

*PRIORITIES FOR PROGRESS 2021*

# **EXECUTIVE ACTIONS**

## ABOUT THE PROGRESSIVE GOVERNANCE PROJECT

Durable solutions to the problems we face won't come from small fixes around the edges. We need solutions that build power for everyday people to emerge from this crisis as a more resilient, just nation. The work ahead of the next president and the next Congress to achieve these goals is formidable. And we can't afford for them to fail.

To help ensure that we are ready to meet this extraordinary moment, organizations from across the progressive movement gathered together to develop policy agendas on key progressive priorities, including both legislative and administrative proposals.

The agendas cover eight major policy areas:

- Climate and environment
- Democracy and civil rights reform
- Economic justice
- Foreign policy
- Healthcare
- Immigration
- Reproductive health, rights, and justice
- Worker power and corporate power

## ABOUT THIS MEMORANDUM

The following memorandum summarizes recommended executive actions for the incoming administration from each of the eight policy agendas. Not all of the opinions expressed in this memorandum are fully shared by all the organizations that contributed to its development.

For more information about the contributors, and to read the policy agendas in full, please visit [prioritiesforprogress2021.org](https://prioritiesforprogress2021.org).



## PRIORITIES FOR THE FIRST 100 DAYS

# EXECUTIVE ACTIONS

## CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

1. **Establish a National Climate Council** with Cabinet-level representatives from across government to coordinate a whole-of-government approach to transitioning the economy to tackle climate change. Issue a Climate Mobilization Plan, developed by the National Climate Council, that sets sector-specific goals and supporting policies for emissions reductions and climate resilience in 2030 and beyond to stay below 1.5 degrees of global warming. This plan should uphold the goals of creating high-quality jobs, anchoring investments and pollution relief in disadvantaged communities, and respecting self-determination. The plan should ensure a just recovery from climate disasters, including by committing to use the Stafford Act and Defense Production Act to rebuild after climate disasters in a resilient and equitable manner. The plan also should ramp up U.S. climate diplomacy via high-ambition engagement in UNFCCC, G20, G7 and other international fora, in addition to expanding U.S. climate finance commitments, including contributions to the Green Climate Fund.
2. **Codify Free, Prior, and Informed Consent for Indigenous nations and tribes** and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, without qualification.

- 3. Correct historic environmental injustices** with an executive order to remediate the cumulative impacts of toxic air, water, and land pollution and climate change in disadvantaged communities identified via stringent monitoring, environmental and climate justice mapping, and a rigorous “no hotspots” policy. To prevent further harm, the order should require agencies to meet environmental justice, climate resilience, and lifecycle climate pollution tests for permitting, relevant rulemaking, and other actions. In addition, the environmental justice order should establish an immediate moratorium on all new fossil fuel leasing and permitting on federal lands and waters and in environmental and climate justice communities (as identified via the above mapping) and all federal permits for new fossil fuel infrastructure projects. Finally, the order should direct the Department of Justice and Environmental Protection Agency to fully hold polluters accountable for crimes of deceiving the public and blocking action to protect public health and lives.
- 4. Clean procurement:** Lead the nation in the transition to a clean energy economy by issuing an executive order to upgrade all federal transportation, energy, buildings, and other assets to support electrification, clean renewable energy, and climate resilience, subject to Buy America, Buy Clean, and Buy Fair procurement rules. This includes electrifying all federal vehicles, retrofitting all federal buildings, and converting all federal energy assets to clean renewable energy.
- 5. Climate-friendly trade:** Issue an executive order announcing a new, pro-worker, pro-environment, pro-equity model of trade that includes high-road labor, environmental, and human rights standards; independent and binding enforcement; elimination of handouts to corporate polluters; and a transparent and inclusive process for auditing and renegotiating all existing U.S. trade agreements to conform to the new model.

- 6. National Investment Agency:** Establish a task force to design a new public financial institution to strategically mobilize investments – at the speed and scale that justice demands – to redress inequities and ensure family-sustaining jobs, climate stability, and healthy communities for all. The task force should include majority representation from disadvantaged communities and unions. Its mandate should be to design the structure of the new investment institution to ensure democratic governance, accountability to disadvantaged communities, and the coherent channeling of public and private investments at scale to achieve long-term societal goals. Those goals should include clear standards and metrics for economic security, climate resilience, environmental justice, and racial, gender, and economic equity.

## **DEMOCRACY**

- 1.** We strongly recommend a bold Day One Ethics Executive Order that closes the revolving door between corporate America and the executive branch.
- 2.** We advocate loudly for a coordinated democracy office or Czar position housed in the White House that can look across government and infuse issues of democracy reform from rule of law, to anti-corruption and ethics, to voting rights, to money in politics, to civic engagement, and more.
- 3.** We ask that select federal agencies, especially those serving under-registered populations, provide voting registration services through their regular transactions.

## ECONOMIC JUSTICE

*The Biden administration should use all tools in its toolbox to advance a pro-worker, pro-family, pro-environment stimulus and economic recovery plan that prohibits profiteering by wealthy individuals, large corporations, and Wall Street.*

*This should include, but not be limited to:*

1. Establishing an **Essential Worker and Poor People's Council** to ensure that workers and low-income families have a voice in policymaking over their safety and welfare.
2. Broadly cancelling **federal student loan debt** and restoring consumer **financial protections** and other financial regulations stripped by the Trump administration.
3. Preventing a tsunami of COVID-19-related foreclosures and evictions, restoring and vigorously enforcing **fair housing regulations** to ensure the full breadth of the Fair Housing Act is being used to address residential segregation and systemic housing discrimination, and convening a cross-administration working group on sustainable homeownership in communities of color.
4. Directing the Federal Reserve to offer **zero-interest loans to all state and local governments** on an ongoing basis to fund vital social programs.
5. Developing an action plan for expanded **postal financial services** to provide an alternative to predatory firms and to facilitate distribution of stimulus funds.
6. Reforming **federal procurement standards** to incentivize large corporate contractors to meet a range of high-road benchmarks, including good U.S. jobs.

7. Proposing an overhaul of the **tax system** that ensures the wealthy and large corporations pay their fair share and refocusing IRS enforcement on high-income tax evaders.
8. Directing agencies to identify administrative changes or new administrative actions within 90 days that strengthen access to and eligibility criteria for **basic needs programs**, including SNAP, housing assistance, child care assistance, medical assistance, SSI, and SSDI. Such actions could include easing gross income tests and asset limits, encouraging states to waive work requirements, and expanding hardship exemption provisions.

## FOREIGN POLICY

### End U.S. complicity in the war in Yemen and unconditional support of the Saudi and Emirati monarchies

*The United States must end its unconditional support of the Saudi and Emirati monarchies, corrupt, authoritarian regimes, which have abused human rights abuses at home and abroad. Driven by corporate and fossil fuel interests, as well as a vast Washington lobbying and [influence machine](#), the United States has consistently ignored such abuses while shaping its Middle East policy to their desires.*

*One particularly heinous result of this poisonous relationship has been U.S. military support and arms sales that have fueled the catastrophic Saudi and Emirati-coalition-led war in Yemen. Since 2015, the coalition has conducted over 22,000 airstrikes in Yemen and imposed de-facto air, land, and sea blockades that have restricted the flow of humanitarian and commercial goods in and out of the country. As a result, Yemen is suffering the world's largest humanitarian crisis, with the country now once again at risk of famine, millions threatened by the spread of COVID-19, an increase in violence against women and girls and a deepened burden of care work, and other impacts from the war. It's time for this to finally end.*

*Three major actions for the Biden administration to take immediately upon coming into office:*

- 1.** Suspend arms sales and halt any transfers initiated by the Trump administration, including the more than \$23 billion package of F-35s, armed drones, and munitions to the UAE.
- 2.** End all U.S. military and intelligence support for the Saudi/Emirati-led coalition's war in Yemen, pressure the Saudi-led coalition to end their military actions in Yemen and lift the blockade of Yemen's ports, and push for a diplomacy-first strategy that centers women and civil society.
- 3.** Restore and expand USAID funding to all parts of Yemen and recommit U.S. financial support to UN, WHO, and WFP relief programs in Yemen. Work with the international community to pressure Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and other members of the Saudi-led coalition to meet and expand their funding pledges for humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction of the country.

**Submit a FY22 Budget Request that Reduces the National Defense (050) Topline by at least 10 percent from the current fiscal year, or ~\$74 billion**

*The coronavirus pandemic has laid bare the reality that our country has made the wrong investments in order to keep its people safe. More than 250,000 people have passed away from COVID-19, the equivalent of the 9/11 death toll every three days for the past eight months. While the major challenges of today, like the climate crisis, rising right-wing authoritarianism, growing global inequality, don't have military solutions, more than half of the annual discretionary budget is directed towards maintaining a worldwide military presence, purchasing and maintaining weapons, and perpetuating wars.*

*To begin to correct this misalignment, the Biden administration should request to reduce the total defense budget by at least 10 percent of its current size to return to Obama-Biden-level spending and spend*



*those dollars on the care and repair of people and the planet. A list of areas ripe for cutting can be found on page 4 of [this memo](#) signed by 31 national and state-based organizations.*

### **Recommit to global cooperation for a just recovery to the COVID-19 crisis**

*Global challenges like the Coronavirus pandemic cannot be solved by short-sighted, isolationist, and cruel approaches that pit the United States against the rest of the world. Tragically, that's exactly what the Trump administration has tried to do — to disastrous effect. The Biden administration should reverse this pernicious unilateralism, addressing the global threat of COVID-19 and its economic fallout through renewed multilateralism instead.*

*This global cooperation agenda should include:*

- 1.** Heed and join the United Nations' [call for a global ceasefire](#), led and sustained by women and grassroots organizations.
- 2.** Suspend unilateral economic sanctions for at least the duration of the crisis and recovery.
- 3.** Rejoin the World Health Organization (WHO), and fully fund it and all United Nations bodies, including the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).
- 4.** Work with Congress and partners at the International Monetary Fund to approve an issuance of at least 2 trillion Special Drawing Rights.
- 5.** Join the WHO's COVAX Facility, support the World Trade Organization's waiver of TRIPS provisions that would hinder vaccine distribution, and join and heed the global call for an equitably-distributed [People's Vaccine](#).

6. Revise International Financial Institution lending practices to align with the [global need](#) for increased health expenditure, support for the vulnerable, and a green just recovery.
7. Dramatically expand the timeline and scope of existing bilateral and multilateral debt payment suspension agreements, support debt cancellation rather than mere payment suspension, and, crucially, take concrete enforceable steps to compel the private sector to take part in such initiatives.

## HEALTHCARE

1. The White House should declare racism a public health emergency and issue an executive order that unequivocally states the administration's commitment to addressing the legacy of health inequities in the U.S. and direct all relevant federal agencies to dedicate resources to addressing this crisis.
2. Empower states to move towards universal coverage by: Changing 1332 waivers to promote increased enrollment and state public options, with guardrails to protect premium-tax-credit beneficiaries; and authorizing 1115 waivers that offer federal funds to finance extra financial help for low-wage workers buying coverage on the health insurance exchange.
3. Ensure equitable and robust distribution of all COVID-19 vaccines and treatments that takes into account health inequities, and risk factors due to health conditions, living situation, or occupation. COVID-19 vaccine and treatment clinical trials should enroll diverse populations based on gender, race, ethnicity, age, pregnancy status, BMI, and other factors. In addition, publicly-supported COVID-19 treatment and vaccine technologies must be treated as global public goods, through nonexclusive licensing and sharing with the WHO COVID-19 Technology Access Pool, to promote increased manufacturing capacity throughout the world to meet unprecedented demand and to promote innovation through open science and collaboration.

## IMMIGRATION

*The Biden administration must simultaneously undo the harms of the Trump administration and aggressively use the full breadth of executive authority to provide relief to immigrants, ensure greater justice and fairness, radically overhaul immigration enforcement and bolster the benefits of migration.*

- 1. End the anti-Black and discriminatory targeting of certain U.S. citizens and immigrants** by repealing all iterations of the African, Muslim, refugee, asylum and other travel bans and invite those whose visas have been denied to re-apply for admission.
- 2. Repeal the racially motivated wealth, health, age tests and barriers** for family members of U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents and others.
- 3. Implement a moratorium on all enforcement actions** until a comprehensive review is completed of all enforcement policies and procedures and until diminished COVID-19 cases and community transmission in countries of return and the conditions of those being removed allow removal without endangering the health of those removed or the communities where they are resettled.
- 4. Ensure that no one who is currently eligible for DACA or TPS loses their work authorization**, including those who lost their eligibility under the Trump administration, reinstate and expand DACA, protect current TPS recipients, and newly designate or redesignate countries eligible for TPS or DED because it is not safe for citizens to return, including Cameroon, the Northern Triangle countries, Somalia, South Sudan, and Venezuela.
- 5. Protect the spouses, parents and children of U.S. Citizens, lawful permanent residents** and others with meaningful ties to the country from deportation and use mechanisms to provide them with work permits and travel documents.

6. **Develop a return and parole process for individuals who have been harmed** by the family separation policy, visa backlogs, deportation and other hardships.
7. **Release detained individuals on public health grounds, phase out the use of detention**, and invest in community-based case management programs not rooted in surveillance.
8. **Do not detain families.**
9. **Halt all wall construction and commit to no further construction of border walls or barriers.** Implement a process to mitigate the wall's harmful impacts on Tribal Nations, border region communities and lands, including removing the most deleterious sections of wall, in consultation with communities on both sides of the border, indigenous communities and environmental justice advocates.
10. **Demilitarize ICE and CBP** by ending unconstitutional searches, seizures, arrests without probable cause and invasive surveillance, eliminating interior checkpoints and roving patrols, strictly limiting the use of surveillance technology at and near the border, implementing accountability measures such as body cameras and civilian review.
11. **Undo the multiple regulations and policies put in place to dismantle the asylum system**, including the so-called "Asylum Cooperative Agreements", and terminate the asylum and transit bans, metering policies, and the CDC's order authorizing the immediate expulsion of asylum seekers, trafficking victims, torture survivors and others without any assessment of their protection needs.
12. **Parole into the US. all asylum seekers with pending cases** who are waiting in Mexico and release them to family, friends, or if needed, community-based programs while cases proceed through the immigration courts.

- 13. Increase the Presidential Refugee Determination (PD) to 125,000.**
- 14. Restore access to the ACA for DACA recipients,** public housing for mixed status families, food assistance to adults without children, and COVID relief for undocumented students.
- 15. End all criminal prosecutions for migration-related offenses** and end family separation.
- 16. Terminate all existing agreements and programs between DHS and local government** that turn local and state law enforcement against their communities and into agents of deportation, including Secure Communities, Basic Ordering Agreements, and all 287(g) agreements.
- 17. End workplace raids** and ensure that workplace enforcement doesn't undermine wages and working conditions for all.
- 18. Develop and fund an Office of Immigration Defenders** to ensure that every indigent person facing removal has legal counsel even if they cannot afford it.

## **REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH, RIGHTS, AND JUSTICE**

*On Day One, the president must issue an executive order unequivocally stating his commitment to protect and expand access to comprehensive reproductive healthcare, uphold sexual and reproductive rights, including abortion care, in the U.S. and around the world, and rescind or revoke prior executive actions limiting access to care. As part of this promise, the administration must:*

- 1.** Rescind or revoke harmful Trump administration actions, including the January 23, 2017 Presidential Memorandum Regarding the Mexico City Policy and regulations that undermine: 1) the Title X program, 2) access to healthcare by emboldening discrimination and refusals of care, 3) access to comprehensive coverage of birth control, 4) the Affordable Care Act, 5) insurance coverage of abortion, and 6) immigrant access to care and services.
- 2.** Expand access to care, including by: directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to issue guidance to lift the FDA's in-person dispensing requirement for mifepristone for the duration of the public health emergency, consistent with similar directives and waivers issued to reduce risk of COVID-19; proposing a budget that invests in domestic and international sexual and reproductive (SRH) healthcare programs and removes harmful anti-SRH policy riders; rescind Executive Order 13535; and, ensure that providers that offer the full range of reproductive healthcare, including abortion, are able to provide care to those individuals who rely on Medicaid for their healthcare.

## **WORKER POWER**

1. Issue an Emergency Temporary Standard at OSHA to protect workers from COVID-19.
2. Raise the minimum wage for federal contractors to \$15 and end subminimum wage.
3. Strengthen and expand overtime protections.
4. Withdraw Executive Order 13957, which eliminates statutory and constitutional job protection for career federal employees and allows agency heads to move political appointees into career positions without competition.
5. Withdraw Executive Order 13950 and the accompanying Office of Management and Budget Memorandum which seeks to prohibit Federal agencies, employees, contractors, subcontractors, and grantees from using so-called “divisive concepts” typified as “systemic racism,” “White privilege,” “unconscious bias,” “intersectionality,” “Critical Race Theory,” and other concepts tied to systemic racism and sexism. The Federal government should work immediately to resolve lawsuits brought by civil and human rights agencies challenging this dangerous EO and its attempt to gag and stifle the truth about structural racism, sexism and inequality in America.

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