

or disabilities. And we will continue to fight for ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Faith and Service

Democrats know that our nation, our communities, and our lives are made vastly stronger and richer by faith in many forms and the countless acts of justice, mercy, and tolerance it inspires. We believe in lifting up and valuing the good work of people of faith and religious organizations and finding ways to support that work where possible.

We believe in the power of national service, with people of all backgrounds coming together in common purpose to serve their communities and country.

Agricultural Communities

We will work to build a stronger rural and agricultural economy. Democrats will spur investment to power the rural economy and increase funding to support the next generation of farmers and ranchers. We will expand local food markets and regional food systems and provide a focused safety net to assist family operations that need support during challenging times. And we will promote clean energy leadership and collaborative stewardship of our natural resources, while expanding opportunities in rural communities across America.

Poverty / Communities Left Behind

We reaffirm our commitment to eliminate poverty. Democrats will develop a national strategy to combat poverty, coordinated across all levels of government. We will direct more federal resources to lifting up communities that have been left out and left behind, such as the 10-20-30 model, which directs 10 percent of program funds to communities where at least 20 percent of the population has been living below the poverty line for 30 years or more. We will also focus on communities that suffer from persistent poverty, including empowerment zones and areas that targeted government data indicate are in persistent poverty.

Democrats will also protect and expand proven programs, including robust support for nutrition assistance to stop people from going hungry as well as programs that help people grow their skills and provide training opportunities. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program should be expanded for low-wage workers not raising children, including extending the credit to young workers starting at age 21. The Child Tax Credit (CTC) should be indexed to inflation to stem the erosion of the credit.

Democrats will also do more to invest in our most distressed communities—from our cities to coal country to the Rust Belt. We will create good-paying jobs and enhance opportunities by investing in small business, youth employment, and reentry programs for formerly incarcerated people. We will improve safety by repairing crumbling infrastructure in communities that need it most as well as on tribal lands. And we will make investments in housing near good jobs and good schools.

Honoring Indigenous Tribal Nations

We have a profound moral and legal responsibility to the Indian tribes—throughout our history we have failed to live up to that trust. That is why the Democratic Party will uphold, honor, and

*****DRAFT – DELIBERATIVE AND PREDECISIONAL*****

strengthen to the highest extent possible the United States' fundamental trust and responsibility, grounded in the Constitution and treaties, to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes.

We recognize the inherent sovereignty of Indian nations and will work to enact laws and policies that strengthen, not reduce, the powers of Indian nations over people who interact with them in Indian Country. We will work on a government-to-government basis to continue to empower Indian nations, and to provide sufficient and meaningful resources to Indian tribes to increase economic development and self-determination. As Democrats, we will constantly seek to ensure that American Indian communities are safe, healthy, nurturing, educated, innovative, and prosperous.

We will restore tribal lands by continuing to streamline the land-into-trust process and recognize the right of all tribes to protect their lands, air, and waters. We will continue to work on a government-to-government basis to address chronic underfunding, and provide meaningful resources and financial investments that will empower American Indian tribes through increased economic development and infrastructure improvements on tribal lands.

We will strengthen the operation of tribal housing programs, and fully fund the Indian Housing Block Grant Program. We will increase affordable and safe housing and fight to significantly reduce homelessness on and off Indian reservations, especially among Native youth and veterans.

We will invest in Indian education from early childhood through higher education. We will fully fund the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) and strengthen self-determination to enable culturally-tailored learning unique to each tribal nation and help to retain qualified teachers for Native learners. Democrats will continue to support President Obama's Generation Indigenous program that has made important strides in promoting new investments and increased engagement with American Indian youth, including by continuing efforts to reform the BIE to provide students attending BIE-funded schools with a world-class culturally-based education. We also support the elimination of school and sports mascots that reflect outdated stereotypes and that perpetuate racism.

We will strengthen tribal sovereignty and tribal jurisdiction by enacting laws and policies that enhance the ability of Indian nations to govern their territories, keep their communities safe, and prosecute crimes committed on tribal lands. And we will back these efforts through robust investments in effective tribal law enforcement and tribal courts.

We believe that health care is a core federal trust responsibility, and we support a robust expansion of the health care provided by the Indian Health Service. We will work to fully fund the Indian Health Service, Tribal, Urban Indian health care system and to ensure that Americans Indian have adequate, safe, and affordable access to primary care providers, including oral health, mental health practitioners, and substance abuse treatment options.

We acknowledge the past injustices and the misguided, harmful federal and state policies and actions based on outdated and discredited values and beliefs that resulted in the destruction of the Indian nations' economies, social, and religious systems, the taking of their lands, and the

creation of intergenerational trauma that exists to this day. We believe that we have a moral and profound duty to honor, respect, and uphold our sacred obligation to the Indian nations and Indian peoples.

We will protect tribal sacred sites and empower tribes to maintain and pass on traditional religious beliefs, languages and social practices without fear of discrimination or suppression. We also believe that Native children are the future of tribal nations and that the Indian Child Welfare Act is critical to the survival of Indian culture, government, and communities and must be enforced with the original intent of the law.

We will strengthen Indian voting rights, including improved access to polling locations. We will build on federal programs to reduce the disproportionate incarceration of American Indian and Alaska Native men and women, reduce disparity in prison sentencing, protect the religious rights of Native prisoners, reduce barriers to prisoner reentry, and offer access to housing and employment upon reentry.

We are committed to principles of environmental justice in Indian Country and we recognize that nature in all its life forms has the right to exist, persist, maintain, and regenerate its vital cycles. We call for a climate change policy that protects tribal resources, protects tribal health, and provides accountability through accessible, culturally appropriate participation and strong enforcement. Our climate change policy will cut carbon emission, address poverty, invest in disadvantaged communities, and improve both air quality and public health. We support the tribal nations to develop wind, solar and other clean energy jobs.

Democrats also support efforts for self-determination and sovereignty of Native Hawaiians.

People of the Territories

We support full self-government and self-determination for the people of the territories of Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and their right to decide their future status.

Puerto Rico

And we are committed to addressing the extraordinary challenges faced by our fellow citizens in Puerto Rico. Many stem from the fundamental question of Puerto Rico's political status. Democrats believe that the people of Puerto Rico should determine their ultimate political status from permanent options that do not conflict with the Constitution, laws, and policies of the United States. Democrats are committed to promoting economic opportunity and good-paying jobs for the hardworking people of Puerto Rico. We also believe that Puerto Ricans must be treated equally by Medicare, Medicaid, and by other benefits programs for families. All American citizens, no matter where they reside, should have the right to vote for the President of the United States. Finally, we believe that Washington must respect Puerto Rico's local self-government as Congress and the Executive Branch work to provide the necessary tools and aid that Puerto Rico needs to restructure its debt so that it can get on a path towards stability and prosperity, while maintaining its autonomy.