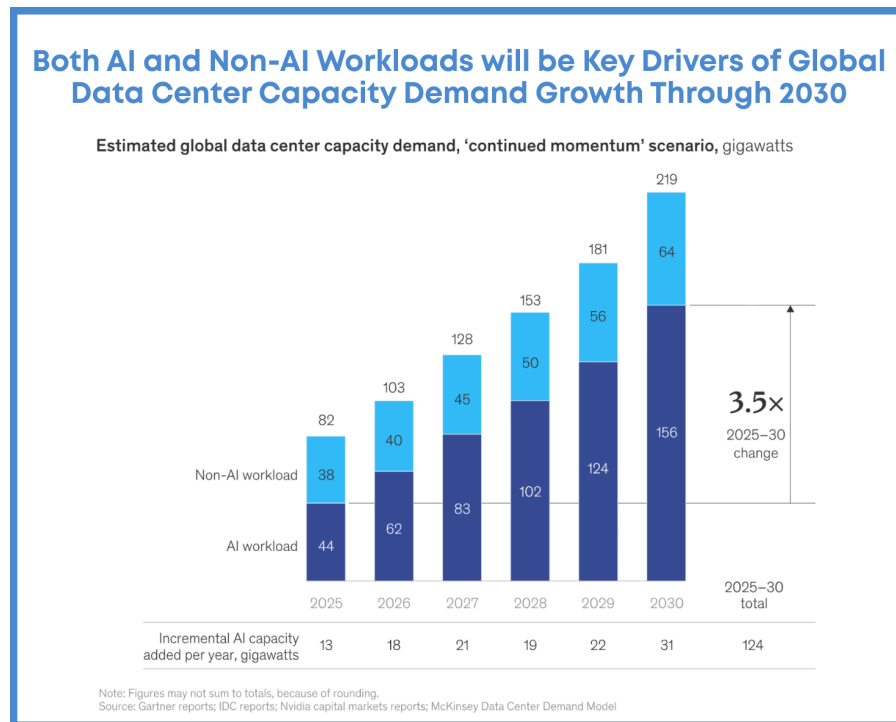
- a. Expand high-skill immigration by launching a "start-up visa" program, lifting per-country caps on employment-based (EB) immigration visas, expand H-4 visas and work authorization for spouses, grant Dreamers conditional permanent resident status, and create a temporary non-immigrant visa category for year-round work in industries experiencing occupation shortages.
- b. Boost upskilling and reskilling workers displaced by technological change through private-public partnerships, such as through the use of tax credits for employers to invest curriculum development with hiring commitments in community

college programs to upskill workers for tech employment. Workers should be prioritized in the development of technology systems, as emerging technologies like AI achieve rapid adoption. Federal investments in apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and labor market data modernization will help support a more nimble workforce.

- c. Tech companies and developers must expand their talent pipelines to include diverse perspectives and Americans from all walks of life at all organizational levels from researchers to C-Suite executives. This includes strengthening partnerships with Community Colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), creating mentorship programs, and ensuring diverse representation in AI ethics boards and decision-making bodies.
- d. Reimagine federal support for universities in ways that protect the independence of university research against extraneous political or social agendas, and incentivize STEM learning and degrees.
- e. Expand federal grants and Title I funding flexibility to support K–12 STEM curriculum development, with an emphasis on computer science, robotics, data literacy, and AI fundamentals, along with early education in responsible technology use.
- f. Expand a refundable Child Tax Credit (CTC) to provide meaningful support to working families and boost workforce and labor access.

**4. Advance American Leadership in Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

- a. Incentivize investment in safety and security to enable better AI governance and research into technically feasible mechanisms for better transparency and explainability of AI systems that impact consumers. These efforts should include both university-sponsored initiatives and permanent, non-regulatory government entities such as NIST’s Center for AI Standards and Innovation.
- b. Rather than imposing licensing and registration mandates or strictly regulating model development, Congress should define undesirable outcomes and regulate incrementally by supporting transparency standards and frameworks for model testing and evaluations, and building consensus for next steps as lessons are learned. Regulations should penalize harmful misuse of AI, including fraud, deception, and invasions of individual privacy, rather than penalizing the underlying tools, with case-by-case exceptions for the development of models that may inherently pose some form of threat (i.e., Artificial General Intelligence). Streamlined regulation should apply across the wide variations of AI deployment, with robust protection and enforcement for privacy and consumer safety through uniform federal standards.



- c. Support voluntary collaboration with industry and developers to promote safety during the development process, through establishing regular communications, developing shared testing metrics or evaluations, and providing an environment or resources to test or evaluate technologies pre-deployment without penalty.
- d. Avoid new regulations that reinforce or exacerbate resource advantages major AI companies have over smaller competitors.
- e. Support federal investment in AI research and facilitate greater access to computing infrastructure, expertise, and AI-ready data in universities, particularly public universities. AI must be driven by its democratized value to all communities in the U.S. and abroad, ensuring equitable access regardless of socioeconomic status.
- f. Address healthcare, financial, and education equity. AI applications in healthcare, financial decisions, and education must be specifically designed to address and not perpetuate existing disparities affecting communities. We must ensure AI diagnostic tools work effectively across racial groups and that educational AI systems support rather than hinder student success.

## **5. Protect Online Privacy, Safety, and Cybersecurity**

- a. Enact a consumer privacy statute and provide sensible federal protections for child safety online.
- b. Federal laws should provide uniformity in consumer protection and industry compliance.
- c. Ensure technologies are designed with the privacy and related rights of consumers as a priority, seamlessly integrating these protections into the architecture of products, services, and public and private sector practices.
- d. Incentivize adoption and deployment of quantum-resistant encryption to safeguard critical infrastructure and communications, including by encouraging private sector transition through procurement preferences.

## **6. Build Innovation Infrastructure**

- a. Invest in new innovation centers outside of existing tech hubs and make reliable, predictable multi-year investments in regional tech hubs to unlock the potential of communities across America to succeed in an innovation economy.
- b. Create incentives and accelerate buildout of sustainable data center infrastructure through accelerated permitting of grid expansions and tax incentives for use of sustainable energy sources, lower greenhouse gas (GhG) emissions, and reductions in water consumption.
- c. Address the digital divide by ensuring technology advances provide all communities robust internet connectivity, digital literacy programs, and the knowledge and tools necessary to understand, evaluate, and make informed decisions about AI systems that affect their lives.
- d. Champion climate tech and energy opportunities for climate progress that provide even a GOP-led Congress an opportunity to reduce residents and businesses' utility bills through the distributed generation and storage of electricity.
  - i. Restore clean energy incentives, but with greater accountability, utilizing advance market commitments and other mechanisms to enable the most cost-effective outcomes.
  - ii. Incentivize energy-efficient, green data center development that strengthens the electric grid.
  - iii. Streamline permitting and eliminate barriers to expansion of renewable energy resources and the grid.
  - iv. Launch a national energy storage technology strategy that enables widespread and safe adoption of distributed electricity generation and storage.
- e. Housing and Transportation. Every metropolitan area with a large tech base faces a housing crisis. The federal government must play a more constructive role in accelerating affordable housing development.
  - i. Speed development timelines by conditioning targeted federal programs on implementation of pro-housing local codes, such as by-right rezoning and permissive use of innovative technologies, including prefabricated and modular construction.
  - ii. Accelerate development of workforce housing through the use of tax credits and other incentives to rebuild vacant commercial space and stimulate housing supply.
  - iii. Expand the resale inventory of homes in high-cost metros by boosting the capital gains tax exemption for home sales.
  - iv. Transit-oriented development: Encourage urban development designed to bring people, services, and jobs together with quality public transport, support by walking and cycling to facilitate shorter trips, better lifestyles, and more efficient use of city resources.
  - v. Dig Once: Mandate that, when feasible, agencies coordinate the installation of additional utilities, such as broadband, electrical cables, and water lines, during the initial phases of construction. This will reduce the need for future excavations, minimizing disruptions to communities, reducing long-term costs, and improving infrastructure efficiency.

## 7. Strengthen National Resilience and Governance

- a. Defense Procurement Reform. The Department of Defense's procurement of technology is broken. Congress must:
  - i. Empower innovation in the DoD by purchasing tech using requirements without excessively prescriptive solutions, and embracing "off the shelf" commercial options where product superiority appears evident.
  - ii. Accelerate the adoption of dual use and commercial technology by expanding the Defense Innovation Unit's (DIU) procurement scope and embracing the DIU's strategic vision for tech procurement.
  - iii. Support promising technologies in overcoming the bureaucratic and fiscal barriers between prototyping and full production.
  - iv. Facilitate more nimble acquisition using non-traditional procurement pathways such as Other Transaction Authority (OTA).
- b. Responsible Governance. A successful innovation economy needs:
  - i. Constitutionality. Any administration and Congress must emphasize a primacy on the rule of law. Court orders must be heeded, elections must be free and fair, and the constitutional rights of every individual must be protected.
  - ii. Oversight. Congress alone has the unique responsibility to conduct oversight using its sole authority over federal spending. Congress must use this power to provide the public with transparency into the use of tax dollars, hold federal agencies accountable to their statutory obligations, and root out waste, fraud, and abuse.
  - iii. Predictability and Trustworthiness. Erratic governance undermines confidence of economic stakeholders. It's not the government's job to be disruptive, but private entrepreneurship. Independent agencies, such as the Federal Reserve, must retain their independence to deliver decisions free of political manipulation.
  - iv. Efficiency. Cutting waste, improving efficiency, and leveraging appropriate technologies in providing public services are not partisan issues.
  - v. Modernized IT and Workforce. Providing high-quality public services is not a partisan issue, but it cannot be done without an efficient, effective, and secure federal IT system and highly skilled workforce. The government must leverage appropriate technologies and qualified civil servants to better optimize spending and increase savings, improve service delivery and quality, and bolster public safety and national security.
  - vi. Fiscal Responsibility. The nation's \$1.9 trillion deficit presents a clear and present threat to our nation's economic vitality, imposing financing burdens that crowd out private investment and preclude critical public investments.

## NEXT STEPS

The New Democrat Coalition looks forward to engaging in discussions with our colleagues in the Democratic Caucus and across the aisle to refine ideas and craft legislation to advance our Innovation Agenda. Innovation will play a central role in growing the economy, governing responsibly, and delivering results for the American people.

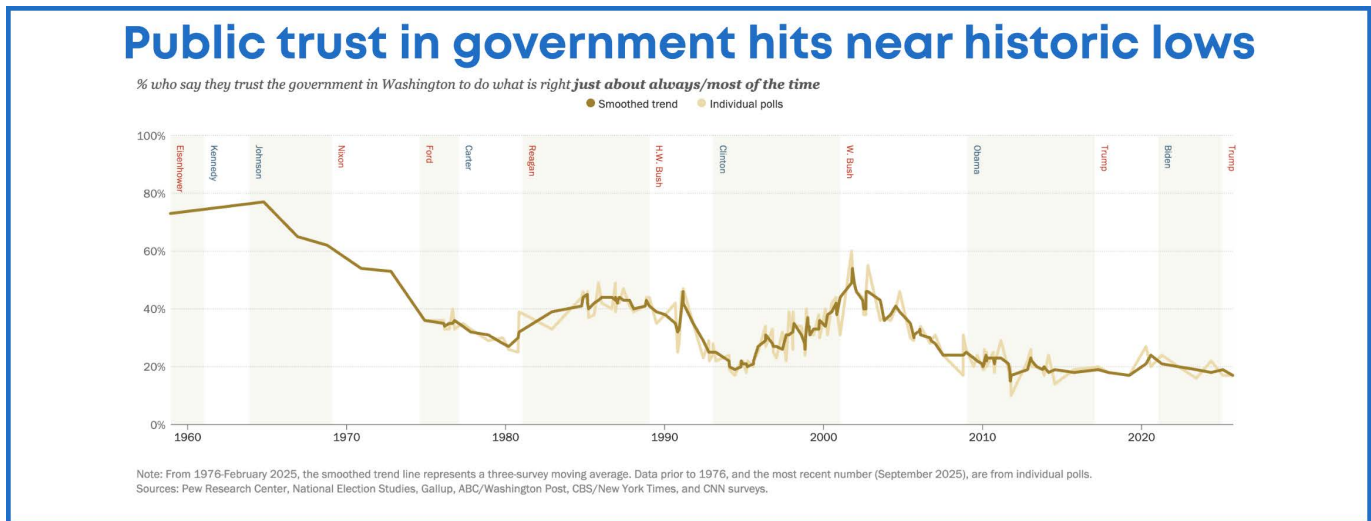
**RESTORE FAITH  
IN GOVERNMENT  
& FIGHT  
CORRUPTION**

# Anti-Corruption Agenda

## INTRODUCTION

Lawmakers in Washington need to address an increasingly obvious fact: the American people don't trust the government to act in their best interests. Just 17 percent of Americans have faith that the government will do the right thing – one of the lowest figures in the last 70 years. Meanwhile, public approval of Congress is similarly suffering at 16 percent, and the American people overwhelmingly view the “typical politician” as corrupt (71 percent).

These numbers are not shocking when everyday Americans see corrupt politicians and their families getting rich on under the table deals, anonymous bets placed on prediction markets aligned with announcements from the briefing room podium, seemingly endless dark money pouring into campaigns, growing federal interference in state and local election processes, and a President in the White House who every day undermines the fundamental separation of powers that our nation's founders established to protect the fidelity of the federal government.



New Dems are committed to earning back the trust of the American people by rooting out corruption. We need to restore the strength of our federal institutions to hold corrupt actors accountable and uphold the high standards that people expect from their public servants.

Government officials work for the American people – not for themselves. The lawlessness and corruption of the Trump Administration has exposed the holes in our system that are ripe for exploitation. Now, New Dems are taking it upon ourselves to lead the charge in Congress to crack down on corruption and build a government that works for working people again.

# TRUMP ADMIN'S CORRUPTION REPORT CARD

F

**Serving the public interest:** *The Trump Family has made more than \$4 billion off the presidency alone in one year.*

F

**Respecting the power of the Presidency:** *Trump has pardoned more than 1,500 people convicted of insurrection, fraud, money laundering, bribery, and more – many in exchange for campaign donations or political favors.*

F

**Cracking down on insider trading:** *New and anonymous Polymarket accounts are making millions from bets placed immediately before the President makes market moving announcements.*

F

**Avoiding conflicts of interest:** *Trump's administration appointments are pay-to-play, with dozens of key roles filled with wealthy donors, from Elon Musk and Scott Bessent to a litany of ambassadors who have funneled large sums to the Trump family.*

F

**Following the law:** *Trump has packed advisory boards with loyalists and outright broken the law to tear down the East Wing of the White House, build a \$1 billion taxpayer-funded ballroom, rename the Institute of Peace and the John F. Kennedy Center in D.C. after himself, and build a 250-foot "Arc de Trump" in Virginia.*

## PRINCIPLES

- Government officials serve the public and must not use their power to enrich themselves. We must construct guardrails to block corrupt activity, ensure transparency into official actions, and punish misconduct with enforceable sanctions.
- All branches of government, including the judicial branch and the Supreme Court, should have a mechanism for public accountability.
- Free and fair elections are a cornerstone of our democracy and must be protected.
- American democracy endures because the separation of powers between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches creates proper checks and balances within our government, and we should strengthen and uphold this system.

## POLICIES

### 1. Ensure that public service remains a public service, not a private moneymaking scheme, by:

- a. Fully banning insider trading by federal officials and political appointees, including Members of Congress, to include a ban on placing bets in prediction markets based on information related to their work and trading individual stocks and bonds.
- b. Prohibiting the President, Vice President, Members of Congress, senior Administration officials, and their families from issuing or endorsing securities and digital assets, like memecoins, so that public officeholders aren't using their position to build personal wealth.
- c. Banning pay-to-play politics by making it illegal to buy access to public officeholders and their immediate family by investing in private companies in which they have a financial interest.

### 2. Restore faith and ensure integrity in the Supreme Court by:

- a. Requiring the judicial branch to establish an enforceable code of ethics that includes standards for recusals and applies to all judges and Supreme Court justices.
- b. Setting limits on Justices and employees receiving gifts in line with limits for legislative and executive branch employees.
- c. Creating strict guidelines on behavior that compromises the integrity of the court or creates the appearance of impropriety.
- d. Establishing an inspector general within the judicial branch to independently investigate claims of misconduct.

### 3. Maintain free and fair elections as a cornerstone of our democracy by:

- a. Protecting and restoring the Voting Rights Act to ensure that all U.S. citizens have the right to vote free from discrimination and fighting back against efforts to create barriers to lawful voting, including by passing the Freedom to Vote Act and John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.
- b. Passing a Constitutional amendment to overturn Citizens United vs. FEC and enacting the DISCLOSE Act to get dark money out of politics.

### 4. Strengthen and clearly delineate the separation of powers by:

- a. Reasserting Congress's Constitutional authority, including matters relating to funding, trade, and war.
- b. Enforcing strict penalties if the Executive Branch fails to comply with a lawful court order.
- c. Establishing strict guidelines on White House interactions with independent agency decision-making.

# LEGISLATIVE ROADMAP

# The Bills Behind the New Dems' Governing Agenda

*Too often, politicians deliver wish lists: long on aspiration and short on action. New Dems set out to do something different. The priorities laid out in this agenda are backed by real policies that have broad support and a realistic path to becoming law.*

*The bills listed here reflect the full breadth of this agenda — from lowering everyday costs and expanding access to affordable healthcare, to strengthening our schools and workforce, securing our border, revitalizing rural communities, supporting our veterans, keeping America competitive in the industries of the future, and restoring honesty and accountability in Washington. This is not an exhaustive list, and it is not the end of our work. It is a snapshot of what is possible right now, with legislation already in hand. We will continue to introduce, cosponsor, and fight for bills that deliver real results for the American people.*

## A TAX CODE THAT WORKS FOR WORKERS

[H.R. 2763](#), **American Family Act** - Rep. Rosa DeLauro (CT-03), Rep. Suzan DelBene (WA-01)

- Makes the expanded, monthly Child Tax Credit permanent, lifting millions of children out of poverty.

[H.R. 7736](#), **RELIEF Act** - Rep. Steven Horsford (NV-04), Rep. Janelle Bynum (OR-05)

- Requires automatic refunds to small and independent businesses for President Trump's illegal tariffs and customs.

[H.R. 407](#), **Prevent Tariff Abuse Act** - Rep. Suzan DelBene (WA-01)

- Prohibits the President from issuing new costly tariffs under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA).

[H.R. 1177](#), **Improve and Enhance the Work Opportunity Tax Credit** - Rep. Steven Horsford (NV-04)

- Increases tax credits for workers in their first year of employment, giving a boost to those newly entering the workforce.

## A PATHWAY TO A GOOD JOB FOR EVERY AMERICAN

[H.R. 5390](#), **FAMILY Act** - Rep. Rosa DeLauro (CT-03)

- Creates a national paid family and medical leave program, making sure no one has to choose between a paycheck and caring for a new baby, a sick parent, or their own health.

[H.R. 20](#), **Richard L. Trumka Protecting the Right to Organize Act of 2025** - Rep. Bobby Scott (VA-03)

- Strengthens labor unions, collective bargaining rights, and worker protections against retaliation – the most pro-union, pro-worker legislation in generations.

[H.R. 1662](#), **LEAP Act** - Rep. Nikki Budzinski (IL-13)

- Provides tax credits for businesses for hiring new, qualified apprentices for two years, creating concrete pathways to good-paying jobs.

[H.R. 1666](#), **Pell Grant Sustainability Act** - Rep. Sean Casten (IL-06)

- Adjusts Pell Grant awards to track with the rate of inflation, ensuring that college students aren't waiting on politicians to act every year to afford tuition, books, and the essentials.

[H.R. 1827](#), **Childcare Availability and Affordability Act** - Rep. Salud Carbajal (CA-24)

- Expands the employer-provided childcare credit to make childcare more affordable and accessible and increase the number of childcare providers.

[H.R. 3090](#), **I-PLAN Act of 2025** - Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (PA-06)

- Encourages collaboration between states on paid leave, aligns administrative and statutory policies, and facilitates the sharing of best practices.

## REVITALIZING RURAL AMERICA

[H.R. 5728](#), **Rural Homeownership Continuity Act** - Rep. Jim Costa (CA-21)

- Helps families obtain federal loans at lower interest rates, making the American dream of homeownership more affordable in rural America.

[H.R. 1991](#), **Producer and Agricultural Credit Enhancement (PACE) Act** - Rep. Angie Craig (MN-02)

- Increases access to credit and financing for agricultural producers through Farm Service Agency (FSA) Operating and Ownership Loans.

[H.R. 1086](#), **Agriculture Export Promotion Act** - Rep. Kim Schrier (WA-08)

- Reauthorizes and extends the Market Access Program and the Foreign Market Development Program to boost export markets for U.S. agricultural products.

## HOUSING YOU CAN AFFORD

[H.R. 4576](#), **Build More Housing Near Transit Act of 2025** - Rep. Scott Peters (CA-50)

- Incentivizes new housing development near transit stops by leveraging competitive federal grant dollars to create more local housing plans along transit corridors.

[H.R. 2725](#), **Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act of 2025** - Rep. Suzan DelBene (WA-01), Rep. Don Beyer (VA-08), Rep. Jimmy Panetta (CA-19)

- Increases Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) available to states, supporting the development of 2 million additional housing units.

[H.R. 6293](#), **Housing Supply Expansion Act** - Rep. Scott Peters (CA-50)

- Allows for modular, mass-manufactured homes to be built for delivery instead of being required to be attached to permanent structures.

[H.R. 4568](#), **Supporting Upgraded Property Projects and Lending for Yards (SUPPLY) Act** - Rep. Sam Liccardo (CA-16)

- Expands access to financing for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), also known as backyard cottages, granny flats, or in-law suites.

[H.R. 2840](#), **Housing Supply Frameworks Act** - Rep. Brittany Pettersen (CO-07)

- Directs HUD to develop best practices on zoning and land-use policies and provides state and local governments with resources to amend their land use policies.

## LOWER COSTS, BETTER CARE

[H.R. 4849](#), **Protecting Healthcare and Lowering Costs Act of 2025** - Rep. Adam Gray (CA-13)

- Reverses cuts to Medicaid and Medicare under Republicans' Big Ugly Bill, restoring healthcare to millions of Americans.

[H.R. 1834](#), **Breaking the Gridlock Act** - Rep. James McGovern (MA-02)

- Extends the ACA enhanced premium tax credits for three years, making sure that working people can afford the healthcare plans they need.

[H.R. 6255](#), **Affordable Insulin Now Act** - Rep. Angie Craig (MN-02)

- Caps out-of-pocket expenses for insulin at \$35 per month to all Americans with private health insurance.

[H.R. 3947](#), [Easy Enrollment in Healthcare Act](#) - Rep. Ami Bera (CA-06)

- Streamlines health insurance access by allowing people to check a box on their tax returns to enroll in Medicaid or marketplace healthcare plans.

[H.R. 4827](#), [Medical Debt Relief Act of 2025](#) - Rep. Nikema Williams (GA-05)

- Prohibits consumer reporting agencies from including medical debt on consumer credit reports, so that families going through hard times avoid even more financial hardship.

## **SAFE BORDERS, ACCOUNTABLE ENFORCEMENT**

[H.R. 3473](#), [Humane Accountability Act](#) - Rep. Gabe Vasquez (NM-02)

- Increases transparency, oversight, and accountability for the treatment of detainees in U.S. immigration custody and requires the Department of Homeland Security to report to Congress on detention conditions, including deaths, injuries, and the use of non-traditional sites.

[H.R. 3227](#), [Farm Workforce Modernization Act of 2025](#) - Rep. Zoe Lofgren (CA-18)

- Creates a program for undocumented agricultural workers to earn legal status, reforms the H-2A visa program to be more flexible and user-friendly for employers, and mandates the use of an electronic employment eligibility verification system for the entire agricultural industry.

## **AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE, AMERICAN ENERGY**

[H.R. 8308](#), [CERTAIN Act](#) - Rep. Scott Peters (CA-50)

- Sets clear timelines and deadlines for federal environmental reviews and protects those reviews from political interference (e.g., Trump's cancellations of clean energy projects) once issued.

[H.R. 7066](#), [SHIELD Act](#) - Rep. Mike Levin (CA-49)

- Protects families and small businesses from rising electricity bills driven by the explosive growth of data centers nationwide and other large energy users.

[H.R. 4503](#), [ePermit Act](#) - Rep. Scott Peters (CA-50)

- Establishes digitized environmental reviews and a unified interagency data system, bringing the permitting process into the 21st century and drastically cutting down on time-wasting bottlenecks.

## **KEEPING OUR PROMISE TO THOSE WHO SERVED**

[H.R. 1732](#), [GUARD VA Benefits Act](#) - Rep. Chris Pappas (NH-01)

- Institutes criminal penalties for sketchy companies that charge unauthorized fees to assist veterans with VA disability claims, cracking down on predatory practices targeting veterans.

[H.R. 770](#), [Accountability for Veterans Act](#) - Rep. Josh Gottheimer (NJ-05)

- Requires the VA to address VA disability benefit claim backlogs and enhance Transition Assistance Program resources our veterans rely on when they transition to civilian life.

## INVENTING THE FUTURE, MADE IN AMERICA

[H.R. 2385](#), **CREATE AI Act** - Rep. Don Beyer (VA-08)

- Establishes the National Artificial Intelligence Research Resource (NAIRR) to provide U.S. researchers, educators, and students with access to AI data, computational resources, educational tools and services, and testbeds.

[H.R. 2627](#), **Keep STEM Talent Act** - Rep. Bill Foster (IL-11)

- Makes advanced STEM degree holders eligible for permanent resident status, removing barriers for them to stay and work in the U.S.

[H.R. 7158](#), **Expanding AI Voices Act** - Rep. Valerie Foushee (NC-04)

- Creates partnerships with universities and research institutions to advance AI and AI-powered innovation and expand AI capacity in populations historically underrepresented in STEM.

## ENDING THE CULTURE OF CORRUPTION

[H.R. 7802](#), **DISCLOSE Act** - Rep. Chris Pappas (NH-01)

- Increases transparency in politics by creating disclosure requirements for donations from corporations, labor organizations, and Super PACs.

[H.R. 14](#), **John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act** - Rep. Terri Sewell (AL-07)

- Restores and modernizes the full protections of the Voting Rights Act, fighting back against the attacks on minority representation in Congress.

[H.R. 8076](#), **PREDICT Act** - Rep. Nikki Budzinski (IL-13)

- Bans Members of Congress and senior government officials from insider trading on prediction markets, so politicians can't profit off the public trust.

