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Executive Vice President & COO

Karen McGill Lawson

January 12, 2015

President Barack H. Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 200 national organizations to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, we write to share with you our executive branch and legislative goals for the coming year. Our 15 task forces worked to identify and develop a comprehensive list of priority legislative initiatives that represent a path forward for our country in advancing social and economic justice — including initiatives to expand the economy, promote job growth and workplace fairness, encourage educational opportunity, ensure fairness in the criminal justice system, and promote programs for healthy, strong families.

The Leadership Conference believes that these important executive and legislative priorities are well-positioned for action. While the list that follows does not reflect the complete agenda of all of our member organizations, it does highlight the issues that are at the top of the coalition's agenda. We believe that these goals can and should be met.

The Leadership Conference looks forward to continuing to work with you to further these important goals and will be scheduling meetings with the relevant departments and agencies to discuss our key civil and human rights priorities. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Nancy Zirkin or Corrine Yu at 202-466-3311.

Sincerely,

Wade Henderson  
President & CEO

Nancy Zirkin  
Executive Vice President



Cc: Vice President Joseph R. Biden

Department of Commerce  
Secretary Penny Pritzker

Department of Education  
Secretary Arne Duncan

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Consumer Financial Protection Bureau  
Director Richard Cordray

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
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Federal Communications Commission  
Chairman Thomas Wheeler

The White House  
Chief of Staff Denis McDonough

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## The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights 2015 Priorities

### State of the Union Themes

- Demonstrate ongoing commitment to advancing civil and human rights, including the need to address the concerns of communities of color disproportionately hurt by the economy, the housing crisis, and predatory lending and discriminatory practices by the banking industry.
- Call for measures to create good jobs, increase the minimum wage, and promote economic and educational opportunities, especially for underserved communities. Highlight the increasing wealth, unemployment and income gaps between whites and communities of color. Highlight the need for fairer tax system for low and middle-income families, as well as for policies that address discrimination against women and other workers with family caregiving and breadwinning responsibilities.
- As we commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landmark Voting Rights Act, elevate election reform and the need for Congress to approve legislation to safeguard the rights of all eligible voters to register and vote.
- Especially in the aftermath of the police shooting in Ferguson, Missouri, underline the urgent need for efforts to promote intergroup engagement, and combat distrust and hostility between law enforcement and the communities they serve.
- Reaffirm the nation's equality ideal by emphasizing the need for workplace fairness – promoting equal pay for women and people of color and combatting discrimination on the basis of personal characteristics or physical or mental disabilities.
- Nominate, and fight for, diverse, inclusive, thoughtful, and progressive judges.
- Elevate U.S. efforts to promote human rights worldwide, which are best served when we lead by example and honor the same values and norms we expect the rest of the world to respect.
- Ensure that technological progress brings greater safety, economic opportunity, and convenience to everyone. Ensure high-speed broadband Internet for all people in the U.S. Maximize the benefits of big data while minimizing its risks to foster discrimination and diminish opportunity.
- Implement targeted and equitable transportation and infrastructure investments to promote diverse and inclusive communities.

### Cross-Cutting Themes

**Civil Rights Enforcement and Funding:** Align funding for civil rights agencies with the identified needs of each agency, taking into consideration overall agency budget, civil rights statutory jurisdiction, complaint flow, complexity of case investigations and resolutions, needs and plans for proactive compliance reviews, staff training and capacity-building needs, and needs for robust data collection and analysis.

**Civil Rights Laws:** Institutionalize advances in rights and liberties. Defend against dilution or weakening of federal civil rights statutes, including unnecessary funding and staffing cuts. Defend against harmful efforts to thwart the President's executive actions on immigration or the ability of agencies to enforce civil rights provisions.

**Racial Justice:** Support and advocate for legislative and policy changes that address the ongoing and pervasive disparate and unequal treatment of minorities that exists in public education and throughout the criminal justice system. Promote deeper neighborhood engagement and training for law enforcement officials and community members to address bias and ensure equal procedural justice.

**Access to Justice:** Support congressional action to overturn *Alexander v. Sandoval*'s holding that there is no private right of action to enforce disparate impact regulations promulgated under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Increase funding for the Legal Services Corporation and lift restrictions on legal services for low-income communities.

**Economic Security and Opportunity:** Support and advocate for legislative policy changes and promulgate regulatory policy changes that promote fair wages, full enforcement of our nation's wage and hour laws and new advances to recognize the changing needs of a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce, particularly as they impact women and communities of color.

## CENSUS

### *Administrative priorities*

- Pursue consensus-building efforts related to the collection of data on race, ethnicity, and national origin that include a broad range of stakeholders — especially in the civil rights community — to ensure that the 2020 Census, the American Community Survey, and other Census Bureau surveys collect and produce the most accurate, detailed, and useful information about the nation's diverse population. Those efforts should include building on Alternative Questionnaire Experiment program results that are most likely to improve the quality, accuracy, and specificity of race, ethnicity, and national origin data. Furthermore, the Office of Management and Budget should take steps to facilitate meaningful and timely stakeholder engagement in the process of updating and revising the OMB Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity and related guidance.
- Pursue consensus-building efforts related to the use of administrative records that include a broad range of stakeholders — especially in the civil rights community — to ensure that the use of administrative records in the 2020 Census, the American Community Survey, and other Census Bureau surveys does not diminish efforts to address the persistent disproportionate undercount of populations of color and other historically harder-to-count population groups, such as immigrants, young children, and rural and low income households.

### *Legislative priorities*

- Support sufficient funding to ensure thorough testing and planning for the 2020 Census. This should include ensuring that operational and technological innovations designed to contain overall census costs are robust and address the persistent disproportionate undercount of populations of color and other historically harder-to-count population groups, such as immigrants, people with disabilities, young children, and rural and low-income households, as well as prison gerrymandering and other design and policy issues that affect a fair and accurate census.
- Ensure an accurate American Community Survey by actively supporting continued mandatory response and full annual funding to guarantee adequate sample size, and by implementing steps to ensure reliable, comprehensive measurement of smaller and special populations.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

### *Administrative priorities*

- The Department of Justice's recent revisions to its profiling guidance for federal law enforcement represents a significant step forward by expanding protected categories and limiting some of the existing loopholes. The policy falls short in the areas of national security, border integrity, and does not apply to state and local enforcement. The administration should continue and expand actions to end profiling by all law enforcement.
- Continue to prioritize reviewing cases for clemency under the new criteria announced by DOJ. Continue the Smart on Crime initiative and codify DOJ guidance to prosecutors regarding charging of drug-related crimes.
- Continue to be proactive in launching pattern and practice investigations of police departments who have engaged in misconduct.
- Continue to pursue criminal civil rights charges against individual officers who deprive individuals of their constitutional rights while acting in their official capacity (Section 242 Prosecutions)
- Ensure that the Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing examines issues of discriminatory profiling, excessive use of force, the utility of data collection, excessive militarization of the police, and a federal accountability mechanism to monitor police misconduct across the country. The Task Force should also support expanded police training on implicit and explicit racial bias.

### *Legislative priorities*

#### **Sentencing Reform**

- Support legislation that addresses front-end drivers of mass-incarceration, racial disparities in incarceration, overcrowding in the federal Bureau of Prisons, and over-criminalization.

#### **Law Enforcement Accountability**

- Support legislation that eliminates discriminatory profiling in all of its forms, similar to the **End Racial Profiling Act**; mandates racial bias training for all law enforcement agencies receiving federal funds; addresses the problem of police misconduct and brutality – one of the most serious, enduring, and divisive human rights violations in the United States; and strengthens personal property rights under the Fifth Amendment to ensure due process of law by reforming civil asset forfeiture laws, which disproportionately impact people of color.

#### **Reentry/Collateral Consequences**

- Support legislation that remove barriers to reentry and addresses collateral consequences for formerly-incarcerated individuals in the areas of education, employment, voting, housing, and public assistance, such as the **Redeem Act**, the **Democracy Restoration Act**, and the **Fairness and Accuracy in Criminal Background Checks Act**. Reauthorize the **Second Chance Reauthorization Act**, which provides funding assistance to state and local governments, and other key stakeholders working with reentering populations.
- Defend and protect against legislation that undermines efforts to provide formerly-incarcerated individuals with pathways to successfully reintegrate into their communities.

### **Juvenile Justice**

- Support legislation like the **Youth Promise Act** to address the specific and unique needs of young people, and support evidence-based practices and alternatives to incarceration. Support reauthorization of the **Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP)**.



## **ECONOMIC SECURITY**

### ***Administrative priorities***

- Issue a “high-road contractor” Executive Order that gives preference to contractors who, in addition to complying with the law, pay living wages, offer good health benefits and retirement plans, provide paid leave, and observe fair scheduling practices.
- The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau should promulgate strong regulations to end abusive practices by payday lenders and other federal regulatory and enforcement agencies—including the Federal Trade Commission and Department of Justice -- should use their enforcement authority against payday lenders to address violations of law.

### ***Legislative priorities***

#### **Budget**

- Protect programs for low-income and vulnerable people and reject structural changes that would negatively impact beneficiaries, such as a block grant for SNAP, a per capita cap for Medicaid, or transforming Medicare into a voucher program.
- Provide relief from the sequester for non-defense programs no less than for defense programs.
- Enact tax policies that improve tax fairness and raise revenue by closing tax loopholes for corporations and the wealthy.
- Reject budget process changes that make it easier to enact tax cuts without offsets and oppose a balanced budget constitutional amendment.

#### **Economic security and jobs**

- Raise the federal minimum wage and the minimum wage for tipped workers, indexed for inflation.
- Protect and expand income and work supports, including Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, nutrition assistance, housing assistance, unemployment insurance, and child care.
- Protect consumers from predatory lending practices by enacting a thirty-six percent Annual Percentage Rate limit applicable to all borrowers and rejecting limits on the authority of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.
- Restore solvency to the Social Security Disability Insurance Trust Fund by reallocating a portion of Social Security’s payroll tax to the Disability Insurance Trust Fund without harmful changes that would reduce benefits or limit participation.
- Make permanent the 2009 improvements to refundable tax credits, including to the Child Tax Credit, Earned Income Tax Credit, and American Opportunity Tax Credit.
- Invest in job creation that builds the economy and meets pressing needs, and ensure that underrepresented populations have access to these jobs.

## EDUCATION

### *Administrative priorities*

**Enforcement:** The Department of Education and the Department of Justice should take aggressive enforcement action to ensure recent guidance is properly integrated into the fabric of local and state education programs, including:

- Zero-tolerance policies and excessive and discriminatory student discipline practices and referrals to law enforcement. (Title VI, Section 504 and Title IX).
- School response to sexual harassment, sexual assault, and all forms of bullying and harassment prohibited by Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504.
- Unlawful seclusion and restraint of students (Title VI, Section 504, and ADA).

**Funding:** Promote equitable distribution of resources, to ensure that:

- Students have qualified, effective and experienced teachers;
- Poor and minority students—including English learners and students with disabilities—are not taught at higher rates than other students by inexperienced, unqualified or out-of-field teachers;
- Adequate professional learning and planning time are provided;
- College-preparatory, AP, IB, or other college-level classes are taught by trained teachers;
- Technology is available, including advanced technology needed to effectively implement college and career-ready standards;
- Adequate school counselors and nurses are provided;
- Learning opportunities are expanded;
- States and LEAs are held accountable for improving achievement and graduation rates of subgroups, for effective school turnaround, and for individual student assistance and tutoring.

### **Policy and Regulation**

- Make permanent, annual, and universal the Civil Rights Data Collection and ensure that each item is cross-tabulated by gender and by Asian-American subgroups. Develop a plan to ensure that accurate and complete data is reported to OCR.
- Use the Secretary's competitive priorities to ensure equity and promote diversity.
- Protect students seeking postsecondary or career education from predatory lending and deceptive marketing practices. (Higher Education Act).
- Ensure quality educational opportunities for all students in juvenile justice facilities that will prepare them to transition back to school upon release from confinement in compliance with Title VI, Title IX, the IDEA, Section 504, the EEOA, and Title IV.
- Protect the rights of undocumented students (e.g., against state denial of college admission to undocumented students). (Title VI).
- Ensure protection against discrimination based on pregnancy or parental status.
- Protect against unlawful discrimination in the administration of single-sex programs and classrooms in elementary and secondary schools. (Title IX).
- Reaffirm and support the recommendations of the Equity and Excellence Commission. Ensure that all student assessments developed with federal funding or used in federally assisted programs—particularly those taken by students with disabilities and/or English learners—meet the requirements of ESEA, federal civil rights statutes, and professionally recognized standards for validity and reliability.

**Transparency:** Make the Department of Education’s work public and available at the Department’s web site, including:

- All compliance, enforcement and resolution documents of *all* offices, including but not limited to OCR and OESE;
- All OCR desegregation agreements (including those currently housed in storage facilities and regional offices), and related documents which should be preserved, accurately catalogued, scanned, and available to the public;
- All state plans (and amendments thereto) under formula programs, including ESEA and IDEA (e.g., waiver documents, reports to the Department, peer review reports and names of reviewers, proposed amendments or modifications, and reports on site visits and other compliance monitoring);
- All applications for competitive grants, peer review reports, names of peer reviewers, scoring and ratings, and discretionary criteria applied (e.g., i-3, Race to the Top);
- Timely and accurate data collection and reporting and measures to ensure that all data can be cross-tabulated by *all* student subgroups (including gender and AAPI subgroups).

#### *Legislative priorities*

- **Early Childhood:** Increase funding for early childhood programs, including child care, and pass the **Strong Start for America’s Children Act (SSACA)**, a comprehensive early childhood education bill. The SSACA would increase access to quality critical early learning opportunities for all children regardless of race, color, or ZIP code.
- **Elementary and Secondary:** Any reauthorization of the **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)** must continue to hold states, districts and schools accountable for providing all children with a high quality public education, including by maintaining subgroup accountability for equitable student outcomes and accountability for equitable resources; fully fund and preserve the targeting and supplemental effect of Title I, Title III, and other ESEA programs to meet the needs of disadvantaged student populations; and expand funding for the magnet schools and other programs to promote diversity and reduce racial isolation.
- **Postsecondary:** Any reauthorization of the **Higher Education Act** and the **Perkins Career and Technical Education Act** must increase the quality and access to postsecondary education and job training, including for non-traditional students such as those who are parenting or who attend school part-time while working. Reauthorizations of these critical laws should increase college affordability by expanding Pell grants and making federal student loans affordable, and support programs such as TRIO, GEAR UP, and HEP-CAMP and minority serving institutions to expand access to education.
- **School Climate and Civil Rights Protections:** Approve critical legislation to ensure students attend school in a safe, nurturing and welcoming environment, free of bullying, harassment and assault, discrimination, or harsh disciplinary practices. Pass a comprehensive **Safe Schools Improvement Act**, the **Student Nondiscrimination Act**, the **Positive Behavior for Safe and Effective Schools Act**, the **Ending Corporal Punishment Act** and the **Keeping All Students Safe Act**. Provide sufficient funding to the Office for Civil Rights in the Department of Education and to the Civil Rights Division in the Department of Justice to enforce federal laws protecting students and employees from discrimination based on race, national origin, sex, disability, age or religion.

## EMPLOYMENT

### *Administrative priorities*

- Issue and implement final rules for the already-issued Executive Orders on federal contractors' pay and civil rights and non-discrimination policies and practices, including:
  - Advancing Pay Equality Through Compensation Data Collection presidential memorandum; and
  - The Non-Retaliation for Disclosure of Compensation Information Executive Order.
- Robustly enforce employment and labor laws and Executive Orders, including those prohibiting discrimination against workers and job-seekers, requiring a higher minimum wage, and prohibiting discrimination against LGBT employees.
- Initiate formal regulatory process in areas where the administration has already committed to act, including:
  - Updating Fair Labor Standards Act regulations regarding workers' eligibility for overtime pay;
  - Issuing regulations on equal opportunity in registered apprenticeships;
  - Reevaluating affirmative action goals for women and minorities in construction;
  - Implementing Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act concerning federal employees and applicants with disabilities; and
  - Implementing the Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces Executive Order.

### *Legislative priorities*

- Promote legislation that promotes fair pay and employment opportunities for women, low-wage workers, and those with family caregiving responsibilities or medical issues; create appropriate standards for supervisor harassment; and ensure protections against workplace discrimination, including:
  - Protections that make it harder for employers to engage in pay and pregnancy discrimination;
  - Anti-discrimination protections for LGBT applicants and employees in hiring and the workplace;
  - Protections for employees and jobseekers against misuse of credit history and criminal background checks.
- Protect against harmful labor and employment policy proposals on pay equity, minimum wage, erosion of workers' rights under the Fair Labor Standards Act to earn overtime pay, and other issues.
- Defend against legislation that undermines or strips agencies' enforcement authority, thereby negatively impacting workers and/or job seekers.

## **HATE CRIMES**

### ***Administrative priorities***

#### **Federal hate crime data collection efforts**

- The administration should create incentives for participation in the FBI's Hate Crime Statistics Act (HCSA) data collection program with special attention devoted to underreporting large agencies that either have not participated in the HCSA program at all or have erroneously reported zero (0) hate crimes. Some Department of Justice funding should be made available only to those agencies that are demonstrating credible participation in the HCSA program.
- DOJ and FBI officials should expand education and training about law enforcement and prevention tools provided by the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act (HCPA), about new HCPA-mandated data collection categories (gender, gender identity, and hate crimes committed by and against juveniles), and about the new 2015 HCSA mandate to collect data on bias-motivated crimes directed against, among others, Sikhs, Arabs, and Hindus.

#### **Public awareness and prevention**

- Federal agencies should publicize and make information available about effective hate crime laws, prevention policies, best practices, and training initiatives, while ensuring that all online materials are fully accessible, following all regulations of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

#### **International leadership in countering violent bigotry**

- The United States, through the Department of State, Department of Justice, delegation to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and other multilateral organizations, should maintain comprehensive and inclusive Department of State monitoring and public reporting on anti-Semitic, racist and xenophobic, anti-Muslim, homophobic, transphobic, anti-Roma, disability-bias and other bias-motivated violence abroad – and provide technical assistance and other forms of cooperation, including training of police and prosecutors in investigating, recording, reporting, and prosecuting violent hate crimes.

### ***Legislative priorities***

- Recognizing the limits of legal responses to hate violence, promote the enactment of comprehensive legislation focusing on inclusive anti-bias education, hate crime prevention, and bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment education, policies, and training initiatives.

## HEALTH CARE

### *Administrative priorities*

- Issue regulations and vigorously enforce section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act.
- Fully implement section 4302 of the ACA (PHSA sec. 3101) regarding data collection in all federally conducted or supported programs and activities.
- Rescind the Dear State Medicaid Director Letter of August 30, 2012 (addressing Individuals with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and amend the Pre-existing Condition Insurance Program Interim Final Rules (77 Fed. Reg. 52614) to ensure access to health insurance and health programs for individuals granted deferred action through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals process.
- Ensure that any administrative relief for immigrants includes access to publicly funded healthcare programs.
- Issue regulations on Qualified Health Plans quality rating and quality improvement initiatives that address health care disparities and compliance with patients' informed medical decisions.
- Implement through administrative action, where possible, provisions of the Health Equity and Accountability Act to address health care disparities due to race, ethnicity, national origin, language, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability.

### *Legislative priorities*

- Ensure Medicaid is not converted into a block grant or funding is otherwise restricted as part of the budget reconciliation or other legislative processes.
- Maintain the health programs, benefits, and funding that everyone needs to achieve and sustain maximum health, including those enacted in the Affordable Care Act.
- Pass the **Health Equity and Accountability Act**.
- Pass the **Health Equity & Access under the Law (HEAL) for Immigrant Women & Families Act**.

## HOUSING AND LENDING

### *Administrative priorities*

- Finalize HUD's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing regulation and Assessment Tool, including a provision that provides a clear and open process for private enforcement actions against non-compliant jurisdictions.
- Reform the Low Income Housing Tax Credit and the Housing Choice Voucher programs to affirmatively further fair housing.
- Oppose any legislation or appropriations riders that prohibit federal agencies from using appropriated funds to enforce HUD's Discriminatory Effects Standard ("Disparate Impact") or Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing ("AFFH") regulations.
- Reallocate at least 300 HUD staff to HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity to better conduct investigations of fair housing complaints and review jurisdictions' compliance with HUD's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing regulation.
- Develop the anti-steering regulation to implement the anti-steering provisions of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act.
- OCC, FHFA, FDIC, and NCUA must follow the Federal Reserve's lead and adopt guidance regarding the maintenance, management, repair, and marketing of REO units in compliance with the provisions of federal and state fair housing laws.
- Continue to bring substantial enforcement actions using the disparate impact and disparate treatment methods of proof in fair housing and fair lending cases and against jurisdictions in violation of the Fair Housing Act for failing to affirmatively further fair housing and for discrimination in the maintenance, management, repair, and marketing of REO units.
- Adopt policies that expand financing for the development and preservation of affordable rental housing.
- Increase access to sustainable mortgage credit for borrowers of color and other underserved market segments through the use of more flexible and accurate credit scoring systems, better pricing policies, and other tools.
- Pursue further policies that prevent foreclosures in communities of color hardest hit by the foreclosure crisis, including the adoption of principal reduction.
- Ensure that all federal agencies involved in housing and mortgage lending, including the Federal Housing Administration and the GSEs, adopt fair lending policies addressing how they and their service vendors maintain and market real estate owned properties.
- Ensure that federal distressed asset loan sales retain critical loss mitigation rights for homeowners, prevent unnecessary foreclosures, and are guided by neighborhood stabilization principles.
- Propose and finalize regulations concerning sexual and other types of discriminatory harassment in housing that provide victims, housing providers, and the public with clear information about what is prohibited under the Fair Housing Act.
- Take continued steps toward implementation of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013's housing protections by the three agencies that administer housing programs covered by VAWA, including HUD, USDA, and the Treasury Department. Expand enforcement of the housing rights of survivors who face housing discrimination because of their status as survivors, under both VAWA and the Fair Housing Act.

- Reform and expand fair housing choice in the Housing Choice Voucher program and related program rules for the Moving to Work, Rental Assistance Demonstration, and Choice Neighborhoods program.

*Legislative priorities*

- Increase funding for the Fair Housing Initiatives Program to better assist private nonprofit fair housing organizations in helping victims of housing discrimination achieve justice and provide fair housing education to the public and housing providers on the rights and prohibitions under the Fair Housing Act.
- Pass legislation, such as the **Housing Opportunities Made Equal Act**, to amend the Fair Housing Act to include LGBT, marital status, veterans' status, and source-of-income protections.
- Safeguard the recently-established mortgage protections in the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act;
- Oppose legislation designed to weaken the Qualified Mortgage and Qualified Residential Mortgage definitions in the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act.
- Protect the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau from a rollback of its authority granted in the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act.
- Eliminate the existing sunset and permanently extend the **Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act**; add a private right of action for tenants.



## HUMAN RIGHTS

### *Administrative priorities*

- Work with Congress to ratify the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)** and the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**.
- Re-establish the Interagency Working Group on Human Rights.
- Appoint a senior White House official to coordinate the implementation of recommendations from the review of the United States under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).
- The Equality Working Group should be reinvigorated with senior agency representatives that meet on a regular basis and consult regularly with NGOs.
- Engage in consultation and dialogue with civil society here in Washington and in Geneva on the review of the United States under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).
- Elevate U.S. engagement of the global fight against hate crimes, including follow up on 2014 OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism.

### *Legislative priorities*

- Ratify the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**.
- Ratify the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**.

## IMMIGRATION

### *Administrative priorities*

The President is to be applauded for using his authority to make a number of improvements to immigration enforcement, including the expansion of deferred action policies for many immigrants. The administration can build on these reforms by making additional changes, including:

- Reforming detention and border enforcement policies to eliminate excessive and abusive practices;
- Ensuring strong oversight and accountability for state and local law enforcement engaged in immigration enforcement;
- Preventing employers from using the threat of immigration enforcement to deprive workers of their rights; and
- Taking action to address backlogs in family-based visa categories.

### *Legislative priorities*

- The recent immigration executive actions taken by the President are no substitute for comprehensive immigration reform. Congress must pass legislation creating a realistic path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, protecting the rights of both immigrant and citizen workers, promoting family reunification, strengthening due process in detention and removal, and ending all profiling.
- Reject “enforcement-only” proposals, which would harm both individuals and our economy as a whole.

## MEDIA/TELECOMMUNICATIONS

### *Administrative priorities*

- Adopt rules that expand the diversity of ownership in traditional and new media. In doing so, the administration should implement long-overdue data collection initiatives to ensure that any new rule not impair broadcast ownership by women and communities of color. Any change to media ownership rules must focus on remediating historic inequality in broadcast media ownership and should be rejected if relaxation of the ownership rules would perpetuate that inequality.
- Expand the low-income telephone service support program (“Lifeline”) into broadband, including support for passage of the **Broadband Adoption Act**. Promote broadband access throughout government. Continue to support measures to modernize and improve Lifeline, recognizing that the recent reforms to the program have made significant strides in improving service and reducing waste.
- Build on previous efforts to reform predatory prison phone rates by extending protections to local calls.

### *Legislative priorities*

- Pass an update to the **Electronic Communications Privacy Act**. Law enforcement searches of email, cell phones, online content, and GPS information should receive the same Fourth Amendment protection as letters and telephone calls.
- Any proposed change to the Communications Act must respect and incorporate central civil rights values, including non-discrimination, access to affordable and quality information services for all, diversity in ownership, consumer protection, and the preservation of jobs.
- Reject efforts to weaken the ConnectEd program.
- Support passage of the **Broadband Adoption Act**.



## NOMINATIONS

### *Administrative priorities*

Nominate a full slate of young, progressive, professionally, and demographically-diverse nominees to fill all judicial vacancies, with a particular emphasis on nominating more public interest attorneys, legal aid attorneys, public defenders, and academics, and make their confirmations a priority. The administration should press senators publicly and privately to support confirmations.

## TRANSPORTATION

### *Administrative priorities*

- Develop updated Title VI guidance for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and harmonize it with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidance that was implemented in 2012.
- Undertake reforms to Metropolitan Planning Organization governance to make these boards more representative of the economic and racial/ethnic composition of the communities served.
- The Department of Transportation should collect and share data on travel behavior that is disaggregated by race and income. Efforts to coordinate the dissemination of information between FHWA, FTA, the Census Bureau, and state DOTs should be executed to the fullest to ensure demographic and travel data is accessible.

### *Legislative priorities*

- Pass a transformative transportation reauthorization that: (1) improves job opportunities for underrepresented communities in the transportation sector; (2) ensures community involvement and public participation in transportation planning and decision making; (3) protects against cuts to public transportation funding and service; (4) promotes safety for pedestrians and bicyclists; (5) ensures that streets and public rights-of-way are safe and accessible for everyone, including people with disabilities; and (6) targets transportation dollars toward communities most in need of investment.

## **U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS**

### ***Administrative priorities***

- Increase funding for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.
- In consultation with the civil and human rights community, develop a robust program of hearings, including field hearings, and reports on pressing civil and human rights issues.

### ***Legislative priorities***

- Pass reauthorizing legislation that transforms the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights into a truly independent and effective agency, includes increased funding for the agency, and restores and expands its historic mission of protecting and promoting civil and human rights.

## VOTING RIGHTS

### *Administrative priorities*

- The Department of Justice should aggressively enforce the Voting Rights Act (VRA), including the general anti-discrimination provisions of Section 2, the minority language and right to assistance provisions in Sections 4(e), 203, and 208, and the bail-in provisions of Section 3, and vigorously defend the provisions of the VRA under constitutional challenge.
- The administration should ensure that the health insurance exchanges created pursuant to the Affordable Care Act offer voter registration services consistent with Section 7 of the NVRA.
- DOJ should vigorously enforce the voter registration provisions of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).
- Federal agencies that interact with the public should offer voter registration consistent with the NVRA's intent and express language.
- DOJ should require federal prosecutors to provide notice to defendants in federal criminal cases regarding the loss of their right to vote in the event of a conviction or as a result of a plea agreement to any disfranchising crime (misdemeanor or felony).
- The Bureau of Prisons should take administrative steps immediately to provide information to incarcerated individuals regarding voting rights restoration upon release and return to their home state.
- DOJ should issue guidance concerning the application of the ADA to voting that clarifies that the ADA forbids the use of voter capacity standards that subject people with disabilities to higher hurdles than others who seek to vote, and strengthens DOJ's existing guidance concerning accessibility of polling places and private, independent voting.
- The Census Bureau should tabulate incarcerated people at their home addresses, starting with the 2020 Census, so as to end the distortions of prison-based gerrymandering

### *Legislative priorities*

- Pass legislation to restore the protections of the Voting Rights Act struck down by the Supreme Court's *Shelby County* ruling.
- Pass legislation that would modernize the voter registration system, including the **Voter Registration Modernization Act**.
- Pass **The Democracy Restoration Act**, which would restore voting rights in federal elections to the nearly four million Americans who have lost their voting rights following a criminal conviction, and who have been released from prison and are living in the community.
- Oppose legislation that would create barriers to the right to vote, including photo voter ID laws.