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!