Building Power:  
A Women’s Agenda for the 21st Century

Women have always been at the forefront of American progress—especially when that progress requires struggle. From Harriet Tubman, who risked her life to lead enslaved Black people to freedom and fight in the Civil War, to Ida B. Wells, whose searing exposes of violent racism fueled the anti-lynching movement, to Dorothy Day, who protested for woman’s suffrage and built the Catholic Worker Movement to advocate for those in poverty, women have worked to ensure that America’s values apply to all Americans.

Especially in the last three years, women have challenged our country to live up to our values. We’ve watched women lead powerful movements for justice, organizing the Women’s March—the largest single-day protest in American history—insisting on the importance of Black lives, and continuing to drive the #MeToo movement. The 2018 elections marked historic gains for women in Congress, propelled by the activism and commitment of women voters—particularly Black women and other women of color.

Women are 51 percent of the U.S. population, and nearly half the workforce. They hold essential jobs, from first responders to teachers to CEOs. Most mothers work, ensuring that their families can make ends meet. Twenty-one percent of children are raised by single moms. And their work pays off for all of us—women’s record participation in the U.S. labor market over the past 50 years has sparked economic growth of historic proportions.

But progress for women has come despite systemic sexism and racism, which have excluded women from economic, political, and social power for far too long.

At the current rate, we won’t close the gender pay gap for all women—including the women of color, for whom the gap is largest—for over 200 years. The “motherhood penalty” still causes women to permanently lose income when they have a child—while men with children are more likely to be hired and given raises. Women are the majority of minimum wage earners—and at $7.25 per hour, they haven’t seen a raise in over a decade. Women today are more likely to die from pregnancy than their mothers were, and Black and Native American women die from pregnancy at rates three to four times higher than white women. Overwhelming numbers of women continue to face illegal harassment and other discrimination at work and at home, including new and vicious forms of online harassment. And women’s right to control their own medical decisions has been under assault all over the country.

A woman isn’t free in America if her boss pays her less than men who do the same job, or if she faces sexual harassment at work. She isn’t free if she has to interrupt her career because child care is too expensive, if banks are less likely to loan her money for her business, or if a lifetime of compounding bias and low wages leads to poverty in retirement. She isn’t free if she can’t make choices about her health care. And she’s not free if the political decisions that shape her life are made by people who don’t know what it’s like to be in her shoes.

The freedom of women is bound up in the freedom of all Americans.

Women’s freedom can’t depend on Washington—it can only come from systematically building women’s power in our economy, our political system, and in every part of our society. And while we must create opportunity for all women, we know that women of color, trans women and other members of the LGBTQ community, and low-income women face unique barriers that require intentional policy solutions.

That’s why, as President, I will:

- **Close the pay and wealth gaps** by ensuring equal pay for equal work, ending harassment and other workplace discrimination, making available over $50 billion in capital to grow women-owned business, and eliminating the trade-off between career and family with affordable child care and paid family leave.
- **Advance women’s health and choice** by enshrining abortion rights into law, ensuring every woman has access to affordable health care, and ending the maternal mortality crisis.
- **Secure women’s power and influence** by accelerating ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment to recognize women’s equal rights in the Constitution, appointing at least 50% women to the Cabinet and judiciary and promoting gender- and racially-diverse leadership across all sectors.
- **Build safe, inclusive communities for women and families** through accountability and culture change that combat domestic and gender-based violence, particularly against trans women and women of color.

Nearly 100 years ago, American women fought for and won the right to vote. We can’t wait any longer to ensure women are fully included in American leadership and share in American prosperity. It’s time for a president who understands that freedom for women doesn’t mean incremental progress—it means lasting power.
PART I: CLOSE THE PAY GAP

Women are nearly half the American workforce and hold positions from first responders to CEOs. They are two-thirds of the workers in low-wage jobs and nearly half of the employees in S&P 500 companies. But women aren’t paid equally for the work that they do. On average, women are paid 82 cents for each dollar paid to a white man, while Black women are paid 62 cents and Latinas 54 cents. By retirement age, women of color have lost $1 million in earnings compared to white men. The pay gap persists at all levels, widening for workers with more education and income. On top of that, women who become parents permanently lose income, while men are professionally rewarded for parenthood.

If progress towards closing the pay gap continues at the current rate, it won’t close for all women for over 200 years. We cannot wait that long.

Pete will address pay discrimination as well as the occupational and social structures that push women into lower-paying fields. His administration will hold companies accountable when they discriminate against women who have caregiving responsibilities, and he will ban the use of salary history to set compensation, which perpetuates discrimination that keeps women’s salaries lower than men’s, especially at senior levels.

In addition to civil rights protections, Pete will invest in comprehensive paid family and medical leave, affordable, high-quality child care, and paid sick leave—crucial supports that keep women in the workforce, enable them to advance professionally, and are proven to narrow the wage gap. Women shoulder the majority of responsibility for family caregiving, from raising children to caring for aging parents. This caregiving burden falls particularly heavily on women of color. The lack of U.S. policies that support women in the workforce is responsible for about one-third of the decrease in women’s labor force participation compared to other OECD countries. Access to affordable child care and paid leave will narrow the wage gap by making sure women don’t have to leave their job or sacrifice getting a degree just to care for their families.

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Paying women equally will put over $500 billion in the pockets of American families every year, benefitting over 25 million children and cutting the poverty rate in half for working women and their families.\(^\text{15}\)

To close the gender pay gap, Pete will:

- **Require gender pay transparency and hold employers accountable for discrimination.**
  
  Closing the gender pay gap requires not only that women get equal pay for equal work, but also that women are promoted into and retained in the well-paying jobs higher on the career ladder. The key obstacle to women’s career advancement is the “missing rung” on the career ladder: promotion into management. For every 100 white men promoted into management, there are only 58 Black women and 68 Latina women promoted—with lifetime consequences for pay.\(^\text{16}\)

  Pete will propose legislation to immediately make public the median pay gap, broken down by racial and ethnic groups, at every large company: for every dollar that the company pays to male employees as a whole, including salary and bonuses, how much does it pay to women employees? He will also require companies to publicly report pay data and number of employees, broken down by race and gender, by quintile, giving visibility into whether women are stuck in low-paying jobs or are fairly promoted to management-level and beyond.

  Based on successful legislation in the UK,\(^\text{17}\) transparency allows the public to hold companies accountable for treating women fairly and enables women to make decisions about where to work and what salary to negotiate for. Pete will also reinstate pay data collection by the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, and will act aggressively to hold employers accountable for evidence of discrimination.

- **Address factors that disproportionately target women of color and widen the racial wage gap.** Pete will ensure that jobs and industries that disproportionately employ women of color have strong workplace protections, fair pay and opportunities for advancement, invest in training and apprenticeship programs that access to jobs in growth industries, and ensure that data analyses from federal agencies are performed with an intersectional lens to make visible the distinct experiences of women of color.

- **Pass a $15 federal minimum wage indexed to wage growth and end the tipped minimum wage.** 60 percent of low-wage workers are women, the majority of whom are single, supporting children under 18, or both.\(^\text{18}\) Raising the federal minimum wage to $15 by 2025 will benefit 13.6


million women with direct wage increases. That’s why Pete will fight for the Raise the Wage Act, which also includes ending the subminimum wage and ending the tipped minimum wage for service workers. Women represent over two-thirds of tipped workers.

- **Ban the use of salary history to determine wages and pass the Paycheck Fairness Act.** We cannot wait any longer to pass this bill, which was introduced 20 years ago and would attack the 38 percent of the gender wage gap that is potentially attributable to discrimination. The Paycheck Fairness Act would ban employers from using salary history to determine wages, ensure that workers have the right to discuss wages without retaliation, and require employers to justify any pay discrepancies.

- **Make core investments in professions with majority-woman workforces, including teaching, early childhood education, and caregiving.** Many industries that disproportionately employ women have low wages - even when they require expensive credentials. Pete will invest in workforce development for K-12 teachers, early childhood educators and caregivers to ensure fair wages and pathways to advancement in these critical professions.

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**End the trade-off between career and family**

- **Ensure all working Americans have access to 12 weeks of comprehensive paid family and medical leave.** Women disproportionately bear the responsibility for family caregiving, particularly for young children and aging parents. Pete will ensure that both women and men are supported when they need to care for family members by providing at least 12 weeks of paid family leave per year as a portable benefit. Pete will pass an enhanced version of the FAMILY Act to create a national paid family and medical leave fund, which will include making sure that benefits for lower-income workers are high enough that workers who need leave can afford to take it and still pay their bills. He will also make sure that caregiving responsibilities for grandparents, grandchildren, siblings, and chosen family members are included and that workers will not lose their jobs when they need time away to provide care. He will decouple medical leave benefits from family care and new child leave benefits to provide a longer total annual leave for workers who have both serious personal health issues and a family health issue or new child within the same year. To ensure that workers are connected to the paid leave they need, he will establish new partnerships with health systems and the Department of Veterans Affairs to improve outreach and education.

- **Ensure workers have access to earned sick leave—no matter where they work.** In addition to passing the Healthy Families Act, Pete will set up a national system of paid sick leave. For workers who do not receive at least seven paid sick leave days from their employer, even under

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the Healthy Families Act, their employers will be required to pay into a state fund from which workers can draw. If a worker has more than one employer, all employers will pay in.

- **Make high-quality child care free for families most in need, and affordable for all.** Lack of access to high-quality, affordable child care prevents women from joining or remaining in the workforce, starting businesses, or pursuing educational opportunities. Pete’s forthcoming comprehensive child care plan will strengthen and build on Head Start and enable all families to choose affordable, high-quality early learning and care options that work for them—improving financial stability for families, providing young children with nurturing, high quality, responsive early learning experiences to help them thrive, and enabling more women to join the labor force.

- **Reduce the burden on unpaid family caregivers.** There are over 40 million unpaid caregivers in America, one in four of whom are millennials. Women disproportionately shoulder this responsibility: two of every three caregivers are women, totaling over 25 million women. Unpaid family caregivers can incur high out-of-pocket costs—an average of 20 percent of their income—and working family caregivers often incur lost wages and benefits. Studies indicate that a 50-year-old woman who leaves the workforce to care for an aging parent loses over $300,000 in wages and retirement savings.

Pete is committed to ensuring that women lead lives of their choosing by:

- Removing barriers to home- and community-based services for individuals in need of long-term services and supports.
- Ensuring that family caregivers have access to community-based, culturally appropriate services and supports, including training and respite care.
- Assessing the needs of unpaid family caregivers at each point of care delivery including office visits, admission to and discharge from hospitals and emergency rooms, and care coordination for chronic conditions, among others.

He will elaborate on these policies in a forthcoming long-term care plan.

- **Restore overtime regulations that protect over four million women.** Too many workers are forced to work long hours away from their families and communities—and often receive no extra pay because of the erosion of overtime pay protections. Pete will restore the Obama administration’s overtime regulations and pass new legislation ensuring that overtime applies any time an eligible employee works more than eight hours in a day, or over seven days in a row.

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24 Caregiver Family Alliance. “Caregiver Statistics: Demographics.”
- **Ensure that workers have access to fair and predictable schedules.** Workers should know their hours in advance so they can plan their weeks, arrange child care, and pay their monthly bills. Pete will champion the Schedules that Work Act to give workers more control over their schedules, or else receive compensation for their irregular schedule.

### Protect women in the workplace

Sexual harassment and other forms of gender discrimination are illegal and contribute to the gender pay gap by depriving women of income and opportunities to advance at work. Over 40 percent of women have faced discrimination at work, and 36 percent say sexual harassment is a problem in their workplace.

Pete will put $10 billion into ending workplace sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination against women by investing in both accountability for employers and perpetrators, and oversight and prevention that protects women. Right now, the system places the burden on those who have experienced discrimination to advocate for change—often at risk of retaliation. As a result, up to 90% of discrimination never gets reported. Pete will fund oversight and prevention efforts that make it the responsibility of employers—not employees—to maintain safe and equitable work environments.

As President, he will **invest $10 billion over ten years to end workplace sexual harassment and discrimination against women** by increasing accountability and prevention.

- **Hold employers accountable for individual and systemic discrimination by doubling funding for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and funding worker resources.** It’s time to get serious about enforcement. Doubling funding for the EEOC—which has been persistently underfunded, causing yearslong case backlogs—will enable the Commission to hire staff and implement systems to fully investigate claims, proactively address potential employment discrimination patterns revealed by employer workforce data, modernize data management practices, collaborate with the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs and Women’s Bureau for data collection and analysis, and make funding available to EEOC field offices, civil and human rights commissions and local labor and workers rights organizations so that women across the country have local resources. Pete will also reinstate the EEOC’s authorization to collect, analyze and act on pay data, and appoint his EEOC Chair as a member of the White House Council on Women and Girls.

- **Promote healthy, harassment-free work environments for low-wage workers.** Women working in low-wage positions such as food service, hospitality, and domestic work are at a

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higher risk of experiencing sexual harassment at work.\textsuperscript{33} For many women, continuing to work in these positions, quitting outright, or pursuing legal remedies may be too risky, expensive, or inaccessible.\textsuperscript{34} That is why Pete believes the entire culture that allows sexual harassment to persist must change. Beyond fighting for the legislative proposals above, his administration will:

- Improve transparency around sexual harassment by requiring public companies to disclose the aggregate number of workplace sexual harassment incidents reported, investigated and settled annually, and create a digital tool to inform and empower the public and potential employees.
- Bring industry leaders, labor, and other stakeholders together to create best practice models for climate assessments, employer policies, and training tailored to specific, high-risk industries.
- Require companies in industries with the highest risk of harassment, based on EEOC data and the EEOC risk factors, to conduct climate assessments and create or update harassment prevention plans every three years.\textsuperscript{35}

- **Treat workplace violence like the safety issue it is.** Pete will charge the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to develop a standard for workplace violence, including sexual violence, and proactively enforce employers’ general duty to comply with providing safe workplaces, particularly for health care and service workers at greatest risk.

- **Guarantee that every worker—regardless of the size of their company—is protected from workplace sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination.** Civil rights protection at work is non-negotiable. Pete will fight to pass and sign the BE HEARD Act, which will ensure that workers in firms with fewer than 15 people are federally protected from workplace sexual harassment, keeping millions more workers safe.\textsuperscript{36}

- **Ban forced arbitration clauses that deny women their right to challenge workplace harassment and other discrimination in court.** 60 million workers are bound by forced arbitration agreements that restrict their ability to sue employers for workplace discrimination and pursue class actions.\textsuperscript{37} 98 percent of people who face workplace abuse abandon their claims when they are blocked from accessing the court system.\textsuperscript{38} This practice allows companies to hide patterns of worker abuse and escape accountability.\textsuperscript{39} Pete will pass a federal law banning mandatory arbitration in cases of harassment or discrimination.

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\textsuperscript{33} “Who Is at Highest Risk of Sexual Harassment?” American Civil Liberties Union, April 10, 2019.  
\textsuperscript{34} Burnham, Linda, and Nikolas Theodore. “Home economics: The invisible and unregulated world of domestic work. National Domestic Workers Alliance, 2012.” Note: This report includes several reasons why domestic workers do not report abusive behavior, including fear of retaliation or economic retribution.  
\textsuperscript{38} The Center for Popular Democracy. “Forced Arbitration Clauses in the #MeToo Era.”  
\end{flushright}
• **Empower workers to file formal complaints about sexual harassment and other discrimination, and stop companies from hiding problems.** 90 percent of people who experience workplace harassment never file a formal complaint—meaning that perpetrators and the companies that enable them can’t be held to account. Pete will work to pass the EMPOWER Act, which stops companies from hiding sexual harassment and discrimination by banning nondisclosure and non-disparagement clauses that cover workplace discrimination and harassment. He will create a confidential tip line for EEOC complaints, task the EEOC to develop best practices and training programs for employers, and require companies to disclose repeat settlements tied to a single employee on SEC filings.

• **Ensure women in fields like child care, domestic work, and home care work have power and representation in the workplace.** Pete will allow multi-employer bargaining to protect workers by ensuring bargaining rights for independent contractors, supporting the right for temporary and contract firm workers to bargain directly with the firm that sets their terms of employment, and cracking down on employee misclassification that hurts women workers.

• **Endorse the National Domestic Workers Bill of Rights and expand worker protections for domestic workers, most of whom are women of color.** Federal labor and employment law does not adequately protect farm workers or domestic workers seeking to organize, which especially harms women and people of color. Pete will ensure that these workers are protected by labor and employment law and have access to overtime pay and time off if they have been working seven days in a row, and protection from harassment and retaliation by employers.

• **Pass the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act to ensure that no woman has to risk economic security for her health.** The Pregnancy Discrimination Act desperately needs an update to reflect the realities faced by working pregnant women. The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act would help prevent employers from forcing pregnant women out of the workplace and ensure that employers make reasonable accommodations available to pregnant women who plan to continue working. Pete will also support all women who choose to breastfeed after returning to work by ensuring businesses implement the federal “break time for nursing mothers” law, and pushing for expansions such as compensated break time, providing break time for exempt employees, or providing the accommodations beyond one year after birth. At the same time, Pete will work with

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states to remove breastfeeding from public indecency laws and support states in enhancing breastfeeding accommodations in public spaces.

PART II: CLOSE THE WEALTH GAP

For every dollar of wealth held by men in the United States, the average woman has 32 cents, and women of color have pennies.45 The cumulative lifetime earnings gap between white men and women of color is almost $1 million, and all women are more likely to live in and retire in poverty than men.46

Even though women-led startups generate better returns, they get less than three percent of venture capital funding.47 Increasing the number of women-owned small businesses and expanding access to capital will improve economic security for women and drive new job growth across industries. Women of color start businesses at a much faster rate than white women: between 1997 and 2016, the number of businesses owned by Black and Latina women grew 518 percent and 452 percent, respectively.48 Expanding access to capital, particularly for underserved women of color, will kickstart business growth to generate returns for women and their communities.

We must also address the public systems that impact women’s economic security throughout their lives. This includes changing Social Security policies that limit women’s retirement support, simplifying cumbersome enrollment procedures that prevent eligible women and families from accessing benefits that they need, lifting caregiving responsibilities, and ending lending discrimination that inhibits women’s ability to start and scale businesses.

To promote women’s financial security and close the gender wealth gap, Pete will:

Grow successful women-owned businesses

Access to capital is a key barrier to women starting and growing small businesses.49 Only 36 percent of businesses are woman-owned, and only 10% of those businesses have scaled to employ additional staff beyond the entrepreneur herself.50 Women-led enterprises receive under three percent of all venture

capital funding and women receive only 13.6 percent of Small Business Administration (SBA) 7(a) loans. As President, Pete will:

- **Increase access to capital and mentorship for women entrepreneurs by over $50 billion.**
  - Underwrite over 40,000 businesses by providing $1 billion in loan guarantees to microlenders, expanding lending to start-ups in underserved communities through the SBA Microloan Program, and removing collateral requirements so local microlenders can provide seed capital to promising local start-ups.
  - Double the number of larger SBA 7a loans awarded to women-owned small businesses by reducing the guarantee loan fee for loans going to underserved populations, including women, and funding mentoring and outreach efforts to empower women through the lending process to scale and leverage at critical growth points in their business.
  - Invest up to $10 billion within five years in entrepreneurs from underrepresented backgrounds through a new federal Walker-Lewis Entrepreneurship Fund. This will especially target women of color, who receive less than one percent of venture capital funding annually.
  - Increase the number of women-led Small Business Investment Company (SBIC) funds and provide competitive incentives for SBIC fund applicants to develop an investment strategy that includes underrepresented small business owners, driving investment in more diverse businesses.
  - Supercharge investment (5X) in Community Development Finance Institutions, which have been lending to low-income, low-wealth, and overlooked communities for decades.
  - Leverage Women’s Business Centers, Small Business Development Centers, Veteran Business Outreach Centers, and the SCORE network as hubs for volunteer mentorship and coaching.
  - Create a central online portal for women to learn about and apply for local business assistance.

- **Reduce gender discrimination in business lending.** Pete will enforce Section 1071 of the Dodd-Frank Act, requiring banks to report demographic information about their business loans. Pete will also ensure that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s (CFPB) leadership will act aggressively on any pattern of discrimination.

- **Reduce gender discrimination in consumer lending by passing the Protections in Consumer Lending Act.** This Act requires credit lenders to collect and report information on which applicants have been approved or denied for a variety of loans, including, auto, credit card, and

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53 Zipkin, Nina. “Out of $85 Billion in VC Funding Last Year, Only 2.2 Percent Went to Female Founders. And Every Year, Women of Color Get Less Than 1 Percent of Total Funding.” Entrepreneur. December 12, 2018.
payday loans. This will enable the CFPB to review and act on any discriminatory patterns in consumer credit lending.\textsuperscript{54}

- \textbf{Increase federal contracting opportunities for women-owned small businesses.} Pete will launch the Walker-Lewis Initiative to aim to award 25 percent of federal contracting dollars to historically disadvantaged small business owners, including women-owned firms, which currently receive five percent.\textsuperscript{55}

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\textbf{Build access to quality jobs in growing industries} \\
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\textbf{Ensure women can compete for jobs in high-paying fields like computer science and construction.} Women, particularly women of color, are predominantly employed in lower-paid sectors that are highly vulnerable to automation,\textsuperscript{56} which is why Pete is committed to ensuring fair pay and working conditions in all jobs, as well as investing in STEM, technical education, and apprenticeship programs to give women and girls greater opportunities to access quality jobs in growing industries. He will require that federally funded workforce development programs set and monitor aggressive targets for women’s participation in high-priority fields, which will reduce occupational segregation and prepare women for the work of the future.

\textbf{Engage young women and girls in STEM and technical education by providing on-the-job training in emerging sectors like computer science, health care, and green energy} as part of K-12 education. Through public-private partnerships, districts can provide student participants with additional academic interventions and comprehensive support services.

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\textbf{Reform public systems to treat women fairly} \\
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\textbf{Narrow the retirement gap for women, particularly women of color, by providing credit toward Social Security for family and other unpaid caregiving.} Women are the majority of our nation’s full-time family caregivers, yet they do not receive credit for Social Security benefits for their work. Under Pete’s plan, Social Security will finally recognize caregiving as work. For a given period of years, the caregiver of a child, senior, or dependent with a disability will be awarded credit toward Social Security benefits as if they earned 50 percent of the average earnings of a full-time, year-round worker.

\textbf{Increase the number of eligible women and families that benefit from social safety net support.} Women are disproportionately responsible for managing their families’ participation in benefit programs to receive critical support for their families. Yet finding out about and getting enrolled in these programs is often difficult, time-intensive, and poorly integrated across


programs. Pete will hold his Cabinet accountable for ensuring that benefits like the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); and Unemployment Insurance (UI), reach those who need them, and continually work to reduce the administrative burdens women face in getting such help for their families.

- **Address the financial burden imposed on women by the criminal legal system.** The rate of women’s incarceration has grown at double the rate of men, resulting in many women facing barriers to financial autonomy—including lack of access to education, housing, and medical benefits during and after incarceration. Women, particularly Black women, have faced the brunt of the financial burdens associated with incarceration when their friends and family members are brought into the system. On average, individuals incur $13,607 in debt for court-related fees and fines. In 63 percent of all cases, these fees are paid by family members on the outside; 83 percent of those family members are women. Pete will work with states to eliminate the profiteering that contributes to these high costs, including by reducing the amount of revenue municipalities and counties can get from fines and fees; ending the privatization of things like phone calls, supervision fees, and commissaries; eliminating for-profit bail; and amending the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act to expand protections for people with criminal justice debt. He will also reduce the incarceration rate by 50% and protect the safety of women by prioritizing reforms to bring better training, policies, and accountability to police departments, as presented in his forthcoming criminal justice plan.

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**PART III: PRIORITIZE WOMEN’S HEALTH**

Health care is a human right. Yet women often don’t have access to affordable, comprehensive health care. Across the country, more than 10 million women still do not have health insurance. This is especially true for women with low incomes and for women of color. More than one in four Latinas are uninsured for example, and millions more women are underinsured, with coverage that is either unaffordable or inadequate for their needs. These women are less likely to seek out critical health services, such as breast cancer screenings, and they are more likely to forgo care for chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease.

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59 Ibid.
Women are also subject to health care policies that restrict their freedom, threaten their safety and jeopardize their lifelong well-being. For example, many policies prioritize women’s health only within the context of pregnancy. Some policies rely on abstinence-only education, which leave young people unprepared to plan for families, to prevent sexually transmitted diseases, to have healthy relationships, and much more. Other policies attack a woman’s access to abortion and comprehensive reproductive care or limit family planning options under Title X. And still others impose work requirements to obtain Medicaid coverage. All of these are closely associated with poor health outcomes for women.

Pete’s plan supports women and girls’ health and well-being throughout their lives. As President, he will make sure that everyone has access to affordable health care, bring down the cost of prescriptions, including implementing no cost sharing for contraception, and tackle disparities that disproportionately affect women and gender nonconforming individuals. His policies are aimed at improving health outcomes for every woman, no matter the state where she lives and works, her insurance status, her race, ethnicity, or place of birth.

To prioritize women’s health, Pete will:

**Guarantee every woman affordable health coverage**

Through Pete’s *Medicare for All Who Want It* plan, anyone will be able to opt in to an affordable, comprehensive public plan or stay on their employer-sponsored care. The public plan will cover preventive and comprehensive reproductive care, including abortion care, for everyone who needs it. This approach gives the American people a choice and trusts them to set the pace at which our country moves in a better direction on health care.

**Safeguard the constitutional right to safe and legal abortion and related care**

In 1973, the Supreme Court established that women have a constitutional right to privacy that encompasses the right to choose whether or not to have an abortion. In a 1992 case affirming *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court noted that the decision to have an abortion was one of many “choices central to personal dignity and autonomy, [which] are central to the liberty protected by the Fourteenth Amendment.”

Despite these rulings, this administration and Republican-controlled state legislatures all over the country have waged an all-out assault on the right of women to control their own body, including criminalizing women and doctors who exercise that right. These attacks on reproductive rights have made women less safe, especially women of color and women with low incomes. Restrictions on reproductive health harm women’s ability to plan their families and can lead to worse maternal and infant health outcomes. This year, for example, Missouri banned abortion at eight weeks—a time at which many women don’t even know they’re pregnant—with no exceptions for rape and incest. Alabama went further: doctors who
perform abortions after six weeks would face up to 99 years in prison—in the most restrictive anti-abortion law in the country.  

These politicians’ decisions not only violate the constitutional right to privacy, but are also at odds with the majority of Americans who support a woman’s ability to make her own health decisions. Pete vows to uphold women’s right to privacy and ensure that abortion is safe, accessible, and affordable as part of comprehensive reproductive care. To safeguard the right to a safe and legal abortion, Pete will:

- **Appoint Supreme Court justices who match the values of his Presidency.** Pete is committed to appointing judges to both the Supreme Court and federal courts that share his vision of freedom and choice for all Americans, which includes reproductive rights.

- **Codify the right to abortion into law to protect women from state-level interference.** Several states under Republican control have put up unconstitutional barriers to make exercising a woman’s right to an abortion all but unavailable. In 18 states, a woman is by law subjected to medically unnecessary—and in some cases, blatantly inaccurate—counseling, such as being falsely informed that abortion can cause breast cancer or higher rates of mental illness. In 27 states, a woman seeking an abortion must wait a full 24 hours between when she decides to have the procedure and when the procedure is performed. This has no medical purpose and, like other restrictions, it does nothing to lower the abortion rate overall. Instead, it imposes a severe burden on women who must take time off work, arrange and pay for child care, and plan for transportation if the facility is not in their hometown. Pete will protect the right to abortion from state-level interference by supporting the Women’s Health Protection Act. Even if Roe v. Wade were overturned, this act would guarantee women’s access to abortion by prohibiting states from imposing medically unnecessary restrictions.

- **Abolish the Hyde Amendment.** The Hyde Amendment prohibits the use of federal funds to pay for virtually any abortion services, which disproportionately impacts low-income, minority women who are more likely to have public coverage. Pete supports the Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance (EACH) Woman Act, which would overturn the Hyde Amendment and restore all women’s ability to access and afford abortion.

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● **Prohibit governments from interfering in private insurance coverage of abortion.** 11 states bar women from accessing abortion through any private coverage, and in 26 states, women who obtain private coverage through the marketplaces are also prohibited from accessing abortion services. Many of these restrictions are so punitive to women that they make no exceptions for rape or incest. Two states—Louisiana and Tennessee—make no exceptions even when a woman’s life is in danger. Pete will support the [EACH Woman Act](https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/1836), which will prohibit states from getting in the way of a woman’s right to access abortion.

● **Expand access to abortion services by increasing the number of clinicians capable of providing an abortion and supporting telehealth initiatives.** Almost one in four women must travel over 30 miles to access abortion services, and women in 27 major cities live in abortion deserts, meaning they are 100 miles or more from the nearest abortion provider. Pete will expand access to abortion services by allowing clinicians to provide remote medication abortion services, an initiative tested in Iowa over 10 years ago. Such abortions are as safe and effective as in-person ones.

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**Ensure access to family planning, reproductive care, and preventive services**

Title X-funded clinics are a critical source of health care for women, particularly women with low incomes, Black women, and Latinas. Title X promotes family integrity, maternal and infant health, and economic stability. Historically, family planning was recognized by both Democrats and Republicans as a right. Over the last four decades, this understanding has created significant social value: Title X-funded family planning and preventive care services have expanded women’s educational opportunities, lowered the rate of STIs, improved maternal and infant health, reduced racial disparities in reproductive health and abortion, and lowered the teen birth rate by subsidizing long-acting reversible contraceptives.

Despite Title X’s profoundly positive impact on the lives of women, the Trump administration banned Title X funds from being used by clinics that either offer abortion services or refer pregnant patients to other providers for abortion services. This regulation has significantly curtailed low-income women’s

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access to family planning services: Planned Parenthood, which previously served 41 percent of the 3.8 million patients receiving Title X funds, was forced out of the program by the new restrictions. Five hundred clinics have shut down, threatening access to care for millions of women and lowering rates of preventive care. Despite its original mandate, Title X funding has gone to clinics that promote abstinence-only practices, limiting women’s options and constraining their access to healthcare.

Pete commits to protecting and expanding Title X funding to ensure that everyone who needs critical family planning, reproductive care, and preventive services has access to them, including transgender people of all genders. Further, Pete will:

● Roll back the Trump gag rule and refusal of care rules.
● Under Medicare for All Who Want It, guarantee contraception coverage and cover all family planning methods with no cost sharing, including long-acting reversible contraception, such as intrauterine devices (IUDs), and ensure that people are allowed to obtain a year’s supply of their preferred form of birth control.
● Ensure that Title X funding only goes to grantees that provide comprehensive and evidence-based family planning services and the full range of methods.

End the maternal mortality crisis and improve maternal and infant health, with a focus on eliminating racial disparities

Only one developed country in the world has a rising maternal mortality rate: the United States. This is a national disgrace. Today, an American woman is 50 percent more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications than her mother was. While the maternal mortality rate has increased for all women, it is three to four times higher for Black and Native American women than for white women. Black women’s symptoms are taken less seriously by doctors, so life-threatening complications go undiagnosed, and Native women are often unable to get timely care because maternity wards and hospitals near them have closed. While the infant mortality rate is improving, it is still higher in the U.S. than in European countries and infants born to Black and Native American mothers are more likely to die during their first year of life than infants born to white mothers.

To end the maternal mortality crisis and improve infant health outcomes, Pete will:

- **Ensure coverage for, and access to, the full range of preventive health care and family planning services to improve pre-pregnancy and postpartum health.** Good health prior to pregnancy is a key part of ensuring a healthy mom and baby after pregnancy.90 Women must have access to affordable care to receive treatment for medical concerns including high blood pressure, diabetes, and mental health; assess which prescription drugs are safe for pregnancy; and receive support to make healthy choices that work for them. All plans, both public and private, will be required to cover these services.


- **Ensure that every woman with a mental illness or a substance use disorder has the resources and support she needs through Pete’s** [Healing and Belonging in America](https://www.whitehouse.gov) **plan.** Depression and anxiety disorders during the prenatal and postpartum period affect up to one in seven women, and mental illness can also be the underlying cause in cases of maternal deaths.91

- **Increase access to maternal health services in rural, Tribal Nations, and other underserved areas.** Women living in rural America, including in the predominantly Black rural South, are 60 percent more likely to die during or after labor than in the rest of the country.92 This is partly the result of poor access to health services in rural areas. More than half of rural counties lack hospital obstetric services, affecting 2.4 million women.93 In some states, almost half of rural moms live more than 30 minutes away from a hospital equipped for deliveries.94 Next year, rural communities will have 8,000 fewer OB-GYNs than needed, putting women at risk.95

- **Reduce the closure of obstetric units.** Pete will make payment reforms to address the closure of obstetric units by basing payment on the actual cost of care and implementing other pricing schemes that take into consideration lower patient volume in rural areas. He will also encourage clinicians to serve patients in rural and tribal areas by expanding and reforming the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, funding new training programs, encouraging immigrant doctors to

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work in rural communities by expanding the Conrad 30 visa waiver program, increasing reimbursement rates for providers working in underserved areas, and more, as outlined in Pete’s *Securing a Healthy Future for Rural America* plan.

- **Protect the health care of women who are incarcerated.** Women who are incarcerated often lack access to proper health care. Pete will ensure that these women have free and sufficient access to menstrual products. Pete will enforce and enhance federal standards and protocols for pregnancy, prenatal, and postpartum care. Pete will also ensure that the First Step Act is properly funded and enforced, including its provision barring the shackling of pregnant women, and instruct the Bureau of Prisons to update standards for post-birth contact between mother and child and support programs that allow for mothers to spend time with their newborns.

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<th>Eliminate barriers to care for transgender people and ensure the LGBTQ+ community receives respectful care</th>
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Many transgender people require medically necessary gender-affirming treatments and procedures. Pete will enact policies that not only require coverage of gender-affirming care but also address the shortages of transition-related care. Such medically-necessary care should be recognized and paid for by all insurers. Pete will also support funding for initiatives that help ensure clinicians understand sexual orientation and gender identity, use inclusive language, appreciate the unique health needs of the LGBTQ+ community, and provide trauma-informed care. And he will promote provider education and training to address stigma based on multiple identities, which is particularly important for LGBTQ+ people of color.

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<th>Reduce disparities in women’s health outcomes</th>
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Significant disparities in women’s health outcomes and access to health care services stem from systemic racism⁹⁶ and result in the marginalization of women of color, women living in rural areas, and transgender women. Latinas, for example, are 60 percent more likely to be diagnosed with cervical cancer and 30 percent more likely to die from the disease than white women.⁹⁷ Black women are 40 percent more likely than white women to die from breast cancer.⁹⁸ Estimates indicate that 44 percent of Black transgender women are living with HIV.⁹⁹ Pete is committed to addressing disparities head on, as a matter of both health and justice. To that end, Pete will:

- **Establish Health Equity Zones to address communities’ most pressing health disparities.** Health Equity Zones will create multi-sector coalitions focused on health equity and reflect the fundamental economic, social, and political determinants of health in a community. Funding will be conditional on concrete plans to address high-priority disparities.

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- **Diversify the health workforce and train our current health workforce to combat discrimination and bias—especially racial bias—when treating patients.** Pete will transform our institutions to ensure that they are prepared to engage with communities in culturally, linguistically, and historically appropriate ways. His administration will design data systems to create new protocols to help the government better address disparities.

- **Revitalize the Office of Civil Rights in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).** Pete will ensure that HHS has frameworks to address health inequities, promote equal access to health care, and prohibit discrimination and that it explicitly considers racial impact in its regulatory decisions and rulemaking.

- **Expand funding for research into gender-mediated disease disparities affecting women and communities of color.** Pete’s administration will expand funding through the National Institute of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality to study gender-based disparities in cancer mortality, cardiovascular treatment, and other areas.

- **Support states in repealing taxation on menstrual products.** In many states, tampons are often excluded from tax-exempt status given to other health-related products. This practice places a discriminatory economic burden on women and girls, while states can earn $150 million from such taxes annually.\(^{100}\) This so-called “tampon tax” is an example of women having to pay more for products that are uniquely consumed by them, otherwise known as a “pink tax.”\(^{101}\)


| Tackle the crisis of mental health and addiction among women |

Women are almost 50 percent more likely to be diagnosed with a mental health disorder than men, and twice as likely to experience serious mental illness.\(^{102}\) For girls and young women, the suicide rate has been rising significantly, and an alarmingly high 10.5 percent of Latina and 12.5 percent of Black girls and adolescents attempt suicide.\(^{103}\) Between 1999 and 2016, the opioid overdose rate increase by a factor of five for women, compared to a factor of three for men.\(^{104}\)

- **Expand access to mental health and addiction care services for everyone.** In his Healing and Belonging in America plan, Pete ensures access to comprehensive coverage for mental illness and addiction care for all, enforces mental health parity in health care coverage, empowers communities to address the problem in their own way through annual $10 billion grants that address prevention and care integration, direct more resources to programs that use harm-

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2. “Period Equity.” Period Equity.
reduction and trauma-informed care, and dramatically expand the use of medication-assisted treatment (MAT).

- **Turn the tide on the rising rate of deaths by suicide and suicide attempts among girls, in particular among Black and Latina women.** Pete will create a three-digit suicide hotline and require schools to teach Mental Health First Aid courses, which increase knowledge of signs and symptoms of mental illness and addiction, improve mental wellness, and reduce stigma. He will also expand the mental health workforce into schools, such as by integrating mental health clinicians into school-based health clinics and supporting the [Mental Health in Schools Act](#).

  
  
  
  
  Promote evidence-based policies that increase the well-being of adolescents

Young people must have the resources to understand their own bodies, gender identity and sexual orientation, as well as how to develop healthy relationships. Abstinence-only programs that do not include all methods of family planning and sexually-transmitted disease prevention omit important health information for the 40 percent of high school students who are already sexually active. To adequately prepare teenagers for adulthood, sexual and reproductive health education must also include honest, open discussions about gender identity, sexual-orientation, STI prevention, consent, relationship violence, and exploitation.

Pete will protect and expand funding for evidence-based sexual and reproductive health education in schools and community-based organizations, such as the Teen Pregnancy Prevention and Personal Responsibility Education Programs. Pete will also work with the Departments of Health and Human Services and Education to facilitate the use of evidence-based curriculum in schools that incorporates consent, relationship violence, exploitation, and trafficking, as well as sexual orientation, gender identity, and other topics.

  
  
  
  
  Restore our global leadership to advance health, well-being, and rights of women and girls

We must restore our status as a global leader on women’s health and rights, and reverse the damage that has been done by exporting dangerous restrictions on women’s healthcare. Improving access to family planning and reproductive health services will prevent maternal deaths and reduce unintended pregnancies both here and abroad. Domestically and globally, Pete will support the third United Nations Sustainable Development Goal to “ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health care services, including for family planning, information, and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes.” To restore global leadership, Pete will:

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105 “Research & Evidence Base.” Mental Health First Aid USA.
- **Restore and increase investments in global health.** This includes family planning, reproductive health, maternal and child health, and HIV/AIDS through the United States Agency for International Development and global partners such as the United Nations Population Fund.

- **End all policies meant to restrict access to family planning and abortion services abroad.** Several rules and policies limit women’s access to essential health services abroad. This includes the Mexico City policy, or the “global gag rule,” which prevents foreign organizations from receiving funding for providing abortion counseling or services; the Helms and Siljander Amendments, which restrict using funds to pay for abortions and lobby for or against abortions, respectively; and restrictions on the President’s Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

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### PART IV: CLOSE THE LEADERSHIP GAP

When women are an equal part of decision-making, better decisions are made. Women are 51 percent of the American population, but are shut out of leadership positions in government and beyond—meaning that decisions about their health care, economic opportunities, and communities are made by male-dominated state legislatures and a U.S. Congress with three men for every one woman. Women of color are particularly underrepresented, holding fewer than one in ten seats in Congress.109

Women are missing on the staff level as well: no president has ever appointed a Cabinet with equal numbers of women and men. The picture is even worse for corporate America: women are 45 percent of workers at S&P 500 companies, but only five percent of CEOs—and only one Fortune 500 CEO is a woman of color.110

Pete understands that policy only works when it’s informed by diverse experiences, and that representation matters not just at the highest levels of government, but throughout the public and private sectors. Pete is committed to fielding a full team of America’s most talented leaders and pushing the private sector to do the same.

To see that commitment through as President, Pete will:

- **Nominate a Cabinet that is at least 50 percent women.** Pete will nominate a gender- and racially-diverse Cabinet to ensure meaningful representation across federal agencies and throughout government. He will challenge governors, mayors, and county executives to do the same.

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• **Nominate at least 50 percent women for judicial appointments and prioritize diversity in all Presidential appointments across federal agencies, commissions, and boards.** Pete is committed to equal representation of women and people of color in all his appointments, including the judiciary. Pete will ensure that federal agencies and departments prioritize gender and racial equity in staffing and will be the first President to commit that his judicial nominations will consist of at least 50 percent women, while also increasing the number of nonwhite appointees to again match the U.S. population. He will prioritize public defenders, civil rights attorneys, and other individuals with diverse professional backgrounds.

• **Accelerate ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA).** The ERA establishes that the rights granted in the Constitution apply equally to women and men, creating a stronger legal standard for reviewing sex discrimination. Introduced 96 years ago, it deserves ratification; it is time to remove the ratification deadline and work with states and Congress to finally get it ratified.

• **Reinstate the White House Council on Women and Girls.** This council will be a policymaking body closely integrated with senior staff on the White House Domestic Policy and National Security Councils to ensure that gender equity is at the forefront of policy priorities at home and abroad, and that every policy is analyzed with a gender and racial lens. Pete will charge its leadership to work with agencies and the White House to coordinate, monitor, and report the progress of federal efforts to close the wage gap, wealth gap, and leadership gap between men and women across racial and ethnic backgrounds. The Chair of the Council on Women and Girls will be a Senior Advisor to the President.

• **Use presidential appointments to commissions, boards, and other honorary positions to create a ripple effect for diversity.** Before making appointments, Pete will require that individuals under consideration submit information on the demographics of their organizational leadership and their efforts to increase gender and racial diversity in their organizations.

• **Break down barriers to women running for public office by implementing a small-dollar matching system for federal elections.** Fundraising is a key barrier to women seeking to run for office. By implementing robust public financing for federal elections, Pete will level the playing field for woman candidates and all those without personal wealth who seek to represent Americans in public office.

• **Invest in the next generation of women’s leadership talent in federal government** by expanding paid entry-level and service opportunities for students and recent graduates.

• **Require public companies to disclose the gender, racial, and ethnic diversity of board members and executives.** Women hold fewer than 20 percent of seats on corporate boards and women of color hold even less, although nearly half of the employees of S&P 500 companies are women. Pete will issue Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) guidance to require

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111 Warner, Judith. “Opening the Gates.” Center for American Progress, May 19, 2017
diversity disclosures that show shareholders and the public if companies are improving representation in executive- and board-level leadership—or if they should take their dollars elsewhere.

- **Increase representation of women in corporate leadership and on corporate boards.** Pete will leverage the power of federal institutional investment to promote diversity in companies where the federal government is a significant shareholder. He will ensure that banks used by the federal government disclose demographic information about their lending practices and leadership.

- **Support establishing a Smithsonian Women’s History Museum on the National Mall.** Pete will support a new Women’s History Museum in order to honor the pivotal role of women throughout our nation’s history and inspire the next generation of leaders.

- **Establish a commission to study and recommend new national monuments dedicated to women.** Out of 129 national monuments, only three are named after women. It’s time to make sure that when we honor America’s history, we honor all those who have been part of it.

- **Issue the $20 bill with the image of Harriet Tubman.** Pete will mark the importance of Black women in American history by reversing the Trump administration’s political delay of the new bill.

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**PART V: BUILD SAFE, INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND FAMILIES**

Every American deserves to live in safety, but one in four women in the United States experiences domestic violence over the course of her life. Domestic violence accounts for 21% of all violent crime, and domestic abusers are five times more likely to murder an intimate partner when a firearm is in the house. Sexual violence and harassment are pervasive on college and university campuses, and new forms of online harassment, such as nonconsensual pornography and sextortion, move faster than existing legal remedies. Not only are women of color, trans women, and poor women at higher risk of being targeted for violence, but they are also less likely to receive support from law enforcement.

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Legal protections for women against harassment and violence are hard-won and recent—and the federal government must do more to hold institutions accountable for protecting women and individuals at risk of discrimination and violence. Addressing violence, harassment, and discrimination involves more than legal protection and accountability; it includes access to safe housing, gun control policies that restrict abusers from accessing deadly weapons, and partnerships with technology companies to address the connection between online harassment and violence.

To support women’s right to live free from violence, harassment, and all forms of discrimination, and secure safe communities for women and families, Pete will:

**Promote inclusion in federal law**

- **Strengthen anti-discrimination protections against gender- and sexual identity-based discrimination by passing the Equality Act.** Pete will make sure that all relevant federal agencies restore interpretations of federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination by federal contractors and by recipients of federal funding based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity, and will vigorously prosecute such discrimination.

**Prevent gender-based violence and support survivors**

- **Reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).** This will provide federal resources for addressing and preventing domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, and for supporting survivors of those crimes. Pete will also ensure that future VAWA reauthorizations cannot be held up for political reasons by implementing automatic reauthorization with a five-year review for necessary updates.

- **Increase funding for affordable housing and shelter services to support women and children escaping domestic violence.** Pete will also work to reduce discrimination toward domestic violence survivors in public and private housing and employment, and to increase resources for trans women.

- **Combat rising online harassment of women and girls, which is often connected to violent crime.** Pete will support the SHIELD Act to criminalize revenge porn at the federal level, increase funding for law enforcement training, and work with industry to eradicate online harassment on their platforms.

- **Combat the epidemic of violence against Black trans women and other trans women of color** by ensuring that the Department of Justice works with state and local law enforcement and advocacy organizations to prioritize this crisis.

- **Empower women to reach their full potential in college through strong Title IX protections.** Sexual harassment and assault at colleges and universities is a ubiquitous problem, with one in
five women reporting sexual assault while in college.\textsuperscript{119} Pete’s administration will reverse the Trump administration’s weakening of Title IX by enacting a student-centric and comprehensive process to amend Title IX regulations, focusing on early intervention and prevention through required training programs, protecting survivors by offering supports like counseling and academic accommodations, and making clear that schools owe each student a full investigation of their claim with a transparent process.

- **Address the intersection of gun ownership and domestic violence by enacting common sense gun laws.** Compared to women in other high-income countries, women in the United States are 21 times more likely to be killed by guns.\textsuperscript{120} This includes Black women who are targeted unjustly by police.\textsuperscript{121} That’s why Pete will immediately close federal loopholes, including the Boyfriend Loophole, to prevent abusive dating partners and convicted stalkers from possessing guns, and strengthen existing laws that require domestic abusers to relinquish their guns. Pete also supports federal legislation requiring notification of state or local law enforcement whenever a domestic abuser or convicted stalker tries to buy a gun and fails a required background check.

- **Address violence against Native American women.** Pete supports a statutory Oliphant fix to affirm tribal jurisdiction over all reservation activity and will appoint a commission dedicated to the study of the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women during his first 100 days. Pete also supports Savanna’s Act and strengthening the protocols and reporting standards surrounding the documentation and investigation of the crisis.

- **Protect members of the military from sexual assault.** Pete will promote better training for military officers to prevent sexual assault in the military and to protect people who report instances of sexual assault.

- **Protect immigrants who are survivors of domestic violence by eliminating caps for U and T visas,** which protect survivors of crimes and encourage cooperation with law enforcement.

- **Ensure that first responders, law enforcement, and members of the judiciary have access to ongoing training regarding trauma, domestic violence, and abuse** in order to improve outcomes for women, and encourage more women to report gender-based violence.

- **Eliminate the backlog in untested rape kits on the federal and state levels through initiatives such as the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI).**\textsuperscript{122} SAKI is a key federal grant program that supports the elimination of the nationwide backlog of untested rape kits. Untested rape kits delay rape investigations and prosecutions, robbing survivors of the opportunity to seek justice.

\textsuperscript{121}Kanya Bennett, “Say Her Name: Recognizing Police Brutality Against Black Women,” 2018.
\textsuperscript{122}“Federal Funding for Reform” End the Backlog.
Change the culture of harassment and discrimination

- **Work with states to develop trainings for all students in consent and bystander intervention to change the culture of sexual harassment and other discrimination.** While college campuses have instituted consent and bystander intervention trainings that have reduced incidence of sexual assault and harassment, promoting genuine culture change requires starting earlier. Pete’s Department of Education will collaborate with states to ensure that all students in public schools learn how to identify and address gender discrimination and bias.

- **Support comprehensive campus-based sexual violence prevention through Department of Education leadership and funding** for programs such as bystander intervention, interventions to address social norms, enforcement of alcohol policies, staff training on trauma-informed approaches, and online harassment and bullying based on gender and gender identity.

Ensure the safety of all LGBTQ+ people, especially transgender women of color

- **Enforce the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.** This year, at least 18 transgender individuals have been murdered, including 17 Black trans women. Trans women are justifiably afraid. Pete will incentivize states to abolish the so-called gay panic defense so that hate and fear can never justify violence. We also will support law enforcement and community policing strategies to investigate and prosecute these crimes in a manner that ensures justice to trans women and their families, while protecting the trans community.

- **Train law enforcement and require reporting on issues specific to LGBTQ+ people.** Pete will train law enforcement to treat LGBTQ+ people in a culturally respectful way. Pete will also incentivize proper collection and reporting of hate crimes statistics against LGBTQ+ individuals and, as in Pete’s Douglass Plan.

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