



Mend the Gaps 2020 Policy Platform

ABOUT NETWORK

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice educates, organizes and lobbies for economic and social transformation in our nation. Founded by Catholic Sisters, NETWORK works to create a society that promotes justice and the dignity of all.

For almost 50 years, NETWORK has advocated in Washington, D.C. for policies that increase access to healthcare, extend justice to immigrants, and advance racial and economic justice. Our work is rooted in Catholic Social Justice and we are open to all who share our passion. Our more than 100,000 supporters know that government policies can create positive change for those who are most marginalized in our society. The 2020 election is crucially important for correcting our nation's trajectory and altering the structures that cause poverty and inequality.

WE WORK FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Pope Francis calls on us to say "thou shalt not" to an economy of exclusion and inequality. This should be at the foundation of any presidential campaign. A just society values people over the accumulation of profits. While economic competition creates winners, it also causes harm. It is the federal government's role to provide support to those pushed to the economic margins.

Since 1996, the number of children living on \$2 a day has tripled.¹ Government spending on social programs has reached historic lows and its share of GDP is predicted to continue dropping through 2029.² President Trump deliberately exacerbated the assault on social spending through his proposed budget plans, which cut the discretionary spending of every agency, excluding the Department of Defense, by approximately 10%.³ These systematic cuts, as well as other strategic administrative attacks on programs, have destroyed the ability of our federal human needs programs to meaningfully reduce poverty. Our nation needs a comprehensive movement to fully fund, revamp, and renew beneficial human needs programs. Without a coordinated effort to increase the capacity and efficacy of social programs, millions of families will continue to struggle with poverty.

WE WORK FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

This election is a crucial opportunity to reject President Trump's harmful white supremacist rhetoric. The United States was built on structural racism, and institutional barriers continue to bar people of color from wealth, education, and equal protection of their constitutional rights. Our nation's continued legacy of racism directly contributes to the racial wealth and income gap, police brutality, and voter suppression, among other issues. The U.S. immigration system is turning its back on immigrants and asylum seekers, and now inflammatory rhetoric and fear mongering pushes undocumented immigrants further into the shadows and threatens their safety. White supremacy continues to perpetuate the unjust treatment of Native Americans. This election represents an opportunity to advocate for racial justice and continue the work of dismantling oppressive institutions; presidential candidates must demonstrate their commitment to ending structural racism in our nation.

Mend the Gaps Policy Platform

The principles of Catholic Social Justice inspired NETWORK to develop our Mend the Gaps agenda, which seeks to bridge the divides in our country, with a special focus on the policies that disproportionately impact women and people of color. We prioritize seven policy areas to mend the wealth and income gap as well as the gaps in access in our nation, while also protecting and upholding current successful federal programs and policies.

We invite all 2020 presidential candidates to join our movement to mend the gaps and transform our country.

Mending the Wealth and Income Gap

Tax Justice

We are called to invest in our shared society to meet the needs of all, especially those at the economic margins. Every person belongs to a single and interconnected human family; this is a core tenet of our faith teaching. When making individual and collective decisions, we have a responsibility to consider the good of the whole community over the interests of the few.

Right now, our tax policies favor the wealthiest in our nation and keep them from paying their fair share. Raising taxes on wealthy corporations and individuals will allow us to invest in key priorities, such as lowering healthcare costs, improving education, and protecting Medicare and Social Security from budget cuts.

Recommended Policy Proposals:

- ✓ Close loopholes for the wealthy by taxing extreme wealth, assessing higher income taxes, and strengthening the estate tax or replacing it with an inheritance tax.
- ✓ Raise corporate tax rates and close loopholes used by corporations to avoid paying taxes. End tax incentives that encourage corporations to outsource jobs and shift profit to tax havens.
- ✓ Improve the Earned Income Tax Credit and expand it to younger workers and workers not raising children in their home so that no worker is taxed into poverty.
- ✓ Expand the Child Tax Credit, making it fully refundable for families struggling with poverty.

Livable Income

Catholic Social Justice affirms work as a means of both fulfilling and expressing the inherent dignity of every human person. Ensuring just and livable compensation for work is a fundamental component of a just economy. Jobs in our nation must enable workers to provide for themselves and their families.

Recommended Policy Proposals:

- ✓ Pass a robust increase in the federal minimum wage with automatic adjustments tied to key economic indicators.
- ✓ Eliminate carve-outs for subminimum wage earnings—including tipped workers—to ensure one fair wage floor across the nation and across sectors.
- ✓ Protect and strengthen workers' role as stakeholders with a voice in their workplace.
- ✓ Encourage and enable collective organizing by workers to negotiate on their behalf.
- ✓ End the employment practices of forced arbitration in employment contracts and unjustified subcontracting to avoid direct employment.
- ✓ Strengthen federal oversight and enforcement of existing labor laws that protect workers and their earnings and end wage discrimination.

- ✓ Ensure robust federal interventions triggered in times of economic downturn (e.g. guaranteed employment and unemployment insurance).
- ✓ Institute federal oversight policies that measure trends in income inequality and which set standards for reasonable pay ratios between highest and lowest earners in companies.

Family-Friendly Workplaces

Catholic Social Justice teaches that workplace and labor policies must recognize and respect the need and responsibility of individuals to be part of community. Family life is important and work must coexist with and accommodate the human needs of all members of our community. Instead, workers today struggle to keep up with the demands of caregiving for children and other family members. These demands are especially pronounced for women of color, which further expands the racial wealth and income gap.

No one should have to choose between their job and caring for a family member. No one should fear losing a job because of the needs of their family. Therefore, our government must institute laws to ensure family-friendly workplaces.

Recommended Policy Proposals:

- ✓ Enact paid family leave to allow workers to address a serious health concern for themselves or a loved one, or care for the birth of a new child, adopted child, or foster child, without the burden of lost income or job insecurity.
- ✓ Require employers to allow employees to earn paid sick time based on the number of hours worked.
- ✓ Support pregnant workers by clarifying reasonable accommodations, requiring an interactive process between employers and pregnant workers, and protecting workers from retaliation, intimidation, or threats for requesting or using an accommodation.
- ✓ Encourage flexible schedules to give employees and employers more tools and resources to create mutually beneficial schedules.
- ✓ Provide Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) without overly burdensome hurdles or strict work requirements.

Mending the Gaps in Access

Access to Democracy

Our faith teaches that we have a responsibility to participate in politics out of a concern for, and commitment to, the common good. Our democracy is founded on the principle of representative government—every person counts equally. This is the only way to realize the common good. NETWORK supports policies that ensure that everyone in our nation can fully participate in our democracy and that no individual or community of color is disenfranchised by federal policy. We want a system which holds our government responsible for advancing the common good and holds our representatives accountable to their constituents.

Recommended Policy Proposals:

- ✓ Expand the right to vote and make it an easier, more inclusive process. We support policies that restore and strengthen the Voting Rights Act, facilitate voter registration for citizens, and enable flexibility and unhindered access to the ballot.
- ✓ Adopt stronger, more enforceable ethics laws for the executive and legislative branches.
- ✓ Create more transparency in campaign finance donations and federal influence.
- ✓ Improve our election infrastructure and aggressively tackle interference in our elections at any stage in the election process.

- ✓ Create a clear, viable path for citizens to challenge discriminatory actions that restrict their right to vote.
- ✓ Reform the redistricting process to protect it from partisan manipulation and to eliminate gerrymandering.
- ✓ Reform the campaign finance system to limit the amount of money any person, corporation, or union can contribute.

Access to Healthcare

Our faith tells us that it is our moral responsibility to guarantee access to healthcare for all people, regardless of social or economic status, race, or ability to pay. Presidential candidates must be willing to take steps to expand healthcare affordability and access, eliminate disparities in health outcomes based on race and economic status, and curb the exploitative behavior of the pharmaceutical industry.

Recommended Policy Proposals:

- ✓ Fully fund the Affordable Care Act with Medicaid expansion in all states for families and individuals who are eligible under federal law.
- ✓ Block efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act without a responsible alternative enacted simultaneously.
- ✓ Stop any efforts to block grant, impose work requirements, or institute harmful structural changes to Medicaid and Medicare.
- ✓ Support robust reforms to prescription drug pricing, including out-of-pocket caps, allowing Medicare Part D to negotiate, and institute penalties for unjustified price spikes.
- ✓ Examine all health policy with a health equity lens, with a specific focus on racial disparities.
- ✓ Pass legislation to reauthorize and sustainably fund Children’s Health Insurance Program, Community Health Centers, the Special Diabetes Program, and the Special Diabetes Program for Indians.
- ✓ Ensure that healthcare is genuinely affordable and accessible to people of all income levels, with particular concern for the most vulnerable among us—children, people with disabilities, and the elderly.
- ✓ Continue to require health insurers to offer comprehensive benefits to everyone, including preventative, primary, acute, mental health, and long-term care services.
- ✓ Build the foundation for universal coverage by introducing a public option for Medicare.

Access to Citizenship

As people of faith and a nation of immigrants, we are called to love our neighbor and welcome the stranger. Immigrants and refugees are a vibrant part of the fabric of our society and positively contribute to our churches and our communities. Our immigration system is unjust and outdated. Immigrants and asylum seekers have been villainized and scapegoated by an Administration intent on upholding white supremacy. We must enact policies that reunite families, provide meaningful opportunities for undocumented immigrants to apply for citizenship, welcome asylum seekers, and grow compassion in our communities.

Recommended Policy Proposals:

- ✓ Create a swift and attainable opportunity for undocumented immigrants to apply for citizenship.
- ✓ Reform the family-based immigration system to promote family unity and family reunification.
- ✓ End mass incarceration of immigrants by halting family detention, reducing the use of other immigration detention and, where necessary, promoting community-based alternatives to detention, which are safer, less expensive, and more effective at ensuring compliance with government-imposed requirements.

- ✓ Expand legal protections for all asylum seekers and unaccompanied children and ensure their health, safety, and well-being.
- ✓ Enact responsible border policies in cooperation with border communities that ensure all individuals are treated with dignity and respect.

Access to Housing

Housing is a basic human right and a foundation for a person's ability to meet their needs. By failing to ensure affordable housing for all members of our society, we harm family development and prevent millions from feeling the peace of this security. We support federal policies that enable everyone to have access to safe, affordable housing.

Recommended Policy Proposals:

- ✓ Establish a tax credit to help make housing affordable for renters with the lowest incomes.
- ✓ Encourage the use of specific tax incentives (Low-Income Tax Credit) among housing developers, for both construction and rehabilitation of low-income housing units.
- ✓ Fund programs to maintain existing affordable housing units and construct new ones through the National Housing Trust Fund and community development.
- ✓ Pass an equitable infrastructure bill that prioritizes investment in low-income communities and facilitates accessible public transportation near low-income housing and shelters so people can efficiently travel to places of employment.
- ✓ Expand the number of housing vouchers.

Additional Concerns

Trade Policy

Our faith affirms that we are one human family regardless of national, racial, ethnic, economic, or ideological differences. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. The rules of the global economy must work for the benefit of all, not just a privileged few. U.S. trade policy must promote the well-being of workers, the rights of indigenous communities, and the health and safety of people and the environment. The current NAFTA agreement must be improved to be mutually beneficial for the common good.

Recommended Policy Proposals:

- ✓ Ensure access to affordable medicines by eliminating proposed NAFTA revisions that would dangerously expand intellectual property protections for pharmaceuticals and have devastating impacts on the health of patients in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.
- ✓ Ensure just labor practices by improving NAFTA rules to enhance workers' rights to good wages, collective organizing, and a safe and healthy work environment.
- ✓ Strengthen critical enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with the agreement in order to protect the human rights and dignity of working people in all three countries.
- ✓ Faithfully steward the Earth and uphold environmental protections by improving the revised NAFTA agreement to protect the environment for future generations.

Equity in Criminal Justice

Our Catholic faith and social justice tradition affirm the dignity and sanctity of every person, no exceptions. Unfortunately, those values are not present in our current criminal justice system. People of color, women, and people experiencing poverty are disproportionately and systematically subjected to overcriminalization, harsh sentencing, and economic discrimination that destabilizes families and communities, as well as imprisonment

that emphasizes punishment rather than rehabilitation. Federal laws and policies enacted since 1980 have resulted in the U.S. becoming the world's leader in incarceration and arrests, with the majority of those imprisoned being Black and Latinx. This has deepened the racial divide and created a situation of structural poverty for many individuals, families, and communities. To overcome these disadvantages, we must ensure equal justice under the law through reforms to the federal criminal justice system.

Recommended Policy Proposals:

- ✓ Restore equity and proportionality in sentencing, especially drug sentencing. Eliminate life without parole and solitary confinement for juvenile offenders.
- ✓ Provide a viable path to rehabilitation and successful reintegration into society, and remove barriers to employment, education, and skills training.
- ✓ Restore the right to vote for formerly incarcerated individuals.
- ✓ Eliminate the use of private prisons in the federal system.
- ✓ Decouple immigration enforcement and the criminal justice system.

Protecting and Improving Programs That Serve the Common Good

While working to mend the gaps in the policy areas above, NETWORK continues our advocacy to ensure that existing critical federal programs with demonstrated success are protected and enhanced. A basic moral test for our nation is how our most vulnerable members fare. In a society struggling with deepening divisions, our faith instructs us to put the needs of the vulnerable first. Evidence-based government programs that are proven to help populations most in need must be protected and supported.

Over the past few years, human needs programs as we know them have been attacked on multiple fronts. To be a nation that supports the dignity of people, the next administration must reverse the devastating cuts and rollbacks so many critical human needs programs have experienced. Modifications to administrative rules have threatened basic safety net programs that provide housing, nutrition, and healthcare to millions of vulnerable individuals and families. Disaster relief and anti-hunger programs have been used as political bargaining chips. These federal programs are the foundation of a moral society. Our next administration must make the restoration of these programs their top domestic priority.

Sources:

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ADVOCATES FOR JUSTICE, INSPIRED BY CATHOLIC SISTERS

Election 2020 Questions for Candidates

Use the questions below, based off NETWORK's 2020 Mend the Gaps Policy Platform, to learn more about the candidates' policy proposals and evaluate how they plan to mend the gaps in our nation.

Tax Justice: We are called to invest in a society that will meet the needs of all, especially those at the economic margins; this is a core tenet of our faith teaching. Right now, the richest in our nation take advantage of many tax loopholes carved out by special interests, leaving the rest of us to pick up the tab. We need to raise taxes on the wealthy so they pay their fair share, and make our tax system fairer for working families. Raising taxes on the rich will allow us to invest in key priorities, such as lowering healthcare costs, improving education and protecting Medicare and Social Security from budget cuts.

Ask about tax justice:

- ☀ Our nation's most essential human needs programs like Medicare and Community Block Grants have suffered under a policy of putting the interests of the wealthy over the interests of the rest. Do you agree that we need to tax extreme wealth, reform the taxation of capital gains, strengthen the estate tax, close tax loopholes, and raise the corporate tax rate to pre-2017 levels?
- ☀ How will you expand federal income tax credits programs like the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit so that workers and families are no longer taxed into poverty?

Livable Income: Catholic Social Justice affirms work as a way of fulfilling and expressing human dignity. Receiving just and livable compensation for work is a fundamental to a just economy — workers must not be exploited by capital. Our economy must allow workers to provide for themselves and their families. Federal policies affect worker pay both directly and indirectly. NETWORK's Livable Income platform targets three tiers of economic participation, all of which are key to ensuring livable incomes for workers: 1) worker compensation, 2) employers and employment practices, and 3) the role of the federal government in the labor market.

Ask about livable income:

- ☀ How can policies help marginalized workers, especially women and people of color, earn a just and living wage?

- ☀ Millionaires and billionaires make exorbitant sums by suppressing the wages of workers domestically and abroad — what would you do to keep jobs in the U.S and prevent companies from exploiting lower wages abroad?
- ☀ Do you support raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour for all workers, regardless of where they live, including tipped workers and workers under 20?

Family-Friendly Workplaces: Catholic Social Justice teaches that workplace and labor policies must respect and recognize the need and responsibility of individuals to be part of community. Work must coexist with and accommodate the human needs of family and community; therefore, our government should institute laws to ensure family-friendly workplaces. Workers are struggling to keep up with the demands of caregiving for children and family members. These demands are especially pronounced for women of color, further increasing the racial wealth and income gap. No one should have to choose between their job and caring for a family member. No one should fear losing a job because of the needs of their family.

Ask about family-friendly workplace policies:

- ☀ The United States is the only industrialized nation that does not provide universal paid leave benefits; this affects low wage workers most. What are some concrete steps your administration would take to provide federal paid family leave and sick leave?
- ☀ What will your administration do to recognize and address the challenges facing families in the 21st century, particularly women-led households, families of color, and the LGBTQ+ community?

Access to Democracy: Our faith teaches that we have a responsibility to participate in politics to advance the common good. Our democracy is founded on the principle of representative government — every person counts equally. This is how we realize the common good. NETWORK supports policies that ensure that everyone in our nation can fully participate in our democracy and that no individual or community of color is disenfranchised. We similarly believe in a system in which our elected officials are accountable to their constituents.

Ask about mending the gap in democracy:

- ☀ The integrity of our electoral process has suffered the worst attacks in our nation's history. How would you prioritize democracy reforms in your presidency?
- ☀ What are your proposals for taking money out of politics, restoring suppressed voter's rights, expanding access to voting, and growing faith in our democracy?

Access to Health Care: It is the moral responsibility of a nation to guarantee access to health care for all of its citizens, regardless of social and economic status, race, or ability to pay. Our healthcare system has been under attack for decades, and We the People are ready to make major transformations. Our next president must take steps to expand healthcare affordability and access, eliminate disparities in health outcomes based on race and class, and take on the exploitative behavior of the pharmaceutical industry.

Ask about mending the gap in health care:

- ☀️ We believe health care is a right: What will you do to expand health care for all in the U.S. in your first 100 days as president?
- ☀️ In order to provide quality, affordable, accessible health care for all people, do you support improving and strengthening the Affordable Care Act, or do you propose a different solution?
- ☀️ Prices for prescription drugs continue to rise, forcing people to choose between food, rent, and life-saving medicines. What will you do to lower prescription drug prices especially for people who are uninsured or low-income seniors and families?

Access to Citizenship: As people of faith and a nation of immigrants, we are called to love our neighbor. Immigrants and refugees are a vibrant part of the fabric of our society and positively contribute to our churches and our communities. Our current immigration system is unjust and outdated. For the past three years, immigrants and asylum seekers have been villainized and scapegoated by a presidential administration intent on upholding white supremacy. We must prioritize making commonsense reforms to our immigration system by enacting policies that reunite families, provide a real opportunity for undocumented immigrants to apply for citizenship, welcome asylum seekers, and promote community wholeness.

Ask about mending the gap in citizenship:

- ☀️ Are you committed to passing responsible and compassionate immigration reform that halts deportation orders and provides a pathway to citizenship for the 12 million aspiring citizens who currently cannot adjust their status?
- ☀️ What steps will you take on Day 1 of your presidency to start undoing the damage the Trump administration has done towards the immigrant and refugee community?
- ☀️ What will you do in the first 100 days of your presidency to ensure that all asylum seekers and unaccompanied children at the Southern border are treated with dignity and respect?

Access to Housing: NETWORK believes that housing is a basic human right and a vital foundation for people to meet their own needs. We support federal policies that ensure everyone has access to safe, affordable housing.

Ask about mending the gaps in housing:

- ☀️ There is an affordable housing crisis for families and individuals across the United States. What is your plan to increase the affordable housing stock for low-to-moderate income communities?
- ☀️ What are your priorities when it comes to improving our nation's infrastructure and incentivizing public-private partnerships?
- ☀️ For the majority of people living in the U.S. their home is their sole source of wealth, particularly for small business owners who rely on home equity for start-up capital. What is your plan to increase access to capital for homeowners and small business owners?

Trade Policy: Our faith affirms that we are one human family across our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. The rules of the global economy must work for the benefit of all, rather than work for a privileged few. U.S. trade policy must promote the well-being of workers, the rights of indigenous communities, as well as the health and safety of people and environment.

Ask about trade policy:

- ☀️ Wages in the United States have remained flat since the 1970s and the U.S. continues to lose middle-income jobs to low wage countries. How will your trade policies stop the race to the bottom in wages?
- ☀️ Corporations have an outsized role in creating U.S. trade policies. This has led to a weak focus on labor, the environmental, and health. How will your administration ensure that workers and civil society have a significant role in creating trade policies that benefit people and the environment?

After asking a question, report the candidate's answer back to us at NETWORK by emailing info@networklobby.org. Thank you!

Create Your Own Side-by-Side

Evaluate Your Candidates' Commitment to Mending the Gaps

With so much at stake in the 2020 Election, it is crucial for everyone to take the time to evaluate candidates before voting in November. Whether you want to evaluate Presidential candidates or House and Senate candidates, this side-by-side is designed to help you see who most closely aligns with NETWORK's Mend the Gaps 2020 Policy Platform.

Catholic Social Justice calls us to participate in public life and exercise our civic duty. We must engage ourselves and others this election season and choose the path of the common good, to seek a better life for everyone.

To create your own side-by-side: Read the candidates' websites and follow local reporting or other sources of information about the candidates to find their positions on the issues. If a public statement from a candidate is not available, consider contacting the candidate or raising the question in a public forum.

As we evaluate candidates on the issues below, we must acknowledge that racism and white supremacy are embedded into all policy issues, especially our economic policy. We are called to recognize and reject the structural racism that tears at the fabric of our nation and look for elected officials who support dismantling white supremacist systems and structures.

2020 ELECTION RACE _____

CANDIDATE A _____ **PARTY** _____

CANDIDATE B _____ **PARTY** _____

Tax Justice

Any tax policy change should reduce the income gap, especially the racial/ethnic and gender wealth gaps.

Does the candidate oppose the 2017 Republican Tax Law? Will they work to repeal the tax law and repair the damage done to our federal revenue streams? Does the candidate support expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit?

Over the next 10 years, the 2017 Republican Tax Law will add \$1.9 trillion to the national debt, with 83% of the tax cut benefits going to the top 1% in the year 2027.¹

CANDIDATE A

CANDIDATE B

Living Wages

National legislation should move from adjusting a minimum wage to creating a living wage.

Does the candidate support a federal minimum wage of \$15/hr for all workers, including tipped workers and young workers?

The federal minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour and has not been increased since 2009. The tipped minimum wage is \$2.13 an hour and has not been raised since 1991.² This causes many workers to earn "poverty-level wages" even when working full time.

CANDIDATE A

CANDIDATE B

Family-Friendly Workplaces

The needs of women and families should be integrated into federal workplace policies.

Have the candidates supported policies that promote family-friendly workplaces such as paid family and medical leave, paid sick days, and flexible schedules for employees, especially for women, people of color, and the LGBTQ+ community?

While the Family and Medical Leave Act provides access to unpaid family leave to the majority of working people in the United States, only 17% of workers have access to paid family leave through their employers.³

CANDIDATE A

CANDIDATE B

Access to Democracy

No individual or community should be disenfranchised by federal policy; everyone should be accurately counted and represented in Congress.

Do the candidates support strengthening and renewing the Voting Rights Act? Has either candidate spoken about the need to take money out of politics?

Since the 2014 midterm elections — the first since the Supreme Court's Shelby County v. Holder decision — at least 1,173 polling sites in places formerly covered by a provision in the law have been shut down.

CANDIDATE A

CANDIDATE B

Access to Health Care

Racial and economic disparities in health care should be eliminated.

Do the candidates support improving and strengthening the ACA, or do they propose a different solution? What are the candidates' proposals to lower prescription drug prices, especially for the uninsured or low-income seniors and families?

23% of seniors in the United States have difficulty affording their medication, and 30% of those needing care have skipped a dose of medication due to cost.

CANDIDATE A

CANDIDATE B

Access to Citizenship

Immigrants should be welcomed into the country.

Do the candidates support welcoming immigrants, ending family separation, and protecting DACA recipients and other undocumented or vulnerable immigrants? Do the candidates have a plan for comprehensive immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship?

More than 650,000 DACA recipients in the U.S. could lose protection from deportation; hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants have no legal protections or pathway to citizenship.⁶ Families seeking asylum must 'remain in Mexico,' where they face violence and cannot access legal representation.

CANDIDATE A

CANDIDATE B

Access to Housing

Everyone should have access to safe, affordable housing.

Do your candidates support funding for federal housing programs? Do they support policies that work to end homelessness in our country?

There is no state in the country where minimum-wage workers can afford a two-bedroom apartment without spending more than 30% of their income on rent.⁷ There were 552,830 people experiencing homelessness in the United States on a single night in 2018.⁸

CANDIDATE A

CANDIDATE B

Find more Election 2020 resources from NETWORK at www.networklobby.org/election2020

Sources:

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ADVOCATES FOR JUSTICE, INSPIRED BY CATHOLIC SISTERS

Letters to the Editor (LTEs)

Letters to the editor (LTEs) are a powerful advocacy tool. They are among the most widely read sections of newspapers and magazines and are closely monitored by campaigns to find out what voters are thinking. When LTEs are strategically coordinated and published, they can strengthen the impression of widespread support or opposition to an issue or candidate. Often times, they can influence editorial writers to take a stance or influence other members of the media to probe an issue more deeply. While they start out as one voice, LTEs can build a movement!

Tips for LTE Submission

- Outlets prefer to publish LTEs from folks who live in their circulation zone. You should target your local outlet.
- To find the correct LTE submission instructions for your local outlet, Google the name of your local outlet and "Letter to the Editor".
- Follow guidelines of the publication to ensure you have the correct length, style, and format. Most publications prefer letters to be 200 words or less.
- Timeliness is key. Many outlets only publish letters responding to articles, editorials, or other letters the day or two after they appear.

Tips for Powerful LTEs

- Frame your letter in relation to a recent news item or topic. Editors are more likely to publish a letter when written in response to a story printed in that publication.
- Use local, specific information whenever possible.
- Be aware of your audience: use talking points that will appeal to the readers, avoid jargon and abbreviations, and don't engage in personal attacks.
- Include your credentials.
- If you're using a sample letter from an organization, don't copy talking points verbatim. Papers can search for canned content after it is published one time.

Sample LTE

Newspaper Name

Editor's Address

Date

Dear Editor,

President Trump claims immigrant families in our state are part of an "invasion" (Trump Calls for Deportations in Texas, August 21, *Houston Chronicle*). In reality, our immigrant neighbors are essential members of our community who have contributed to life in Houston for generations.

Through my ministry work at Justice Center, I speak daily with undocumented immigrants. They tell me of their fears of a U.S. deportation system that fails to respect basic human rights.

Our current detention and deportation policies are inhumane. Among other problems, they allow agencies within the Department of Homeland Security to indefinitely detain immigrant families and separate children from their parents.

President Trump's policies and rhetoric are dangerous. According to the Department of Health and Human Services, almost 70,000 children were locked away in government cages in 2019. Last August, a white nationalist mass shooter obsessed with anti-immigrant rhetoric killed 22 people and injured more. As a person of faith, I cannot allow this to continue. Our nation needs a leader who will act against hate, not embrace it. This Election, I pray that we all evaluate the candidates on these two questions: "Do you love your neighbor? Do you welcome the stranger?"

Sr. Margaret Mary Sample, Director of Justice Center, Houston

**For additional assistance writing or submitting a letter to the editor,
email NETWORK at info@networklobby.org.**



ADVOCATES FOR JUSTICE, INSPIRED BY CATHOLIC SISTERS

Election 2020 Advocating for Justice on Social Media

- **Keep your posts concise.**
Twitter limits tweets to 280 characters (about 2-3 sentences), and Facebook will show a shortened version of your post if it is longer than 400 characters (about 4-5 sentences). However, if you have a good story or compelling data that needs a longer post, go ahead and write a longer post or reply to your own tweets (this creates a tweet thread).
- **Add a photo**
Tweets with photos result in a 48% increase in tweets being favorited
- **Use hashtags in your posts**
- **Tag candidates, journalists, debate moderators, and other public figures**
Include their handle in your tweet or their Facebook page in a Facebook post.
- **Add emotional appeal or faith language**
People are more likely to interact with and share posts that make them feel something or touch them on a personal level
- **Tweet and post on Facebook about major events and other topics that people are talking about.**
- **Reply to or share/retweet interesting tweets or posts**
- **Engage with NETWORK!**
Follow us: @NETWORKLobby

Presidential Candidate Twitter Accounts

@amyklobuchar	@ewarren
@AndrewYang	@JoeBiden
@BernieSanders	@MichaelBennet
@PeteButtigieg	@MikeBloomberg
@JohnDelaney	@TulsiGabbard
@DevalPatrick	@TomSteyer
@GovBillWeld	@WalshFreedom

Hashtags

#MendtheGaps #MendtheGapsVoter
#My2020Vision

Tag NETWORK!

