About Stand Together

Tackling complex problems requires a comprehensive approach. Stand Together is the organization that serves as the backbone of these efforts. We work with partner organizations who take the lead on driving efforts within each key institution of society.

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Stand Together Chamber of Commerce (STND)

Stakeholder(s):
Charles Koch: Founder
Brian Hooks: Chairman & CEO

Institutions:
The Key Institutions of Society

Education Sector:
Education is essential for helping people discover and develop their unique potential—and for generating the ideas that lead to a brighter future. The Charles Koch Foundation is the primary organization in our community supporting K-12 and post-secondary education. This includes tens of thousands of K-12 teachers, over 1,000 professors at 300 universities, educators in the skilled trades, and more.

Business Sector:
Businesses contribute to society when they serve customers, drive life-improving innovations, and empower employees to find fulfillment in their work. Stand Together includes more than 700 of the country’s most successful business leaders and philanthropists, who employ over two million people. Together, we support efforts for business to be a force for good.

Communities:
Strong and safe communities are springboards to success and safety nets when people fall on hard times. Stand Together Foundation is the primary organization that leads our efforts to strengthen communities, which today includes support for more than 160 community-based organizations helping over 1 million people beat poverty. We are now on pace to partner with an additional 70 groups per year, going forward.

Government Sector:
Government has a vital role in society—first and foremost securing equal rights and keeping people safe. Americans for Prosperity is the premier organization in our community that advances policy reforms that help people improve their lives. Along with its affiliates, The LIBRE Initiative and Concerned Veterans for America, Americans for Prosperity consists of millions of grassroots activists in all 50 states.

Vision
Every person rises

Mission
To tackle complex problems

Values

**Principles:** The Principles of Empowerment — Certain principles have made societies more free and open throughout history, contributing to unprecedented progress. These principles guide all of our efforts. We stand for:

**Empowerment:** Empowering people to realize their unique potential. Everyone has a gift—let’s help them discover and develop it.

**Rights:** Equal rights and respecting the dignity of every person.

**Dignity:** Everyone has the potential to contribute in society if they have the right mindset and material support.

**Openness:** Openness to people, ideas, goods, and services. We all benefit when we embrace differences and expand inclusion.

**Mutual Success:** People succeeding by helping others improve their lives. Let’s find win-win solutions that truly help every person rise.
1. Education

Remove barriers prevent students and teachers from realizing their potential

Stakeholder(s)

Students

Teachers

Urban Specialists:
Derrel Bradford and 50CAN amplify the voices of rising education leaders who are passionate about discovering innovative ways for every child to develop their unique talents and abilities.

Hudson Link:
In-prison education programs such as Hudson Link that enable inmates to earn college-accredited degrees, so they have a promising future when they re-enter their communities. Less than 2 percent of Hudson Link graduates are arrested again, compared to the national average of nearly 70 percent.

Huntsman School of Business:
Educational centers, such as the Huntsman School of Business at Utah State, where students and scholars are learning together in a diverse academic community about principled entrepreneurship.

John Tomasi:
Professor John Tomasi leads a program at Brown University that encourages students to consider and evaluate alternate points of view—one of more than 1,000 professors the Stand Together community supports at over 350 universities who are expanding open inquiry and a rigorous exchange of ideas that are essential for learning.

Ashley Berner:
Professor Ashley Berner at Johns Hopkins University is producing research that can improve America’s education system by better understanding the benefits of diversity and allowing more educational opportunities to meet students’ unique needs.

Bipartisan Coalitions:
Unite bipartisan coalitions to expand access to more educational opportunities through public policy reform. In Florida alone, the coalition helped to pass four educational choice programs in recent years, building on similar successes in states like North Carolina, Wisconsin, and dozens more.

Policy Champions:
Support policy champions at all levels of government who will expand access to educational opportunities for all students.

Education that predicts the future — Throughout the country, students are eager to learn, and teachers are eager to teach. But barriers prevent students and teachers from realizing their potential in both the classroom and their lives. We are working to change that. Education should be three-dimensional—enabling students to identify their innate abilities, turn them into valued skills, and apply them in ways that contribute to society. We want to broaden the range of educational opportunities available to students and teachers by removing barriers that limits access to them. Education predicts the future. Let’s ensure America’s brightest days are ahead. Education should be a three-dimensional experience—one that enables students to identify their innate abilities, turn them into valued skills, and apply them in ways that contribute to society... Bottom line — We want to help enable a diverse and innovative educational system. America should be a place where all students find a place to learn and a path to a better future.

1.1. Empowerment

Empower teachers to apply their own passions and aptitudes to help guide students along their journey of learning

Learn to be. Learn to know. Learn to do. — Education should be an experience that fosters the unique potential of every student. Unfortunately, today’s system instead focuses more on the rote process of schooling—telling
students to sit quietly and memorize information. The result is students who lack the critical thinking skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing world. It also fails our nation’s teachers, many of whom spend an average of 45 school days each year prepping for and administering standardized tests rather than engaging students in rich curriculum based on their needs. The Stand Together philanthropic community is working to change that by supporting educators who provide a three-dimensional learning experience. Learn to be means students identifying their unique aptitudes. Learn to know means acquiring the knowledge necessary to turn those aptitudes into valued skills. Learn to do means students apply what they’ve learned to contribute to society. All three are necessary to developing the critical thinking skills required to succeed in a 21st century economy. We want to empower teachers to apply their own passions and aptitudes to help guide students along their journey of learning.

**Stakeholder(s):**
- Teachers

### 1.2. Opportunities

**Make educational opportunities available to all students**

An “all-of-the-above” approach to increasing opportunities in education Much of today’s education debate misses the point: It shouldn’t be about where students go to school. It should be about how to best meet each student’s own unique needs. It’s why our community has united with teachers representing various educational options that provide three-dimensional learning opportunities to students across the country—whether it be public or private, charter or home school, four-year college degrees or vocational training, or anything else... Educational opportunities must be available to all students, regardless of their zip codes or family income levels.

**Stakeholder(s):**
- Students
- Teachers

**Teachers:**
Students and teachers are experimenting with various learning methods—and we want to ensure all students have access to whichever educational option is best able to help them succeed.

**Matt Silverthorne:**
That includes Matt Silverthorne, a K-12 teacher who brought entrepreneurship classes to his high school nearly 30 years ago and continues teaching today.

**OpenStax:**
It also includes state-of-the-art online programs like OpenStax that utilize adaptive technology to help students identify their strengths and close learning gaps.

**SkillsUSA:**
It includes programs like SkillsUSA that—alongside Mike Rowe of “Dirty Jobs” fame—encourage more students to attend trade schools, transforming their strengths into valued skills that are in high demand.

### 1.3. Options

**Expand access to more options**

Expanding access to more options — The growth of so many new educational models presents enormous opportunities for students to find which is best suited for them, yet barriers deny access to many of them. Low-income families in particular face limited options. Public policies cap enrollment or altogether ban charter schools. Higher education leaves the average student more than $30,000 in debt, and many vocational schools lack sufficient funding to meet growing demand. Particularly in a country as prosperous and technologically advanced as ours, the Stand Together community is working to remove these and other barriers currently in place. That includes helping pass public policy reforms that make more options available for every child. It includes leveraging technology to expand access to Advanced Placement high school courses by providing free digital textbooks to schools and districts that otherwise could not afford them. And it includes utilizing online platforms to scale programs like Youth Entrepreneurs to reach far more students than a brick-and-mortar approach. These are just a few examples of how we are expanding access to education. Given the advances in technology and innovation, we are on the cusp of transforming education like never before.
2. Poverty

Break the cycle of poverty

**Stakeholder(s)**

**Stand Together Foundation:**
The Stand Together Foundation is helping more than 140 organizations to be more effective, grow their efforts, and transform more lives.

**Hudson Link:**
For example, Hudson Link—an in-prison college degree program—is reducing recidivism rates from nearly 70 percent nationally to less than two percent for the incarcerated men and women they serve.

**The Opportunity Index:**
“The Opportunity Index,” with Gallup and the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, empowers faculty and students at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) to develop solutions to problems affecting fragile communities.

**Americans for Prosperity:**
Americans for Prosperity is standing up against unnecessary occupational licensing in dozens of states—costly, time-consuming requirements that limit access to employment—including in New Jersey, where it recently helped overturn a law requiring people to pay $18,000 in tuition and sit through 1,200 hours of training to braid hair.

**Center for Advancing Opportunity:**
The Thurgood Marshall College Fund established the Center for Advancing Opportunity, which brings new faculty and student voices into the conversation about removing barriers to opportunity in fragile communities.

**Carrie Pettus-Davis:**
Professors such as Dr. Carrie Pettus-Davis at Florida State University are conducting first-of-its-kind research to identify the most effective ways to prepare people for release from prison and equip them with the skills they need to succeed, given the inextricable link between poverty and today’s broken criminal justice system.

**Cara:**
Cara utilizes life and career training skills to prepare and inspire motivated individuals to break the cycle of homelessness, transform their lives, strengthen their communities, and forge paths to real, lasting success.

**Shelters to Shuttles:**
Shelters to Shuttles changes the trajectory of individuals experiencing situational homelessness and reduces the stigma around homelessness by partnering with the real estate community to provide housing and immediate employment opportunities.

**Friends of the Children:**
Friends of the Children builds confidence in young people by helping with schoolwork, teaching emotional and social skills, encouraging perseverance, and building a growth mindset and grit for a full 12.5 years.

**Back on My Feet:**
Back on My Feet revolutionizes the approach to homelessness through a running-based model to restore confidence, strength, and self-esteem. Its national chapters collaborate with local businesses to develop pathways for education and jobs for program participants while creating a movement to bring attention to and reduce homelessness in cities across the country.

**Thistle Farms:**
Thistle Farms provides a strong community of advocates and partners for women who are recovering from trauma. They provide housing opportunities, as well as employment through an oil and candle shop where they manufacture their own high-quality products.

**Needs and Offers Marketplace:**
Stand Together Foundation’s Needs and Offers Marketplace connects business professionals to skills-based volunteering opportunities, where people can use their professional skills to help inspiring nonprofits break the cycle of poverty.

**MBM® Center:**
The MBM® Center—led by a group of retired Koch Industries executives—offers business consulting services to help nonprofit leaders implement the values of principled entrepreneurship in their organizations.

**Bipartisan Coalitions:**
Uniting bipartisan coalitions—including U.S. Senators, Congressmen, governors of both parties, and groups as diverse as the ACLU, Texas Public Policy Foundation, Google, and more—to enact criminal justice reforms at the federal level and in dozens of states that help break the cycle of poverty.

**Americans for Prosperity-Mississippi:**
Americans for Prosperity-Mississippi led passage of a first-in-the-nation comprehensive reform of occupational licenses—which limit access to entry-level jobs and entrepreneurship—that has served as a model for recent reforms in other states, such as Nebraska.

**Policy Champions:**
Support policy champions at all levels of government who will remove barriers that perpetuate the cycle of poverty and prevent people from realizing their potential.

Breaking the cycle of poverty — Far too many Americans are trapped in a vicious cycle of multi-generational poverty. Despite hundreds of billions in charitable giving annually, and as much as $1 trillion every year in anti-poverty government programs, the poverty rate in the U.S. has not declined significantly since the 1960s. It’s time for a different approach—one that sees the very people working to improve their lives as the solution rather than merely victims, or just a problem to be solved. We are committed to breaking the cycle of poverty. That’s why the Stand
Together community invests in people with firsthand knowledge of the problems their communities face. They’re breaking the barriers people confront in society and inside themselves. When we unleash the potential of people, we can catalyze the transformation of entire communities and break the cycle of poverty to help all people realize their potential... Bottom line — To break the cycle of poverty in America, we need to disrupt its root causes, remove the barriers people face in society and inside themselves, and empower those who’ve lived it to lead the way.

2.1. Root Causes

*Tackle the root causes of entrenched poverty*

Complex problems. Unique approaches. — For fifty years, the war on poverty has focused almost exclusively on symptoms, providing access to material necessities like food, clothing, shelter, and healthcare. The result of this well-intentioned effort is that poverty in America might be easier to endure, but not any easier to escape. In fact, data show the poorer you are growing up today, the more likely you are to stay poor through adulthood. Making substantial progress requires tackling the five root causes of entrenched poverty: chronic unemployment, educational failure, family breakdown, addiction and trauma, and personal debt. The interconnection between these pathways to poverty is what makes the challenge complex, and there is no single solution. The paths out of poverty are as unique as the individuals living in it... Making substantial progress requires that we tackle the root causes of entrenched poverty: chronic unemployment, educational failure, family breakdown, addiction and trauma, and personal debt.

**Stakeholder(s):**

*Social Enterprises:*
We’re investing in social enterprises and community leaders with proven track records of success in each of these five areas.

*Community Leaders*

**Formerly Incarcerated People:**
They’re making substantial progress on everything from recidivism rates for the formerly incarcerated to reduced relapse rates for those recovering from addiction.

2.1.1. Unemployment

*Tackle chronic unemployment*

2.1.2. Education

*Tackle educational failure*

2.1.3. Families

*Tackle family breakdown*

**Stakeholder(s):**

Families

Recovering Addicts

Underprivileged Children:
They’re helping underprivileged children find schools that prepare them for life and the homeless and chronically unemployed get back on their feet. No single approach is the entire solution. We need to invest in sustained progress across them all.

Homeless People

Unemployed People
2.1.4. Addiction & Trauma

Tackle addiction and trauma

**Stakeholder(s):**
- Addicts
- Victims

2.1.5. Debt

Tackle personal debt

**Stakeholder(s):**
- Debtors

2.2. Dignity & Injustice

Recognize injustice and the dignity of every individual

Recognize injustice and the dignity of every individual — Many people discount historical and present injustices that are often at the root of poverty in America. Slavery. Segregation. An unequal criminal justice system. Cultural racism. Fear of immigrants. Others see people as mere victims in need. The only way to make real progress is to acknowledge both the injustices holding people back and the potential for every person to overcome even the most incredible obstacles—then break the barriers holding them back. We must remove educational barriers to ensure every student can receive an education that gives them a chance. Barriers to work need to be struck down, so people aren’t prevented from meaningful employment that could help lift them out of poverty. Our criminal justice system needs an overhaul to restore equal treatment and justice for all, especially those at the margin of society. Data show these barriers disproportionally affect minority and low-income communities. But reforming our systems and institutions is just the start. Transformation must also happen through the support of strong and safe communities. At the heart of the most successful programs in America is a focus on helping people to see themselves as valuable and capable with something to contribute to their community.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Hudson Link:**
Programs such as Hudson Link provide more than a diploma—they help incarcerated men and women transform their vision of themselves and gain hope for their future.

**Chrysalis:**
Others such as Chrysalis go beyond helping the jobless fill out an application—they help people build self-worth and the belief that they have something to offer their community.

**Communities:**
In each case, these local programs treat the people they serve as human beings full of dignity and potential, holding them to a higher standard and helping them see that they are capable of achieving things they didn’t think possible. The most successful programs in the country focus on helping people see themselves as valuable and capable with something to contribute to their community.
2.3. Experience & Knowledge

Apply personal experience and local knowledge to help people struggling to escape poverty

Personal experience and local knowledge make all the difference.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Social Entrepreneurs:**
Some of the most effective social entrepreneurs making a real difference for people struggling to escape poverty and desperation have experienced it first-hand. These individuals develop programs that are uniquely tailored to needs of the communities they serve, with their effectiveness driven in part by empathy and personal accountability.

**Antong Lucky:**
For example, Antong Lucky—a former Bloods gang leader in Dallas—has helped thousands of at-risk kids abandon violence and avoid the path he went down.

**Urban Specialists:**
His personal experience, and that of his team of former gang members at Urban Specialists, enable them to engage their community credibly and effectively.

**Scott Strode:**
Scott Strode discovered the healing power of a fitness community when he was in recovery from drug addiction.

**The Phoenix:**
He founded The Phoenix, a peer-to-peer physical fitness program that’s helping people shed the stigma of addiction. Today, The Phoenix has relapse rates that are dramatically lower than traditional treatment centers.

**Community-Based Organizations:**
There are thousands of voluntary, community-based organizations like these across America. This "social sector" of our society offers a third way that stands apart from the public and private sectors. The social entrepreneurs that lead it are delivering solutions rooted in local knowledge and mutual benefit that are helping millions of Americans transform their lives.
3. Criminal Justice

Expand justice to keep communities safe, rehabilitate people, and recognize the potential in every person to transform his or her life and contribute to society

**Stakeholder(s)**

**John Koufos**
After serving time in prison, John Koufos decided to dedicate his life to helping formerly incarcerated people transform their lives.

**Safe Streets & Second Chances**
Now, John is scaling his efforts through Safe Streets & Second Chances, a first-of-its-kind project that combines academic research into the most effective re-entry programs with public policy reforms.

**Academy for Justice**
Led by Erik Luna, Arizona State University’s Academy for Justice brought together over 50 of the nation’s leading scholars to publish Reforming Criminal Justice, a four-part volume that is widely recognized as the authoritative report bridging the gap between academic scholarship and reforms on the ground.

**Americans for Prosperity Foundation**
Americans for Prosperity Foundation is uniting citizens to provide second chances to formerly incarcerated individuals who have earned them, including major media efforts to tell the stories of people who have gained a second chance and transformed their lives.

**Americans**
Nearly 80 percent of Americans agree our criminal justice system should focus on rehabilitation instead of punishment alone.

**Carrie Pettus-Davis**
Professors like Dr. Carrie Pettus-Davis at Florida State University are conducting first-of-its-kind research to identify the most effective ways to prepare people for release from prison and equip them with the skills they need to succeed.

**Drug Enforcement and Policy Center**
The Drug Enforcement and Policy Center at The Ohio State University is researching drug policy and sentencing reforms that can help address our country’s opioid crisis.

**Hudson Link**
In-prison education programs such as Hudson Link help those in prison earn degrees from accredited universities—lowering the recidivism rate from a national average of nearly 70 percent down to less than one percent for program participants.

**The Other Side Academy**
Alternative sentencing programs such as The Other Side Academy, a minimum two-year residential program that offers vocational training, education, and peer counseling.

**The Last Mile**
In-prison vocational programs such as The Last Mile help people learn the skills they need to hold a job and improve their lives upon release.

**Businesses**
Encourage more businesses to “ban the box” that asks job applicants whether they have a criminal record and has been found to reduce by half the chances someone receives a call back.

**Society for Human Resources Management**
The Society for Human Resources Management increases awareness of the willingness of business managers and human resources officers to hire people with criminal records.

**Non-Violent Offenders**
Supported passage of the federal FIRST STEP Act, which helps more people in prison re-enter society as productive citizens and reform mandatory sentences for low-level, non-violent offenders who made a mistake and deserve a second chance.

**States**
Supported reforms in more than 30 states to overhaul the criminal justice system, including bail reform, ending civil asset forfeiture, and more.

**ACLU**
Partnered with the ACLU to restore voting rights to Floridians who have felony convictions and deserve a second chance. If we want people to successfully re-enter society, we need to welcome them as full members.

**Google**
Partnered with Google to reform bail policies to better reflect whether the arrested individual poses a threat to public safety.

**Policy Champions**
Supported policy champions at all levels of government who will enact criminal justice reforms that keep communities safe, rehabilitate people in prison, and provide second chances.

Expanding justice throughout America’s justice system — A just criminal justice system treats everyone equally and affords all due process under the law. It also recognizes the potential of all people to transform their lives and contribute to society, ensuring rehabilitation accompanies punishment and providing second chances to those who deserve them. Unfortunately, today’s criminal justice system is far from that ideal. It criminalizes poverty and disproportionately harms minorities and low-income communities. We want to change that. We’re working toward a system that keeps communities safe, puts behind bars only those people who should be there, and ensures the
punishment fits the crime. We want a criminal justice system that ensures rehabilitation accompanies punishment and provides second chances to those who deserve them... Bottom Line — We want a criminal justice system that keeps communities safe, rehabilitates people, and recognizes the potential in every person to transform his or her life and contribute to society.

3.1. Overcriminalization

_FIX America’s “overcriminalization” epidemic_

Fixing America’s “overcriminalization” epidemic — America has an overcriminalization epidemic. Due to an explosion in the number of laws and regulations that carry criminal penalties, the U.S. incarcerated population has quadrupled from roughly 500,000 in 1980 to nearly 2.2 million people in 2016. As a result, there are as many Americans with criminal records—one-in-four—as there are with college degrees. Worst of all, the system effectively criminalizes poverty. Studies show the poorer you grew up, the more likely you are to spend time incarcerated when compared to those raised in higher income households. The Stand Together community is working to fix this epidemic.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Georgia:**
For example, states such as Georgia implemented substance abuse treatment programs and accountability courts for low-level offenders. The results: Fewer people continued breaking the law after serving their punishment, the prison population declined, and the state’s crime rate fell overall.

**Lawmakers:**
Now, our community is uniting federal and state lawmakers, the law enforcement community, academic experts, and others to implement similar reforms at every level of our criminal justice system.

**Prisoners:**
95 percent of those in prison will be released—more than 650,000 people each year. It’s in everyone’s interest to ensure they come out better than they went in.

3.1.1. Public Safety

_Eliminate criminal punishments for offenses that pose no danger to public safety_

For starters, that means eliminating criminal punishments for offenses that pose no danger to public safety—e.g., are communities made safer by locking up people who can’t afford excessive fines for traffic violations?

3.1.2. Low-Risk Offenders

_Provide alternative punishments for low-risk offenders_

We should also provide alternative punishments for low-risk offenders that are more effective than incarceration.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Low-Risk Offenders**

3.2. Punishment & Rehabilitation

_Make punishment fit the crime and rehabilitate people_

The punishment should fit the crime. Prison should rehabilitate people. It’s pretty simple: Punishments should fit the crime, and we should keep communities safe by rehabilitating people in prison rather than just punishing them. That’s not the case today. Mandatory minimum sentences lock up non-violent, first-time offenders for decades. People charged with multiple trivial crimes have their sentences “stacked,” producing decades-long sentences. Additionally, the system denies many incarcerated people access to rehabilitation programs,
sometimes releasing them back into society worse than they went in. The Stand Together community is working to change that.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**American Civil Liberties Union:**
We have united with groups and people as diverse as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Texas Public Policy Foundation, policymakers from both parties, and over a dozen governors to reduce excessive sentencing practices and expand access to in-prison education and workforce development programs.

**Texas Public Policy Foundation**

**Policymakers**

**Governors**

**Bipartisan Coalitions:**
This included helping build bipartisan coalitions to pass the federal FIRST STEP Act and enact similar reforms in states across the country.

**Texas:**
For example, Texas has closed eight prisons and saved $4 billion since the early 2000s, while reducing its crime rate to a 50-year low. Let’s implement this approach across the country.

**States:**
States have shown such commonsense reforms reduce recidivism, crime, and prison populations. The added bonus? It saves a ton of money.

**Managers:**
74 percent of managers and 84 percent of HR professionals say they are willing or open to hiring individuals with a criminal record.

**HR Professionals**

**Individuals with Criminal Records**

3.3. Second Chances

**Give second chances to people who have paid their debt to society**

Let’s give second chances to people who have paid their debt to society. Let’s be clear: People should be held accountable for their actions. But those who have paid their debt to society deserve a second chance—one that’s denied to too many people today. For example, there are more than 15,000 laws and regulations that limit job opportunities for people with a criminal record. Other policies make it near impossible to find affordable housing, open bank accounts, and countless other things that are essential for leading productive lives. It helps to explain why 77 percent of people released from prison are arrested again within five years.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Educational Institutions:**
There’s a role for the institutions of education, business, communities, and government to play in helping people re-enter society.

**Businesses**

**Communities**

**Social Entrepreneurs:**
We’re working with social entrepreneurs within them all.

3.3.1. Barriers

**Remove barriers that limit job opportunities for people with criminal records**

Our community is working to remove these and countless other barriers by reforming policies like occupational licensing that limit access to employment, encouraging businesses to choose to adopt hiring practices that screen out otherwise qualified job applicants simply because they have a criminal record, and supporting dozens of workforce development programs that provide a pathway from prison to employment.
4. Immigration

Create a system that welcomes immigrants who will contribute to American society

**Stakeholder(s)**

**LIBRE Initiative**: The LIBRE Initiative is uniting citizens behind policy reforms that will provide certainty for Dreamers. This includes major legislative and media efforts calling for bipartisan action in support of Dreamers and thanking champions on both sides of the aisle with the courage to lead.

**Dreamers**

Tim Cook: Apple CEO Tim Cook partnered with Charles Koch to write an op-ed in The Washington Post calling for Congress to act now on Dreamers. This is part of a broader effort to unite and amplify the voices of a diverse coalition of people who share our vision for immigration.

**Americans**: 68 percent of Americans believe our country’s openness to people from all over the world is essential to who we are as a nation—and even more believe legal immigration should stay at the current level or increase.

**LIBRE Institute**: The LIBRE Institute offers English courses, economic empowerment sessions, and “pathways to citizenship” workshops to support immigrant families who want to learn, contribute, and succeed.

**Policymakers**: Unite policymakers of both parties to oppose policies that divide our communities and don’t make America safer, including the travel ban and family separation at the border.

**Community**

From Arizona to Washington, D.C., these events aim to bring folks together and build a coalition to address the challenges and opportunities of immigration at the community level.

**Media**: Major marketing and communications efforts—including TV and digital ads, direct mail, and more—to tell the story of how immigrants contribute to this country, reflecting the beliefs of the vast majority of Americans.

**Policy Coalitions**: Build broad-based policy coalitions in Washington, D.C. to pass legislation that allows Dreamers to stay in the U.S. and curb proposals that would limit legal immigration levels, including by thanking lawmakers of both parties who are willing to work together and find common ground.

**Policy Champions**: Support policy champions at all levels of government who will put aside the politics of division and work together to address our broken immigration system.

**Path Project**: The Path Project offers mentorship programs to help immigrant children discover their talents and unlock their potential.

**Local Leaders**: The LIBRE Initiative hosts town hall meetings that bring together local leaders who represent all sides of the issue to have an open dialogue.

**Cornell Law School**: University research on immigration policy and immigrants’ contributions to our country, and forums such as the Dreamer Conference with Cornell Law School to spark discovery of innovative solutions for future generations of immigrants.

**Immigrant Families**

Cornell Law School: University research on immigration policy and immigrants’ contributions to our country, and forums such as the Dreamer Conference with Cornell Law School to spark discovery of innovative solutions for future generations of immigrants.

Immigration is good. Our current system is not. — America’s future is brighter with more people here contributing to it. Yet today’s immigration system keeps too many decent, industrious people from fully participating in the American experience, to the detriment of our country as a whole. We are determined to change that. Our system should treat immigrants as fellow human beings with dignity and respect. We should ensure those who would come to do us harm are prevented from doing so while, simultaneously, welcoming the overwhelming majority of immigrants who will add immeasurable value to our economy and our culture. We can have more immigration, a stronger economy, and safer communities. Ultimately, we want a system that welcomes immigrants who will contribute to American society.

**Bottom Line** Immigrants add immeasurable value to our economy and our culture. We want a culture that welcomes immigrants who will contribute to American society because immigration is good.

4.1. Assimilation

Provide a clear process for legal status to promote assimilation by immigrants and their children

More immigration. More culture. More American originals. — America is a nation of immigrants. Our culture is built on a foundation of immigrant genius. Immigrants invented blue jeans, basketball, and Budweiser. An immigrant wrote “God Bless America” while serving in the U.S. Army. Even the Statue of Liberty is an
immigrant. A clear process for legal status actually promotes assimilation by making it easier for immigrants and their children to find jobs, enroll in schools, and fully embrace the American Dream. Providing them with legal certainty and the ability to plan for their futures empowers them to work, study, join in public service, and recognize their potential to contribute to society. Immigrants to America today are learning English at the same rate or faster than in the past.

4.2. Innovation & Growth

Support immigration to enable more innovation and a stronger economy

More immigration. More innovation. A stronger economy. — Immigrants come to America to build a better life. This is the land of opportunity, and for more than 300 years immigrants from every corner of the globe have risked their lives for a chance to contribute to the fastest-growing economy in history. In fact, by increasing the customer base for U.S. companies and starting new businesses, immigrants create more new jobs than they fill.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Fortune 500 Companies:**
Nearly half of all Fortune 500 companies were founded by immigrants or their children. Google, AT&T, Pfizer—all created by immigrants.

**Google**

**AT&T**

**Pfizer**

**Center for American Entrepreneurship:**
According to analysis by the Center for American Entrepreneurship, “Immigrant-founded Fortune 500 firms are headquartered in 33 of the 50 states, employ 12.8 million people worldwide, and accounted for $5.3 trillion in global revenue in 2016.”

**Immigrants:**
But what about the use of public services like education, healthcare, and welfare? The fact is, most immigrants contribute more in taxes over their lifetimes than they use in government benefits. Bottom line: more immigration means more jobs, more innovation, and more growth in the long run.

4.3. Lawfulness

Make it easier for immigrants to comply with the law

More immigration. Less crime. A safer America. — America is a nation of laws. Unfortunately, our immigration system is so convoluted that complying with the law is virtually impossible.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Undocumented Immigrants:**
A result is 11 million undocumented immigrants living and working in the shadows, and five million more are waiting in line abroad. Nearly half of undocumented immigrants entered the country legally and overstayed their visa.

**National Academy of Sciences:**
More immigration via more respectable laws also helps keep America safe. In fact, according to the National Academy of Sciences, “Immigrants are less likely than the native-born to commit crimes, and neighborhoods with greater concentrations of immigrants have much lower rates of crime and violence than comparable nonimmigrant neighborhoods.”

**Law Enforcement Officials:**
Improving the openness, transparency, and efficiency of our immigration system will ease the burden on law enforcement so they can focus their time and resources on keeping out those who pose a genuine threat.

**Employers:**
There are over seven million job openings in the U.S. Meanwhile, nearly four million qualified, potential immigrants are currently stuck on the visa wait list, instead of contributing to the American experience.
5. Free Expression

Unlock solutions to our country’s biggest problems by facilitating collaboration among those who have different ideas

Stakeholder(s)

Knight First Amendment Institute:
The Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University protects free speech in the digital age. That includes studying and increasing public awareness of the threats to online speech and privacy and freedom of the press.

Chris Medina:
Professor Chris Medina resurrected a debate league for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) that gained national prominence in the 1930s and was featured in the 2007 movie, The Great Debaters.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs):
With support from the Charles Koch Foundation, Professor Medina created a national speech and debate championship, after which the number of HBCUs with debate teams doubled.

StoryCorps:
StoryCorps’ One Small Step is countering our country’s polarization by bringing together people with different viewpoints for one-on-one, in-person conversations.

Matt Ridley:
“The chief source of innovation in human society . . . is not the efforts of lonely geniuses thinking in solitude, but simply the exchange of ideas.” – Matt Ridley

Poynter Institute:
The Poynter Institute, a non-profit journalism education organization, teaches accountability in media and equips student journalists to engage their campus communities on controversial topics.

College Media Project:
In the 2017-18 academic year, Poynter launched the College Media Project on three campuses: Iowa State University, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and Howard University. This past year it grew to nine campuses.

Poynter-Koch Media & Journalism Fellowship Program:
The Charles Koch Foundation and Charles Koch Institute—which are part of the Stand Together community—also announced the Poynter-Koch Media & Journalism Fellowship Program in the spring of 2019.

Newseum:
The Newseum in Washington, DC, launched its NewseumED program to help K-12 educators teach students about First Amendment rights.

Eric Luna:
Professor Eric Luna of Arizona State University law school united more than 100 scholars of diverse perspectives to publish the authoritative source for anyone seeking to reform our nation’s criminal justice system. Their work has been cited in U.S. Supreme Court proceedings and distributed to policymakers, law enforcement, and many others.

Kurt Gray:
Scholars such as Kurt Gray, a psychologist at the University of North Carolina, are using science to better understand the cognitive roots of political polarization so others can more effectively address it going forward.

After Charlottesville Project:
The After Charlottesville Project—a partnership between the Charles Koch Institute, Center for American Progress, and Anti-Defamation League—helps to ensure protests are done peacefully, including assisting police control crowds in a safe and respectful way.

Center for American Progress

Anti-Defamation League

Urban Specialists:
Urban Specialists works to reduce violence in urban communities and increase collaboration between law enforcement and the populations they serve, including an event in 2018 that brought together the families of victims of police brutality as well as those of police officers who have been killed in counter protests.

Narrative 4:
Narrative 4 promotes collaboration between disparate groups of people by equipping them to use their stories to build empathy, shatter stereotypes, and break barriers.

Tennessee:
The Senate passed a bill in Tennessee that strengthens protection for journalists, whistleblowers, activists, and other individuals speaking out on issues from so-called “SLAPP” lawsuits (strategic lawsuits against public participation).

Bridging the divide through courageous collaboration — The greatest advancements in human progress—social, scientific, or otherwise—have resulted from an exchange of ideas, not borne of a single thought. Unfortunately, the polarization that grips our country today threatens continued progress. We’ve splintered into factions that focus more on what divides us than unites us. Worse is that more people want to silence opposing viewpoints rather than listen to and learn from different perspectives. We’re working to end this vicious cycle. Unitng people from all walks of life who have the courage to not let their differences prevent them from collaborating on areas of shared concerns. It’s the key to unlocking solutions to the biggest challenges facing our country today. Collaboration—even, and especially,
with those who have different ideas—is the key to unlocking solutions to our country’s biggest problems. Bottom Line — Collaborating with others—especially those with whom we disagree on other issues—has led to breakthroughs that have helped millions of people improve their lives. Let’s work together to bridge our country’s divides and accelerate that pace of progress.

5.1. Common Causes

_Foster unity in support of common causes_

Our differences and openness to new ideas are essential to progress — Gravity. Electricity. The Polio vaccine. Women’s suffrage. The abolition of slavery. Each of these milestones in human progress was the result of people who had different perspectives, backgrounds, and skillsets collaborating with and challenging their contemporaries while building upon the discoveries and ideas of generations before. Despite the headlines, however, this country is full of good people who do respect the dignity and opinions of those with whom they disagree and who are willing to unite in common cause. A recent study found that 77 percent of Americans believe we can unite despite our disagreements. We’re working to foster such unity. It’s the key to ensure the progress our country has made accelerates going forward, helping more and more people live fulfilling lives.

**Stakeholder(s):**

_Nadine Strossen:_

“The most effective way to counter the potential negative effects of hate speech . . . is not through censorship, but rather through more speech.” — Nadine Strossen, Former President of the ACLU

5.2. Incivility

_Ensure freedom of the press to hold politicians and cultural figures accountable for abuses of power and harms they inflict on others_

Civil liberties are the solution to incivility — Our country is no stranger to struggle: Civil rights and the Vietnam War in the 1960s. Watergate in the 70s. The fight for LGBTQ rights in the 80s, 90s, and 2000s. The list goes on. Yet each time, we persevered. And we became a stronger and more just society. The civil liberties that served as the foundation of our country make it possible for courageous individuals to take courageous stands—for example, the First Amendment freedoms of speech and the press, and the right to worship and peaceably assemble, among others. Despite these achievements, today many see restricting civil liberties as a solution to division. A recent poll found that nearly one-in-three Americans say the government should shut down media outlets they believe are biased or inaccurate. A similar proportion of universities maintain speech codes that censor students’ ideas. Politicians try to insulate themselves from critique by discouraging involvement with certain charitable and civic organizations. Although this is a natural instinct, it’s counterproductive. It’s especially harmful for groups of people who have historically been disenfranchised. Without free speech and the right to peaceably assemble, there might never have been national movements for civil rights and equality for the LGBTQ community. Without free press, corrupt politicians and cultural figures would have escaped accountability for abuses of power and other harms they inflicted.
6. Trade

Open the U.S. economy to the rest of the world so every American can experience greater prosperity

**Stakeholder(s)**

**Americans for Prosperity:**
American for Prosperity provides a platform for people being harmed by protectionist policies like the recent tariffs to tell their stories on the national stage.

**Chris Scott:**
At a recent event in Washington, D.C., Chris Scott, who runs a small Philadelphia factory, said, “Every day it seems like a new tariff is coming up and we’re getting hit.”

**Veronique de Rugy:**
Veronique de Rugy of the Mercatus Center at George Mason University explains the benefits of trade on national TV and in major newspapers.

**American Families:**
Trade has been a key ingredient to increasing Americans’ standards of living by as much as 3,000% over the last two centuries. In just 50 years following World War II, it benefited the typical American family by around $10,000 annually.

**Mercatus Center:**
The Mercatus Center at George Mason University is recognized as one of the country’s leading authorities on the benefits of trade and the harms of protectionist policies.

**Workforce Development Programs:**
Supporting dozens of workforce development programs across the country that are helping the unemployed and people whose jobs have been displaced acquire the skills to find employment in new, innovative fields.

**Unemployed People**

**Businesses:**
Uniting a coalition of more than 50 businesses, trade associations, and others in the business community to take a principled stand against recent tariffs and provide a more accurate narrative about the benefits of trade.

**Trade Associations**

**Lawmakers:**
Launched a multiyear, multimillion-dollar media and communications campaign—including national TV, digital ads, and direct mail into lawmakers’ districts—that demonstrate the harms of recent tariffs and show the benefits of increasing trade.

**Policymakers:**
Unite policymakers and citizen activists to defeat protectionist policies such as the border-adjustment tax that was proposed as part of the 2017 tax reform plan, which would have raised prices on everyday goods purchased by American families.

**Citizen Activists**

**Policy Champions:**
Support policy champions at all levels of government who will enact policies that increase trade and reduce protectionist policies.

The truth about trade: it makes our country better — History proves countries that are open to trade thrive and their people prosper with stronger economies, more and better-paying jobs, and higher standards of living than countries that close themselves off. Yet, today we’re seeing a rise in protectionism, as policies like the recent tariffs are hurting those they claim to help the most—destroying jobs and restricting Americans from the benefits of more affordable goods and services from other countries. We are working to open the U.S. economy to the rest of the world so every American can experience greater prosperity—regardless of other countries’ current policies. We want to open the U.S. economy to the rest of the world so that every American can experience greater prosperity... Bottom line — It’s a natural—but ultimately destructive—tendency to respond to the increasing pace of change and innovation by erecting protectionist policies that try to hold on to the past. We should embrace the future and increase trade with other countries, not close ourselves off to the world.

6.1. Workforce Development

Support workforce development and cutting-edge educational programs

Imports make Americans prosperous — The evidence is clear: more trade means more prosperity for more Americans over the long term. A recent study found that for every percentage point increase in the share of the economy based on trade, the economy grows twice as fast. The benefits to Americans are immense. By the early 2000s, the typical American family benefited by around $10,000 thanks to the move by countries around the globe to begin reducing trade barriers after World War II. Yet these benefits are often ignored in the current debate over trade. In fact, today’s debate often gets things completely backward, particularly the argument that
trade deficits with other countries are harmful. In the simplest of terms, a trade deficit means Americans have chosen to buy more stuff they value. Think about it. You run a trade deficit with your grocer: you buy food from them, but they don’t buy anything from you. And yet, you’re both better for it. This reality helps to explain why our trade deficit with China is much larger today—when our economy is strong and unemployment is near historic lows—than during the Great Recession. Many Americans understandably worry increasing trade is displacing jobs. Displacement is real, but 85 percent of lost jobs are due to the rapid pace of innovation and technological change that will continue to accelerate. Blocking trade won’t help these workers and their families. It highlights the need to do everything we can to help more people acquire the values and skills to compete in an evolving world. It’s part of the reason we support more than 30 workforce development programs nationwide and invest in cutting-edge educational programs.

**Stakeholder(s):**
- American Families
- American Workers

### 6.2. Disputes

**Resolve trade disputes without harming American workers**

Protectionism doesn’t “protect” the United States—at all — Competition is the key to innovation, and both increase with more trade to the benefit of the U.S. as a whole. For example, a 2015 study found innovation was higher among firms that were more exposed to Chinese imports than those that weren’t. Another study found the U.S. is 50 percent more prosperous than if we were closed to trade. On the other hand, protectionist policies that limit competition also limit innovation, harming everyone—including those they are intended to help—in the process. Tariffs are a case in point. Tariffs are sales taxes paid by the citizens of the country that imposes them. So when the U.S. slaps tariffs on imported steel, it increases costs for U.S. manufacturers that use steel to make cars, nails, machinery, and countless other products, while raising prices on consumers who buy these and other everyday goods. When the U.S. imposed steel tariffs in the early 2000s, they actually destroyed more jobs than the tariffs were designed to protect. Protectionist policies also harm the very industries they’re designed to protect by providing less incentive to continue innovating over time.

**Stakeholder(s):**
- U.S. Steel Industry:
  - For example, even though the U.S. steel industry was “protected” by 150 different provisions during the 1990s and 2000s, it is dramatically smaller today in terms of both employment and investment, with many firms declaring bankruptcy.
- Americans:
  - Protectionism doesn’t protect the U.S. at all. Tariffs, quotas, and other protectionist policies harm every American over the long term, while competition and innovation driven by trade benefit us all.
- World Trade Organization:
  - The U.S. wins 87 percent of complaints it files with the World Trade Organization against other countries’ improper trade practices—a far more effective method for resolving disputes that help the U.S. without harming American workers.
- American Workers

### 6.3. Barriers

**Eliminate barriers to trade**

Better ways to negotiate than taking yourself hostage — Critics of trade express valid concerns, particularly when it comes to China allowing—and in some cases, directly conducting—the theft of intellectual property from U.S. businesses. That said, launching a “trade war” is akin to taking yourself hostage. Considering tariffs are a sales tax paid by the imposing country’s citizens, a trade war is effectively two countries harming their own people until the other relents. A study found that in 2019, the current trade policies could cost 2.75 million U.S. jobs, among other disastrous consequences. What should we do instead? History is instructive on this point: Just stop it already... Even if other countries stick to their own protectionist policies, Americans would still benefit from eliminating all of ours. We should pursue multilateral and bilateral trade agreements like the World Trade Organization (WTO), North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and others that have increased standards of living for all Americans while also providing effective channels for resolving disputes.
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<td><strong>Hong Kong:</strong> Places like Hong Kong and Singapore have shown unilaterally eliminating barriers to trade produces enormous benefits for their citizens.</td>
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7. Foreign Policy

Adopt a better foreign policy

Stakeholder(s)

**Scholars:**
Scholars at the nation’s leading universities—including MIT, Harvard, Tufts, Texas A&M, Notre Dame, Catholic University, and the University of California San Diego—are producing state-of-the-art research and introducing fresh perspectives to the foreign policy conversation.

MIT
Harvard
Tufts
Texas A&M
Notre Dame
Catholic University
University of California San Diego

**Concerned Veterans for America:**
Concerned Veterans for America united federal policymakers across party lines to pass the VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017 and the VA MISSION Act of 2018.

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs:**
Together, these reforms improve accountability at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and expand health care choices for more than 9 million service members.

**American Veterans:**
A 2017 poll found half of American veterans believe the U.S. should be less militarily engaged around the world, while two-in-three said they would support removing all troops from Afghanistan.

**Eurasia Group Foundation:**
The Eurasia Group Foundation’s “Independent America Project” is helping foster a new way of thinking about America’s role in the world, including by examining how the U.S. would benefit from a more restrained foreign policy that is open to the world but more prudential in its use of military force.

**Brookings Institution:**
The Brookings Institution and the Charles Koch Institute are convening a series of debates on America’s role in the world, including public forums to discuss the future of U.S.-China and transatlantic relations, among other topics.

**John Quincy Adams Society:**
Student programs like the John Quincy Adams Society are identifying, educating, and equipping the next generation of scholars and foreign policy leaders.

**Headstrong:**
Headstrong helps veterans overcome the stigma and challenges of mental illness such as post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression, and addiction, among others, as they reenter civil society.

**Workforce Development Programs:**
Stand Together Foundation supports more than two dozen workforce development programs across the country that help people learn the values and skills to build successful careers, many of which serve veterans.

**Concerned Veterans for America:**
Concerned Veterans for America unites policymakers across party lines, among other reforms, to increase accountability at the Department of Veterans Affairs and improve the quality of health care for the 9 million veterans who rely on it.

**Policy Champions:**
Support policy champions at all levels of government who will advance an effective and realistic foreign policy to keep America safe while maintaining the strength of our military.

A better way to keep America safe — The United States needs a strong military to keep America safe. Unfortunately, today’s foreign policy asks our service members to do too much in too many places. In fact, it often undermines our security and saps our strength — costing thousands of American lives, leaving hundreds of thousands more physically wounded or suffering from mental ailments. It also threatens the future of our economy by adding trillions to our national debt. We seek a better way: a foreign policy that utilizes strength and smarts to deter potential threats and protect our vital security interests — without so many of the costs and unintended consequences that harm us today. We seek a foreign policy that utilizes strength and smarts to deter potential threats and protect our vital security interests — without so many of the costs and unintended consequences that harm us today... Bottom line — We support a strong military that keeps America safe. Rather than repeat the mistakes of recent decades, it’s time to adopt a better foreign policy—one based on a more realistic assessment of what constitutes a threat to America’s vital interests as well as restraint as to when and how we use military force to protect those interests.
7.1. Realism & Restraint

Rely on realism and restraint as to when and how we use force to secure our vital national interests

Realism: a better way for foreign policy — The United States military is the strongest force the world has ever seen. In fact, our military has never been stronger than it is today, serving as a powerful deterrent to other countries that might otherwise do us harm. Unfortunately, we don’t always deploy that force wisely. We’ve become involved in too many conflicts that do not directly relate to our national security and over-extended our military to 800 bases in 70 countries around the globe. Meanwhile, “mission creep” has extended otherwise necessary military actions beyond their core objectives, resulting in nation-building projects that have been costly and ineffective while leading to less global stability. Just one example: Afghanistan is now our nation’s longest war—longer than the Revolutionary War, World War I, and World War II combined. Rather than continue down this path, we seek a better way. One that relies on both realism and restraint—realism as to what constitutes a threat to our vital interests and what military force can accomplish, and restraint as to when and how we use force to secure those interests.

Stakeholder(s):

Michael Mullen:
"The most significant threat to our national security is our (national) debt.” — Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Michael Mullen

7.2. Defense Spending

Reduce defense spending

The best national defense is a strong economy—our military spending threatens both ... These are just a few examples of how policymakers can responsibly reduce defense spending and pressure on our national debt, helping to secure the strength of our military for decades to come. And while significant, they still pale in comparison to the savings we can achieve by exercising more prudence when it comes to using military action in the first place.

Stakeholder(s):

Michael Mullen:
It’s no coincidence America has both the world’s strongest economy and military force. Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Michael Mullen put it best: “(T)he strength ... and the resources that our military uses are directly related to the health of our economy over time.”

U.S. Military:
Yet, today Pentagon spending is a major driver of our national debt. It threatens our economy and our military alike. In 2019, military spending will total nearly $1 trillion—more than twice as much as China and Russia combined.

Veterans:
Costs will continue to soar due to long-term consequences of recent wars, such as caring for the more than 50,000 men and women who have been wounded in post-9/11 conflicts and the more than one million who have filed disability claims. The good news? There are many ways to rein in spending while maintaining our strength and taking care of our veterans.

Department of Defense:
For example, a 2015 Department of Defense report discovered $125 billion in bureaucratic waste. Closing or realigning bases the Pentagon itself deems non-essential, increasing transparency of Pentagon spending, and modernizing the Department of Veterans Affairs would save billions more.

Department of Veterans Affairs

7.3. Toolbox

Expand the foreign policy toolbox

Expand the foreign policy toolbox—reserve war as a last resort — War is sometimes necessary to keep Americans safe. But the consequences to service members, their families, and their communities are severe. As countless men and women who have experienced it firsthand say, “War is hell.” That’s why military action
should be a last resort. It’s why we’re uniting policymakers and the foreign policy community to use all the tools of statecraft rather than view military action as the primary means to keep America safe. Such an approach produced some of America’s most significant foreign policy victories of the 20th century. For example, the U.S. used diplomacy to help counter the Soviet threat by opening economic relations with China in the 1970s—eventually bringing about a peaceful end to the Cold War and the reunification of Germany... We’re working to replicate those successes today. Using the carrot of cooperation to keep America safe and reserving the stick of military action as the last resort.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**World Trade Organization:**

The U.S. has also leveraged accords like the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)—today known as the World Trade Organization (WTO)—to further American interests, using international trade as a way to encourage other countries to engage with the world in more peaceful ways.
8. Economic Opportunity

Abolish today’s two-tiered system that makes it too hard for too many to get ahead

Stakeholder(s):

Americans for Prosperity:
Americans for Prosperity united citizens in states across the country to encourage policymakers to pass the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, reducing government favoritism in the federal tax code and saving the typical family of four more than $2,000.

Rising Tide Capital:
Alfa Demmellash and Alex Forrester founded Rising Tide Capital to help low-income entrepreneurs. The results: average household incomes of the people they serve increase by nearly 50 percent within two years. Today, Alfa and Alex are partnering with Stand Together to make an even greater impact by scaling their model to empower more people.

Americans for Prosperity-Mississippi:
Americans for Prosperity-Mississippi led passage of a first-in-the-nation comprehensive reform of occupational licenses—which limit access to entry-level jobs and entrepreneurship—that serves as a model for recent reforms in other states, such as Nebraska.

Alfa Demmellash:
“Entrepreneurs are the very heart of what the American Dream is all about.” — Alfa Demmellash, founder of Rising Tide Capital.

Entrepreneurs

Educators:
There is no silver bullet or single solution to this problem. It requires uniting educators, community and business leaders, and policymakers of all parties to fix it.

Community Leaders

Business Leaders

Policymakers

Everyone deserves the opportunity to rise — The American story is one of people rising to achieve great things. However, it’s become increasingly difficult for people to share in that experience in recent decades, the result of a two-tiered system that makes it too hard for too many to get ahead. We’re working to reverse that trend by making it easier for the least fortunate to grab hold of the economic ladder and rise. We are working toward a system in which government grants privilege to no one and everyone has access to opportunity. All people should have the ability to succeed, contribute to their communities, and live meaningful lives—regardless of their starting point. We want an economic system that makes it easier for the least fortunate to grab hold of the economic ladder and rise... Bottom line — Our community is uniting people to abolish today’s two-tiered system that makes it too hard for too many to get ahead. We are working toward a system where government grants privilege to no one and everyone has an opportunity to rise—regardless of their starting point in life.

8.1. Opportunity & Mobility

Close the opportunity gap and boost economic mobility

Let’s close the opportunity gap and boost economic mobility — To put it bluntly, today’s economic system not only denies people the opportunity to rise, but also the very belief they can do so... These trends are due to barriers in education, business, communities, and government that make it harder to increase economic mobility. This is an injustice, and the Stand Together community is partnering with social entrepreneurs to remove these barriers holding people back, including [the following] ... Economic opportunity is the most effective anti-poverty program in history.

Stakeholder(s):

Millenials:
Millenials are the first generation to be worse off than their parents at the same point in life.

Poor Families:
Data show those who grow up in poor families are more likely to stay poor through adulthood.

Americans:
Additionally, more than 40 percent of the country thinks America’s best days are behind us.
8.1.1. Health Care

*Make health care more affordable*

Volunteer activists with Americans for Prosperity who are uniting citizens to make health care more affordable by leveraging technology to expand access and increase choice; prevent future tax hikes by reforming state pension systems to be sustainable over the long term; stop overspending that’s led to an explosion in our national debt that will impose increasing burdens on Americans; and transform today’s social safety net—that, however well-intentioned, has trapped millions of people in long-term dependency—into a social safety springboard that helps the needy back onto their feet; among other public policy reforms.

8.1.2. Entrepreneurship

*Teach the values and skills of entrepreneurship*

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Junior Achievement USA:**

Educators at Junior Achievement USA who, by teaching the values and skills of entrepreneurship, are preparing students to compete in a rapidly evolving economy.

**Students**

8.1.3. Homeless People

*Help the homeless experience earned success*

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Homeless People**

**Workforce Development Programs:**

Leaders at 30 workforce development programs that help the homeless experience earned success.
8.2. Special Favors

*Eliminate special favors*

Expand the Great Enrichment to all by eliminating special favors for the few — We’re fortunate to be living in the Great Enrichment, the most prosperous period in human history. Starting in the early 1800s, it was built in part on the establishment of equal rights and a recognition that people can work and do business together voluntarily to their mutual benefit... So, what’s happening? Why are so many being left behind? Part of the answer is that public policy barriers have rigged the system in favor of a few, against everyone else. Policies like corporate welfare have created a system in which success for some comes at the expense of others. In a recent six-year period, for example, the federal government doled out $4.4 trillion to just the top 200 U.S. companies, costing roughly $35,000 per household. Our regulatory system has become so burdensome and complex that small businesses report spending more than $80,000 on compliance in their first year of operation—providing a steep advantage to large businesses that can more easily absorb such added costs. Meanwhile, other policies like occupational licenses often stack the deck against the unemployed by requiring them to sometimes pay thousands of dollars and endure hundreds of hours of training to simply enter their chosen profession. We want to ensure more people are able to experience the benefits from the Great Enrichment. We’re working to restore an economic system in which the only way to succeed is by benefiting others. Among other reforms, that means advancing equal rights by eliminating all special government favors—whether they be subsidies, tax credits, or anticompetitive regulations. This country has never lived up fully to this ideal, sometimes falling far short. But to the extent that we have followed these principles, our country has flourished—increasing Americans’ standard of living by as much as 3,000 percent in the last two centuries alone.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Middle-Class Wage Earners:** The pace of progress has stalled for many, with middle-class wages failing to keep up with a booming economy.

**Americans:** Nearly three-in-five people have less than $1,000 in savings, and two-in-five Americans say they would have trouble covering an emergency that cost $400.
9. Tech & Innovation

Empower people through innovation

**Stakeholder(s)**

**Trust Ventures**

Trust Ventures invests in tech companies that are leveraging innovation to address some of our country’s most pressing problems, such as access to health care and affordable housing— all while reforming public policies to create a level playing field for all innovators. For example, one company can 3D-print high-quality, hurricane-proof homes in only 24 hours and at dramatically lower costs than traditional construction.

**Tech Companies**

**Innovators**

**Americans for Prosperity-Tennessee**

Americans for Prosperity-Tennessee helped pass legislation that protects people from lawsuits designed to silence their speech online. This reform—passed with unanimous support—is a blueprint for other states and is critical to ensuring that innovation continues to provide a bigger microphone to every person to express their beliefs online.

**Adam Thierer**

“We stand on the cusp of the next great industrial revolution and developments that could vastly enhance the welfare of people across the planet.” – Adam Thierer, technology scholar

**Mays Innovation Research Center**

Scholars at the Mays Innovation Research Center at Texas A&M University are studying the nature of innovation, from how it advances human potential to the conditions that allow innovation to flourish.

**Good Digital Parenting**

Good Digital Parenting, a project of the Family Online Safety Institute, provides parents and caregivers with the tools they need to confidently navigate the online world with their families.

**Center for Growth and Opportunity**

The Center for Growth and Opportunity at Utah State University is using the cutting-edge techniques of economics to study and develop adaptive and flexible approaches to innovation and entrepreneurship.

**Trust Ventures**

Trust Ventures invests in some of the most innovative startups in the country:

**Veryable**

Veryable is using technology to connect workers with manufacturing job opportunities.

**Visibly**

Visibly is providing affordable and convenient eye care online.

**Sana**

Sana is offering innovative health insurance plans at up to 40% less cost than traditional insurance.

**Pessimists Archive**

Pessimists Archive is sharing the stories of previous generations’ resistance to innovations that are now part of our everyday lives, illustrating that fears are often overblown and such advances in technology enable society to flourish.

**The Last Mile**

Social enterprises such as The Last Mile provide technology training to people in prison to ensure everyone can succeed in the 21st-century economy and no one is left behind by the rapid pace of innovation.

**Workforce Development Programs**

The Stand Together Foundation supports more than two dozen workforce development programs that are helping the unemployed and people whose jobs have been displaced by innovation learn the skills to succeed in new careers.

**Tech Industry Leaders**

Stand Together has outlined five key principles for the tech industry, encouraging leaders to embrace values like openness, free expression and mutual benefit.

**American Tech Companies**

These values drove America to become the global tech leader it is today, and by holding to these values, American tech companies will continue to spur innovation.

**Policymakers**

Americans for Prosperity (AFP) is holding policymakers accountable to ensure antitrust laws are used to protect consumers, rather than being politicized. AFP is also advocating federal legislation that would protect privacy without destroying innovation.

**Civil Society Organizations**

The Stand Together community is partnering with a diverse coalition, including the Center for Democracy and Technology, TechFreedom, more than 50 leading academics, and more than two dozen civil society organizations to support seven principles that will protect free expression online while addressing some of society’s most pressing concerns.

**Center for Democracy and Technology**

TechFreedom

**Fourth Amendment Center**

The National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers’ Fourth Amendment Center is equipping defense lawyers with the tools and litigation assistance necessary to ensure emerging technologies don’t violate constitutional protections.
Empowering all people through innovation — It’s an incredible time to be alive. As new technologies transform the world, innovations that seemed impossible just a decade ago are part of everyday life now. But in this time of disruption, many people are understandably concerned about the challenges that come with such rapid change. Some are calling to block new technologies, impose harmful restrictions on current ones, or otherwise limit the pace of innovation. We seek a better way: a culture and policies that embrace innovation and new ideas while working together to adapt to disruption rather than holding back progress. Let’s ensure the incredible progress today is just the beginning. We embrace innovation and new ideas. We seek to meet the challenge of disruption in a way that empowers all people to experience the benefits in their everyday lives... Bottom line — Technology can improve all of our lives, but it requires a policy environment that allows for experimentation and a culture that embraces innovation.

9.1. Workforce Development

Support local workforce development programs that help people learn the skills for new careers

A culture that welcomes innovation will thrive from innovation. — Life-enhancing innovations can come from anywhere. The first airplane was built in a bicycle shop. Many tech leaders started in garages... Of course, innovations have always come with disruptions. The car replaced the buggy. ATM machines replaced the bank teller. Robots are replacing workers. The list goes on... Throughout history, people have not only adapted to these sorts of disruptions – they’ve thrived. In fact, nearly 70% of people say life is better now than in past generations because of technology and 92% say innovation is a key part of American culture and history. We’re working to ensure people can continue driving innovations that enable human progress – as unimaginable as they might seem today.

Stakeholder(s):

Norman Borlaug:
Norman Borlaug – who’s credited with saving over 1 billion people from starvation – began as a scientist in a small town.

Hospitals:
Now we are on the cusp of innovations that can take our standard of living to a whole new level. For example, an innovative hospital is offering high-quality heart bypass surgery for $2,000, compared with the usual $100,000.

OpenStax:
OpenStax provides college students with free, peer-reviewed digital textbooks – eliminating the barrier of unaffordable textbooks that limit people’s learning.

Workforce Development Programs:
These transitions are never easy for those whose jobs are at stake. It’s why we support more than two dozen local workforce development programs that help people learn the skills for new careers – groups like NPower, which is helping people in underserved communities launch tech careers through free training programs in coding, cloud computing, cyber security, and more.

NPower:
Virginia Postrel:
“The future will be as grand, and as particular, as we are.” –Virginia Postrel, The Future and Its Enemies
9.2. Public Policies

Eliminate unnecessary and counterproductive public policies

Public policy can strengthen—or weaken—America’s leadership in innovation. — America has long led the world in innovation. We’re currently home to 14 of the 20 largest internet companies in the world. There have been four times as many successful tech startups here than the European Union. And the total valuation of tech startups in the U.S. is double that of Chinese firms. This leadership has created millions of American jobs and brought life-enhancing innovations, once reserved for the wealthy, to the masses. However, that leadership is on the decline, due in large part to unnecessary and counterproductive public policies. For starters, many innovators must get permission from the government before they can try something new—or even bring something to the U.S. that’s been developed abroad.

Stakeholder(s):

**Food and Drug Administration**: For example, it took the federal Food and Drug Administration from 2010 to 2014 to approve a treatment for a fatal lung disease—even as it was saving lives in Europe, Canada and Japan. There was no other treatment at the time, and 150,000 patients died during the wait.

**Industries**: In other cases, powerful industries use regulations to shut down competition.

**Medical Profession**: For example, telemedicine—an emerging technology that enables people to receive health care over the internet—has already been proved to lower some costs by as much as 90 percent. Yet in state after state, the hospital and physicians’ lobbies seek to limit their expansion.

**Hospital Lobbyists**

Physicians’ Lobbyists

**Clinton Administration**: Of course, many regulations can play a productive role. But they also stop good things from happening. The approach adopted by the Clinton administration for the internet is a great example of how to strike the right balance. Rather than tightly control what people could do, the government established a legal framework that gave people space to try new things. The result: a renaissance of innovations that benefit every person today—from e-commerce to global communications to ridesharing—and it should be a blueprint for innovation policy elsewhere.

**John Barlow**: “We are creating a world where anyone, anywhere may express his or her beliefs, no matter how singular, without fear of being coerced into silence or conformity.” – John Barlow, A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace

9.3. Safety, Speech & Association

Keep people safe while protecting the freedoms of speech and association

Tech and innovation should be a microphone, not a muzzle. — At no point in human history have more people had more opportunities to express themselves—anyone with a smartphone can instantly reach hundreds or thousands of people on issues that are critically important to them and our country. As our conversations continue to move online, it only makes sense that the legal rights and obligations of traditional speech carry over as well... To be sure, the internet comes with risks and challenges that must be dealt with. And people who commit crimes must be held accountable—whether they’re committed in the digital or physical world. Individuals should be liable for their actions. But keeping people safe and protecting the freedoms of speech and association is not an either/or proposition. We can, and should, have both.

Stakeholder(s):

**Online Service Users**: That’s largely been the case since passage of Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act in 1996. Section 230—a.k.a. the First Amendment of the internet—ensures people are accountable for their actions online.

**Tech Innovators**: It also ensures tech innovators such as Pinterest, Etsy, Yelp and countless others are not required to regulate the speech of the billions of people who use their services.

**Pinterest**

**Etsy**

**Yelp**
Stakeholders (continued)

**Policymakers**: Yet today, some policymakers are trying to change that, seeking reforms that would effectively force innovators to censor speech or face ruinous lawsuits.

**Berin Szoka**: As Berin Szoka, president of TechFreedom, noted, “Section 230 is the law that made today’s Internet possible... Today’s most popular social websites would never have taken off and the internet would look basically like cable. The debate about Section 230 is almost entirely about political posturing rather than ‘fixing’ anything.”
10. Business for Good

*Support the establishment of a system in which businesses only benefit themselves by benefiting others*

**Stakeholder(s)**

**Chris Rufer:**
Chris Rufer is one of hundreds of business and philanthropic leaders who joined the Stand Together community to ensure that the American dream is open to everybody, in part by reducing cronyism and corporate welfare that have sewn distrust toward the role of business.

**UNCF Koch Scholars Program:**
The UNCF Koch Scholars Program helps undergraduates learn the fundamentals of principled entrepreneurship and innovation, equipping these future leaders with the knowledge and skills to succeed by helping others succeed as well.

**Business School Programs:**
Business school programs such as The Ciocca Center for Principled Entrepreneurship in The Busch School at the Catholic University of America and the Center for Growth and Opportunity at Utah State University are just two of the many programs helping future leaders gain the knowledge and values to drive progress in a principled way.

**The Ciocca Center for Principled Entrepreneurship**

**Center for Growth and Opportunity**

**OpenStax:**
Digital, free-of-charge business text books published by OpenStax help millions of students learn the principles of business.

**Knee Center for the Study of Occupational Regulation:**
The Knee Center for the Study of Occupational Regulation at St. Francis University produces research that helps policy makers improve laws and regulations, such as studies that inform occupational licensing reform.

**mikeroweWORKS Foundation:**
The mikeroweWORKS Foundation supports students who find fulfillment in high demand skills-based professions access an education in the skilled trades.

**Social Enterprises:**
Social enterprises such as The Last Mile and Women’s Bean Project to help ensure everybody has the opportunity to succeed in the 21st century economy.

**The Last Mile**

**Women’s Bean Project**

**Coalfield Development**
Coalfield Development is a workforce development program that combines the passion of the nonprofit sector with the efficiency of the for-profit sector to retrain employees in declining industries to revitalize entire communities.

**Trust Ventures**
Pioneering companies and innovative technologies supported by Trust Ventures help new businesses succeed in highly regulated industries.

**MBM® Center**
Business consulting services through the MBM® Center—which is led by a group of retired Koch Industries executives—help business leaders implement the values of principled entrepreneurship in their companies.

**Mercatus Center**
The Mercatus Center at George Mason University is the nation’s leading authority on “permissionless innovation,” producing research that informs public policy reforms that enable businesses to responsibly innovate and advance 21st century technologies.

**Policy Champions**
Support policy champions at all levels of government who will level the playing field by reducing corporate welfare and cronyism.

Business for good: a better bottom line — Businesses can be a force for good when they serve customers, drive life-improving innovations, and enable employees to find fulfillment in their work. Yet that’s often not the case today. Too many of America’s largest companies pursue profit by seeking government favors at everyone else’s expense. We’re working to change that. We want a system in which businesses only benefit by benefiting others first, creating goods and services that people truly value and doing so responsibly and in a way that consumes fewer resources. Such a system also enables employees to live lives of meaning, treating them as unique and creative individuals, not cogs in a machine. That’s a better bottom line for businesses, employees, customers, and society alike. We want a system in which businesses only benefit themselves by benefiting others, creating goods and services that people truly value and doing so responsibly in a way that consumes fewer resources... Bottom Line — Businesses can be a force for good when they serve customers, drive life-improving innovations, and enable employees to find fulfillment in their work. In short, businesses should strive to succeed by helping others succeed. That’s a better bottom line.
10.1. Favors

Eliminate government favors that enable companies to profit at others’ expense

Create value for customers, not special favors from government ... That means reducing all forms of corporate welfare, which pad businesses’ bottom lines by giving tax dollars to well-connected companies. It means reducing unnecessary occupational licensing laws, which protect business profits by charging up to thousands of dollars for a “license” that would-be competitors cannot afford. And it means developing a modern regulatory system that enables technological advances while safeguarding the public interest, compared to the current system that serves to protect large companies that can afford the extraordinary costs. Work should be rewarding, fulfilling, and an opportunity for employees to realize their potential.

Stakeholder(s):

**Wright Brothers:**
History demonstrates breakthrough innovations and progress come when business is rewarded not by carrying favors from government but by innovating new products and services that people value—from the Wright Brothers to Henry Ford to Steve Jobs. We want a system that enables more of these life-enhancing innovations that increase everyone’s standard of living.

**Henry Ford**

**Steve Jobs**

**America’s Largest Companies:**
Unfortunately, our economy is increasingly driven as much by—if not more than—influence rather than innovation. For example, in a recent six-year period, 200 of America’s largest companies received $4.4 trillion in bailouts, subsidies, and other handouts—costing around $35,000 per U.S. household.

**Americans:**
Unsurprisingly, nearly three in five Americans don’t trust business leaders today.

**Business Leaders**

**Businesses:**
We want to reverse this dynamic. We’re working to create a system in which businesses only benefit by benefitting their customers—and society as a whole—first.

**Customers**

**Society**

**Principled Business Leaders:**
It’s why the Stand Together community united principled business leaders, policymakers from both parties, and citizens across the country to eliminate government favors that enable companies to profit at others’ expense.

**Policymakers**

**Citizens**

10.2. Employee Empowerment

Empower employees to lead

Empower employees to lead the 21st century forward — Empowered employees are essential for success in a rapidly changing economy—not only to the benefit of their employers, but also for themselves and their families.

Stakeholder(s):

**Employees**

**Families**

**Gallup:**
Meanwhile, Gallup reports companies with the most engaged employees are more successful on every performance metric—they make firms safer, more profitable, and more innovative.

**Businesses:**
Yet, today many businesses fail to harness their employees’ ingenuity, adopting authoritarian management models with rigid hierarchies. The result is employees who find work mind-numbing, or even soul-crushing.

**David Graeber:**
Gallup estimates 85 percent of employees feel disengaged in their job, while London School of Economics Professor David Graeber observed many feel stuck in “BS jobs” where they don’t see how their work contributes to society.

**Business Community:**
We want to change that. But it cannot be achieved through public policy reforms. There must also be

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cultural change within the business community to empower employees. That’s especially important in a 21st century economy.

McKinsey Global Institute:
McKinsey Global Institute estimates automation could displace 73 million current jobs but create even more new kinds of jobs. Machines will always have the edge with rote work, but people excel at creativity and collaboration. We envision a system that fosters both—where new technologies complement and empower employees.