



SEARAC

SEARAC Questionnaire - 2020 Presidential Voter Guide for the Southeast Asian American Community

The Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC) is a national civil rights organization that empowers Cambodian, Laotian, Hmong and Vietnamese communities to create a socially just and equitable society. Please take a few minutes to share your candidate's platform for the following issues below around immigration, education, and health. If you prefer to email your response, please send to SEARAC's National Policy Director, Katrina Dizon Mariategue at katrina@searac.org. These responses will inform the creation of a presidential candidate voter guide to be launched in the spring.

Click here to learn more about SEARAC: <https://www.searac.org/>

Contact Information

Please share your contact information for any follow up questions we may have

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Main Questionnaire

Please describe your candidate's position (in as much detail as you are comfortable), on the following issues.

1. Education

For SEARAC, Southeast Asian American (SEAA) is a political identity that comes from the shared experience of people who came to this country as refugees from the US occupation of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. SEAA's now number close to 2.7 million. Yet our community's challenges, stemming from SEAA's unique refugee experiences, are often overlooked and masked behind the broader Asian American "model minority" myth, making it more difficult for students to succeed in schools.

Please describe your candidate's position on:

- **Data Equity / Data Disaggregation**

Every person deserves to be seen for who they are, not for any stereotype or generalization that society might impose on them. This is especially true for Southeast Asian Americans, who all too often are lumped into the broad and misguided generalization that all Asian Americans are a monolith. This generalization makes it extremely difficult to assess SEAA's needs when it comes to critical issues like schooling, health care services, and other federal programs. The federal government needs accurate data regarding SEAA individuals in the United States to identify challenges they are facing and direct adequate resources to the right places and people.

In 2016, the Obama-Biden Administration launched the Asian American and Pacific Islander Data Disaggregation Initiative, a grant [program](#) that worked with states "to improve data collection, helping to identify educational opportunity gaps and tailor support to improve the college-and career-readiness of underserved AAPI students and English learners." This followed a 2012 [initiative](#) from the Obama-Biden Administration that asked school districts, states and higher education institutions to share their data disaggregation efforts. As president, I will recommit to these efforts and ensure that federal agencies and relevant federal programs obtain accurate data on SEAA communities, and ensure that information is properly analyzed and reviewed to ensure that communities within the SEAA umbrella are receiving adequate resources and support.

- **Culturally relevant K-12 support (ex: ethnic studies, english learner support, culturally relevant parental engagement)**

As President, I will build an education system that invests in our children at birth and helps every student receive a high-quality K-12 education. Systemic racism is persistent across our institutions today – including in our schools – and must be addressed. I will make sure that no child's education opportunity is determined by their zip code, parents' income, race, or disability.

Today, too many of our public schools are seriously under-resourced. That leaves them unable to invest in culturally relevant K-12 support that is essential to ensuring our children and families are able to thrive. That's why one of my top priorities is making a historic investment in our K-12 public schools. These investments are designed to ensure that schools have the flexibility to use the funds to meet the unique needs of the communities they serve. I have proposed tripling Title I funding, which goes to schools serving a high number of children from low-income families. This new funding must first be used to ensure teachers at Title I schools are paid competitively, three- and four-year-olds have access to pre-school, and districts provide access to rigorous coursework across all of their schools, not just a few. But once these three conditions are met, districts will have the flexibility to use these funds for other local priorities, such as ethnic studies and English language learner support. Additionally, I am proposing to dramatically expand our investment in community schools, which work with families, students, teachers and community organizations to identify families' unmet needs and then develop a plan to leverage community resources to address these needs in the school building, turning schools into community hubs. By investing in this collaborative partnership, these community schools will be able to identify and meet the needs of the SEAA community, including culturally relevant parental engagement. And, I am proposing to double the number of mental health professionals in our schools. This will enable many schools with a large number of SEAA students to hire culturally and

linguistically competent mental health professionals.

In addition, I will:

- **Improve teacher diversity.** Research shows us the substantial and unique impact that teachers of color have on students of color. I will support more innovative approaches to recruiting teachers of color, including supporting high school students in accessing dual-enrollment classes that give them an edge in teacher preparation programs, helping paraprofessionals work towards their teaching certificate, and working with minority-serving institutions to recruit and prepare teachers.
- **Build the best, most innovative schools in the country in low-income communities and communities of color.** Preparing our students for the workforce increasingly entails not only rigorous academics, but also problem-solving, collaboration, and technical skills. I will create a new competitive program challenging local communities to reinvent high school to meet these changing demands of work. This funding will be targeted first toward building the best schools in the country in low-income communities and communities of color.
- **Reinstate the Obama-Biden Administration's actions to diversify our schools.** As President, I will reinstate Department of Education guidance that supported schools in legally pursuing desegregation strategies and recognized institutions of higher education's interests in creating diverse student bodies. And, I will provide grants to school districts to create plans and implement strategies to diversify their schools.
- **College access, affordability and completion (ex: support for AANAPISIs, pell grants, trio, gear up programs)**

In today's increasingly globalized and technology-driven economy, 12 years of education is no longer enough for American workers to remain competitive and earn a middle class income. Roughly 6 in 10 jobs require some education beyond a high school diploma. And, because technology continues to change, American workers – whether they have an industry-recognized credential, an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree, or a PhD – will need opportunities to continue to learn and grow their skills for career success and increased wages in the 21st century economy.

But for too many, earning a degree or other credential after high school is unaffordable today. For others, their education saddles them with so much debt it prevents them from buying a home or saving for retirement, or their parents or grandparents take on some of the financial burden. I am proposing a bold plan for education and training beyond high school that will give hard-working Americans the chance to join or maintain their place in the middle class, regardless of their parents' income or the color of their skin.

My administration will build on community colleges' success and unleash their full potential to grow a stronger, more inclusive middle class by:

- **Providing two years of community college or other high-quality training program without debt for any hard-working individual looking to learn and improve their skills to keep up with the changing nature of work.** In 2015, President Obama and I proposed to make two years of community college tuition-free for hard-working students. Since

then, Dr. Biden and I have championed progress toward this goal, and hundreds of state and local College Promise programs have expanded access to free two-year or four-year college education. As president, I will build on this progress by enacting legislation to ensure that every hard-working individual, including those attending school part-time and DREAMers, can go to community college for up to two years without having to pay tuition. Individuals will also be able to use these funds to pursue training programs that have a track record of participants completing their programs and securing good jobs. Importantly, this initiative will not just be for recent high school graduates; it will also be available to adults who never had the chance to pursue additional education beyond high school or who need to learn new skills. And, students who do want a bachelor's degree could then transfer to a four-year school, including to Minority-Serving Institutions that play vital roles in their communities. This plan will be a federal-state partnership, with the federal government covering 75% of the cost and states contributing the remaining obligation.

- **Creating a new grant program to assist community colleges in improving their students' success.** I will support community colleges implementing evidence-based practices and innovative solutions to increase their students' retention and completion of credentials. Reforms could include academic and career advising services; dual enrollment; credit articulation agreements; investing in wages, benefits, and professional development to recruit and retain faculty, including teacher residencies; and improvements to remediation programs. My plan will also help community colleges around the country scale successful programs to help a larger number of students.
- **Tackling the barriers that prevent students from completing their community college degree or training credential.** There are too many Americans who don't complete their education or training programs not because of a lack of will, but because of other responsibilities they are juggling, such as a job to pay their bills or caring for children. Often these students and their families also face housing and food insecurity. My administration's community college initiative will be a first-dollar program, meaning that students will be able to use their Pell grants, state aid, and other aid to help them cover expenses beyond tuition and fees. In addition, my plan will give states financial incentives to foster collaboration between community colleges and community-based organizations to provide wraparound support services for students, especially veterans, single parents, low-income students, students of color, and students with disabilities who may face unique challenges. Wraparound support services can range from public benefits and additional financial aid to cover textbook and transportation costs that often keep students from staying enrolled, to child care and mental health services, faculty mentoring, tutoring, and peer support groups. And, I will establish a federal grant program to help community colleges create emergency grant programs for students who experience an unexpected financial challenge that threatens their ability to stay enrolled.
- **Make a \$50 billion investment in workforce training, including community-college business partnerships and apprenticeships.** In 2014, President Obama asked me to develop a national strategy for reforming our nation's workforce training programs designed to prepare "ready-to-work Americans with ready-to-be-filled jobs." Building on the successful models championed through that initiative, I will make an investment of \$50 billion in high-quality training programs. These funds will create and support partnerships between

community colleges, businesses, unions, state, local, and tribal governments, universities, and high schools to identify in-demand knowledge and skills in a community and develop or modernize training programs – which could be as short as a few months or as long as two years – that lead to a relevant, high-demand industry-recognized credential. These funds will also exponentially increase the number of apprenticeships in this country through strengthening the Registered Apprenticeship Program and partnering with unions who oversee some of the best apprenticeship programs throughout our nation, not watering down the quality of the apprenticeship system like President Trump is proposing.

- **Invest in community college facilities and technology.** I will invest \$8 billion to help community colleges improve the health and safety of their facilities, and equip their schools with new technology that will empower their students to succeed in the 21st century.

In addition to supporting community college, my plan will:

- **Target additional financial support to low-income and middle-class individuals by doubling the maximum value of Pell grants, significantly increasing the number of middle-class Americans who can participate in the program.** Pell grants help 7 million students a year afford college, but they have not kept up with the rising cost of college. In the 1970s, Pell grants covered roughly 70 to 80 percent of the cost of a four-year degree at a public institution; today, that percentage has been cut in more than half, to roughly 30 percent. I will double the maximum value of the Pell grant, a level of investment experts say is necessary to close the gap between the rich and poor so that everyone has the opportunity to receive an education beyond high school, and will automatically increase the value based on inflation. Doubling the maximum value of Pell grants will increase the grant value for individuals already eligible for Pell and, given the program's formula for determining eligibility, expand the benefits of Pell to more middle class Americans. As president, I will also take care of young immigrants by ensuring DREAMers are eligible for financial aid if they meet other requirements for that aid. And, I will restore formerly incarcerated individuals' eligibility for Pell.
- **More than halve payments on undergraduate federal student loans by simplifying and increasing the generosity of today's income-based repayment program.** Under the Biden plan, individuals making \$25,000 or less per year will not owe any payments on their undergraduate federal student loans and also won't accrue any interest on those loans. Everyone else will pay 5% of their discretionary income (income minus taxes and essential spending like housing and food) over \$25,000 toward their loans. This plan will save millions of Americans thousands of dollars a year. After 20 years, the remainder of the loans for people who have responsibly made payments through the program will be 100% forgiven. Individuals with new and existing loans will all be automatically enrolled in the income-based repayment program, with the opportunity to opt out if they wish. In addition to relieving some of the burden of student debt, this will enable graduates to pursue careers in public service and other fields without high levels of compensation. I will also change the tax code so that debt forgiven through the income-based repayment plan won't be taxed. Americans shouldn't have to take out a loan to pay their taxes when they finally are free from their student loans.

- **Make loan forgiveness work for public servants.** Public servants do the hard work that is essential to our country’s success – protecting us, teaching our children, keeping our streets clean and our lights on, and so much more. But the program designed to help these individuals serve without having to worry about the burden of their student loans – the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program – is broken. I will create a new, simple program which offers \$10,000 of undergraduate or graduate student debt relief for every year of national or community service, up to five years. Individuals working in schools, government, and other non-profit settings will be automatically enrolled in this forgiveness program; up to five years of prior national or community service will also qualify. Additionally, I will fix the existing Public Service Loan Forgiveness program by securing passage of the What You Can Do For Your Country Act of 2019. I will ensure adjunct professors are eligible for this loan forgiveness, depending on the amount of time devoted to teaching.
- **Create a “Title I for postsecondary education” to help students at under-resourced four-year schools complete their degrees.** My administration will establish a new grant program to support under-resourced four-year schools that serve large numbers of Pell-eligible students. The funds will be used to foster collaboration between colleges and community-based organizations to provide wraparound support services for students, especially veterans, single parents, low-income students, students of color, and students with disabilities who may face unique challenges. Wraparound support services can range from public benefits and additional financial aid to cover textbook and transportation costs that often keep students from staying enrolled, to child care and mental health services, faculty mentoring, tutoring, and peer support groups. And, I will ensure that these funds can be used to help colleges create emergency grant programs for students who experience an unexpected financial challenge that threatens their ability to stay enrolled.
- **Create seamless pathways between high school, job training, community college, and four-year programs to help students get their degrees and credentials faster.** My administration will provide grants to states that work to accelerate students’ attainment of credentials, including bachelor’s degrees, while still ensuring quality and accountability. For example, some communities have adopted the early college model, allowing students to begin earning credits towards an associate’s degree while still in high school. And, in some areas students can be dual enrolled in the community college and the four-year program they wish to complete. I will challenge more communities to expand on these accelerated pathways and create a seamless transition between high school, community college, other job training, and four-year programs, enabling students to obtain an associate’s or bachelor’s degree in less time. Approaches to accelerating degree attainment include guided pathways that provide a sequence of classes for a specific area of study; shifting toward a 12-month academic calendar; better aligning high school, community college, and four-year college courses; providing college credits for quality, degree-related on-the-job training; and offering degree-related paid internships for course credit.

As president, I will also take steps to rectify the funding disparities faced by Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), including Asian American And Native American Pacific Islander-serving Institutions (AANAPISIs), so that the United States can benefit from their unique strengths. Students at

AANAPISIs, as well as HBCUs and TCUs, will benefit from my proposals to double Pell grants, slash the income-based repayment of loans to 5% of income, and provide free tuition for students at all community colleges, including those that are MSIs. In addition, I will invest over \$70 billion in these colleges and universities to:

- **Make under-resourced MSIs, HBCUs, and TCUs more affordable for their students.** My plan will invest \$18 billion in grants to these four-year schools, equivalent to up to two years of tuition per low-income and middle class student, including DREAMers and students who transfer to a four-year HBCU, TCU, AANAPISI, or other MSI from a tuition-free community college. Schools must invest in lowering costs, improving retention and graduation rates, and closing equity gaps year over year for students of color.
- **Invest in the diverse talent at MSIs to solve the country's most pressing problems.** My administration will invest \$10 billion to create at least 200 new centers of excellence that serve as research incubators and connect students underrepresented in fields critical to our nation's future – including fields tackling climate change, globalization, inequality, health disparities, and cancer – to learning and career opportunities. These funds will provide additional work study opportunities and incentivize state, private, and philanthropic dollars for these centers.. As president, I will also dedicate additional and increased priority funding streams at federal agencies for grants and contracts for MSIs, HBCUs, and TCUs. And, I will require any federal research grants to universities with an endowment of over \$1 billion to form a meaningful partnership and enter into a 10% minimum subcontract with an MSI, HBCU, or TCU.
- **Build the high tech labs and facilities and digital infrastructure needed for learning, research, and innovation at MSIs, HBCUs, and TCUs.** I will invest \$20 billion in infrastructure for MSIs, HBCUs, and TCUs, to build the physical research facilities and labs urgently needed to deliver on the country's research and development, to update and modernize deteriorating facilities, including by strengthening the Historic Preservation program, and to create new space for increasing enrollments. Additionally, as president, I will ensure all MSIs, HBCUs, and TCUs have access to low-cost federal capital financing programs and will work with states to ensure they can take advantage of these programs. And, I will work to incentivize further public, private, and philanthropic investments in school infrastructure.
- **Provide support to continuously improve the value of MSIs, HBCUs, and TCUs by investing \$10 billion in programs that increase enrollment, retention, completion, and employment rates.** These programs may include partnerships with both high schools, other universities, and employers; evidence-based remedial courses; academic and career advising services; and investing in wages, benefits, and professional development and benefits to recruit and retain faculty, including teacher residencies. Additionally, I will incentivize states, private, and philanthropic dollars to invest in these programs, while ensuring schools that do not receive matches increase their competitiveness.
- **Expand career pathways for graduates of MSIs, HBCUs, and TCUs in areas that meet national priorities, including building a diverse pipeline of public school teachers.** I will invest \$5 billion in graduate programs in teaching, health care, and STEM and will develop robust internship and career pipelines at major research agencies, including

Department of Energy National Laboratories, National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, and the Department of Defense.

- **Triple and make permanent the capacity-building and student support for MSIs, HBCUs, and TCUs in Title III and Title V of the Higher Education Act.** These funds serve as a lifeline to under-resourced MSIs, HBCUs, and TCUs year over year, ensuring that the most vulnerable students have the support they need to succeed. My administration will make permanent \$750 million per year in Title III and Title V funding, which will provide a dedicated revenue stream of \$7.5 billion over the first ten years.
- **Reduce disparities in funding for MSIs, HBCUs, and TCUs.** I will require federal agencies and states to publish reports of their allocation of federal funding to colleges and universities. When inequities exist between MSIs and similar non-MSI colleges, federal agencies and states will be required to publish robust rationale and show improvements in eliminating disparities year over year. To ensure funding is more equitably distributed among MSIs, HBCUs, and TCUs, my administration will require that competitive grant programs make similar universities compete against each other. And, I will require higher education accreditors to provide increased transparency in their processes.

2. Health

The traumatic experiences of war, genocide, and displacement left many SEAAAs with physical and mental health conditions that have gone untreated.

Please describe your candidate's position on:

- **Access to affordable healthcare (ex: ACA and medicaid expansion)**

The reason President Obama and I fought so hard for the Affordable Care Act was to make sure that the peace of mind provided by health insurance is a right for all, not a privilege. Immediately after its passage, Congressional Republicans began trying again and again to repeal it. Following the lead of President Trump, Republicans in Congress have only doubled down on this approach since January 2017. And, since repeal through Congress has not been working, President Trump has been unilaterally doing everything he can to sabotage the Affordable Care Act. Now, the Trump Administration is trying to get the entire law – including protections for people with pre-existing conditions – struck down in court.

As president, I will protect the Affordable Care Act from these continued attacks. I oppose every effort to get rid of this historic law – including efforts by Republicans, and efforts by Democrats. Instead of starting from scratch and getting rid of private insurance, I have a plan to build on the Affordable Care Act by giving Americans more choice, reducing health care costs, and making our health care system less complex to navigate.

My plan takes a number of steps to build on Obamacare, including allowing Americans who are uninsured or who don't like their coverage to buy into a Medicare-like public option. My plan also

increases premium tax credits so more people will have lower premiums and lower deductibles. My plan will help middle class families by eliminating the 400% income cap on tax credit eligibility and lowering the limit on the cost of coverage from 9.86% of income to 8.5%. This means that no family buying insurance on the individual marketplace, regardless of income, will have to spend more than 8.5% of their income on health insurance.

My plan will ensure low-income individuals get covered by offering premium-free access to the public option for the roughly 4 million individuals who would be eligible for Medicaid but for their state's inaction, and making sure their public option covers the full scope of Medicaid benefits. States that have already expanded Medicaid will have the choice of moving the expansion population to the premium-free public option as long as the states continue to pay their current share of the cost of covering those individuals. Additionally, I will ensure people making below 138% of the federal poverty level get covered. I'll do this by automatically enrolling these individuals when they interact with certain institutions (such as public schools) or other programs for low-income populations (such as SNAP)

I believe that Medicaid plays an absolutely critical role in our health care system and it must be protected and strongly funded going forward. As president, I will fight all efforts to undermine it - such as work requirements and other tactics to reduce enrollment. My Administration won't let states skirt their duties under Medicaid and will take enforcement action against any state that allows profiteering to get in the way of Medicaid beneficiaries' health. I will also take steps to ensure Medicaid's beneficiaries can access home and community-based long-term care when they want it.

I will also protect and strengthen Medicare as we know it. The Affordable Care Act strengthened Medicare by extending the life of the Medicare Trust Fund; giving Medicare beneficiaries access to free recommended preventive services, such as an annual wellness visit; and closing the prescription drug coverage gap, often referred to as the "donut hole." As president, I will continue to defend our nation's commitment to older Americans and people with disabilities through Medicare. I will keep Medicare as a separate and distinct program and ensure there is no disruption to the current Medicare system.

I have also proposed a robust, comprehensive plan to reduce prescription drug costs. I will put a stop to runaway drug prices and the profiteering of the drug industry by:

- **Repealing the outrageous exception allowing drug corporations to avoid negotiating with Medicare over drug prices.** Because Medicare covers so many Americans, it has significant leverage to negotiate lower prices for its beneficiaries. And it does so for hospitals and other providers participating in the program, but not drug manufacturers. Drug manufacturers not facing any competition, therefore, can charge whatever price they choose to set. There's no justification for this except the power of the prescription drug lobby in Washington. My plan will repeal the existing law explicitly barring Medicare from negotiating lower prices with drug corporations.
- **Limiting launch prices for drugs that face no competition and are being abusively priced by manufacturers.** Through my work on the Cancer Moonshot, I understand that the future of pharmacological interventions is not traditional chemical drugs but specialized biotech drugs that will have little to no competition to keep prices in check. Without competition, we

need a new approach for keeping the prices of these drugs down. For these cases where new specialty drugs without competition are being launched, under my plan the Secretary of Health and Human Services will establish an independent review board to assess their value. The board will recommend a reasonable price, based on the average price in other countries (a process called external reference pricing) or, if the drug is entering the U.S. market first, based on an evaluation by the independent board members. This reasonable price will be the rate Medicare and the public option will pay. In addition, my plan will allow private plans participating in the individual marketplace to access a similar rate.

- **Limiting price increases for all brand, biotech, and abusively priced generic drugs to inflation.** As a condition of participation in the Medicare program and public option, all brand, biotech, and abusively priced generic drugs will be prohibited from increasing their prices more than the general inflation rate. My plan will also impose a tax penalty on drug manufacturers that increase the costs of their brand, biotech, or abusively priced generic over the general inflation rate.
- **Allowing consumers to buy prescription drugs from other countries.** To create more competition for U.S. drug corporations, my plan will allow consumers to import prescription drugs from other countries, as long as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has certified that those drugs are safe.
- **Terminating pharmaceutical corporations' tax break for advertisement spending.** Drug corporations spent an estimated \$6 billion in 2016 alone on prescription drug advertisements to increase their sales, a more than four-fold increase from just \$1.3 billion in 1997. The American Medical Association has even expressed "concerns among physicians about the negative impact of commercially driven promotions, and the role that marketing costs play in fueling escalating drug prices." Currently, drug corporations may count spending on these ads as a deduction to reduce the amount of taxes they owe. But taxpayers should not have to foot the bill for these ads. As president, I'll end this tax deduction for all prescription drug ads, as proposed by Senator Jeanne Shaheen.
- **Improving the supply of quality generics.** Generics help reduce health care spending, but brand drug corporations have succeeded in preserving a number of strategies to help them delay the entrance of a generic into the market even after the patent has expired. My plan supports numerous proposals to accelerate the development of safe generics, such as Senator Patrick Leahy's proposal to make sure generic manufacturers have access to a sample.

Additionally, my health care plan takes a holistic approach to ensuring that veterans have access to the care and treatment they need. There is nothing partisan about improving support for service members, veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors. As president, I will unite the country and restore the VA as the premier agency for ensuring our veterans' overall well-being. My plan calls for providing veterans world class health care to meet their specific needs, including by establishing the right balance of VA care and purchased care, region by region, based on veteran needs, existing VA capacity, and availability of market alternatives. My plan also calls for a full-circle referral process, which will better ensure that veterans are seen in a timely manner and receive the best possible quality of care, as well as

improving care for specific subsets of the veteran population, including women, LGBTQ vets, and children.

My plan for veterans also specifically addresses promoting vets' mental health and well-being, including by working aggressively to facilitate immediate access to mental health services for veterans in crisis, to include standardizing performance expectations around same day, walk-in and urgent mental health services; hiring more ER psychiatric staff and peer specialists; expanding crisis line capacity to ensure all calls are answered and appropriate referrals occur within hours; and implementing specific programs to encourage veterans to prioritize their mental health by reaching out to the VA when they need support.

- **Culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health services**

Our culture and health care systems too often treat mental illness as different from physical health conditions. It's wrong. As Vice President, I was a champion for efforts to implement the federal mental health parity law, improve access to mental health care, and eliminate the stigma around mental health. As president, I will redouble these efforts to reduce stigma, ensure enforcement of mental health parity laws, and invest in efforts to ensure that care is culturally and linguistically appropriate.

According to the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#), "individuals living with mental illness experience recovery through a combination of community services, medication, peer support, housing, education, employment and other supports." When people have access to all appropriate treatment options they, along with their doctors or other providers, can decide what works best for them. In Medicaid, integrating mental health and addiction treatment into primary care must be a priority. The stigma and discrimination against people with mental illness prevent millions from seeking and receiving effective treatment. We can and must do better.

The Obama-Biden White House made sure that discussions surrounding mental health were open and honest, and ensured that communities were able to speak to their needs and access relevant resources. For example, the Obama-Biden Administration's White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI) held events highlighting mental health resources and programs for the AAPI community. Additionally, in coordination with the White House Office of Public Engagement, the WHIAAPI hosted a briefing during AAPI Heritage Month and National Mental Health Awareness Month to discuss mental health and suicide prevention within the AAPI community. As president, I will ensure that key programs, events, and resources like these are made available to the community and part of our broader mental health and suicide prevention efforts.

I am proud that the Affordable Care Act (ACA) provided individuals with pre-existing conditions, including a mental health challenge, access to health insurance. The ACA requires insurance companies to cover mental and behavioral health treatment as an essential benefit, and cover that care at parity with physical health benefits. And, the ACA gave 60 million Americans access to mental health and substance use disorder benefits. Yet, despite this progress, I know that our parity laws are under-enforced and too many people are still denied the mental health care they need. As president, I will make sure enforcing our mental health parity laws is a priority. Currently states vary in how they define essential health benefits when it comes to mental health. In my Administration, we will set clear

standards raising the bar for mental health coverage, including habilitative services and other forms of behavioral health care.

I will also build on the Affordable Care Act to make sure low-income individuals with mental health disabilities have access to insurance. Access to affordable health insurance that includes coverage for mental health shouldn't depend on your zip code or income.

And because I also want to make sure that our kids get the mental health care they need, I will make an unprecedented investment in school mental health professionals in order to double the number of psychologists, guidance counselors, nurses, social workers, and other health professionals employed in our schools, and partner with colleges to expand the pipeline of these professionals. The current school psychologist to student ratio in this country is roughly 1,400 to 1, while experts say it should be at most 700 to 1. That's a gap of about 35,000 to 60,000 school psychologists. Teachers too often end up having to fill the gap, taking away from their time focusing on teaching. My plan will allow school districts with a large number of SEAA students to hire culturally and linguistically competent mental health professionals.

- **Government programs to support low income families (particularly SNAP and SSI)**

The Obama-Biden Administration worked to protect families who were in most need of assistance due to food insecurity, including by providing authority to increase SNAP benefit levels through the Recovery Act. As president, I will increase funding for the program and roll back President Trump's actions to restrict SNAP. SNAP beneficiaries should have as many options for purchasing food as other people, and they shouldn't be pushed to use any one option. As president, I will oppose any proposals like President Trump's Harvest Box plan that restricts choices of SNAP beneficiaries. And, I will address food deserts so people in low income communities are not forced to use online shopping as their only option.

Trump has systematically attacked the Social Security disability programs. He has [proposed monitoring](#) people with disabilities through social media in order to cancel their benefits, including their health care. He has [proposed conducting](#) disability reviews more frequently with the goal of canceling the benefits of thousands of people with disabilities for which they are qualified. And he has [taken action](#) to make the administrative law judges who decide social security disability appeals "excepted service" appointments rather than career employees. All of these moves weaken the income safety net necessary to ensure people with disabilities have the support they need to improve their economic health. To protect income support and increase employment and opportunities, I will protect and enhance Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits, which millions of people rely on to survive.

3. Immigration

SEAs are the largest community of refugees ever resettled in America. We are a vibrant, diverse, and growing community of refugees, the children of refugees, people sponsored by refugee families, and more recently arrived immigrants who have come to the U.S. on family-based and employment visas.

Please describe your candidate's position on:

- Ending unjust mandatory detention and deportations (including those with criminal records)

The next president will need to take urgent action to end the Trump Administration's draconian policies, which are grounded in fear and racism rather than facts, work to heal the wounds inflicted on immigrant communities, and restore America's moral leadership. As president, I will move immediately to ensure that the U.S. meets its responsibilities as both a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants.

I will end prolonged detention and reinvest in a case management program. The Trump Administration has sought to circumvent the Flores agreement and hold children in detention indefinitely. But proven alternatives to detention and non-profit case management programs, which support migrants as they navigate their legal obligations, are the best way to ensure that they attend all required immigration appointments. These programs also enable migrants to live in dignity and safety while awaiting their court hearings—facilitating things like doctor visits, social services, and school enrollment for children. Evidence shows that these programs are highly effective and are far less expensive and punitive than detaining families. I will codify protections to safeguard children to make sure their treatment is consistent with their best interest and invest in community-based case management programs, including those supported by faith-based organizations such as Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, to move migrants into safe environments as quickly as possible. I will also end the use of for-profit detention centers, because no business should profit from the suffering of desperate people fleeing violence. I will ensure that facilities that temporarily house migrants seeking asylum are held to the highest standards of care and prioritize the safety and dignity of families above all. And, I will make clear that the federal government should not use private facilities for any detention, including detention of undocumented immigrants.

Furthermore, targeting people who have never been convicted of a serious criminal offense and who have lived, worked, and contributed to our economy and our communities for decades is the definition of counterproductive. I will direct enforcement efforts toward threats to public safety and national security, while ensuring that individuals are treated with the due process to which they are entitled and their human rights are protected. I will end workplace raids to ensure that threats based on workers' status do not interfere with their ability to organize and improve their wages and working conditions. I will also protect sensitive locations from immigration enforcement actions. No one should be afraid to seek medical attention, go to school, their job, or their place of worship for fear of an immigration enforcement action. I will also ensure that ICE and CBP officials are abiding by professional standards, following the law, and are held accountable for inhumane treatment. I will increase resources for training and demand transparency in and independent oversight over ICE and CBP's activities. Under a Biden Administration, there will be responsible, Senate-confirmed professionals leading these agencies, and they will answer directly to the president.

To achieve these goals, in the first 100 days, my administration will also:

- **Immediately reverse the Trump Administration's cruel and senseless policies that separate parents from their children at our border**, including ending the prosecution of parents for minor immigration violations as an intimidation tactic, and prioritize the reunification of any children still separated from their families.
- **End Trump's detrimental asylum policies.** The Statue of Liberty has long been a beacon to people "yearning to breathe free" around the world — including asylum-seekers and refugees.

But the Trump Administration has worked against this tradition to drastically restrict access to asylum in the U.S., including imposing additional restrictions on anyone traveling through Mexico or Guatemala; attempting to prevent victims of gang and domestic violence from receiving asylum; systematically prosecuting adult asylum seekers for misdemeanor illegal entry; and severely limiting the ability of members of the LGBTQ community, an especially vulnerable group in many parts of the world, from qualifying for asylum as members of a “particular social group.” I will end these policies, starting with Trump’s Migrant Protection Protocols, and restore our asylum laws so that they do what they should be designed to do—protect people fleeing persecution and who cannot return home safely.

- **End the mismanagement of the asylum system**, which fuels violence and chaos at the border. Trump’s disastrous policy of “metering” — limiting the number of asylum applications accepted each day — forces people seeking asylum to wait on the streets in often dangerous Mexican border towns for weeks before they are permitted to apply. It has created a horrifying ecosystem of violence and exploitation, with cartels kidnapping, violently assaulting, and extorting migrants. I will direct the necessary resources to ensure asylum applications are processed fairly and efficiently, while treating families and children with compassion and sensitivity.
- **Surge humanitarian resources to the border and foster public-private initiatives.** Humanitarian needs are best met through a network of organizations, such as faith-based shelters, non-governmental aid organizations, legal non-profits, and refugee assistance agencies working together. I will dramatically increase U.S. government resources to support migrants awaiting assessment of their asylum claims and to the organizations providing for their needs.
- **Protect Dreamers and their families.** The Obama-Biden Administration created DACA in 2012 to protect “Dreamers,” undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children, obeyed the law once here, and stayed in school or enlisted in the military. DACA provided young people who passed a background check and application process with temporary work permits and protection from deportation. The Trump Administration made the cruel and counterproductive decision to terminate DACA, throwing into turmoil the lives of millions of Dreamers. Dreamers and their parents should have a roadmap to citizenship through legislative immigration reform. But in the meantime, I will remove the uncertainty for Dreamers by reinstating the DACA program, and I will explore all legal options to protect their families from inhumane separation. I will also ensure Dreamers are eligible for federal student aid (loans, Pell grants) and are included in his proposals to provide access to community college without debt and invest in HBCU/Hispanic Serving Institution/Minority Serving Institutions, which will help Dreamers contribute even more to our economy.
- **Rescind the un-American travel and refugee bans**, also referred to as “Muslim bans.” The Trump Administration’s anti-Muslim bias hurts our economy, betrays our values, and can serve as a powerful terrorist recruiting tool. Prohibiting Muslims from entering the country is morally wrong, and there is no intelligence or evidence that suggests it makes our nation more secure. It is yet another abuse of power by the Trump Administration designed to target primarily black and brown immigrants. I will immediately rescind the “Muslim bans.”
- **Order an immediate review of Temporary Protected Status (TPS)** for vulnerable populations who cannot find safety in their countries ripped apart by violence or disaster. The Trump Administration’s politically-motivated decisions to rescind protected status for hundreds of thousands of people fleeing countries impacted by war and natural disasters — without regard for current country conditions — is a recipe for disaster. I will protect TPS and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) holders from being returned to countries that are unsafe. TPS/DED

holders who have been in the country for an extended period of time and built lives in the U.S. will also be offered a path to citizenship through legislative immigration reform.

- **Protect and expand opportunities for people who risked their lives in military service.** I will not target the men and women who served in uniform, or their families, for deportation. I will also direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to create a parole process for veterans deported by the Trump Administration, to reunite them with their families and military colleagues in the U.S.

- **Strengthening naturalization programs (ex: funding, support for limited English populations)**

As president, I will commit significant political capital to finally deliver legislative immigration reform to ensure that the U.S. remains open and welcoming to people from every part of the world—and to bring hardworking people who have enriched our communities and our country, in some cases for decades, out of the shadows. This touches families of every heritage and background. There are approximately 1.7 million undocumented immigrants from Asia in the U.S., as well as hundreds of thousands from Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and the Caribbean. I will immediately begin working with Congress to modernize our system, with a priority on keeping families together by providing a roadmap to citizenship for nearly 11 million undocumented immigrants; growing our economy and expanding economic opportunity across the country by improving and increasing opportunities for legal immigration; and preserve the longstanding directive of our immigration system to reunite families and enhance our diversity.

My administration will streamline and improve the naturalization process to make it more accessible to qualified green card holders. The Trump Administration has made it far too difficult for qualifying green card holders to obtain citizenship. Quite simply, this is wrong. I will restore faith in the citizenship process by removing roadblocks to naturalization and obtaining the right to vote, addressing the application backlog by prioritizing the adjudication workstream and ensuring applications are processed quickly, and rejecting the imposition of unreasonable fees.

It's time for the federal government to listen and learn from local municipalities across the country that have built vibrant and inclusive communities and economies by developing concrete policy and program recommendations at the grassroots level to provide opportunities for new immigrants.

As president, I will:

- **Marshal federal resources, through the reestablishment of the Task Force for New Americans, to support community efforts to welcome immigrants.** Concrete efforts will most often happen within individual communities, but federal agencies have tremendous information and resources to support community-led efforts. By adopting initiatives promoted by organizations like Welcoming America, my administration will improve access to federal agencies and better support local initiatives, such as:
 - Establishing Offices of Immigrant Affairs in city halls, or at the county and state levels, so there are local government officials focused on making policies inclusive;

- Creating neighborhood resource centers or welcome centers to help all residents find jobs; access services and English-language learning opportunities; and navigate the school system, health care system, and other important facets of daily life;
 - Supporting entrepreneur incubators targeted toward immigrants and providing resources to help access business loans, mentoring, and capital;
 - Promoting statewide seals of biliteracy to recognize people who graduate from high school speaking multiple languages;
 - Driving campaigns to help lawful permanent residents naturalize;
 - Facilitating statewide efforts to lower the barriers to relicense professional degrees and certifications from other countries;
 - Increasing immigrant representation on community boards;
 - Ensuring that all public schools have sufficient English-language learning support to help all children reach their potential; and
 - Investing in programs to connect immigrant professionals to others in their field or to create cultural events and other programming to build social capital in immigrant communities.
- **Push to repeal extreme, anti-immigrant state laws that have a chilling effect on the ability of immigrant domestic violence, sexual assault survivors, and other victims of crimes to seek safety and justice.** Some state laws drive victims and witnesses into the shadows and threaten public safety. As documented in a recent national survey, immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking are increasingly afraid to contact police, pursue civil or criminal cases, or go to court to seek safety. This traps victims who either ask for help and risk deportation, retaliation by an abuser, and separation from one's children, or stay with a violent partner and risk one's life. As president, I will work in partnership with cities, states, nonprofits, and law enforcement to build trust and push for states to repeal the laws that chill the reporting of domestic violence incidents and threaten public safety.
 - **Protecting and expanding family immigration**

I reject the false choice between employment-based and family-based immigration. Each day, in every state in the country, millions of immigrants granted a visa based on family ties make valuable contributions to our country and economy. Keeping families together and allowing eligible immigrants to join their American relatives on U.S. soil is critically important, but the current system is poorly designed with per-country caps that prevent applications from being approved in a timely fashion. That means approved applicants may wait decades to be reunited with their families. As president, I will support family-based immigration by preserving family unification as a foundation of our immigration system; by allowing any approved applicant to receive a temporary non-immigrant visa until the permanent visa is processed; and by supporting legislation that treats the spouse and children of green card holders as the immediate relatives they are, exempting them from caps, and allowing parents to bring their minor children with them at the time they immigrate.

America has been strengthened culturally and economically by immigrants and refugees from Southeast Asia countries who have made their homes in the United States. Offering hope and safe haven to

refugees is part of who we are as a country, which is why I will embrace the core values that have made us who we are and will prioritize restoring refugee admissions in line with our historic practice under both Democratic and Republican Administrations. I will set the annual global refugee admissions cap to 125,000, and seek to raise it over time commensurate with our responsibility, our values, and the unprecedented global need.

Is there anything else you would like us to know?

I'm running to rebuild the middle class, unify the country, and restore the soul of our nation. I was always taught that there is no greater sin than the abuse of power – and that it's never enough to just abhor that abuse; it's every single one of our duties to stand against it, wherever it's found. Today, our country is facing grave abuses of power: Tax giveaways to the rich and funding cuts for the poor. A rollback of voting rights, civil rights, and America's role as a beacon of hope to the world. Emboldened forces of hate that have slithered out from under their rocks to kill in Charlottesville, Brooklyn, Pittsburgh, Poway, and El Paso and the epidemic of violence against trans women of color; and to terrorize daily in countless smaller, insidious ways. That is not who we are. I'll fight to make sure that every person is treated with dignity, shares in the prosperity their work creates, and has the same fair shot at the American Dream, regardless of race, gender, income, or zip code. I believe in our founders' ideals: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal..." We've never fully lived up to them, but we've never quit trying. And, I'm not about to let us quit trying now.

The Biden Campaign has made outreach to the Southeast Asian, and the Asian American and Pacific Islander community as a whole, a priority. The campaign has made investments to engage the Southeast Asian community, including by hiring a National AAPI Director to focus on engagement and outreach. The campaign also holds several calls every month with representatives of the AAPI community, providing campaign updates and hearing concerns from the AAPI and East Asian community directly. We also launched AAPIs For Biden, a national volunteer-led affinity group to mobilize the AAPI grassroots community. Furthermore, campaign surrogates including Michelle Kwan and former Deputy Secretary of State Tony Blinken have directly engaged and attended events with the East Asian community across the country. We will continue to prioritize engagement with the AAPI and East Asian community and plan to conduct even more targeted outreach to specific communities within the AAPI community.