



WE GO TOGETHER

THE WE THE PEOPLE AGENDA FOR 2020-2021

WE THE PEOPLE is a campaign of, by, and for all the people of Pennsylvania. Our goal is to ensure that everyone can thrive, no matter whether they are Black, brown, or white; native-born or immigrant; Asian or Latinx; poor or rich, and live in cities or suburbs or rural areas. We call for decisive leadership and bold action from state lawmakers to keep our families safe today—and to build a stronger, healthier, and more just future.

We launch our 2020 campaign under the cloud of the COVID-19 pandemic afflicting our state and country, the resulting economic recession, and the protests of the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and others in an long exhausting list of victims of police violence. WE THE PEOPLE—Black and white, Latinx and Asian, native-born and immigrant—are working together to protect the lives and health of all Pennsylvanians. And we are standing up together to say that Black Lives Matter.

The pandemic and our efforts to contain it has shown us that no matter what we look like or where we live, how much we have or where we work, we are dependent on one another and on the efforts we make together to stay safe, go to a doctor when sick, and provide our families with the necessities of life. There will be no real recovery from economic distress unless it is a just recovery that generates prosperity by focusing first on people with low and moderate incomes and small community-based businesses.

The pandemic and the tragically common police violence are showing everyone what WE THE PEOPLE have long known—that neither our sacrifices in hard times nor our opportunities in good ones are equally distributed. For too long, we have let politicians who serve the interests of corporations and the rich divide us on the basis of what we look like, where we come from, where we worship, or how much money we have. These divisions lead to public policies that do too little to help most Pennsylvanians, while making the rich and corporations wealthy. These divisions have allowed our leaders to allow businesses to pollute our air, contaminate our water, and create a climate crisis. And they have created militarized police forces that aim to repress not just the problems created by inequality but the protests that demand justice.

It's time for WE THE PEOPLE to embrace a new path forward for all Pennsylvanians. Here we state our core goals. Elsewhere we provide detailed policy prescriptions.

WE GO TOGETHER TO SECURE A FAIR RETURN FOR OUR WORK

Because some politicians have tried to divide us, too many of us have ignored how many people work long hours for wages that don't allow them to support their families. Now it's impossible to ignore the frontline workers in hospitals, grocery stores, and farms—who are more likely to be Black, brown, or immigrants—who do not receive fair wages or the protective equipment they need. Nor can we ignore the small, community-based businesses that are suffering and need both help from the government and customers who can afford to purchase what they produce and sell.

So WE THE PEOPLE GO TOGETHER not just to protect and reward frontline workers during this crisis, but to ensure that everyone—with no exceptions—can secure a fair return on their work and give their kids a better life in the future by

- removing the barriers that prevent Pennsylvanians from joining together to form unions to negotiate for better wages, benefits, and safety in the workplace;
- ensuring that every worker has paid family leave and sick days;
- making it possible for undocumented workers to secure the driver's licenses they need to get to work and take care of their families;
- creating a living wage for everyone—a \$15 minimum wage that increases with the cost of living, an end to the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers, an end to the preemption of local minimum wage laws, and strong enforcement of minimum wage laws;
- investing in green jobs and ecologically sustainable infrastructure, especially in Black, brown, and low-income communities, while ensuring a just transition for workers and communities that now rely on extractive industries; and
- supporting local community-based businesses that protect and pay their workers fairly.

WE GO TOGETHER TO GIVE ALL OF OUR KIDS A GREAT EDUCATION

Because politicians have set some of us against others, we have not come together to insist that every child—regardless of their income level, their learning styles or abilities, the color of their skin or nation of origin—can secure an education that excites and stimulates them and that prepares them to make the most of their lives, not just to benefit themselves but all of us. The pandemic has made it impossible to ignore the stark economic and racial inequality in our schools and the differences in the computer equipment, technical support, and number and quality of teachers available to members of different communities.

So WE THE PEOPLE GO TOGETHER IN support of providing every child and every school the means to continue receiving education during the crisis and ensuring an equal education for all once it ends by

- increasing state funding for childcare, pre-K, and K-12 public schools and fully desegregating our schools so every child gets a superior education, health hazards are removed from school buildings, and rising property taxes don't impoverish working people;
- making tuition affordable at community colleges and at our state colleges and universities, ensuring students can earn a degree without going deep in debt;
- investing in career and technical education, job training, and apprenticeship programs that are critical to the future of our children and our economy.

WE GO TOGETHER TO PROVIDE HEALTH CARE TO ALL

Some politicians have encouraged us to ignore our common vulnerability to illness and disease so they don't have to ensure that everyone, no matter their race, income, or immigrant status, can go to a well-trained doctor or a hospital with the best equipment. COVID-19 has made it impossible to ignore that some of us are struggling to get tested or see doctors. And it has reminded us that we are all better off when all of us, regardless of where we live or where we came from, can get the care we need.

So WE THE PEOPLE GO TOGETHER to ensure that everyone can secure testing and treatment for COVID-19 and receive quality, affordable health care in the future by

- creating state regulations that ensure no one is denied health insurance or is required to pay more if they have a pre-existing condition, as well as limit the profits of health insurance companies.
- ending our dependence on employer-based health care by creating a public option for health insurance in Pennsylvania.

WE GO TOGETHER FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR ALL

Some politicians have lifted up developers and builders while setting communities against one another. Too often we forget that some people can easily find affordable homes while those with low and moderate incomes, as well as many people of color and immigrants, both documented and undocumented, spend too large a share of their income to put a roof over their head. The current crisis is showing how many of us are just one disaster away from homelessness.

So WE THE PEOPLE GO TOGETHER in protecting both homeowners and renters during this crisis and beyond by

- providing assistance to people with their rent and mortgage payments; creating a moratorium on evictions, foreclosure, and utility shut-offs and a "good cause" eviction requirement, fully funding the state's Homeowner Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program (HEMAP) and creating a similar rental assistance program for tenants;
- expanding investment in housing for the homeless, in affordable housing, and in programs to help homeowners, landlords and tenants make currently substandard housing livable, energy efficient, and free from health hazards; and
- changing zoning laws to encourage affordable housing in gentrifying communities and the suburbs.

WE GO TOGETHER TO ENSURE THAT EVERYONE PAYS THEIR FAIR SHARE

We have let some politicians split us from one another so they can cut taxes for the rich and corporations again and again even though that does nothing to create jobs, increase investment, or foster growth. Our tax system asks working people to pay too much—especially those who are Black, brown, or immigrants, both documented and undocumented—and lets corporations and the rich pay too little. That's not only unfair but it prevents us from raising the funds we need to invest in our future. The response to the COVID-19 disaster reveals similar inequities as too much relief funding is going to large corporations and too little to small businesses and working people.

WE THE PEOPLE GO TOGETHER TO provide everyone with the economic support they need right now and to ensure that everyone pays their fair share for our common needs by

- enacting the Fair Share Tax which raises taxes on profits, capital gains, dividends, and estates; reduces taxes on wages and interest; and generates billions from the top 5% while cutting taxes for 60% of Pennsylvanians;
- ending tax loopholes so that large multi-state and multi-national corporations pay taxes at the same rate as Pennsylvania-based corporations and fossil fuel production is taxed not subsidized; and
- creating an anti-poverty tax credit that prevents families from being taxed into poverty.

WE GO TOGETHER TO ENSURE PUBLIC SAFETY FOR ALL

The murder of George Floyd has reminded all of us of something that Black and brown people know in their bones and the rest (of us) have shamefully ignored for too long: police violence is endemic and disproportionately affects the lives of Black and brown people. Some politicians use the threat of crime to divide us and justify rapidly growing police forces as they cut the critical services we have identified. They create police forces that engage marginalized people as threats, and too often injure and kill Black and brown people, people who are experiencing homelessness; people experiencing trauma; and people living with developmental, physical, or mental disabilities.

So WE THE PEOPLE GO TOGETHER in the belief that the safest communities are not those with the most police but those that have the most resources. We are committed to ensuring that Black Lives Matter by

- transferring funding from the police and investing in Black communities to repair the damage that our legacy of slavery and racism has created;
- creating strong citizen oversight of law enforcement agencies that establishes training and mental health standards, that has investigatory and disciplinary power, that provides an independent review process for police officers that harm civilians, and that eliminates all legal and contractual barriers to police accountability;



- enacting legislation that strictly limits the use of deadly force; prohibits methods of detaining citizens likely to lead to injury and death; and requires officers of the law officers to report the misconduct of their peers and protects them when they do so.

WE GO TOGETHER TO ENSURE THAT EVERY VOICE IS HEARD AND EVERY VOTE IS COUNTED

For too long, we have allowed some politicians to make our very democracy an object of division because they know that when every voice is heard and every vote is counted, the power of WE THE PEOPLE will overwhelm the money of their corporate sponsors.

So WE THE PEOPLE GO TOGETHER to eliminate the barriers that prevent everyone—especially Black and brown people and those with low incomes—from playing a role in shaping our government now and in the future by

- sending every voter a postage-paid mail-in ballot.
- ensuring that early voting locations are widely available.
- ending the partisan and racial gerrymandering of legislative districts.
- limiting the influence of money in our politics.

OUR VISION

In the past, we have achieved great things when we've gone together—higher wages, strong unions, public community and four-year colleges, civil rights, and more. We created a vibrant economy and a strong middle class. But our work was never complete because women, Black and brown people, and immigrants were never fully included in our politics or economy or treated fairly by the police. And in recent years we have allowed economic inequality to grow unchecked while police forces expand. It's time for us to go together to secure what we all need: an inclusive community and sustainable economy.