



QUESTIONS FOR POLITICAL CANDIDATES

Millions of Americans are taking care of children, parents, and sick or disabled family members. This is a major source of stress, poverty, and income insecurity.

There is one thing most voters agree on: families deserve more support from employers and government policy. Americans want -- and need -- policies that support care work.

We must recruit and support candidates who will vote for these policies on the national, state, and local levels.

Overwhelming majorities of voters in all parties say that paid family leave, tax breaks, and Social Security credits should be available so they can care for family members. Our wealthy nation must have these policies. Nations in which care is culturally valued and fully integrated in public policy see their economies grow and their democracies strengthened. Putting care at the center of political conversations, where it belongs, means more opportunity and greater security for everyone.

Change is possible if we apply a fresh approach to the seemingly intractable problems of economic inequality, social injustice, and gender and racial disparity. Making the economic value of the work of care visible is this fresh approach.

Using This Guide to Change the Political Conversation:

The failure of U.S. policies to take the value of the essential work of care into account lies behind the fact that almost one out of every three American children lives below the poverty line, that one in three American women live in poverty or on its brinkⁱ, and that the United States lags way behind other developed nations in its investment in our most important asset: our children.ⁱⁱ

Recognizing that the value of care strengthens the social safety net addresses the irreducible needs of people from infancy through old age, expands the middle class, cuts through cycles of poverty, and positions the US as a strong global competitor for generations by investing in our future human capital. This guide, prepared by the [Center for Partnership Studies' Caring Economy Campaign](http://www.caringeconomy.org), is a tool for bringing these vital, yet largely ignored, issues to candidate, media, and public attention. You can use it at candidate events like rallies or town halls and for contacting candidates directly via social media or through their offices. It also offers information you can use to write a letter to journalists hosting debates, the editor of your local paper, or other news outlets. It can be shared with your colleagues, friends, and family to help them decide for whom to vote.

Child Care –

Science has established that most human brain development occurs between birth and age 5. Yet the

US invests less than half as much as a percentage of GDP in young children than other advanced economies like those in the UK, France, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark.ⁱⁱⁱ Devoting funds to accessible, affordable child care, early education, and pre-school is sound economic policy that:

- Decreases crime, incarceration rates, poverty, and reliance on public assistance
- Prepares the future labor force to compete in the rapidly changing global economy
- Leads to higher earnings, greater educational attainment, and lower rates of teen pregnancy.^{iv}

If elected, will you promote both public and private sector investment in affordable, high quality early education and childcare?

Promoting Care Within the Family –

The well-being of families is central to our economic strength and global competitiveness. It is imperative that we strengthen our care infrastructure so all citizens get the care they need, from the time they are born throughout life. Parents, adult children caring for spouses and elder family members, or those with disabilities, must be able to honor their personal as well as their professional obligations. The vitality of our society and our security as a nation depend on it.

- Most American workers are also caregivers for children or other family members.
- All Americans will need care at some point, from spouses, adult children, other family members, and/or the direct care workforce.
- The growing number of people living longer means the demand for elder care from families and paid providers is exploding.^v

If elected, will you support the following policies that value care to promote family economic security?

1. **Paid family leave**
2. **Earned sick days**
3. **Workplace flexibility options**
4. **Social Security protection for family caregivers**
5. **Caregiver tax credits**

Paid Family Leave –

When new parents have paid time off to welcome a newborn or newly adopted child, the benefits are both short and long term. However, The US invests less than half as much in family benefits as other OECD nations.^{vi} Paid family leave is good for employees because:

- Children are more likely to get routine medical attention and vaccinations, and to breastfeed.
- Maternal health improves and post-partum depression is less likely.
- Fathers are more likely to remain engaged in the child's upbringing when they develop confidence in their caring ability in the first weeks and months a child is home.^{vii}

Paid family leave also benefits employers and the economy. Analysis of businesses in states with paid leave programs has revealed:

- Lower costs in worker recruiting, retention, and retraining.

- Higher productivity
- Reduced unemployment
- An expanded GDP due to women's higher labor force participation.^{viii}

Will you support the Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act providing paid family and medical leave to American workers?

Gender Equity –

A strong democracy requires gender, racial, and economic equity, and so does widely shared economic prosperity. Income inequality stifles economic expansion, disproportionately concentrates wealth, and allows a small minority to exercise too much influence over government and policy.

Societies in which the status of women approaches or is the same as that of men have stronger democracies, with greater political rights and civil liberties. Gender parity has proven to be a reliable predictor of standard of living across the board.^{ix}

Gender equity is associated with

- Greater economic efficiency
- Greater economic productivity
- Greater economic competitiveness.

If elected, will you commit to enforcing fair pay laws and support passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act?

Accounting for Care in National Statistics –

Current economic indicators like GDP, employment statistics, housing starts, and inflation rates do not tell us whether people have what they need to lead secure, productive lives and the opportunities to achieve their optimal potential. We need better data about public and private investments in care and education to devise and implement effective policies and measure their success. Collecting data on the connection between the economy and the development of human well-being is necessary to:

- Identify public and private investments that increase human capacity
- Analyze the impact of these investments on the development of human capital.^x

If elected, will you support the collection of data beyond GDP and use of metrics such as Social Wealth Economic Indicators tracking public and private investment in care and their impact on human capital?

REFERENCES:

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ⁱⁱ Ghosh, I. with Eisler, R. *Social Wealth Economic Indicators: A New System for Evaluating Economic Prosperity*. Pacific Grove, CA: Center for Partnership Studies, 2014.

<http://caringeconomy.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/11/SWEI-Executive-Summary-and-CoreIndicators-2.pdf> and <http://caringeconomy.org/wpcontent/uploads/2015/03/Social-Wealth-Economic-Indicators-FullReport-20152.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Young, V. *Children—The Nation’s Best Investment*. Caring Economy Campaign, 2015 at <http://caringeconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/children-thenations-best-investment.pdf>

^v *Making the Case for Paid Parental Leave*. Center for Partnership Studies’ Caring Economy Campaign, 2015 at <http://caringeconomy.org/wpcontent/uploads/2015/12/Case-for-Paid-Parental-Leave-CPS-2015-1-2.pdf>

^{vi} *Care Crisis Means Big Trouble for the Economy and Women*. Center for Partnership Studies’ Caring Economy Campaign, 2015, at <http://caringeconomy.org/wpcontent/uploads/2015/08/care-crisis-means-big-trouble.pdf>

^{vii} *Fathers Gain When We Change Policies to Value Care*. Center for Partnership Studies’ Caring Economy Campaign, 2015. <http://caringeconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Fathers-FactSheet.pdf>

^{viii} *Care Crisis Means Big Trouble for the Economy and Women*. Caring Economy Campaign, 2015, at <http://caringeconomy.org/wpcontent/uploads/2015/08/care-crisis-means-big-trouble.pdf>

^{ix} Eisler, R., Loye, D. & Norgaard, K. *Women, Men, and the Global Quality of Life*. Center for Partnership Studies, 1995 at <http://centerforpartnership.org/product/women-men-and-the-globalquality-of-life/>; Schwab, K. et al, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2015*. Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2015 at <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR2015/cover.pdf> (The United States is number 28).

^x *Social Wealth Economic Indicators*, 2014 <http://caringeconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/SWEI-Executive-Summary-and-Core-Indicators-2.pdf>