



**Public Policy Priorities**  
Calendar Years 2019 – 2020

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## [Overview, Public Policy Priorities, 2019-2020](#)

The Public Policy Priorities developed by the Coalition on Human Needs are based on our understanding of the basis for our nation's progress. We grow by providing opportunities for all our people, and by ensuring that all people are able to take advantage of those opportunities.

America's people are the true source of our prosperity, and our greatness depends on inclusion. Over our history, we have welcomed newcomers and given them the chance to succeed. Their diverse beliefs and experiences have contributed to our growth. We have, imperfectly and haltingly, recognized the wrongs of racism and the hard-won progress of people of diverse color and ethnicity has made us stronger. We have opened doors to women and their work has built family incomes and sustained shared economic growth.

Some believe that America's greatness lies in the success of a few. We know that it is built on the contributions that come from our rich diversity. People with disabilities, those born poor in the isolation of rural or urban areas, the young, the old, those with different gender identities – when we include all, we all reap the benefits.

We have heard parents share their struggle to provide care for children with severe medical needs, and how the Affordable Care Act protected them from running out of coverage. We have listened to successful business people describe how they would not have made it if their family had not received food assistance when they were children. We are lifted up by the news of selfless acts and contributions to our prosperity by immigrants. Everywhere we see examples of the gains we share when all people's talents can be used to full advantage.

But while we have known for a long time that “a mind is a terrible thing to waste,” we continue the unconscionable waste that comes from failure to provide children with enough nutritious food and protection against lead and other environmental hazards. We are only just starting to address the desperate waste of substance use disorders. The Trump Administration has implemented attacks on migrant children and families that amount to government-sponsored child abuse, and is intent on denying medical care, housing, and food to low-income people when they cannot document enough hours of work. We incarcerate far too many and with rampant racial discrimination and are not doing enough to re-integrate those who have served their sentences into work and community. Disparities persist in income, health, education, and access to good jobs that hold back people of color, the rural poor, and immigrant communities and are all too common. The federal government is weakening its protections against environmental threats and against confiscatory debt traps. These restrictions and failures make millions sicker and poorer. We cannot afford to exclude so many from full participation.

These Public Policy Priorities provide the tools for inclusion and for opposing policies and budgets that deny people the chance to succeed. Our economy will not provide shared growth if we do not invest in a healthy, educated, and economically secure people. From our earliest times, such investments have come in large part from public sources. We recognized that publicly funded education was vital. Government financed the nationwide infrastructure that allowed economic growth. Now, we still need public education, and more of it. From pre-school through post-secondary education, we need to ensure that our children, youth, and adults have the preparation they need to thrive and contribute in an increasingly technological economy. In the past, we built roads and extended the mail and electricity to every corner of our land. Now, we must repair crumbling roads and bridges and build new ones, renew and expand public transit, and extend online access to every corner of our land.

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The work and innovation we need can only be achieved when we invest in people, from birth to old age. These Public Policy Priorities spell out the investments that are needed to ensure health, enable families to care for their children, provide lifelong education, and sustain economic security through affordable housing, access to good jobs, and income in retirement or periods of unemployment.

Because there are multiple threats that individuals alone cannot protect against, these Public Policy Priorities support federal action to ensure that workers' rights are secured and enforced, that borrowers are not gouged and forced into debt traps, that public health and safety are protected from environmental hazards and natural disasters, and that discrimination by race, religion, gender or gender identity is prohibited. Moreover, these Priorities clearly state that when federal actions, proposed or undertaken, threaten to harm individuals or exacerbate inequities among people and communities, such actions will be vigorously opposed.

Further, these Priorities recognize that we cannot make the investments we need nor provide the protections required without adequate federal revenues assessed according to ability to pay. While the federal government's ability to borrow is important and keeps us strong especially in hard times, we understand that more revenues must be collected to sustain the investments we need. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will deprive the nation of about \$2 trillion over the next decade. Those lost revenues, which could have been used to sustain basic needs programs and make investments in our future, will instead largely enrich corporate shareholders and others with high incomes. Such wrong-headed policies should be reversed.

The Coalition on Human Needs establishes budget and taxation as issues on which it plays a leadership role because they are central to the national capacity to invest in our people and to protect their health and economic security. CHN will work towards a budget that lifts spending caps preventing us from providing the services we need and that protects the capacity of basic needs programs such as Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to respond to changes in the economy. CHN supports a responsible balance of investments, fair revenues, savings from reduced waste, and sustainable levels of borrowing.

Such a responsible balance will make it possible to support the forward-looking agenda described in these Priorities:

- **Investments in shared economic growth:** efforts to rebuild and improve our infrastructure should include expansion and maintenance of affordable housing stock and be targeted to meet disproportionate needs in low-income communities, and low-income workers should gain employment at jobs created by infrastructure projects.
- **Increased revenues and greater tax fairness:** Reversing provisions of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and enacting new sources of progressive revenues such as a financial transactions tax and/or taxing unearned income at the same rate as earned income should be top priorities. Improvements in the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit will lift more individuals and families with children out of poverty while supporting work.
- **Worker rights:** Workers have not shared in the productivity gains of the past several decades. Reversing the stagnant earnings of middle- and low-income workers requires support for strong unions, protections against discrimination, including enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and prohibiting forced arbitration.

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- **Raise the minimum wage:** The minimum wage should rise to \$15 per hour, and then be indexed to inflation.
- **Improved working conditions:** Workers need paid sick days and paid family leave, fair scheduling of work hours, and enforcement of overtime pay, minimum wage and other worker protection laws.
- **Strengthening services for the unemployed:** Federal law should require a minimum of 26 weeks of Unemployment Insurance in all states and ensure that it is adequately funded, with options for extended benefits in economic downturns. Programs such as work-sharing and a job-seeker's allowance can help workers maintain or secure employment.
- **Overcoming barriers to work:** Workers need lifelong affordable education and training opportunities. People with disabilities require full funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and targeted training, rehabilitation and job supports.
- **Increased support for caregivers:** Caregivers play an increasingly vital role in our economy, making it possible for people with serious disabilities to live and work in the community, assisting seniors, and providing child care. Caregivers need adequate pay and benefits, significantly federally subsidized, to ensure that skilled and reliable assistance is available, and to provide jobs with fair pay.
- **Reducing poverty and increasing income security:** In addition to the assistance for workers described above, a comprehensive anti-poverty strategy must include
  - ***Job pathways and other services for youth and young adults***, providing pathways to jobs in infrastructure, energy, transportation and health care sectors; apprenticeships, national service (such as AmeriCorps and VISTA), and other work experience; more opportunities for post-secondary and vocational education with supports. In addition, juvenile justice programs should expand alternatives to incarceration. Special services, including appropriate shelter, should be provided for homeless youth.
  - ***Jobs programs for low-income people***: Investments aimed at increasing access to jobs, such as infrastructure funding, should be targeted to assist low-income communities and hire low-income workers. Temporary jobs programs that pay prevailing wages and do not displace current workers should be created to help low-income unemployed people who need more work experience. Intensive reemployment services, training, labor exchange programs and other innovative programs should be targeted to low-income people and communities.
  - ***Improve the safety net for those unable to find work or work at decent pay***: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) should be improved to provide more adequate income supports and to set a goal of poverty reduction, not simply caseload reduction, with increased access to education, training, child care, and other supports. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) requires adequate administrative support to reduce backlogs in approving applications. Social Security must be defended against reductions in benefits.
  - ***Improve child support collections***: Effective child support lifts many children out of poverty, and can do more through voluntary employment services to non-custodial parents. Support orders should reflect ability to pay, and should not force non-custodial parents into the underground economy or into prison for nonpayment.

- **Adequate funding for the Community Services Block Grant:** CSBG funds the operations of over 1,000 community action agencies nationwide, which coordinate anti-poverty programs such as Head Start, home energy assistance and weatherization, child care, and consumer education.
- **Protecting and expanding health coverage:** CHN supports guaranteed, affordable, and high quality health care for every person. To address immediate needs, the Affordable Care Act must be protected and improved and Medicaid expansion should be implemented in every state. The Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) should be strengthened. Structural restrictive changes such as per capita caps, block granting or privatization for Medicaid or Medicare must be strenuously opposed. Funding cuts and eligibility restrictions, including work documentation requirements, drug tests, or public charge rules that discourage participation by eligible immigrants, will also be opposed. Federal programs must address racial/ethnic health disparities, including a federal commitment to fund help for low-income communities to respond to natural disasters and toxic substances in the air, soil, water or buildings.
- **Ensuring that no one goes hungry:** Benefits for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) should be increased, with eligibility expanded for very vulnerable groups, such as ex-offenders, immigrants, and jobless adults. Efforts to cut or restrict SNAP through work documentation rules, drug testing or onerous public charge rules will be strongly opposed. Child nutrition programs should be strengthened and expanded, including school meals and out-of-school nutrition programs and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program. In addition, nutrition programs serving the elderly and emergency food programs must be funded adequately.
- **Providing and expanding social and health services:** Individuals cannot fully participate as workers, parents, or community members if mental health or substance use disorders remain unaddressed. Addressing the substance use disorder epidemic requires full funding for prevention, treatment and recovery services, much of which should be available through expanded Medicaid programs. There is an urgent need for expanded services to prevent child abuse or neglect and to provide services to enable families to care for their children, or to place children appropriately when they cannot remain with their families. The Social Services Block Grant should receive adequate funding as part of the resources available to states to provide needed services.
- **Increasing the supply of affordable housing and decreasing homelessness:** The supply of affordable housing is increasingly inadequate and must be addressed by increases in the numbers of rental vouchers and expanded funding for the National Housing Trust Fund and other means of expanding housing supply such as the low-income housing tax credit. More funding is needed to maintain and/or renovate public housing. Any infrastructure plan should include affordable housing building and rehabilitation. Anti-discrimination provisions should be vigorously enforced. Federal policies are needed to end homelessness, combining access to housing with appropriate services. Services to increase employment should be voluntarily available to low-income tenants. Increased funding is needed for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and for weatherization of low-income housing units.
- **Demanding humane immigration policies:** It is morally repugnant to separate migrant children from their parents or to incarcerate them together, to deny entrance or hearings to asylum-seekers, and to reject legal status for Dreamers and those here, often for decades, under Temporary Protected Status. It is unconscionable to seek funds for a border wall and harsh enforcement measures instead of expediting hearings and protecting desperate asylum-seekers. Instead, we need comprehensive immigration legislation that includes a pathway to citizenship and supports to

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integrate immigrants into our economy and society, including protections against discrimination and labor or consumer rights violations.

- **Ensuring access to justice:** People of color, women, those with disabilities, immigrants, and the poor are among those without adequate access to civil or criminal justice. Anti-discrimination laws designed to protect all these groups must be strictly enforced. Specifically,
  - **protections for people with disabilities** such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) must be enforced.
  - **legal protections for consumers and voters** are vitally needed. Without rigorous enforcement of protections against unfair mortgages, payday and car title lending, and other unscrupulous financial instruments, consumers can fall into devastating debt traps. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau must be strong and independent; efforts to limit its role must be opposed. The Voting Rights Act should be strengthened and protections increased against efforts at voter suppression. There should be full transparency of money in politics and an effective citizen-led campaign finance system.
  - **the criminal justice system should be reformed** through enactment of anti-racial profiling laws, mandatory training of police and collection of data on police-civilian encounters. Sentencing reform legislation is needed to reduce certain sentences and decrease mass incarceration. In addition, programs to assist those returning to their communities after serving their sentences are badly needed, including help with employment, housing and other benefits, and education. Voting rights should be restored to people formerly incarcerated.

More detail on all of these agenda items is included in the full 2019-2020 Public Policy Priorities that follow.

### **CHN Leadership Issues**

Issues in this category are cross cutting and affect the entire human needs community. The Coalition will play a leadership role on these issues. Issues in this category will get the highest possible attention from CHN staff where appropriate and feasible. CHN will:

- Advocate for these priorities before Congress and the Administration;
- Organize and actively participate in lobbying visits;
- Hold strategy sessions;
- Initiate sign-on letters and circulate sign-on letters initiated by others;
- Host seminars, briefings and webinars;
- Educate the human needs community and its network on the issues;
- Highlight and provide information on the status of these issues in our emails, web site, and in *The Human Needs Report*;
- Update CHN members on their status at bi-weekly Advocates' meetings.

CHN recognizes that in a time of unprecedented threats and unpredictable opportunities affecting vulnerable people and the services they need, it may be necessary to shift staff resources and coalition focus to issues not now addressed within the Leadership Issues below. Decisions to shift resources will be made based on the significance of the impact on low-income and vulnerable populations, including immigrants, communities of color, and people with disabilities, children and seniors.

The following public policy initiatives are identified as **Leadership Issues**:

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## Budget and Appropriations

The federal budget is an expression of our nation's priorities, and an engine for realizing them. Federal investments should spur economic growth that benefits all, reducing inequality and ensuring that our society provides all people with the building blocks of a decent life: food, housing, health care, education, and training; opportunities to work and care for family members; and income supplements when work pays too little or is not possible, including for seniors in retirement and people with disabilities.

Protecting and improving federal programs that ensure economic security and individual and family well-being are the central goals of the Coalition on Human Needs. Decisions about federal investments should begin with an assessment of unmet needs. The President's budget, Congressional Budget Resolutions, and subsequent appropriations bills should all provide for real growth in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable and realize the goal of reducing poverty and increasing economic security for all Americans. These goals and the challenges of providing health care for all and ensuring retirement security for an aging population can be met by federally funded investments that spur broadly shared economic growth, paid for by a responsible combination of revenues, savings, and sustainable levels of borrowing.

Failure to control wasteful spending makes it harder to meet our country's needs. The Pentagon and Homeland Security budgets should be subject to the same oversight and discipline as other spending. The Pentagon's budget is at an all-time high, and it exceeds the defense budgets of China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, India, France, the United Kingdom, and Japan combined. Yet the Pentagon is the only federal agency that has never passed a basic financial audit. Powerful special interests -- and the members they influence in Congress -- must not be allowed to continue to fund programs and weapon systems that even the Pentagon has not requested and does not need. Similarly, funds for border walls and harsh anti-immigrant enforcement measures do not enhance our security. Reducing wasteful and ineffective military spending will lead to improved national and economic security for our nation.

Caps on domestic and international appropriations have reduced spending on domestic discretionary spending to about 3 percent of GDP in 2018, down from a 55-year average closer to 4 percent. The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 lifted discretionary budget caps for FYs 2018 and 2019, allowing some important increases in human needs spending. Even with this progress, however, many human needs programs are still well below their FY 2010 levels, adjusted for inflation. If the spending caps return in FY 2020, domestic and international discretionary spending will be cut \$55 billion below FY 2019 levels, a cut of more than 9 percent. Such a decline would force unacceptable reductions across the wide range of domestic programs, disproportionately harming vulnerable communities and our children.

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** a federal budget that gives priority to human needs, recognizing that investments are needed in our human and physical infrastructure such as education and job training, health care, housing, digital communications, clean air and water, and transportation, in order to increase opportunity and security for all people, with special attention to the needs of those with low- and moderate income.

**CHN supports** raising spending caps and ending the sequestration cuts governing domestic discretionary spending now scheduled to return in FYs 2020 and 2021, in order to meet needs and make investments as described above. **CHN supports** at minimum parity in lifting spending caps for domestic/international and defense expenditures and **opposes** the use of Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding to pay for regular operations of the Defense Department, thereby evading budget caps. **CHN supports** the use of emergency spending on human needs programs outside budget caps to meet urgent, unanticipated, threatening and temporary needs. Public health emergencies and natural disasters should all be addressed outside budget caps.

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**CHN supports** allowing discretionary spending caps to expire in FY 2022, as provided under the Budget Control Act.

**CHN supports** the continued exemption of mandatory programs such as Social Security, Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and others, from budget caps or similar restrictions. These programs have been exempted because they provide essential services, with special attention to the needs of low-income and vulnerable people, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities. **CHN opposes** further extensions of budget caps on non-exempt mandatory programs such as Medicare.

**CHN supports** an even-handed and open assessment of expenditures and revenues through the budget process based on program effectiveness at meeting important goals. Tax expenditures, which exceeded \$1.6 trillion in 2017, must be subject to this assessment, along with Pentagon and domestic expenditures. Spending through the tax code is not only costly but also skewed to deliver its benefits disproportionately to people with the highest incomes. Support for military spending reductions has spread across the political spectrum. Other expenditures such as border wall construction and immigration enforcement measures, agricultural subsidies or private contractor payments should be assessed for their usefulness in promoting national goals. Similarly, tax expenditures intended to encourage economic growth should be evaluated for their cost-effectiveness and role in lessening or exacerbating inequality. *(See next section for a fuller discussion of CHN positions on revenues.)*

**CHN supports** the continued incorporation of inflation adjustments in projecting baseline costs of programs. The Congressional Budget Office includes the effects of inflation in order to show the cost of maintaining current service levels. Failure to do so would create the false impression that flat funding would cover the same amount of services as in the previous year and would worsen current trends of disinvestment in domestic needs.

**CHN supports** limiting increases in the deficit due to tax cuts by restoring the Conrad rule, which subjected tax cuts as well as proposals to increase mandatory program spending to a 60-vote Senate point of order if they would increase the deficit. In recent years, the Senate ended such limits on tax cuts, only maintaining the point of order against mandatory program spending increases. **CHN also supports** restoring the pay as you go rule in the House, ensuring that supermajority votes are needed to increase the deficit through tax cuts. **CHN opposes** applying pay-go rules to emergency spending for disaster relief or in response to economic downturns; nor should pay-go be applied to discretionary spending.

**CHN supports** automatic approval by Congress of an increase in the level of debt held by the U.S. government, based on the revenues and expenditures approved by Congress in its budget resolutions. Once Congress has approved levels of spending and revenues that result in a deficit, there should be no separate periodic votes required to increase the debt limit.

**CHN supports** a long-range balanced approach to reducing the deficit in which increased revenues from those most able to pay make up the majority of further deficit reduction measures. The nation needs more investment in affordable housing, public transit, job training, and sectors likely to provide good-paying jobs; without that, wages will continue to stagnate, and prosperity will not be shared with millions of Americans, including families with children. Budgets should incorporate the goal of stabilizing the debt to GDP ratio by the end of a ten-year period, taking into account the impact of deficit reduction measures on disparate income groups and protecting low-income people from harmful cuts in services.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** restrictive structural changes such as block grants, per capita caps or vouchers, as well as dollar cuts in critical human needs programs that would hamper their effectiveness or their ability to serve eligible families and individuals in essential entitlement programs including Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), SNAP, unemployment insurance, TANF, and SSI. **CHN opposes** waivers that would undermine the individual entitlement to benefits and **supports** ensuring that waiver requests from states are only approved if they are consistent with underlying law and accompanied by effective evaluation. **CHN opposes** offsetting cuts in one priority program to pay for another.

**CHN opposes** the use of reconciliation instructions within congressional budget resolutions that are intended to force cuts or restrictions in basic safety net programs and **opposes** fast-track procedures for terminating programs or converting safety net entitlement programs to discretionary appropriations.

**CHN opposes** efforts to sabotage, dismantle, or undermine the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which has provided health insurance to 20 million Americans and improved coverage for millions more, while making savings in overall health care costs that have already contributed to a reduction in long-range deficit trends. A good faith effort should seek improvements in the ACA as well as adopting other measures to expand access to health care and reduce costs.

**CHN opposes** budget enforcement procedures that are limited to across-the-board spending cuts without requiring revenue increases and/or reductions in tax expenditures, as well as budget rules changes that make it easier to cut taxes while making it procedurally difficult to consider revenue or expenditure increases. **CHN opposes** the use of “dynamic scoring” to justify costly tax cuts. Economists across the ideological spectrum agree that its use is more a political tool than a reasoned assessment of policy.

**CHN opposes** constitutional amendments to require a balanced budget.

## Tax Policy & The Economy

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes famously defined taxes as “what we pay for civilized society.” Over the past several decades, our tax system has become rigged in favor of the wealthy and corporations, while leaving average Americans and our children picking up the tab. The major tax bill passed in December 2017 exacerbates the problem. Tax breaks and loopholes, and offshoring of profits all serve to benefit the super-rich, Wall Street, and major corporations while starving our country of the revenue needed to make critical public investments to protect the most vulnerable in our society and ensure opportunity for everyone.

A tax system is needed that is built on the principles of fairness and adequacy. This means a system that is more progressive and raises a substantial amount of additional revenue from our country’s wealthiest individuals and corporations. Democrats and Republicans alike have supported proposals to increase the Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income workers without dependent children and provide more help to low-income families through the Child Tax Credit, proposals that if passed could expand opportunity to those in need and help more low-income individuals and families out of poverty.

Many in Congress have vowed their opposition to raising revenues. But enacting spending cuts alone to reduce the deficit would be devastating to vital domestic priorities including human needs programs. A tax system is needed that raises adequate revenues in a progressive manner and includes tax benefits that help struggling families.

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**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** a tax system that raises adequate revenues in a progressive manner and includes tax benefits that help struggling families.

**CHN supports** broadly reversing those provisions of the so-called Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) that favor the wealthy and corporations. Whether it's the cut in the top marginal tax rate for corporations or individuals, the doubling of the exemption for the estate tax or the tax break for pass-through corporations, the TCJA further rigged our tax code in favor of the powerful at the expense of everyone else. While many of these provisions should be more broadly reformed, others should simply be repealed outright.

**CHN supports** substantially increasing the scale and scope of tax credits for low- and middle-income families. The success of programs like the EITC and CTC show that these programs are well worth building up and replicating to address additional needs in the future.

**CHN supports** closing the gap in the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) so that no low-wage worker is taxed into poverty. Congress should expand the EITC for low-wage workers not raising children in their home, including extending the credit to young workers starting at age 21, to young adults who age out of foster care at 18 and to workers above the age of 64.

**CHN supports** strengthening the Child Tax Credit (CTC) for young children living in poverty by making the credit fully refundable starting with the first dollar of earnings, and by phasing it in at a much more rapid rate. The CTC is aimed at helping parents do the best for their children, but very poor families who most need it get only a partial credit or none at all.

**CHN supports** tax reform proposals that target corporate tax avoidance, reduce incentives for corporations to shift jobs and profits offshore, and crack down on tax havens. Multinational corporations should not be allowed to avoid paying their fair share in taxes by continuing to shift hundreds of billions in profits into tax havens each year.

**CHN supports** reducing tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans, who receive billions in tax benefits each year that do not serve the national interest, increase inequality, and starve the government of revenues needed for important services. As written, many of the largest tax breaks in our code are upside-down, meaning they provide greater benefits to the wealthy over low- and middle-income families. Those tax breaks targeting real needs should be reformed and turned right-side up so that they are better targeted to those facing hardship. Well targeted refundable credits for low- and moderate-income people are strongly preferable to deductions, which always benefit those in higher tax brackets more.

**CHN supports** taxing income from investments (such as capital gains and dividend income) at the same rate as income from work (ordinary income). There is no reason why wealthy investors like Warren Buffet should be paying a lower tax rate than many middle-income Americans.

**CHN supports** progressive new sources of revenue, such as financial transaction taxes on Wall Street trading and a Financial Crises Responsibility Fee, which would reduce the risk of and offset the costs related to firms that might be considered "too big to fail."

**CHN supports** a significantly more progressive estate tax at a rate at least as high as the rate in effect in 2009 (45 percent) and an exemption no higher than that applicable in 2009 (\$3.5 million). The estate tax should be restored to its role as a critical bulwark against the increasing consolidation of wealth in the United States.

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**CHN supports** repealing the loophole that allows a substantial portion of capital gains income to never be taxed if it is passed on as part of an estate. This is yet another way wealthy investors are able to escape taxation.

**CHN supports** enacting a carbon tax to combat the existential threat of climate change and generate much needed revenue for public investments. The carbon tax should be carefully designed so that some of the revenue generated is returned to low- and middle-income families to offset increased costs for the tax.

**CHN supports** legislative actions that prevent corporations from pretending to be foreign companies for tax purposes (a practice known as “corporate inversions”). If Congress refuses to act, the Treasury Department should use every administrative tool lawfully available to raise revenue and make our tax system fairer.

**CHN supports** the establishment of a tax credit to help make housing affordable for renters with the lowest incomes. Our nation has long provided tax relief for higher income homeowners, most of whom would be stably housed without assistance. A renters’ tax credit that could help ensure that the lowest income households are able to afford a safe, decent home is long overdue.

**CHN supports** an expansion of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit tied to reforms that make it more effective and more able to serve more low-income and extremely low-income, homeless, rural, and Native American populations.

**CHN supports** making the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC) refundable. This crucial reform would allow many low-income families to claim the credit for the first time. Child care is a major expense for families and consumes a larger share of the budgets of lower-income families. The current CDCTC provides limited benefits to low-income families because it is not refundable.

**CHN supports** increasing IRS funding so that the agency has adequate federal appropriations to strengthen and increase enforcement activities, especially focusing on taxpayers or corporations avoiding or evading large dollar amounts. After years of budget cuts, the IRS has been unable to ensure that the wealthy and corporations are paying what they legally owe.

**CHN supports** increased funding for the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) to help low-income taxpayers get every tax credit to which they are entitled.

**CHN supports** Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) eligibility for tax credits designed to help working immigrant families support their children and pay for college. The Congress and IRS must eliminate administrative barriers to applying for and receiving an ITIN in order to ensure that all taxpayers – regardless of their immigration status – are able to comply with their federal tax obligations.

**CHN supports** improving and retargeting tax incentives to promote asset building for low-income families with children, for retirement security and to reduce the racial wealth gap.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** making any “tax (cut) extenders” permanent or renewing them for any period of time without paying for them by increasing revenues from fair sources. It is outrageous that many lawmakers require that every penny of public investments be paid for by cutting programs, while at the same time they pass unpaid-for tax breaks, mostly for corporations, year after year.

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**CHN opposes** cutting funding for human needs programs to pay for any tax expenditures, including refundable tax credits such as EITC and CTC. Given the challenges many face in America, there is no reason additional help for some individuals should have to come at the cost of cuts for others in need.

### **CHN Supportive Issues**

Issues in this category are those in which CHN will serve to “bridge” the gap between the human needs community and any other coalitions working on the identified issues. The Coalition will not take the lead on these issues but will support other leaders and expand their advocacy capacity. As resources permit, CHN will:

- Advocate on behalf of these issues before Congress and the Administration;
- Disseminate sign-on letters generated by other organizations to CHN member groups;
- Co-host briefings and forums on supportive issues;
- Identify member organizations to participate in advocacy efforts, but will not take primary responsibility for arranging meetings or actions on the issue;
- Track the legislation in *The Human Needs Report*; and
- Provide updates during the bi-weekly Advocates’ meetings.

The following public policy initiatives are identified as **Supportive Issues**:

#### **Education and Labor**

A strong workforce is an educated workforce. In addition to K-12, an effective education system includes high-quality early childhood programs, including quality child care, Head Start, and Early Head Start, which help children develop the skills they need to succeed in school and help parents get and keep jobs. It includes access to affordable higher education, including college or university or technical school. It includes effective and well-funded job training for adults and youth.

Historically, union membership has led to better wages and benefits and greater job security. But the percent of workers who belong to unions has almost been cut in half since the 1980s. Today workers face many threats. Most workers are employed “at will” and can lose their jobs at any time. They may be given unpredictable schedules and less than full-time hours. Large numbers, especially in low-wage jobs, lack paid leave (including sick leave and paid family and medical leave). Many workers face discrimination: by race or gender, pregnant workers, immigrants, LGBTQ workers, workers wrongly classified as independent contractors and thus denied benefits – even unemployed workers face discrimination based solely on their employment status. And with decreased bargaining power, wages are stagnant.

Too often, work – even full-time work – does not provide sufficient compensation to raise families out of poverty. Moreover, for millions of workers, particularly those with caregiving responsibilities or those laboring in agricultural work, today’s jobs leave them struggling to meet their responsibilities at work and at home. The federal minimum wage has not been raised since 2009; since that time, inflation has eroded its value by close to 10 percent. Workers need improvements in wages, access to paid leave, a guarantee of sufficient hours, and parity for part-time workers. Finally, with two in three workers experiencing at least a year of joblessness for themselves or their household head during their working years, workers need the backup of a strong unemployment insurance system.

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## ***Fairness in the Workplace***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** all workers' freedom to form unions and to bargain collectively, including legislation to provide all public employees with the right to organize; to collectively bargain over wages, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment; and to access dispute resolution mechanisms such as mediation and arbitration.

**CHN supports** legislation to provide workers with the right to utilize a majority sign-up process (card-check) to form a union, which will help protect workers seeking to form a union from intimidation and coercion by anti-union employers.

**CHN supports** unions' rights to receive non-member fees, in addition to member dues, so that all employees who benefit from union representation are contributing to the cost of that representation.

**CHN supports** legislation to protect employees exercising their labor rights, including increased protections for workers engaging in strikes or peaceful protest actions, increased access to the court system for workers seeking justice for violations of their rights, and increased penalties for employers that violate workers' rights.

**CHN supports** legislation to prohibit employers from forcing employees seeking to organize from attending anti-union meetings, where employees are often intimidated by union-busting "persuaders."

**CHN supports** legislation to facilitate first contracts for newly formed unions—nearly half of which never reach a first contract—by requiring mediation and arbitration to settle disputes.

**CHN supports** legislation that would allow pregnant women to continue to do their jobs and support their families by requiring employers to make the same kinds of accommodations for pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions as they are currently required to do for employees with disabilities.

**CHN supports** legislation that ensures workplace equality by protecting LGBTQ workers from employment discrimination, including discriminatory hiring, firing, promotion, wages and benefits, and protection from retaliation for reporting these practices.

**CHN supports** the continuation of President Obama's executive order which prohibits the federal government and its contractors from discriminating based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

**CHN supports** policies and adequate funding to enforce workplace protections such as the right to minimum wage and overtime pay, child labor laws, healthy and safe workplaces, and equal opportunity and equal treatment.

**CHN supports** legislative actions that will curb misclassification of employees as independent contractors.

**CHN supports** legislative actions to secure full employee rights for workers currently excluded from federal labor law protections, including domestic workers, farmworkers, day laborers, in-home child care providers and others.

**CHN supports** legislative actions that will curb employers' abuse of immigrant workers.

**CHN supports** legislation that would make the practice of hiring discrimination against the long-term unemployed illegal.

**CHN supports** legislation that would limit employers' use of credit checks to screen potential employees, thus leveling the playing field for those workers who have suffered through economic hard-times.

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**CNH supports** legislation that would limit employers' use of criminal background checks to screen potential employees until they have received a conditional offer of employment. Thereafter, such background checks should only be considered in a manner that is consistent with the [EEOC's Enforcement Guidance on Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions](#).

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** any federal action that would erode worker protections, including the right to organize, to receive fair wages, to work in healthy and safe workplaces, to be whistleblowers, and to be free from discrimination. **CHN opposes** any federal action, including in the courts that would weaken public sector unions by prohibiting them from collecting fees from nonmembers. **CHN opposes** any efforts to roll back legal protections and agency enforcement efforts addressing pregnancy discrimination. **CHN opposes** turning back the clock on federal minimum wage and overtime protections, including for home care workers. **CHN opposes** immigration enforcement actions that undermine the enforcement of labor, health and safety, anti-retaliation and other employment laws.

### ***Adult Education and Workforce***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** a revitalized workforce system that will contribute to economic and job growth and enable workers to secure living wage jobs with decent benefits. This includes increased federal support for all workforce programs, including WIOA programs for adults, dislocated workers, and youth, national programs training hard-to-reach and hard-to-serve populations, the Employment Service, and unemployment insurance operations, as well as additional investments in literacy, adult basic education and career and technical education programs, rehabilitation services, and providing training for nontraditional occupations or those in which one gender is less than 25 percent of the workforce.

**CHN supports** significantly increasing the size of and access to Pell Grants so those pursuing a postsecondary education are not burdened with debt as they attempt to gain a foothold in the labor force.

**CHN supports** greater alignment of workforce development, postsecondary, and human services programs, including child care assistance, to create pathways to marketable postsecondary credentials for low-income adults and opportunity youth.

**CHN supports** increasing the focus on serving the most vulnerable workers – low-income adults and youth who have limited skills, lack work experience, and face other barriers to economic success; expanding education and training options to help participants access good jobs and advance in their careers; building robust career pathway programs that include integrated education and training strategies along with comprehensive support services; helping disadvantaged and unemployed adults and youth earn while they learn through support services and effective employment-based activities; preserving the national job-training program for migrant and seasonal farmworkers; and aligning planning and accountability policies across core programs to support more unified approaches to serving low-income, lower-skilled individuals.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** policies that promote rapid reemployment or “work first” policies rather than needed wage replacement for jobless workers or receiving education, training and placement help for good jobs.

## ***Job Quality and Caregiving Responsibilities***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** an increase in the federal minimum wage to \$15 for all workers and it should be indexed to average wage growth so that it cannot erode due to Congressional neglect. All sub-minimum wages should be gradually eliminated – those for workers with disabilities, youth and student workers. Furthermore, the tipped minimum wage should be eliminated, establishing one minimum wage for all workers.

**CHN supports** policies and adequate funding to enforce workplace protections such as the right to minimum wage, healthy and safe workplaces, equal opportunity and equal treatment. **CNH supports** restoring vitality to the federal overtime law by upholding, through legislative or judicial action, the final December 1, 2016 overtime regulations. **CHN supports** requiring the payment of prevailing wages in federal contracting. **CHN supports** federal legislation to improve gender pay equity and enforcement of equal pay laws.

**CHN supports** legislation that would establish a national minimum paid sick days standard for employers, expand FMLA coverage, and create a national paid family and medical leave insurance program. Further, the federal government should be a model employer, providing its employees with paid family and medical leave.

**CHN supports** a national paid family and medical leave insurance program that is universal, available to all workers regardless of where they work, the size of employer and whether they work full or part-time or are self-employed; is comprehensive, covering all needed and serious family and medical leaves; is inclusive to cover diverse families including those related by “blood or affinity” with the worker; and affordable and accessible to all workers, including replacing a significant portion of low-wage workers’ usual wages, and provides job protection and prohibits discrimination and retaliation for taking the benefit.

**CHN supports** legislation to create fair job schedules, including proposed laws that would give workers the right to ask for a change in their schedule without fear of retaliation; to receive sufficient advanced notice of their job schedules; to receive a minimum number of hours of work per week; to receive reporting pay if sent home from work early; to receive compensation if required to be on-call or scheduled for a “call-in shift;” and (for part-time workers) to receive access to available hours prior to the hiring of additional part-time workers. **CHN supports** legislation to create equitable access to benefits and pay for part-time workers.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** any paid family and medical leave legislation that is limited just to new parents, is limited to only part of the workforce or offers tax incentives that perpetuate inequalities in access to paid leave.

**CHN opposes** rescinding President Obama’s Executive Order that requires government contractors to provide paid sick days to employees. This Order ensures that taxpayer dollars are spent to help deter unnecessary contagion, among other health benefits.

**CHN opposes** any legislation that would undermine existing state and local labor standards, such as paid sick days or fair scheduling policies.

## ***Unemployment Insurance***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** strong state UI programs that reflect the needs of today’s working families. Congress must require states to provide up to 26 weeks of regular UI benefits, which,

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in an economy of rising unemployment durations, would provide jobseekers, especially lower-wage jobseekers, with enough time to find suitable new employment, without significantly impacting aggregate unemployment. Further, in recognition of the prominent role of part-time work in the U.S. economy, especially in large service-providing industries, Congress must ensure that part-time workers are eligible in all states. **CHN supports** federal “non-reduction” provisions prohibiting states from enacting offsetting reductions to regular state benefits during periods in which federal benefits for long-term claimants are activated—including reductions to benefit amounts and maximum potential durations.

**CHN supports** an adequately funded UI system, to ensure it can continue meeting its goals of stabilizing the economy and households during difficult times without harsh benefits cuts that harm working families. As a first step, Congress must raise the portion of annual earnings subject to federal UI taxation, known as the taxable wage base, which at \$7,000, is highly regressive. Recent policy reform proposals have put forward levels ranging from one-third to one-half of the Social Security taxable wage base. Notably, this would cause state wage bases to rise automatically.

**CHN supports** fair access to state UI programs, supported by full federal funding of program administration, and strong enforcement of applicable federal standards, to ensure state claims-filing processes can be easily understood and accomplished by most workers, including workers with literacy challenges, workers with limited English proficiency, older workers, and disabled workers.

**CHN supports** federal investments in layoff aversion strategies like short-time compensation, also known as work sharing, which lets firms reduce work hours as an alternative to layoffs during temporary downturns. UI benefits supplement worker earnings until conditions recover.

**CHN supports** a revitalized Employment Service, which provides cost-effective job-search assistance to jobseekers, including UI claimants, and greater investment in Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments, or RESEA, for UI claimants, especially those identified as the most likely to become long-term unemployed.

**CHN supports** Congressional authorization of a Job Seekers Allowance, which would be a modest, means-tested benefit to workers who are ineligible for UI, but who are attached to the labor-force, looking for work, and need financial assistance in order to be able to meaningfully search for work and support themselves and their families while doing so.

**CHN supports** reforms to the Extended Benefits (EB) program, the permanent federal-state program that extends the benefit duration of claimants who exhaust their regular state benefits during recessions. To ensure EB ramps up swiftly during difficult times, state activation criteria, also known as “triggers,” should be based on state unemployment rates, rather than insured unemployment rates, which are stricter; and payments should be fully federally funded, as state trust fund reserves usually are low or depleted during recessions.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** proposals that would grant states waivers of important federal UI requirements, for such purposes as diverting scarce UI trust fund dollars to conduct demonstration projects that allege to facilitate the reemployment of a state’s UI recipients but that condition UI receipt on factors unrelated to substantive eligibility; or to defy federal UI administrative standards, first established to ensure the prompt payment of benefits to eligible jobless workers. Current federal UI law grants states broad authority to define UI eligibility rules and disqualification penalties. In addition, many states demonstrated during the Great Recession that they have the capability and resources under existing federal UI law to employ strategies that help facilitate reemployment.

**CHN opposes** any attempts to allow states to require mandatory drug testing of UI applicants other than in the narrow circumstances spelled out in the Middle Class Tax Relief Act of 2012. Federal law currently permits states to conduct drug testing as a condition of initial UI eligibility if an individual was discharged for unlawful drug use, or if the only suitable work available to an individual is in an occupation that regularly conducts drug testing, and the duty to define such occupations cannot be delegated to the states.

**CHN opposes** any proposals that draw UI eligibility distinctions based on individual earnings. Involuntary job loss and long-term unemployment impose a wide range of material and personal hardships, and it would be incorrect to presume that even the highest-wage earners are immune to these outcomes.

### ***Early Child Care and Education***

**CHN supports** maintaining and substantially increasing funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant and increased funding for early childhood programs including Early Head Start, Head Start, the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program, and other programs that give young children what they need to thrive.

**CHN supports** investments in afterschool and summer programs to help prevent children from losing important educational gains while away from school and to enable parents to work.

**CHN supports** passage of the Child Care for Working Families Act to guarantee affordable, high-quality child care for millions of working families.

### **Poverty and Income Security**

Americans have a right to expect that their federal government will ensure opportunity and security for all. Poverty has been reduced by about 50 percent since the 1960s when support from programs that provide a basic standard of living is taken into account. Gains from public benefits programs improve the lives of those who directly benefit, and spur broadly shared economic growth.

During the Great Recession and its long aftermath, high unemployment caused millions to need unemployment insurance benefits, an infusion of cash that reduced family hardship and helped the economy to rebuild. But even in the years job growth was sparse, states and the federal government cut back on the months of unemployment insurance and allowed states' UI funds to decline. While unemployment has gradually declined to historically low levels, federal and state governments should prepare for an eventual downturn by rebuilding the unemployment insurance system so that it can protect workers and help them return to work.

Certain groups are disproportionately likely to experience poverty, and there should be a national commitment to overcome these disparities. Communities of color are poor at about three times the rate of non-Hispanic whites. People with disabilities are poor at about twice the rate of people without disabilities. Concentrated poverty exists in certain urban and rural areas, requiring a comprehensive approach to job creation and community development through rebuilding infrastructure, transportation, and affordable housing, combined with improved and stabilized education, job training, child care, and health care. Youth and young adults must be provided opportunities to attain post-secondary education, including through apprenticeships and other forms of on-the-job training, as well as access to social services, health care, and affordable housing.

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Families living in poverty, especially single-parent families, need comprehensive supports to prevent privation and to allow parents to raise their children with the resources they need to thrive and succeed. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families should be part of that package, providing income assistance while connecting families to job training and/or education, child care, and other needed services.

Social Security insures nearly all American workers and their families in the event of a worker's retirement, death, or qualifying disability. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) provides a basic standard of living for very low-income seniors and people with disabilities. Social Security and SSI together lift more people out of poverty than any other system but need to be strengthened. Overall retirement security is declining, as employer-sponsored defined benefit pensions are disappearing rapidly, and stagnant wages, high levels of debt and reduced home equity have sapped Americans' ability to save for retirement. And too many families live on a very thin financial margin, with little or no ability to get by if a worker dies or experiences a life-changing disability. Strengthening Social Security and SSI will enhance the economic security of seniors, people with disabilities, and families.

To help fight poverty, we also need accurate, rigorous means of measuring economic security and hardship. This means providing adequate funding for the U.S. Census Bureau, enabling it to conduct accurate decennial censuses and to collect annual local and state data through the American Community Survey, as well as other important research tools such as the Supplemental Poverty Measure.

### ***Youth Policies***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** a robust job creation strategy to link youth and young adults to employment pipelines and pathways within infrastructure, energy, transportation sectors and other high demand industries, including subsidized summer and year-round employment that provide critical work experience, pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships, and connections to private sector internships targeted to high poverty communities and those with high levels of unemployed youth and high school dropout rates.

**CHN supports** using the implementation of Carl D. Perkins Act and The Every Student Succeeds Act as key opportunities to advance equity for students of color, and support investments in multiple education options and pathways, including dropout recovery and reengagement strategies, that lead to the attainment of secondary, postsecondary and industry credentials for young people. It is essential that the nation's public education system play a key role in the recovery of young people who have dropped out of high school and support those who are at imminent risk of dropping out, including over-age and under-credited students.

**CHN supports** efforts to improve school climate and reduce suspensions, expulsions and school-based arrests through implementation of The Every Student Succeeds Act and redirection of funding. Congress should assess the impact of school-based policing and any disparate impact on specialized populations, particularly students of color, those with disabilities and LGBTQ students. Congress should also invest in federal funding streams and resources that help build positive school climates, including but not limited to mental health professionals, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and school personnel trained in positive youth development.

**CHN supports** the reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) with provisions to strengthen the law's core protections by reducing the placement of youth in adult jails pre-trial, providing more structure to the law's requirement to decrease racial and ethnic disparities, and phasing out exceptions that allow the detention of youth who have engaged in status offense behaviors. The bill also promotes the use of alternatives to incarceration, improves conditions and educational services for incarcerated youth, and strengthens state accountability.

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**CHN supports** a comprehensive response to the plight of poor and homeless unaccompanied youth, including a federal commitment to provide all youth in need with access to safe shelter and appropriate supportive services.

**CHN supports** the expansion of national service and increasing the inclusion of low-income youth and young adults in giving service to their communities and gaining valuable skills through national service programs such as AmeriCorps, the National Civilian Community Corps, Service Learning, Volunteer Generation, the Leland Emerson Fellowships and VISTA.

**CHN supports** protecting and expanding pathways to higher education and reauthorizing the Higher Education Act (HEA), with an emphasis on making federal financial aid resources work for low-income students, including policy provisions such as part-time and year-round Pell Grants, restoring the Ability to Benefit, work-study reform, transition and wrap-around supports, and protections against for profit entities that practice predatory practices harmful to low-income students and young people of color.

**CHN supports** reforms to the juvenile and criminal justice systems that seek to eliminate racial disparities in sentencing and policing, assist states in removing youth from the adult criminal justice system, close youth prisons and invest in community-based alternatives, trauma-informed approaches, and employment and postsecondary pathways, including expanding comprehensive programs to formerly incarcerated individuals through funding and legislation, such as the Second Chance Act. These investments can mitigate the consequences of over policing and criminalization of youth of color. They can also help youth lead productive lives and prevent their involvement with the juvenile justice or adult criminal justice systems, where youth, particularly youth of color, often are subjected to unjust treatment. To help youth move forward in life, support is needed for reforms that promote investments in prevention, early intervention and re-entry supports rather than costly incarceration. (See *Reforming the Justice System* recommendations.)

### ***Financial Security for Elderly and Disabled***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** proposals that protect and expand Social Security benefits while ensuring the program's long-term solvency. This could include both across-the-board increases and increases targeted to disadvantaged populations. Increased source of revenue could include raising or removing the cap on taxable income. **CHN supports** opportunities for beneficiaries to work up to their capacities while receiving Social Security disability payments, and the reinstatement of the student benefit to assist young people who continue their education at college, university, or vocational school after high school. **CHN supports** strengthening the basic standard of living provided by SSI by increasing the inadequate asset limits, updating the program's earned and unearned income exclusions that have been frozen since the SSI's enactment, ending eligibility time limits for refugees and other humanitarian immigrants, and bringing eligibility rules for other lawfully-residing immigrants into parity with those that apply to citizens. **CHN supports** increasing the sub-poverty level benefit.

**CHN supports** proposals to ensure that Social Security's COLA is improved to more accurately take into account health care and other costs of seniors and people with disabilities, so that their modest benefits do not continue to erode, as they do under the current formula. **CHN supports** policies that would strengthen defined benefit pensions for public and private employees, expand coverage for low-wage workers in other employer-based retirement plans, and provide effective incentives for personal savings and asset building by low-income people.

**CHN supports** Congress and the Administration working together to provide adequate administrative funding to the SSA so it can provide high-quality and timely service to the American people, which over the years has been the hallmark of the agency's stewardship. **CHN supports** adequate administrative budgets for SSA to meet the growing administrative burdens and to eliminate the backlogs facing SSA

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and state agencies responsible for disability determinations, allowing SSA to fulfill their responsibilities to the American people, including providing annual statements of contributions to the Social Security program, as required by law.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** cutting or privatizing Social Security or otherwise replacing some or all of Social Security benefits with private accounts, and it opposes proposals that would cut or lessen the progressivity of the financial security provided by Social Security, (including Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)) and SSI. **CHN opposes** cutting already-modest Social Security benefits. **CHN supports enacting paid family leave but opposes** proposals that purport to provide paid leave through delaying or reducing Social Security benefits. **CHN opposes** all cuts, including raising the retirement age, means-testing the benefit or adopting a “chained” consumer price index that would result in massive reductions in benefits received by the elderly, veterans and persons with disabilities. **CHN opposes** policies that force elderly and disabled refugees to lose their SSI or that confiscate the Social Security contributions of some workers, such as undocumented immigrants. **CHN opposes** policies that undermine defined benefit pensions.

### ***Job Creation and Employment***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** robust investment in sustainable infrastructure that helps to address the growing challenges of inadequate infrastructure and climate change and that will create good quality jobs, particularly for people who are struggling to find quality, stable employment.

**CHN supports** federal aid to encourage states and localities to create temporary jobs targeted to providing employment experience and opportunities for low-income workers and those who have exhausted unemployment benefits. Jobs in the public and private sectors can be created through initiatives similar to the successful but expired Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Fund, summer and year-round job placements for youth, and transitional jobs to help people with little job experience and/or severe barriers to employment, including ex-offenders.

**CHN supports** expansion of AmeriCorps, summer and year round employment programs and paid work experiences to create jobs and service opportunities for jobless young Americans. Temporary jobs programs should include strong anti-displacement protections to ensure that current workers do not lose their jobs or work hours due to these programs, and that no permanent positions are lost. Those placed in temporary subsidized positions should be paid the prevailing wage.

**CHN supports** enhanced funding for intensive and personalized reemployment services to link workers with training opportunities, to assist them in their job search, and to help employers find workers to fill job vacancies.

**CHN supports** robust work and training opportunities, as well as robust labor exchange programs that connect unemployed and underemployed workers to high quality jobs.

**CHN supports** full implementation of the Section 3 Economic Opportunities for Low and Very Low Income Persons’ obligation to provide job training, employment, and contracting opportunities for low and very low-income residents.

**CHN supports** a strong safety net for those who are unable to find work, or who are poor even though they are working.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** any attempts to weaken safety net programs through block granting or otherwise restricting federal investments for such programs, mandatory work requirements or arbitrary time limits on benefit receipt.

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### ***Temporary Assistance for Needy Families***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** improvements to the TANF program to offer greater income supports to more low-income families and avoid supplantation of other state spending. **CHN supports** measuring TANF's success by poverty reduction rather than caseload reduction. **CHN supports** increasing TANF recipients' access to high quality education and training without arbitrary time limits.

**CHN supports** changes to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) work participation rate (WPR) that give states credit for engaging clients in education and training and barrier removal activities, and that allow states to align TANF with workforce programs.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** cuts to the TANF block grant or block granting of other key programs.

### ***Community Services Block Grant***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** increased funding for the Community Services Block Grant, which funds Community Action Agencies with flexible funds to support gap-filling activities that address unmet local needs, innovative initiatives to combat poverty and promote self-sufficiency, and rapid responses to urgent community needs.

### ***Measuring Economic Security & Hardship***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** adequate and timely funding for the Census Bureau.

**CHN supports** removing the citizenship question from the 2020 census.

**CHN supports** increased funding for the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**CHN supports** including questions on sexual orientation and gender identity in surveys and record systems in consultation with federal statistical experts.

**CHN supports** investigating the Administration's failure to move forward with recommended revisions/improvements to the race/ethnicity questions on the census and American Community Survey.

### ***Regulations, Waivers & Enforcement***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** effective enforcement of laws that protect workers, consumers, and the environment. **CHN supports** opportunities for wide public comment before regulatory changes.

**CHN supports** cross-agency federal efforts to integrate systems and share data in order to develop client-centric systems that are coordinated and responsive to client needs regardless of funding source. **CHN supports** the use of program options to improve service delivery and program effectiveness. **CHN supports** the collection and reporting of both financial and outcome data as part of the waiver process in order to improve our understanding of effective programs and the resources they deliver.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** efforts to overturn regulations as a block or to put a moratorium on regulations regardless of their impact. **CHN opposes** the use of waivers to bypass essential protections, including public administration necessary to protect the integrity of core functions, create new conditions of eligibility, or reduce benefits or services for low-income populations.

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## Food and Nutrition

Hunger in America is recognized as the recurrent and involuntary lack of access to sufficient food due to poverty or constrained resources, which can lead to malnutrition over time. Families who experience hunger frequently skip meals or eat too little, sometimes going without food. Those who have access to some food often have lower quality diets or must resort to seeking emergency food because they cannot always afford the food they need. Research shows that young children in such food insecure households are more likely to suffer from ill health and developmental problems and are more likely to be hospitalized. On the other hand, people who benefited from nutrition assistance during childhood experience better education outcomes and earnings as adults, as compared with similarly low-income children who did not receive nutrition aid.

Two-thirds of people who receive assistance under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP; formerly known as food stamps) are children, elderly, or disabled. Most working-age SNAP recipients work, but simply earn too little to afford the food they need. Existing SNAP rules set harsh limits on assistance for adults without dependent children; they can only receive three months of benefits over three years unless they are working at least 20 hours per week. Most of these extremely poor individuals are unable to secure enough work hours and do lose assistance unless the state seeks a waiver of the three-month limit because of high local unemployment. Some proposals would make it more difficult for states to seek such waivers and would also impose similar time limits on more adults receiving SNAP, although there is no evidence that setting such limits results in more work.

SNAP is one of the nation's most effective anti-poverty programs. Even though it only provides about \$1.40 per meal per person, SNAP lifted 3.4 million people out of poverty in 2017, according to the Census Bureau's Supplemental Poverty Measure. That is a conservative estimate; past analyses that corrected for underreporting of benefits found that millions more were lifted out of poverty.

Every day one in five Americans receives nutrition assistance through one or more of the 15 federal nutrition assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, school lunch, school breakfast, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), senior programs and emergency food and shelter programs.

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** efforts to strengthen and protect Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps) access and benefits to low-income individuals and families. Congress must invest resources to make benefit allotments more adequate, ensure eligibility to more vulnerable people such as jobless adults, ex-offenders and immigrants, and connect more eligible people with program benefits. **CHN supports** ensuring that program funding is adjusted to address unmet needs and to keep pace with inflation. **CHN supports** additional funding to states to cover the costs of administering SNAP.

**CHN supports** efforts to strengthen and expand school meals, pre-school (Child and Adult Care Food Program, or CACFP) and out-of-school-time nutrition programs and to ensure funding to serve all eligible mothers and young children for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). **CHN supports** efforts to protect the integrity of the nutrition standards of the child nutrition and school meal programs and WIC by relying on the scientific recommendations of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM).

**CHN supports** adequate and anticipated-need funding for all food and nutrition programs during the annual appropriations process— including WIC, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), senior programs and emergency food and shelter programs.

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**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** restrictive structural changes to SNAP such as block grants or waivers that would undermine the individual entitlement to SNAP. **CHN opposes** any policy change that would incentivize states to place barriers to SNAP receipt.

## Health

Every person in the U.S. should have access to quality, comprehensive, and affordable health care. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has expanded coverage for millions of Americans, providing subsidies for people with moderate incomes and important protections for health care consumers, including a ban on lifetime benefit caps and a prohibition on denying coverage based on pre-existing conditions. There is more to be done. States that have opted not to expand Medicaid have uninsured rates that are almost twice as high as states that have accepted Medicaid expansion. Prescription drugs are still too expensive. Too many people remain uninsured, and even for those who do have coverage, it may not provide comprehensive, quality care. Public health programs, prevention, and community health centers play a critical role in the health care system.

The ACA has been under attack from its first day of implementation, and it remains under attack. The number of people with access to health care rose year after year after the ACA became law; there is evidence, however, that the growth rate of insured Americans has slowed. But the federal government has a role to play in guaranteeing that Americans from all walks of life have access to affordable health care -- that includes all age groups and people with disabilities, through the Children's Health Insurance Program to Medicaid and Medicare. Health care must be adequately funded without shifting costs to those who can least afford them. Finally, health care should be broadly available for immigrants; this means no unnecessary documentation requirements, or any other barriers to health care for citizens and immigrants.

The epidemic of substance use disorders has taken more American lives than the Vietnam War and urgently requires a multi-pronged federal response emphasizing access to treatment. Such a response should also include ensuring a stable and professional behavioral healthcare workforce, research into non-addictive pain medication, effective approaches to treatment, and controls over abusive practices by the pharmaceutical industry that have led to massive over-prescribing of addictive drugs.

The federal government must play a more aggressive role in protecting people from life-threatening public health hazards. Lead poisoning remains a serious threat to children's health. Lead contamination of Flint, Michigan's water supply was a preventable tragedy whose harm to children and the whole community will require continued services for years to come. We know that many other communities' water supplies have high levels of lead contamination that must be addressed. Further, the biggest threat of lead poisoning to children is from lead paint and dust in public buildings and residences. The scientific consensus is that there is no safe blood lead level in young children. Nevertheless, children continue to be poisoned by lead in publicly supported housing and other units available to low-income families.

Lead poisoning is just one of many public health dangers that require federal leadership and investment. Pollution in our air and water and improper protections against toxic substances disproportionately endanger low-income communities and agricultural and other workers. In addition, it is an urgent priority to protect as many people as possible from the devastation of hurricanes and other natural disasters, and to provide extra help for the poorest people and communities, not only in immediate rescue efforts, but also in the rebuilding that must follow.

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## ***Affordable Health Care***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** guaranteed affordable and high-quality health care for every person. **CHN supports** maintaining the reforms in the Affordable Care Act that protect consumers, expand coverage and improve the quality of health care, especially consumer protections that shield from discrimination against people with preexisting conditions.

**CHN supports** expanding health care access to the remaining uninsured, including those left out of the Affordable Care Act.

**CHN supports** funding for discretionary programs in the Affordable Care Act, including for public health and prevention, and for community health centers serving the remaining uninsured.

**CHN supports** the expansion of Medicaid in every state so that consumers may qualify for coverage based on their income, rather than family status or disability.

**CHN supports** policies that hold states accountable for using every tool available to conduct outreach and enroll all eligible people in the programs and benefits available under health reform.

**CHN supports** increased funding for integrating financial capability services into community health centers and certified community behavioral health care clinics to improve the financial well-being of vulnerable populations.

**CHN supports** efforts to strengthen coverage for children under the Children's Health Insurance Program, Medicaid, and the marketplaces.

**CHN supports** policies that improve affordability and lower out-of-pocket health care and drug costs for consumers.

**CHN supports** policies that address racial and ethnic health disparities.

**CHN supports** legislation that addresses the significant social, cultural, physical, and economic barriers that continue to impede communities of color and others from obtaining affordable, quality health and mental health care. CHN supports improving data collection and reporting to identify and measure disparities and hold our health care system accountable.

**CHN supports** increased funding for the Title X, the nation's only dedicated family planning program.

**CHN further supports** access to essential safety-net resources that increase the capacity of providers to deliver high-quality family planning and sexual health services.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** restricting the availability of coverage and care for moderate- and low-income people.

**CHN opposes** any and all efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act or measures to weaken the law's goal of expanding affordable and comprehensive coverage, and particularly any attempt to repeal the ACA without simultaneously enacting new legislation to provide affordable and comprehensive coverage.

**CHN opposes** policies that weaken the consumer protections in the ACA, including efforts that expand the sale of 'junk insurance' that does not guarantee coverage for those with preexisting conditions.

**CHN opposes** restrictions on funding for the Affordable Care Act, including limits or delays in the availability of tax credit subsidies for moderate-income people to purchase insurance.

**CHN opposes** policies that erect barriers to coverage and care, such as efforts to add work requirements, drug testing, or lockouts to Medicaid programs.

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**CHN opposes** cuts to or caps on federal Medicaid funding or changes to the structure of Medicaid that would result in shifting costs to states and to the low-income children, families, seniors, and people with disabilities who rely on it.

**CHN opposes** changes to Medicare that shift more health care costs onto low-income beneficiaries.

**CHN opposes** restricting the availability of coverage and care for immigrants, unnecessary documentation requirements, and any other barriers to health care for citizens and eligible immigrants.

**CHN opposes** changes to Title X that undermine the patient-provider relationship, bar qualified providers, or limit the availability of clinical family planning and sexual health services.

**CHN opposes** efforts to undermine individuals' choice of providers in Medicaid. **CHN further opposes** any efforts to apply cost-sharing to family planning services within the program.

### ***Addiction and Substance Abuse***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** full funding and implementation of all programs that expand prevention, treatment, and recovery services for individuals and families with substance use disorder.

**CHN supports** evidence-based addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery programs and services that focus on vulnerable and at-risk populations including those in underserved rural areas, incarcerated and formerly-incarcerated, low-income people and families, pregnant mothers and those with substance-exposed newborns, military veterans, older adults susceptible to non-medical use of prescription drugs, children and youth, and other highly affected communities.

**CHN supports** enforcement of federal laws that require insurance companies to provide equal coverage, parity for addiction and mental health services.

**CHN supports** programs, data analysis, and research that show America's addiction crisis includes dual-diagnosis of mental health conditions and more than just opioid abuse, i.e. that other drugs such as cocaine, methamphetamines, synthetic cannabinoids (spice), benzodiazepines, tobacco, and other dangerous drugs must be factored into a comprehensive public health strategy.

**The CHN supports** programs and policies to address the recruitment and retention of behavioral health care professionals who are vital to our nation's ability to help individuals recover and sustain recovery.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** any regulatory changes or eligibility restrictions in federal health programs, including mandatory work requirements, that reduce services for people with substance use disorder, substance abuse, or mental health needs.

### **Housing and Homelessness**

The lack of affordable housing for Americans with the lowest incomes is a problem that has become overwhelming. Rents are rising, wages at the bottom of the labor market are flat, and more people are renting their homes than ever before. Yet, the supply of affordable housing has not kept pace. As a result, record-breaking numbers of families cannot afford a decent place to call home. Every state and every congressional district is impacted. The response by the federal government remains woefully inadequate. Federal programs exist to provide affordable housing to Americans with the lowest incomes, but Congress has never agreed to spend anywhere near the amount necessary to address the problem comprehensively. As a result, three-fourths of Americans with incomes low enough to be eligible get no government help paying for housing.

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A large and growing number of Americans do not have housing they can afford. In no state can an individual working full-time, year-round at the minimum wage afford a modest two-bedroom rental unit for his or her family. Nationwide, the shortage of affordable and available rental homes for extremely low-income households runs in the millions. Families are often forced to make difficult choices between paying rent and buying groceries or visiting their doctor. In worst cases, they become homeless; it is estimated that over 550,000 people were homeless as counted on a single night in 2017, and that 20 percent of them were children.

Research demonstrates that when people have a safe and affordable place to live, many other problems (such as unemployment, ill health, and lack of food) are lessened. Further, long-term studies show that when rent subsidies allow low-income families to move to neighborhoods with better schools and other advantages, children are more likely to go further in education and earn more as adults, and less likely to get in trouble with the law. Helping people pay rent is particularly effective at improving the economy and creating jobs.

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** providing safe, decent, affordable rental housing to low-income households, including households who are experiencing homelessness, through a full range of programs at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and elsewhere, to fund these three elements. **CHN supports** Congress adequately funding all of these through annual appropriations and dedicated funding. With the notable exception of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit and National Housing Trust Fund programs, virtually all existing housing programs are funded through “discretionary” spending, so responsible expansion of limits on that spending are particularly important for housing.

**CHN supports** increasing funding for programs such as public housing, housing choice vouchers, project-based rental assistance, and homeless assistance grants, both to preserve existing assistance and to expand assistance to eligible families who cannot access these limited programs.

**CHN supports** including rental housing in any infrastructure package enacted, since housing is part of the built environment that is necessary for businesses and local economies to thrive, and its development employs people in a range of jobs.

**CHN supports** funding for and maintaining the structure of the National Housing Trust Fund so that more extremely low-income households can access safe, decent, and affordable housing.

**CHN supports** funding of special population vouchers, such as for the Family Unification Program (FUP), which strengthen families by preventing foster care placements, and the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers, which provide housing and supportive services to the most vulnerable veterans.

**CHN supports** supportive services and other interventions that, in addition to housing, are needed to address family homelessness, including early care and learning, adult education, employment assistance and mental health services.

**CHN supports** federal policies that will bring an end to homelessness.

**CHN supports** the low-income housing tax credit, which uses tax subsidies to support development of housing that is affordable for people with modest incomes and can be combined with rent subsidies to provide housing for people with extremely low incomes. In addition to rental assistance and homeless assistance programs, **CHN supports** the HOME, Section 811 Housing for Persons with Disabilities Program, Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly, and Low Income Housing Tax Credit programs, which bring communities needed resources to meet their range of housing needs.

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**CHN supports** Rural Housing Service programs that help meet the needs of the lowest income households, such as the Section 515 and Section 521 programs.

**CHN supports** efforts to affirmatively further fair housing and expand fair housing protections on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status and source of income.

**CHN supports** full implementation of the Section 3 Economic Opportunities for Low and Very Low Income Persons' obligation to provide job training, employment, and contracting opportunities for low and very low-income residents.

**CHN supports** increased funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the use of the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) and other efforts to bring greater energy efficiency to federally-assisted housing properties.

**CHN supports** a more systematic and comprehensive approach to ending housing instability for extremely low-income Americans, through enactment of a housing policy that provides resources so that no one is homeless or lacks decent housing they can afford.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** any proposals that would reduce the number of federally-assisted housing units available to people with the lowest incomes.

**CHN opposes** any proposals that would weaken income targeting, increase residents' rents, negatively impact housing stability, restrict immigrant families' access to federal housing programs, or impose work requirements on residents or time limits on assistance.

## Social Services

The nation's social services are designed to strengthen families, help children thrive, and to enable seniors and people with disabilities to live in their communities and prevent the need for institutional care. For many low-income families, people with disabilities and seniors, access to such critically needed services is impossible without government help.

Low-income families need help in a wide array of areas. For the vast majority of families where at least one parent works, child care is essential but extremely costly. When parents do not live together, children continue to need the financial support of both their parents to avoid poverty. Federal child support assistance workers help custodial parents collect support from the absent parent on behalf of their child. Child support lifted close to a million people out of poverty in 2017, more than half of them children. However, for the one in four non-custodial parents who have limited ability to pay child support, it is important to seek amounts that can actually be paid rather than driving parents underground or incarcerating them.

Other services can help parents trying to raise their children successfully to cope with a wide range of challenges affecting parent and/or child. With help, families can stay safely together, avoiding the harm that can come when children are placed in foster care – foster family homes or group care settings. Until early 2018, most federal child welfare funding paid for care for children removed from their families – foster family care, relative care, group care, or guardianship or adoption assistance; now a change in federal law allows more federal funds to be used for services and treatment to keep children safely with their families and out of foster care. In 2017, 56 percent of children in foster care were returned to their parents or other relatives; just about one third were adopted or discharged to guardianship. The growing epidemic of substance use disorders has resulted in a large increase in the number of children and parents needing care, with gross shortfalls in needed substance abuse prevention and treatment, and mental health and social services to address related trauma and other needs.

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Youth aging out of foster care or young people who leave home because of conflicts need a range of services to ensure that they can continue their education, find employment, and afford housing. Many are subject to homelessness, sex trafficking, and trouble with the law. LGBTQ youth are disproportionately likely to experience these crises. There are far too few community-based support services to help youth make a successful transition to adulthood.

### ***Child Protections, Foster Care, Kinship Care and Adoption***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** reforms to current savings and ownership limits in programs such as TANF, SNAP, and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to encourage savings and financial planning for the future.

**CHN supports** investing in children and youth and strengthening families as key poverty reduction strategies. These investments can help prevent intergenerational cycles of poverty by maximizing opportunities for success. This includes provision of critical mental health and substance abuse services to both adults and youth.

**CHN supports** legislation that helps prevent child abuse and neglect and other family crises, strengthens supports for vulnerable children, youth and families, increases access to substance abuse and mental health services and treatment for children and parents, promotes care in the most family-like settings, strengthens the capacity of the child welfare workforce to respond to the special needs of children and families, promotes permanency and post-permanency services and assists women experiencing domestic violence and their children who witness it.

**CHN supports** the reauthorization of and full funding for the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and efforts to continue to increase funding to help more children benefit from the Family First Prevention Services Act enacted in February 2018. **CHN supports** the protections for children in the Indian Child Welfare Act.

**CHN supports** full funding for the Violence Against Women Act.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** cuts to programs that help address vulnerable children's needs, including the Child and Family Services and Promotion Safe and Stable Families Programs. **CHN opposes** conversion of child welfare services and foster care entitlement funding into a state block grant.

**CHN opposes** discrimination in the recruitment and placement of adoptive and foster parents and any practices that would harm youth who identify as LGBTQ.

### ***Social Services Block Grant***

**CHN supports** adequate funding for the Social Services Block Grant, which provides supportive services in communities where low-income children and families live.

### ***Child Support Enforcement***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** services that help custodial parents collect child support from non-custodial parents (NCPs) who are able to pay. **CHN supports** voluntary employment services for NCPs to enhance their ability to support their children.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** child support policies that are set without regard to ability to pay and that put NCPs at risk of ever-increasing arrears and incarceration. **CHN opposes** requiring cooperation with child support enforcement as a condition of eligibility for public benefits.

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## Immigration

We are a nation of immigrants, and our prosperity is inextricably tied to their contributions to our economy and culture. Protecting the rights of immigrants and refugees living in the United States and reforming our failed immigration system are moral and economic imperatives. Aggressive efforts to deport millions of immigrants are tearing apart families and wounding our communities. Taking children from their families or detaining parents with children are inhumane policies that must be rejected. Similarly, it is contrary to American values to deny a path to citizenship to Dreamers who were brought to the U.S. as children, or to those who fled emergency conditions in their native countries and have lived and worked here for decades. Massive immigrant enforcement initiatives cost billions of dollars, funds which should instead be directed to investments in our shared future and promoting economic security for all Americans, including children.

More than two-thirds of the undocumented immigrants in the United States are in the nation's workforce. These immigrants work in the toughest, hardest-to-fill jobs for the least amount of pay and the fewest workplace protections. Our broken immigration system leaves millions of immigrant workers without any way to become citizens, regardless of the taxes they pay and the contributions they make to the places where they work and the communities in which they live.

Despite high rates of employment, non-citizen immigrant and mixed status families experience a wide range of unnecessary hardships. Immigrants—including those lawfully present in the U.S.—are often shut out of basic economic support programs available to other taxpayers due to arbitrary eligibility restrictions that bear no relation to need. New proposals to deny legal status to immigrants because they have made legal use of public benefits or might in the future are calculated to silence the Statue of Liberty's call to "give me your tired, your poor" and replace it with an open door for immigrants with money.

Even when eligible, immigrant and mixed status families are less likely to receive critical economic supports because of inconsistent and confusing rules and fear of repercussions. By denying assistance to immigrants in need, we make it harder for families to rise out of poverty, and harder for children, many of them citizens, to grow up healthy and ready to make their own contributions in adulthood.

Looking forward, an effective and meaningful immigration system will advance our nation's economic growth and productivity. We will become a stronger nation when our immigrant population can assume the rights and responsibilities of full citizenship. A path to citizenship is one of the most important steps to addressing poverty in the United States, as non-citizens have nearly twice the poverty rate of naturalized citizens.

Congress must give priority to creating an immigration system that preserves family unity, provides meaningful opportunity, protects the rights of immigrants – whether at home, in the workplace, in the courtroom or beyond -- and strengthens communities and the U.S. economy.

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** a comprehensive fix to our nation's immigration laws that includes a clear and affordable path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants living and working in the U.S.

**CHN supports** permanent protections for undocumented youth and those with TPS, many of whom have lived in the U.S. for decades and sometimes in the same households.

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**CHN supports** the U.S. commitment to welcoming refugees who are fleeing persecution and imminent danger as a reflection of our moral and national values.

**CHN supports** cuts to funding for the Department of Homeland Security to mitigate the harmful and abusive enforcement practices, massive detention expansion and militarization of the southern border.

**CHN supports** Congress providing access to supports that will help immigrants integrate into the fabric of our communities. This should include policies that harness the skills of immigrant workers and allow them to develop their full potential, including expanding immigrants' access to adult education and workforce development programs, English language acquisition programs, and dual generation programs.

**CHN supports** policies that lift immigrant families out of poverty and promote economic security.

**CHN supports** equal access, regardless of immigration status, to safety net programs, refundable tax credits, public services and economic supports that meet basic human needs, including health services and insurance, education, employment benefits, nutrition assistance, and income supplements.

**CHN supports** full labor and civil rights protections for immigrant workers, regardless of immigration status.

**CHN supports** the continuation of federal policies by both immigration and labor law enforcement agencies that prevent unscrupulous employers from exploiting immigration status to deter employees from asserting their rights on the job.

**CHN supports** policies that build trust between local law enforcement and all community members to ensure public safety. Separating local policing from federal immigration enforcement promotes the safety of the whole community. Forcing local law enforcement to enforce federal immigration law does not make communities any safer and inhibits victims and witnesses of crimes from coming forward as they fear retribution or separation from their families.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** massive enforcement and deportation initiatives that will tear apart immigrant families and communities.

**CHN opposes** any increases to funding for a border wall, detention or other enforcement resources for Department of Homeland Security.

**CHN opposes** threats to the DACA program, which is protecting over 740,000 young immigrants from deportation who have made important contributions to their communities and the economy and to TPS, which has provided humanitarian protection to approximately 300,000 individuals – many of whom have lived in the U.S. for decades and sometimes in the same households as DACA recipients.

**CHN opposes** the Muslim Ban, which has permanently banned the entry of most nationals from several Muslim-majority countries and is being used as the basis for banning nationals at the southern border.

**CHN opposes** changes to our family-based immigration system, including changes to the public charge rule that would impose a wealth test on immigrant families.

**CHN opposes** policies that divide families, including separating children from parents and other actions that have a divisive or harmful effect on immigrant communities and that foster restricted access to services for eligible beneficiaries or indirect intimidation where people are forced to forego basic needs.

**CHN opposes** the detention of immigrants awaiting their opportunity to see a judge and urges instead the use of community-based alternatives to detention.

**CHN opposes** restricting the availability of coverage and care for immigrants, unnecessary documentation requirements, and any other barriers to health care for immigrants and their families.

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## Social, Economic and Racial Justice

Systemic barriers and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, immigration status, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or poverty subjects many in our nation to disparate outcomes. Many are hit harder by environmental hazards, go to prison when people who can afford a lawyer get off, are more likely to pay exorbitant interest to borrow money and to be excluded from the voting booth.

Far too many people of color and low income people in this country are shut out of mainstream financial services and find themselves trapped in a cycle of debt when they seek a mortgage, buy a car, or borrow for other expenses from unscrupulous lenders.

From tainted water supplies to lead-based paint to poor air quality, environmental hazards disproportionately affect low-income communities and communities of color.

People with disabilities are roughly twice as likely as people without disabilities to live below the poverty line, and people of color are disproportionately likely to experience disability or illness. People with disabilities, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, or other demographic grouping, continue to face barriers to employment, education, housing, transportation, and health care because of inaccessible and inadequately-funded state and federal programs, outdated public policies and discrimination despite the legal protections of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Far too many people lack access to justice. They are unable to seek legal redress because they cannot afford to hire an attorney. They are subject to patterns of mass incarceration, racial profiling, police misconduct, sentencing inequity, barriers to employment and civic participation once a sentence has been served.

Far too many people face discrimination at the ballot box. Onerous photo I.D. laws discourage voting, as do cutbacks in early voting and elimination of precincts in minority neighborhoods. And the wealthiest donors have disproportionately more influence in the political process than average voters, skewing legislative action towards more tax cuts for the well-connected and fewer investments to build shared prosperity.

Many reforms are needed to remedy these injustices. We cannot meet human needs without protections against all these discriminatory practices. We also need to support judicial and Executive Branch nominees with a demonstrated record of combating unequal treatment and to oppose those whose views and record favor wealthy and powerful interests.

The president's nominees to key cabinet, agency and advisory positions have an enormous impact on all of human needs policies, programs and services. Similarly, nominations to the federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, are of concern to the needs of low-income communities. The people who occupy these positions have the ability to establish and implement good policies or bad policies that affect every aspect of low-income and other vulnerable people's lives.

### ***Policies for People with Disabilities***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** policies that promote the empowerment, inclusion, independence, integration, and self-determination of people with disabilities in all aspects of society.

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**CHN supports** policies that increase the availability of affordable, accessible, and inclusive housing and transportation.

**CHN supports** policies that enhance educational opportunities for children with disabilities, including under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and other relevant laws.

**CHN supports** policies that seek to reduce the disproportionately high unemployment rate for people with disabilities and create the opportunity for competitive integrated employment by means of workplace supports, job training, rehabilitation services, education-to-workforce transition programs, work incentives programs, Medicaid buy-ins, and rigorous enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other civil rights laws.

**CHN supports** policies that allow people with disabilities to build assets.

**CHN supports** policies that provide opportunities for people with disabilities to have greater access to long-term supports and services in the home and community.

**CHN supports** policies that would improve the direct care workforce through training, adequate wages and other supports, and that would support family caregivers of people with disabilities.

**CHN supports** the continued role of Social Security in providing a basic standard of living for people with disabilities and elders.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** policies that threaten the rights of people with disabilities under the ADA and other civil rights laws.

**CHN opposes** policies that have the effect of cutting back on Medicaid, Social Security, education, employment services, housing, accessible transportation, and other critical supports for people with disabilities.

### ***Access to Justice***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** adequate federal funding for robust civil legal services programs. **CHN supports** reform of Legal Services Corporation restrictions on the legal assistance that may be provided with federal funds, including lifting the restriction on class action litigation. **CHN supports** access to justice and to the courts to enforce rights under the law and to receive appropriate relief from all responsible parties.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** forced arbitration, class action bans, and other devices that make it more difficult for individuals to access the justice system.

### ***Reforming the Justice System***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** passage of a federal anti-racial profiling law that prohibits biased based policing, like the End Racial Profiling Act, with prohibitions on profiling based on gender, gender identity and expression, and sexual orientation.

**CHN supports** the Trump Administration requiring law enforcement agencies that receive federal funding to collect data on police-civilian encounters, including encounters that involve the use of force, sexual assault, misconduct, and the deaths of individuals not technically in the custody of law enforcement. **CHN supports** the implementation of the Death in Custody Reporting Act. **CHN supports**

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building on the FBI's attempts to collect data on police-community encounters. **CHN supports** mandatory training on implicit bias, de-escalation, crisis intervention, procedural justice, adolescent development, and proper interactions with persons with disabilities and mental illness.

**CHN supports** legislation that amends current law to provide a standard that ensures criminal liability for civil rights violations that are a result of police misconduct.

**CHN supports** building on the bipartisan momentum garnered in the 115th Congress and, moving forward, pushing for sentencing reform legislation that specifically addresses front-end drivers of mass incarceration that have led to overcrowding and overspending at the federal level.

**CHN supports** the adoption of body worn camera policies that adequately protect privacy rights, civil rights, and civil liberties. Law enforcement agencies should: (1) develop body worn camera policies publicly, seeking community and stakeholder input; (2) commit to a set of narrow and well-defined purposes for which cameras and their footage may be used; (3) specify clear operational policies for recording, retention, and access of footage; (4) make footage available to promote accountability with appropriate privacy safeguards in place; and (5) preserve the independent evidentiary value of officer reports by prohibiting officers from viewing footage before filing their report.

**CHN supports** passage of bipartisan legislation that provides state and local governments and agencies with resources to support programs that assist formerly-incarcerated individuals with reentering the community.

**CHN supports** the implementation of policies at the federal, state and local levels that support reentry and remove harmful barriers to basic necessities such as employment, housing, education and training, and income and nutrition assistance.

**CHN opposes** any policy riders that prohibit people with certain records from being ineligible for federal housing assistance and other public benefits.

**CHN supports** legislation that would make background checks fair and accurate and would expand access to expungement and sealing of criminal records. **CHN supports** legislation to adopt Fair Chance Hiring Practices (Ban the Box) and remove questions regarding conviction and arrest histories from job applications and delays inquiry into arrest and conviction history until after the initial offer. **CHN supports** legislation to reauthorize and increase funding for the Second Chance Act.

**CHN supports** legislation that eliminates mandatory minimums, expands the federal safety valve, providing judicial second look, alternatives to incarceration, and ending drug conspiracy laws.

**CHN supports** legislation that addresses the restoration of voting rights to currently and formerly incarcerated persons at the federal level, such as the Democracy Restoration Act.

**CHN supports** stronger gun laws and programs to prevent the senseless violence that continues to threaten children's safety and the safety of our communities.

### ***Executive & Judicial Branch Nominees***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** nominees showing a dedicated commitment to faithfully implementing laws that protect low-income and other vulnerable people, personal integrity, and ethical standards. CHN will, at its discretion, scrutinize nominees' qualifications and support or oppose individual nominations where warranted.

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## ***Reclaiming our Democracy***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** requiring full transparency of money in politics, including disclosure of the sources of funds for political campaign and lobbying expenditures and increasing accountability of corporate spending through shareholder oversight. CHN also supports small-donor matching programs to elevate the voices of small donors.

**CHN supports** ensuring that every eligible citizen can freely exercise their right to vote and have their vote counted; this includes efforts to strengthen components of the Voting Rights Act.

**CHN supports** creating a citizen-led campaign finance system that allows candidates to run effective and competitive campaigns using only small donations and limited public matching funds and requiring transparency of money in elections.

**CHN supports** independent, citizen-led redistricting commissions that allow voters to choose their elected officials, instead of the other way around.

## ***Preventing Environmental Threats to Low-Income People***

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** a federal commitment to assist low-income communities in protecting their residents from health and safety threats due to environmental hazards, whether natural or human-made. Such assistance should be provided both for rapidly occurring disasters and for long-term problems such as inadequate maintenance of water systems or toxic substances concentrated in soil, housing units, or air. While it is appropriate for state or local governments to share in the costs, low-income communities will need help from the federal government in order to address environmental health problems, both in the form of funding and regulatory oversight of private and public sector entities. The disproportionate impact of environmental hazards on low-income communities results at least in part from government decisions at all levels, such as the public works projects that channel flooding to spare upper-income communities while leaving low-income communities at risk, the negligence of authorities in failing to protect Flint residents from lead contamination when their source of drinking water was changed, or the failure of the EPA to inform City of East Chicago residents of the neurotoxins and carcinogens in their soil, despite knowledge and a duty to respond.

**CHN supports** federal funding to alleviate suffering and remedy such emergency and health-threatening conditions, without the requirement to offset the costs by cutting other programs.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** reducing the regulatory authority of the federal government to prevent or abate environmental health hazards and **opposes** any reduction in existing federal agency environmental justice strategies that direct agencies to identify and address the disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effects of their actions on minority and low-income populations.

## *Protecting Against Lead Hazards*

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** a national goal to end childhood lead poisoning, with actions and adequate funding across many federal agencies, such as the Environmental Protection Agency, the departments of Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture, Veterans Affairs, Treasury, Labor, and Health and Human Services. Funding to detect, track, abate, and treat lead poisoning and lead hazards should be increased by Congress. As a top priority, **CHN supports** steps to remove lead hazards from federal property or from property benefiting from federal assistance. HUD should utilize the most updated CDC reference values for blood lead levels in children. HUD should employ research-based tests to identify lead hazards in all federally assisted units that may be frequented by children and remediate or abate lead hazards to prevent harm to residents *before* a child occupies the unit. In federally-assisted units, if children with lead poisoning are present or a lead hazard is identified, families should be relocated to safe housing while lead removal occurs in their units.

**CHN supports** the use of Medicaid funds to remove lead hazards in units where children with lead poisoning live. **CHN supports** counting lead poisoning prevention and control activities as a community benefit that would meet IRS standards for nonprofit hospitals providing charitable services, increasing their incentive to carry out these activities.

**CHN supports** improved lead screening under Medicaid EPSDT requirements and the delivery of the full scope of services to which children are entitled. **CHN supports** collection and public dissemination of information about lead prevalence rates, especially among children enrolled in Medicaid.

**CHN supports** automatic eligibility for early intervention and special education screening services for children who have a current or past diagnosis of lead poisoning.

**CHN supports** updating the HUD and EPA guidelines and standards related to the lead-dust, lead-soil, lead-paint, lead-water testing and clearance standards to protect health.

**CHN supports** lead hazard and other healthy homes inspections prior to the sale or rental of a property or the issuance of a mortgage.

**CHN supports** increasing incentives, penalties and enforcement mechanisms for addressing lead hazards and other environmental conditions dangerous to health. **CHN supports** collaboration across federal and local agencies and public private partnerships to more quickly identify and address environmental hazards and better protect communities.

**CHN supports** community-based primary prevention strategies that engage and organize communities at high risk for environmental harm.

**CHN supports** funding for the removal of lead service lines in low-income communities, as well as investments in education around the threat of lead in drinking water systems and the need to use filters to protect families from lead exposure through the water coming out of their tap.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** funding reductions to essential lead poisoning prevention programs. In one example, funding for the CDC's Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention program has been cut in half since FY 2010, down to \$17 billion in FY 2018. Funding across the relevant federal agencies should be increased to prevent the human toll and attendant increased costs.

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## *Clean Air and Water*

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** robust and timely implementation and enforcement of Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act standards that protect public health and the environment.

**CHN supports** policies to improve the affordability of investments in safe wastewater and drinking water infrastructure with federal assistance targeted to low-income communities.

**CHN supports** fully funding the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), including restoring or expanding funding to ensure that overburdened and historically disenfranchised communities are protected.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** any legislation or efforts to block, delay, weaken or undermine Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act standards and protections that guard our communities from dangerous and deadly air and water pollution, including efforts to restrict science-based decision-making or EPA's use of the best available health science in setting standards and protections.

## *Protecting Workers and Communities from Toxic Substances*

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** efforts to ensure that impacted communities and local governments are notified of the release of unregulated toxic contaminants, that polluters are held accountable for contamination, and that funds are provided to the affected states for clean-up and to test for all potential pathways of exposure (i.e. in water, soil, food, etc.).

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** any efforts to weaken EPA's standards that protect our nation's farmworkers and pesticide applicators from chemical exposure and poisonings, safeguards that affect over 3.5 million workers, including nearly 500,000 children, and countless consumers across the country.

**CHN opposes** any efforts to underestimate the risks that chemicals pose to vulnerable populations like children, pregnant women, workers and the elderly in chemical safety evaluations.

**CHN opposes** efforts to block, delay or weaken federal EPA protections from toxic coal ash. The siting and disposal of coal ash disproportionately and adversely impact people's health in low-income communities and communities of color. Improper disposal of coal ash has resulted in contaminated drinking water, inhalation of fly ash, catastrophic spills, and deaths of cleanup workers due to inadequate training and protective equipment.

## *Consumer Protections*

**The Coalition on Human Needs supports** access to fair, safe and affordable financial products and services and effective consumer protections so that consumers can build assets and lead successful financial lives. **CHN opposes** practices that are unfair, deceptive or abusive or that undermine economic stability.

**CHN supports** rules and other efforts to ensure access to safe, fair, affordable and sustainable mortgages, credit cards, auto loans, student loans, small dollar loans and other forms of credit. **CHN supports** efforts to ensure access to financial services in consumers' preferred language.

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**CHN supports** access to safe and affordable bank accounts, prepaid cards, mobile payments, electronic payments, remittance services and other transaction products and services, including through public institutions like the Postal Service. **CHN supports** transparency, free access to account information, and competition and fairness in banking and transaction services. **CHN supports** effective measures to resolve disputes, errors or unauthorized charges and to control who accesses consumers' accounts. **CHN supports** government efforts to stop payment fraud. **CHN opposes** practices designed to induce consumers into incurring excessive fees.

**CHN supports** measures to ensure that data and reports kept about consumers are fair, accurate and up to date, and that financial data is kept private and is used only for appropriate purposes that do not have a disproportionately negative effect on vulnerable individuals or communities, including people with medical debts. **CHN supports** measures to ensure that consumers can effectively correct errors in their credit reports, including fair and just treatment by credit reporting agencies.

**CHN supports** efforts to ensure that working families can get, keep, insure, and use a reliable car at fair terms.

**CHN supports** increased financial education and policies that encourage savings as helpful steps in promoting long-term economic security.

**CHN supports** fair treatment of consumers who owe debts and the opportunity for second chances and a fresh start. Individuals sometimes run into hard times, are exploited, or make bad financial decisions. **CHN supports** programs that work with consumers to save homes, to modify mortgages, student loans and other types of loans, and to access affordable repayment plans. **CHN opposes** unfair, deceptive or abusive debt collection practices. **CHN supports** fair garnishment and debt collection laws that leave consumers with sufficient funds to pay for necessities. **CHN supports** fair bankruptcy laws and the ability of bankruptcy judges to modify mortgages and discharge student loans. **CHN opposes** scams in debt settlement, credit repair, loan modification or foreclosure rescue that exploit vulnerable consumers and leave them in a worse position.

**CHN supports** a strong and independent Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and efforts by other federal, state and local agencies to protect consumers. **CHN opposes** any attempts to weaken the CFPB by ending its dedicated funding or changing its status as an independent agency led by a single director.

**The Coalition on Human Needs opposes** measures to make it more difficult for agencies to adopt and enforce consumer protection laws and rules to protect consumers.

**CHN opposes** predatory lending, lending that is unaffordable or leads to a cycle of debt, and discriminatory lending practices.

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*The positions in CHN's Public Policy document reflect the general consensus of member organizations on issues contained within it, but the document does not reflect the specific positions of all member organizations in every policy area.*