

NEXT GENERATION



2016

Until economic and social rules work for all, they're not working. Inspired by the legacy of Franklin and Eleanor, the Roosevelt Institute reimagines America as it should be: a place where hard work is rewarded, everyone participates, and everyone enjoys a fair share of our collective prosperity. We believe that when the rules work against this vision, it's our responsibility to recreate them.

We bring together thousands of thinkers and doers—from a new generation of leaders in every state to Nobel laureate economists—working to redefine the rules that guide our social and economic realities. We rethink and reshape everything from local policy to federal legislation, orienting toward a new economic and political system: one built by many for the good of all.



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The rules that guide our generation's social and economic realities are broken.

Yet there has never been so much potential and momentum on the ground to fix them. We believe our generation* has the most to lose or gain in this election, and that we have both the opportunity and the responsibility to rewrite the rules. In a political climate marked by hyperbolic rhetoric from politicians and waning faith that participation matters more than dollars, we need to challenge the failures of our political system and take back the value of our vote. We believe 2016 is a powerful moment to showcase what we can achieve by connecting a generation's issue activism and policy work to the electoral process.

It's time to demonstrate that while we're disenchanted, we're not disengaged.

We're here to hold our officials accountable not to the 24-hour news cycle, but to the public demand for bold problem-solving. Our Next Generation Blueprint for 2016 is a crowdsourced articulation of our vision for change—a vision backed by concrete ideas for how we can tackle the complex and looming challenges we face.

This document is our clarion call—because we believe who rewrites the rules matter.¹

Our elected bodies are older and whiter than we are.² The data shows that less effort is made to reach us as voters, and even when candidates do try to connect, we're only asked for our votes, not our ideas.³ We're active in our communities but sidelined for the decisions that shape them.⁴ This election cycle, we're bringing our opinions and solutions to the table, challenging decision-makers to more effectively engage this generation in America's collective experiment.

WHO REWRITES THE RULES MATTERS.

* We're Millennials (in our 20s and early 30s) and Generation Z (voting for the first time this election). We'll make up 30.5 percent of eligible voters in 2016 and over a third of the workforce.

What will guide our vote?

Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt's greatest achievement was the 20th century social contract: a pledge that government made to citizens, and that citizens made to each other. Jobs, safety and security, and most importantly the opportunity to prosper as an individual and citizen—this was the promise of the Roosevelts' America. **We live in a period of seismic social and economic shifts that have eroded that contract. Our Blueprint draws the line: We cannot abandon the Roosevelts' promise. We must reimagine, for a changing America, the basic building blocks of our economic, civic, and social well-being. We must secure these building blocks to achieve a vision that embraces the human dignity of all.**

We have directly experienced an education system that works for some but not for all. We've pursued the American Dream only to be crushed by student debt. In addition to our own experiences, we've seen our parents and friends struggle with the repercussions of the financial crisis, wage stagnation, and a shifting skills marketplace. We feel as deeply as other generations the reality that the rules of the economy and our democracy aren't working for all of us—and as the most diverse generation in American

**1,000 PEOPLE:
160+ CITIES,
COLLEGES,
UNIVERSITIES.**

history, we witness the racial disparity of wealth distribution in our country. Some of us have been made to fear the very institutions that were designed to protect us.

We understand reimagining and securing the building blocks to be our collective responsibility. That's why a thousand of us came together to provide decision-makers with a vision and action plan for the first 100 days of their terms, emphasizing education, the economy, and human rights as top priorities. We also provide our agenda for tackling climate change, expanding access to our democracy, evolving America's place in the world, and expanding on our recent progress on health care.

This election matters and will reverberate long after our time. It's likely that the next president will shape the Supreme Court for decades to come, creating a body that will either affirm basic human rights and save our democracy or directly undermine both. The next president will determine whether the United States will be a leader on fighting climate change or shirk its responsibilities on the global stage. In our localities and states, our chosen decision-makers will either fight for the fundamentals—access to a quality education and jobs, a guarantee to health care, and trust that everyone, regardless of skin color, can safely walk our streets without fear of violence—or continue to tear apart our country's social and economic fabric.

We believe that an aggressive approach in the first 100 days by local, state, and national decision-makers—modeling the ambition of FDR's administration during an earlier period of great uncertainty and opportunity—would demonstrate that:

We, as a country, are unwilling to succumb to political paralysis, and we believe it is possible to build a better future.

Who are we?

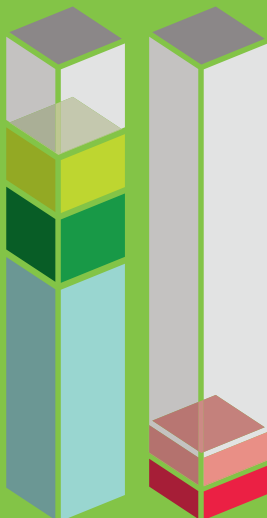
We're members of the Roosevelt Institute, the country's largest network of emerging thinkers and doers—a community that rethinks and reshapes everything from local policy to federal legislation, orienting toward a new economic and political system built by the many for the good of all. Why? Because Rooseveltters believe that until economic and social rules work for all, they're not working. Rooseveltters are active voters in local and national elections; **93 percent of us voted or participated in the last election and plan to vote in the next one.** We are student leaders on campus, advocates in our communities, and emerging political and civic leaders. We are Latino/a, Black, white, Asian and Pacific Islander, and more. We are male, female, and gender non-conforming. We come from more than 160 colleges and universities, represent different cultural and geographical regions, and reflect a wide range of economic backgrounds. While it is impossible for any single group to represent an entire generation, we do represent a critical slice of the politically engaged and informed young people who mobilize and activate in our communities. And we're taking responsibility for our country's future.

We also recognize that our future is dependent on changing who gets to write the rules. Our solutions, people-powered campaigns, and steps forward will face opposition as long as money matters more than votes and the system is more responsive to those who can pay to play.⁵ **We ask our decision-makers and peers: In the face of powerful lobbyists, entrenched interests, and a moribund political system, will you stand with us?**

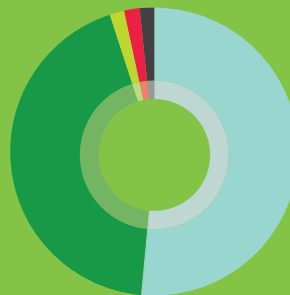
Breakdown of Rooseveltters

Voting

- 49%** Yes, every chance I get.
- 20%** Yes, in national elections.
- 16%** Yes, in most local elections
- 8%** No, I can't!
- 7%** No.

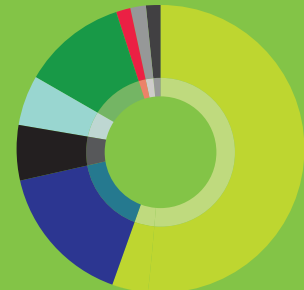


Gender



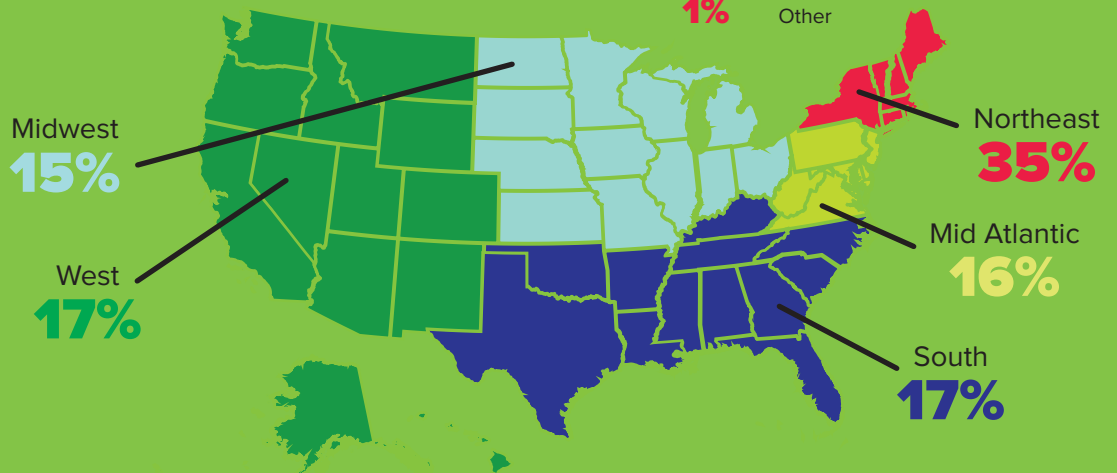
- 51%** Female
- 46%** Male
- 1%** Trans
- 1%** Prefer Not to Answer
- 1%** Other

Race



- 56%** White / Caucasian
- 13%** Asian / Pacific Islander
- 12%** Multiple Answers
- 8%** Black / African Descent
- 7%** Hispanic / Latino
- 2%** Prefer Not to Answer
- 1%** Middle Eastern
- 1%** Other

Regions



In a survey conducted by Fusion, 77 percent of 18–34-year-olds said they were “absolutely certain” or “very likely” to vote in the 2016 election.

Our generation's voice matters.

OUR COHORT

Our generation has reshaped and transformed not just what America looks like, but also the way we consume,

socialize, and work. Yet we are stereotyped as narcissistic, technology-obsessed, and politically correct to a fault. These narratives reflect neither the reality of our generation nor the genuine insights, commitments, and experiences that we share. Most importantly, they ignore a critical perspective: our own. Now, it's time for our generation to take up the responsibility of reshaping our politics.

IS A FORCE

Our cohort is a force to be reckoned with in both the cultural debate and the voting booth. In the 2016 elections, Millennials and Generation Z will be 36 percent of the voting electorate at 86 million strong. A number of the major movements of the last eight years have been led by people under 35, including the Dreamers, Title IX activism, the Movement for Black Lives, and Occupy. And Generation Z will visit

TO BE

the voting booth for the first time in 2016, having become politically aware in a post-financial crisis world in which our institutions have betrayed public trust and gotten away with it.

Efforts to engage us and reach us have fallen woefully short.

We won't respond to tokenization, but will seek authenticity. We also recognize our own responsibility in an age of deep-seated anxiety about the future. We are under no illusion that who represents us doesn't matter. We know what's at stake.

RECKONED WITH.

WHAT WAS UNEXPECTED?



80%

of respondents said a fair and inclusive process was important to achieve change in 2016—in comparison to 20 percent who prioritized seeing their candidate win.



64%

of respondents identified the outsized influence of money in politics as very important. Of all the issues, this priority had the greatest consensus.

Methodology

STEP 1 (Early Fall 2015)

Roosevelt staff worked with Roosevelters (our architects) to build a survey that challenged our cohort to articulate our priorities and identify solutions for 2016 in seven key areas: education, economy, civil rights (which became human rights), health care, energy and environment, democratic access, and foreign policy. The survey asked members to identify both what they saw as (1) most important and (2) most practical in the context of the 2016 elections. What they identified as most important shaped the vision for each section, while what was most practical shaped the policies for the first 100 days.

STEP 2 (Mid-Fall 2015)

Surveys are effective but insufficient tools. We recruited advocates to ensure a diversity of participants across race, gender, immigration status, economic backgrounds, geographies, and other. We reached 1,000 participants who roughly reflect the demographic breakdown in higher education. We then convened more than 20 partner groups to present our initial results and seek their input on our developing argument.

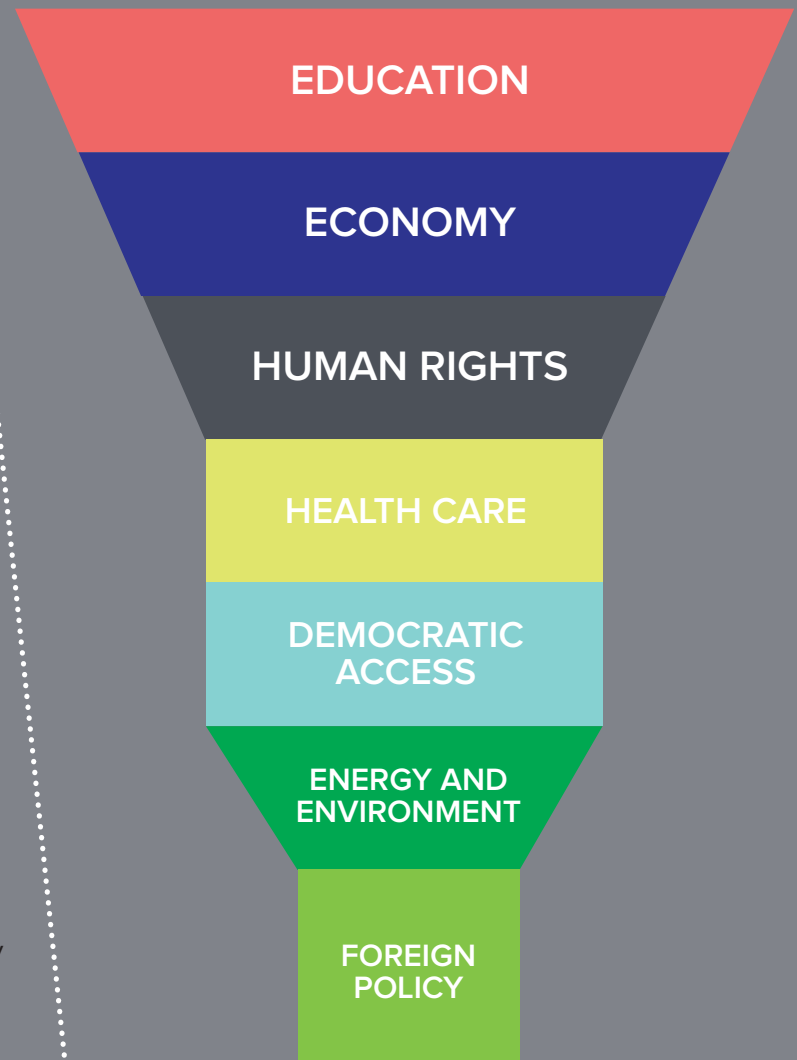
STEP 3 (Late Fall 2015)

The survey results came in with three clear breakaway priorities: education, the economy, and human rights. We convened working groups of 8–10 members. The working groups interpreted and translated the survey data based on pre-work, two calls (one with an outside expert) and individual follow up. For the other four issue areas, we engaged member experts in a one-on-one format and drew more heavily from the survey for the content.

STEP 4 (Early Winter 2015)

We reached out to more than 50 members, experts, and partners to review parts or the entirety of the document. We pulled on the crowdsourced feedback to tighten our argument, push some boundaries, and affirm that this document reflected our members and their priorities.

Our Priorities



A weighted ranking of priorities based on what respondents believe is most urgent.

OUR VISION FOR 2016 AND BEYOND

To envision and act on a new social contract grounded in human dignity, we've articulated the big picture—what our decision makers, the country, and we should be aiming for in the long run. For our priorities—education, the economy, and human rights—we then provide specific, actionable policies across the local and federal spectrum to urge our decision-makers to act in the first 100 days of their terms. The solutions we've articulated are based on what our membership identified as most practical. It is not comprehensive, and we know a list of policies is not enough to overcome our greatest challenges. However, we do believe that we have to start somewhere—and this is where **we believe political opportunity, issue activism, and real solutions meet to move us forward.**

PRIORITIES FOR 2016

EDUCATION



America's public education system has long touted the promise of civic and economic opportunity. It is an institution that is meant to provide every individual, no matter their background or means, the knowledge and skills they need to make their way in the world.

But that just isn't the case. Despite the immense talent and energy of practitioners, public intellectuals, administrators, teachers, and students in the classroom, our education system is falling behind globally. Every dollar we misdirect or disinvest from our education system fails another student by stretching already insufficient resources. Every teacher who leaves the classroom because of insufficient support is lost

expertise and talent we desperately need to release the creativity and genius of the next generation.

We can do better. As young people, we are current or recent participants in the education system and are intimately familiar with its strengths and weaknesses. While the education debate is deeply divided, there is real potential to find a way forward if we think and act generationally on the core challenges.

We believe in:

- Education as a tool for individuals to realize their full potential as civic, social, and economic actors
- Education as foundational to economic and social mobility
- Education that is both accessible and equitable in outcomes
- Education that identifies racial, residential, and economic inequalities and strives to address them



In the long run, Rooseveltians believe all of this is achievable by overhauling how we fund pre-K through graduate education (28 percent), significantly decreasing the burden of student debt (24 percent), and leveling the higher education playing field in a world where a high school degree no longer guarantees a stable income and benefits (20 percent). Our members were clear: We need to reimagine our education system beyond the current options, with a focus on investing in and supporting the teaching profession, ensuring students are prepared and equipped with the skills they need for a changing economy, and providing wraparound services to build a system that truly catalyzes economic and social mobility.

Rooseveltians firmly believe the best possible education system is a robust public one equipped with resources, support, and the ability to meet the distinct needs of its students. What works in schools needs to be scaled and adapted across the system, not in a few handpicked schools. We envision an education system that is flexible

enough to iterate, innovate, and directly confront inequality. These are bold moves, and we need to lay the groundwork for them now to see results for future generations.

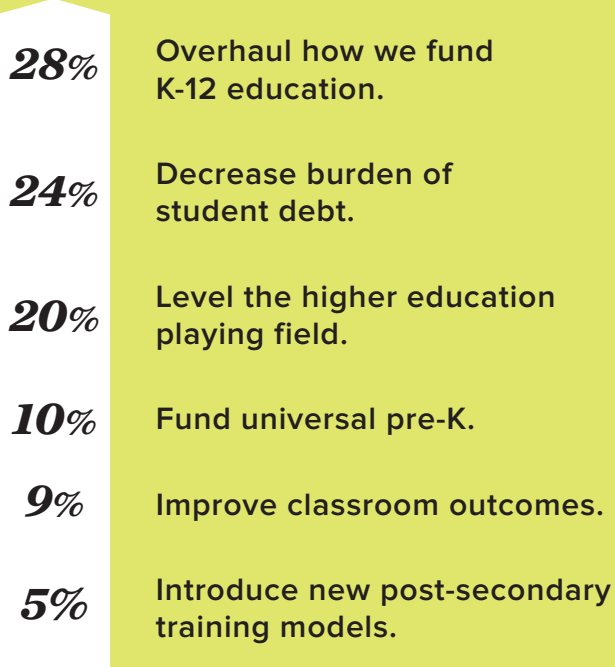
Because our current school finance system is based primarily on local property taxes, we need to rethink our funding methods so that they address rather than exacerbate disparities between high- and low-income communities. We recognize that the ability to replicate successes comes down to funding, and we call on the government to be the steward of the common good by finding ways to keep access to these important educational programs open to all.

We also cannot allow the deeply entrenched, moneyed interests currently shaping our education debate to keep us from making changes.

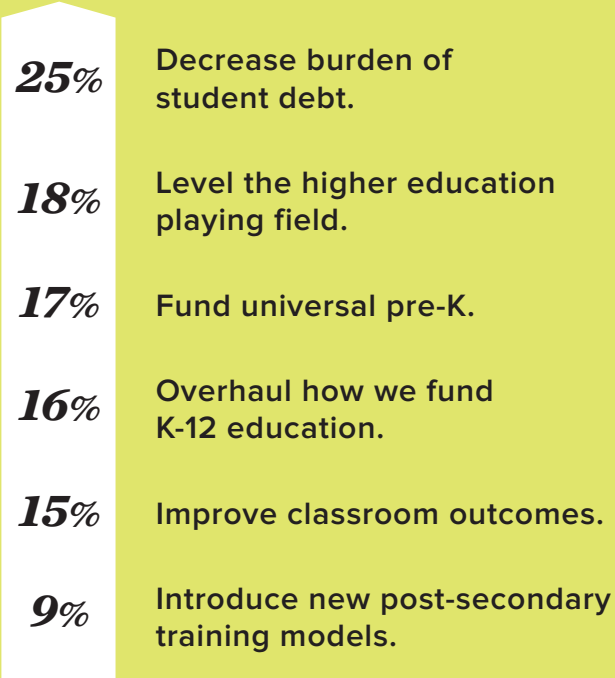
In the first 100 days of the 2017 term, we challenge our elected officials to:

The Results

WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT?



WHAT'S PRACTICAL?



Results shown represent only the top issues polled.

Expand universal pre-K by:

- Increasing federal programs that provide matching or supplemental funds to states that are investing in pre-K. In its first two years alone, the preschool development grants program, currently in 18 states, expects to create 40,216 new pre-K slots and improve an additional 30,844.⁶
- Expanding neighborhood-based pre-K funding to be universally available in high-poverty communities. While low-income children benefit most from universal pre-K, children from all backgrounds benefit from high-quality pre-K programs.⁷
- Partnering with living wage campaigns to focus on pre-K teachers who, despite having four-year degrees, are often making close to or slightly above minimum wage.⁸

End the school-to-prison pipeline by:

- Overhauling the use of school resource officers (SROs) and law enforcement in schools, especially in inner city/urban schools. Deploying law enforcement in schools has coincided with increased referrals to the justice system, disruption of the educational system, and long-term harm to youth.⁹
- Expanding the use of restorative disciplinary policies that foster better learning environments, such as decreasing the use of suspension (especially for non-violent offenses) at the local level.¹⁰ At the federal level, the Department of Education has already released extensive policy recommendations on curbing the use of suspensions and zero-tolerance policies that have demonstrably poor educational, fiscal, and juvenile justice outcomes.¹¹
- Investing in curriculum content that is more experiential and relevant to the current economy. While experiential learning and content fosters better student outcomes across the board, it is especially effective for minority students and students entering non-traditional occupations.¹²

Decrease the burden of student debt by:

- Removing the poorly defined legal standard of “undue hardship” and allowing students to declare bankruptcy would make it possible to discharge loans in the most hopeless of financial circumstances. Such a policy would cost the government only \$3 billion, or 3 percent of total loans dispensed by the government each year.¹³

- Introducing across-the-board income-based repayment options that would permit debtors to cap their monthly contributions. Such policies, supplemented by “promise plans” that incentivize people to stay in an area after graduation or work within a certain industry, would decrease or eliminate the cost of college, boost local economic development, and help create a college-going culture.
- Establishing free community college built around a state and federal partnership—including a federal match of \$3 for every \$1 invested by the state to waive community college tuition and fees for eligible students before other financial aid is applied. Through this plan, an estimated 9 million students could save an average of \$3,800 in tuition annually.¹⁴

There is an opportunity to lead at all levels of government, from established U.S. Senators to newly minted state legislators.

Despite the challenges, there is reason for optimism: We could be graduating future Neil deGrasse Tysons, Amelia Earharts, and John Lewises. Imagine the future of this country if we can educate,

empower, and advance a greater number of future programmers, teachers, astronauts, and civic leaders from all communities?

“We can’t ignore poverty in education; it’s just the reality in this country that some will enter the system with the resources and support they need to succeed and some won’t. So what do we do about that? We need a moral reckoning that calls communities to recognize our responsibility isn’t just a test score, but the well-being of our most precious resource, our human capital.”

– Roosevelt in the Education Working Group

“I think education can open many doors to opportunity and I’m afraid it is not seen as a priority anymore. School is becoming an endeavor only available to those with money. Making education affordable is definitely near the top of the list.”

– Roosevelt in the Education Working Group

“I believe that access to higher education is vital. Our nation will not be able to continue to change the world if we fail to have educated individuals leading the way. Making higher education affordable should be a priority. Public universities should be tuition free, much like our counterparts in Europe.”

– Roosevelt in the Education Working Group



ROOSEVELT @ CITY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK

Changing education outcomes can start with thoughtful curriculum changes. At City College of New York, a Roosevelter is working to pilot a dual language immersion (DLI) program in New York City as a precursor to legislation that would support DLI programs in elementary schools state-wide. DLI programs have been touted for their successes in helping students of all backgrounds achieve higher levels in tested subject matter across the board, as well as equipping students to interact comfortably in two languages. He models his policy on Utah legislation that established similar statewide programs.



PRIORITIES FOR 2016

ECONOMY



The American economy suffers from high inequality and low mobility, stagnant wages divorced from increased productivity, a distorted tax code, and rising health care and education costs. Our ability to identify and act on real solutions is hampered by political and racial polarization and deep uncertainty surrounding the future of the economy and the social contract.

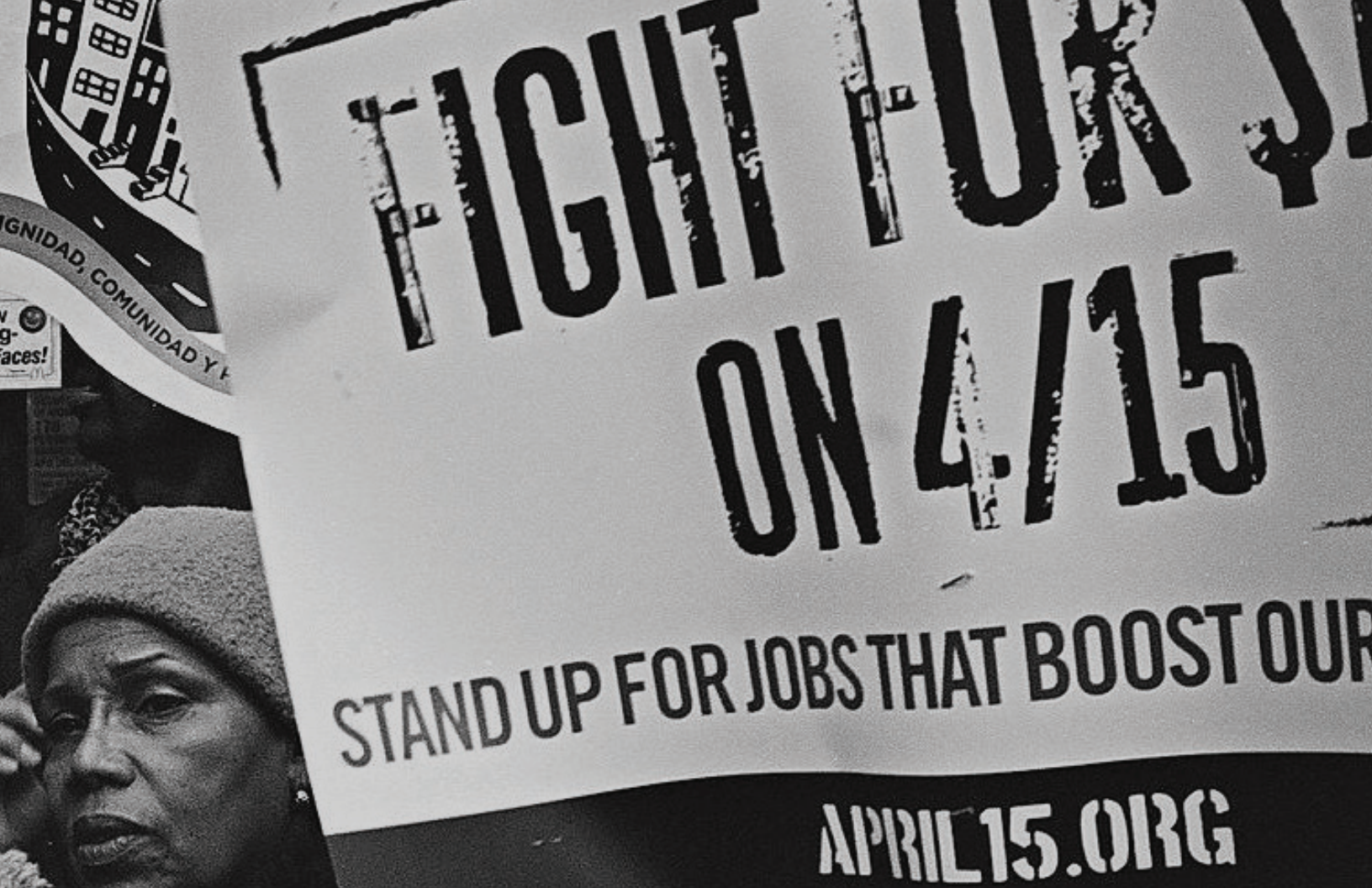
Despite these hurdles, Rooseveltians see opportunities for economic growth and potential in the incredible

set of skills possessed by young people entering the workforce. But our economy will be shaped by the rules that govern it. Our generation has the opportunity to be a powerful voice in rewriting those rules for the 21st century, and we have much at stake as we grapple with crippling student debt and lower net wealth than previous generations.

We believe in:

- An economy that works for all Americans, providing full employment and dignity for every citizen
- An economy guided by rules written by the many rather than the few
- An economy that furthers global collective prosperity
- An economy that takes responsibility for the realities of climate change and takes advantage of the opportunity it provides to develop new sectors

To achieve this vision of a 21st century economy,



Rooseveltians believe we should reform the tax code by closing corporate loopholes and taxing unearned income (25 percent), focus on building strong, local economies that create vibrant communities (14 percent), and rebalance the economy by countering the undue influence of the financial sector and short-term incentives (14 percent). Recognizing existing racial and gender disparities and how discrimination past and present has affected access to the economy will bring us closer to the most Rooseveltian of values: judging our country by how we treat those that have the least.

In a period of change and narrowed horizons, it is necessary to reaffirm our commitment to a robust social safety net; a balance of power between workers, corporate shareholders, and executives; and jobs that provide dignity. We believe that we cannot disaggregate the crippling effects of inequality from challenges to civic life, education, climate, and justice—and that, in order to build vibrant communities, we must understand and address the fact that the economic

situation one is born into is the strongest indicator of one's future success. We also recognize that the power in the employee–employer relationship has shifted, and that it will take the ingenuity and creative problem-solving of our generation to help unions evolve for a new economy.

Rooseveltians envision an economy that invests in and rewards those who build rather than those who collect rents; that incentivizes thoughtful long-term investment over short-term profit; that innovates to seize the opportunities of our era while still providing basic economic security. Importantly, we must also prioritize and expand economic growth that promotes a sustainable future.

The urgency of the economic realities facing young Americans means we must take action now as we build toward bolder choices in the future. ***In the first 100 days of the 2017 term, we challenge our elected officials to:***

The Results

WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT?

- 25%** Reform the tax code.
- 14%** Build strong, local economies.
- 14%** Counter undue influence of financial sector.
- 13%** Eradicate child poverty.
- 12%** Build worker power and improve working conditions.
- 9%** Prepare workers for the new economy.

WHAT'S PRACTICAL?

- 16%** Reform the tax code.
- 14%** Build strong, local economies.
- 14%** Build worker power and improve working conditions.
- 13%** Institutionalize family-friendly policies.
- 13%** Prepare workers for the new economy.
- 9%** Expand investment in innovation and technology.

Take initial steps to reform the tax code to ease the burden on low- and middle-income earners by:

- Utilizing the tax system to reduce actions that are overly risky by passing a financial transactions tax (FTT) and creating a Financial Infrastructure Exchange.¹⁵ This would limit some of the worst market distortions created by rapid trading and realign incentives away from short-termism.^{16,17}
- Passing a carbon tax to create a cleaner, more efficient economy. Putting a price on carbon would lower future emissions, though the amount would depend on the level of the tax and how quickly it rose over time.^{18,19}
- Increasing the minimum wage, which would not only raise wages at the bottom but improve labor's share of the economy in general.²⁰
- Closing domestic tax loopholes with an eye to eliminating laws that benefit corporations' bottom line and reduce U.S. tax revenues. This would include adjusting international tax rates for corporations, taxing them based on where they actually draw resources and do business, not where their corporate headquarters are located.

Incentivize local investment in disadvantaged communities by:

- Incentivizing local and state governments to set benchmarks for engagement with women- and minority-owned business enterprises (WBEs and MBEs). Nationally, more than 50 percent of businesses are women- or minority-owned, but only 7 percent of the overall market share goes to those businesses.²¹
- Introducing a jobs program to undo the well-documented disinvestment from struggling communities and address the systemic racial and economic injustices that pervade them.²²
- Investing in affordable housing, transportation, and energy and Internet infrastructure to make sure that every worker has access to the jobs being produced by the new economy.
- Expanding free community college and trade school programs to help workers evolve with a rapidly changing job market—allowing them to earn a credential, acquire a skill, go into the labor market, and return to school if they can't find a job in their chosen field.

Rebalance the relationship between labor and corporate by:

- Strengthening the existing safety net. Food stamps, the Earned Income Tax Credit, Social Security, Medicaid, and other systems provide security for all Americans and create a much-needed demand boost in our middle-out economy.²³
- Building a portable vehicle for worker protections and benefits that are not connected to a particular employer. ²⁴ The Freelancers Union is leading the charge on experimenting with a new system to build worker power even as the definition of “worker” changes.²⁵
- Closing the CEO performance pay loophole, which incentivizes risky decisions, fraud, and diminished investment. A change in how and how much CEOs are paid would encourage companies to reinvest in the wellbeing of workers and in their own long-term stability.²⁶
- Incentivizing policies that support worker-owned businesses. New York City has recently spent \$1.2 million to incentivize the creation and support of these businesses, with positive results.²⁷

The story of the American economy is a complex one, embodying the extremes in its world-changing innovations and back-breaking inequality. The evolution of the “gig” economy, the impact of technology, and the rise of developing nations are only a few of the changes that invite us to demonstrate that we can drive sustainable growth, innovate, and lead while putting rules in place to ensure we leave no one behind. History and economics have taught us time and time again that broad-based opportunity is not only ethically desirable but critical for robust economic growth—as opposed to the persistently weak consumer demand, rising household debt, and financial sector hypertrophy that we have seen in recent decades.

“Income inequality and money in politics. Two sides of the same coin. Overturn Citizens United, higher taxes on the wealthy specially for short term gains, higher minimum wage, strong unions, less dependency on prisons in justice system.”

– Roosevelt in the Economy Working Group

“Inequality is not inevitable: it is a choice we make with the rules we create to structure our economy.”

– *Rewriting the Rules of the American Economy*



ROOSEVELT @ UMICH & MICHIGAN STATE



Rooseveltters in Michigan have been grappling with how to close the inequality gap. Our Roosevelt @ University of Michigan chapter has been working on redirecting a larger portion of their school’s procurement to WBEs and MBEs. Nationally, WBEs and MBEs comprise 50 percent of all U.S. firms but receive only 7.3 percent of business transactions. Addressing that disparity would be a major first step toward closing the wealth gap for women and minorities, and students are working to provide support through a mentorship program and annual business fair to bring in diverse local businesses.

Meanwhile, a Rooseveltter and graduate of Michigan State has continued an undergraduate project examining the capacity of Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) to guarantee communities a return on investment before they approve a private construction project. These are agreements between the developer and the community (in the form of either a coalition of citizens groups or the local government) in which the developer promises to provide certain assets and/or observe certain practices to benefit the local community. These benefits are often related to hiring practices: setting aside jobs for members of the immediate community, paying workers a living wage, or ensuring that a certain percentage of workers are minorities. But this framework can be applied to environmental, education, housing, and transit concerns as well. Michigan introduced a bill in 2014 that would ban CBAs, which Rooseveltters are working to prevent from becoming law.





PRIORITIES FOR 2016

HUMAN RIGHTS

We want to recreate our political and legal systems to serve the interests of our communities. This includes a legal system that actively works to rehabilitate instead of punish and an education and political system that cultivates the potential of every child. We believe in a system that recognizes the difference between achieving equality and equity of opportunity and aims for the latter—across race, ability, class, gender, and sexual identity.

It is, undoubtedly, a seminal moment in our country's ongoing struggle for justice and civil rights. As movements for immigrant justice, and women rights, and Black lives gain traction, push boundaries, and change the national conversation, we can position ourselves as a nation capable of achieving the vision of equality and justice for all.

While a significant cultural shift will require efforts that go beyond our political system, we can rewrite the rules to correct injustices that primarily affect low-income communities and Black and brown people. These include extreme levels of incarceration, police brutality, identity-based discrimination in health care and the workplace, and the other unacceptable conditions forced upon too many Americans. As the energy in the streets translates into the potential to change the rules, Rooseveltians believe there is an opening for America to evolve into a beacon of fairness, justice, and opportunity.



We believe in:

- A country that holds itself accountable for the racial injustice and prejudice that fostered its economic prosperity throughout its history and seeks to build an equitable future
- A country that values rehabilitation and opportunity over incarceration
- A country that celebrates its identity as an immigrant nation and invests in new immigrants as a source of civic, cultural, and economic strength
- A country where every individual is treated equitably in our civil and legal systems

To achieve true racial and economic justice, Rooseveltians believe we should reform the justice system (34 percent), alleviate the system's undue burden on those in poverty (23 percent), and overhaul the immigration system (13 percent). In short, our political and legal systems need to come to terms with

the changing face and values of our citizenry. As we become an ever-more-diverse country, it's critical that we recognize that America's future prosperity and strength is inextricably linked to the realization of a just system—and, ultimately, to the end of criminalization and the rise of safe communities with access to housing, rehabilitation, and mental health services.

The movement moment provides our policymakers and decision-makers with an opportunity to lead.

In the first 100 days of the 2017 term, we challenge our elected officials to:

Why do we say human rights instead of civil rights? What's at stake is not just about full participation in our democratic and legal systems, but human dignity.

The Results

WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT?

- 34%** Reform the justice system.
- 23%** Alleviate the justice system's burden on low-income individuals.
- 13%** Reform the immigration system.
- 13%** Increase police accountability.
- 8%** Pathways for felon reintegration.
- 4%** Secure reproductive rights.

WHAT'S PRACTICAL?

- 25%** Increase police accountability.
- 24%** Reform the justice system.
- 13%** Alleviate the justice system's burden on low-income individuals.
- 11%** Pathways for felon reintegration.
- 11%** Reform the immigration system.
- 9%** Secure reproductive rights.

Address the link between criminalization and poverty by:

- Curbing the destructive costs of skyrocketing court and bail fees, which can add up to thousands of dollars.²⁸
- Ending fines for municipal violations and the undue financial burden imposed on those too poor to pay them. These penalties may boost government coffers but also trap Americans in debt.²⁹
- Creating alternative oversight structures that hold police accountable, such as community oversight commissions.
- Banning the use of grand juries in the case of extreme or deadly force used by police. California has taken this step with Assembly Bill 227, signed into law in 2015.³⁰
- Ending workplace discrimination against individuals with past convictions by removing from hiring applications any reference to past criminal history.³¹

Reform the justice system by:

- Creating more robust and prevalent alternatives to incarceration, including rehabilitation programs and paid community work programs. The U.S. spends \$52 billion on incarceration annually without having a major impact on crime reduction.³²
- Reallocating funding to build community-based mental health services as an alternative to incarceration, and encouraging the use of pre-trial diversion programs that can serve as important screening points for people who have been arrested for reasons directly linked to their mental health issues.³³ Of the 2 million people currently incarcerated in the criminal justice system, an estimated 500,000 are mentally ill.³⁴
- Improving the pay of public defenders. This will reduce system costs by lowering the number of wrongly incarcerated Americans and slowing the high turnover costs of recruiting and training new public defenders.³⁵

Build our future prosperity based on human dignity by:

- Implementing comprehensive immigration reform with a fair pathway to citizenship and immigration enforcement that is sensitive to the needs of

families.³⁶

- Enforcing and expanding workplace anti-discrimination laws to ensure that all Americans can safely make a living, no matter their ability or gender, sexual, or racial identity. In 28 states, for example, it is legal to fire a worker based on sexual or gender identity.³⁷
- Beginning to close the racial wealth gap by widening access to higher-valued homes for people of color with a first-time homeowner tax credit. Blacks and Latinos tend to own homes—the most common form of wealth for Americans—of far lesser value than whites.³⁸

“I think that focusing on holding police accountable doesn’t really get at the core. What we’re really asking for is a reduction in the mass criminality of Black and brown bodies.”

– *Roosevelter in the Human Rights Working Group*

America has been built on an unfulfilled promise. As the most diverse generation, we can tilt the scales to build a political, legal, and social system that recognizes all as equals while adjusting for real barriers that hold some communities back. We can achieve that promise and ensure it is solidly in place for future generations.



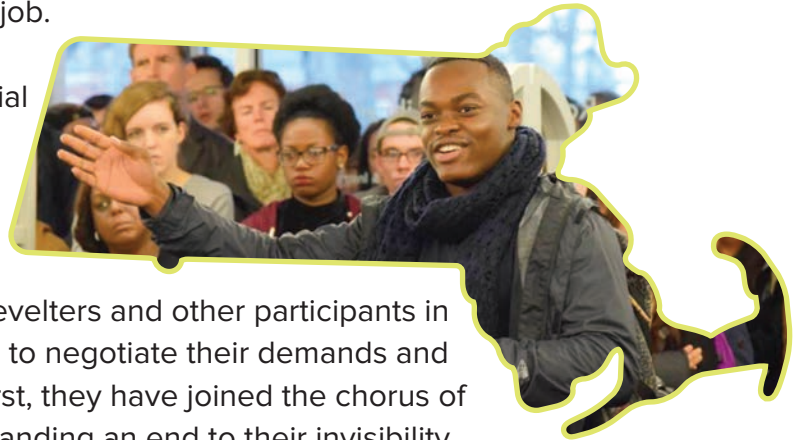
ROOSEVELT @ AMHERST & MOUNT HOLYOKE



Students and alumni in Massachusetts’s Pioneer Valley have been tackling human rights from very different perspectives. A Roosevelter who graduated from Mount Holyoke in 2015 developed a plan to adjust the bond process for the more than six out of 10 prisoners awaiting trials across the United States.³⁹ Pretrial incarceration costs U.S. taxpayers \$9 billion annually.⁴⁰ Massachusetts is one of many states across the country in which the bail system is not determined by the risk of the defendant’s release and depends instead on who can pay the price of their freedom. The Roosevelter is working to make pretrial detainees of low and medium risk enroll in an electronic monitoring program (EMP) and a social services unit while awaiting trial rather than stay behind bars due to the crippling cost of bail. For many of these defendants, making bail can be the difference between keeping and losing a job.

Meanwhile, increasing frustration with racial injustice led to the birth of the Amherst Uprising movement. An initial sit-in led to a widely recognized set of demands for Amherst College’s administration and

Amherst President Bidy Martin. As Roosevelters and other participants in the Amherst Uprising movement continue to negotiate their demands and the broader call for racial justice at Amherst, they have joined the chorus of voices of color on college campuses demanding an end to their invisibility.



OUR VISION FOR 2016 AND BEYOND

The political reality we face is that no single candidate—no matter the public mandate—is likely to achieve all of the changes we need, but we've highlighted where we believe current and incoming decision-makers at the local, state, and national level can focus in their first 100 days. While the priorities are the basic building blocks of economic, civic, and social well-being, we must also remain committed to progress on health care, climate change, democratic access, and evolving America's role in the world. Below, we sketch out our priorities on these other critical issues with an eye toward how they underpin our top priorities on the economy, education, and human rights. We need a healthy population to be able to work, a robust democracy to fix our education system, and international allies to help in the fight against global climate change. All of these challenges are interconnected, and movement on all fronts is required over the long term.

PRIORITIES FOR 2016

HEALTH CARE

The United States is a global leader in cutting-edge clinical practice, biomedical research, and health care technology—yet it is nowhere to be found among those nations leading the world in life expectancy. The whole of America's health system is less than the sum of its parts. Access to quality, affordable health care is a necessity for every American, and delivering it will require every level of government to work together.

The passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010 has laid a foundation for wholesale health reform and has seen millions more Americans join the rolls of the insured. Rooseveltors believe in continuing this positive momentum by addressing the next frontiers in

health reform: equity, transparency, affordability, and coordination.

To work toward this vision over the long term, Rooseveltors believe we must focus on reducing health care costs (34 percent), prioritize preventative care and general public health (33 percent), and focus on mental health care accessibility (8 percent). In the short term, we should focus our efforts on the same set of issues, though our survey indicates that preventative care and long-term health is viewed as more practical and achievable now (26 percent), and that a focus on food insecurity (16 percent) would close important gaps. In perusing these goals, it is important to start with equity. The most prominent features of America's health care woes have been cost, quality, and access, all of which determine health outcomes for too many Americans.⁴¹ The ACA marked an important milestone in achieving a more equitable health care system in this country: Costs are rising less rapidly, and more radical, state-based reforms are gaining momentum. But the ACA is just the first step. There is still significant room to innovate within our health care system. We must build more robust public health systems, bring in new accountability mechanisms, support emerging technologies, and ensure that hospitals are both funded and accessible.

There are still major inequalities left to address: Many Americans remain uninsured, including those who cannot afford their premiums because government subsidies don't close the gap and immigrants who are not even eligible for coverage under the new law; inequalities in health outcomes persist along racial lines; and true health equity includes a focus on women's reproductive health. We also know that it's possible to keep life-saving drugs affordable, that money invested in preventing disease is more cost effective than money spent to cure it, and that the cost of a medical procedure should not vary by tens of thousands of dollars depending on where the patient lives.

We believe in:

- A system that provides access to quality and affordable health care is a right and precondition for all other freedoms
- A system comprised of core institutions designed to safeguard our health—hospitals, payer groups, research institutions—can and must keep costs reasonable, quality high, and access equitable
- A system that innovates and evolves to meet stimulate the economy, prepares for future crises, and meets the public health needs of its citizens



ROOSEVELT @ U OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAPEL HILL

At University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, Rooseveltters are leading an effort to create a comprehensive toolkit for local pediatricians to connect their low-income and at-risk clients to service providers. Working with the North Carolina Pediatric Society, they are placing their toolkit in the hands of physicians and working toward a toolkit for each county in the state.



The Results

WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT?

34%

Reduce health care costs.

33%

Prioritize preventative care.

8%

Increase mental health services.

8%

Eliminate food insecurity.

6%

Advance reproductive justice.

3%

Invest in disease and biomedical research.

WHAT'S PRACTICAL?

26%

Prioritize preventative care.

21%

Reduce health care costs.

16%

Eliminate food insecurity.

8%

Advance reproductive justice.

8%

Invest in disease and biomedical research.

7%

Increase mental health services.

Results shown represent only the top issues polled.

PRIORITIES FOR 2016

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Climate change is happening here and now. We need a new generation of scientists, engineers, policymakers, and thinkers to develop the solutions that will deliver clean energy, preserve biodiversity, provide clean water, and ultimately protect the earth and humanity. How we define the scope of energy and environmental issues is an economic and moral question: The future of the energy sector has the potential to transform our economy, yet also risks leaving behind low-income communities as the frontline victims of climate change.

Roosevelters believe we must focus on international climate change negotiations (21 percent), investment in energy innovation (17 percent) and new energy technologies, and focus on a just transition to a clean energy future (17 percent) that gives people control over their own energy production regardless of class, creed, or color. We believe the same holds true in the short term, though our survey indicates that investing in energy deployment (14 percent) is perceived as a more practical and achievable goal than moving the international community to address climate change

(12 percent) or overseeing a just energy transition (6 percent).

Roosevelters have grown up in an era in which the scope of climate concerns is global. We know that addressing the problems will require international cooperation. We've also seen the global community attempt the scale of action that would be needed, most recently with COP21, and know that such progress is possible, if not probable.

The people most effected by environmental concerns are the often the least likely to be at the table.

We believe in:

- Supporting a system of global governance that takes on the mandate of solving for climate change
- Investing in renewable energies as a smart economic and moral choice
- Prioritizing solutions and actions that protect vulnerable frontline communities

“If we don't address that problem, there will be no space for us to discuss issues like employment, healthcare, reproductive rights, etc. We start by imposing a carbon tax, an arduous one that can seriously cause American businesses harm if they don't start reducing emissions.”

– Roosevelter

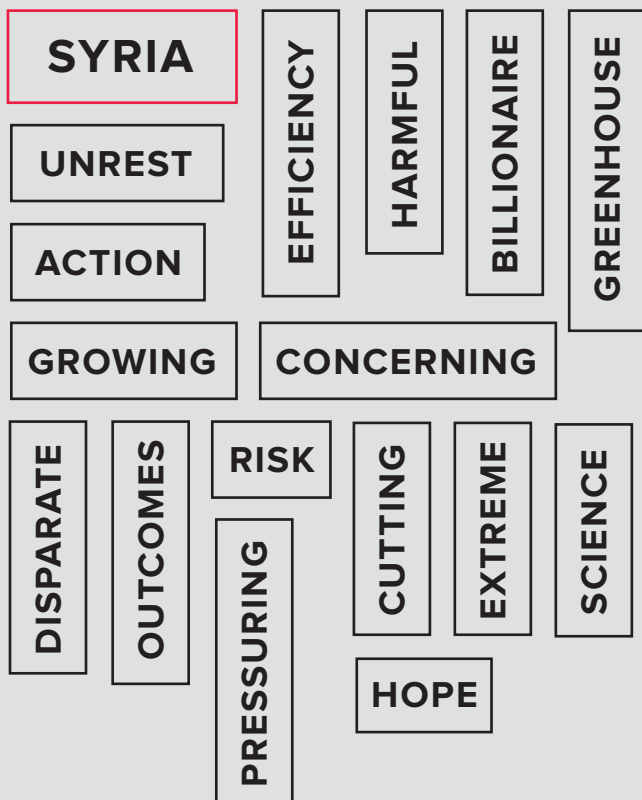
“The amount and diversity of fuel we’re consuming is staggering—and we have no idea what permanent damage we are causing to the planet, the only home we’ve got. I think we need to invest in energy innovations and implement energy conservation policies.”

– Roosevelt

While energy and environment was emphasized less as an issue bucket, climate change showed up in the open-ended responses across the survey. So we asked:

WHAT DO YOU ASSOCIATE WITH THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE?

CLIMATE



The Results

WHAT’S MOST IMPORTANT?

21%

Focus on international climate negotiations.

17%

Invest in energy innovations.

17%

Democratize to achieve a just energy future.

17%

Limit domestic greenhouse gases.

8%

Innovate energy deployment.

8%

Regulate energy extraction.

WHAT’S PRACTICAL?

21%

Invest in energy innovations.

15%

Limit domestic greenhouse gases.

14%

Innovate energy deployment.

12%

Focus on international climate negotiations.

9%

Invest in public transportation.

8%

Regulate energy extraction.

Results shown represent only the top issues polled.

PRIORITIES FOR 2016

DEMOCRATIC ACCESS

***It matters who rewrites the rules.** We must remove barriers to participation and challenge current and future decision-makers to more effectively engage our generation. Across the board, Rooseveltors are clear: In the long term, our future depends on tackling money in politics head on. In the short term, we believe there is immense potential in focusing our energy on improving the voting system.*

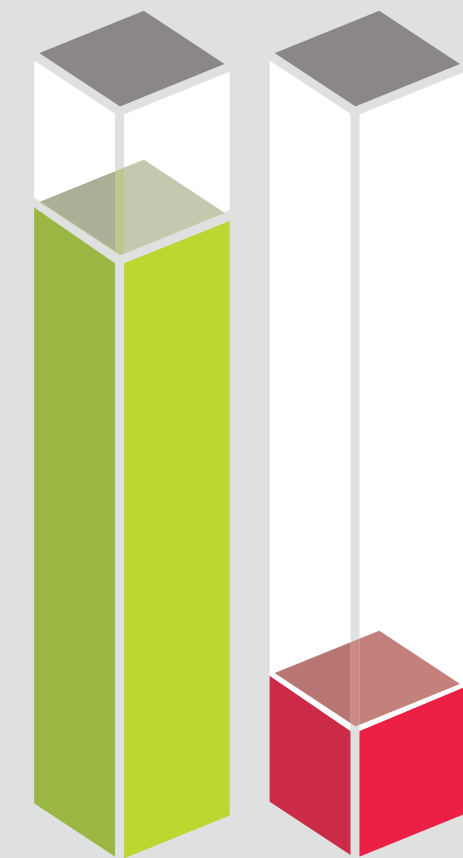
To work toward a long-term vision of a healthy and responsive democracy, Rooseveltors believe we must focus on addressing the outsized influence of money in political decisions (64 percent); improve the voting system (17 percent); and decrease barriers to elected office (10 percent). Issues of student debt, financialization, and private prisons are all made much harder to address because of the moneyed interests arrayed against them. Allowing influence to be bought raises drug prices, puts our environment at risk, and makes our justice system profit-driven.

We believe in:

- A political system that values the full and varied forms of participation of its citizen and non-citizens
- A political system that strives for equal representation and reduces barriers to the voting booth and the decision-making rooms of our legislatures and agencies
- A political system that prioritizes the vote over the dollar

A robust and health democracy is critical to achieving our vision for America. That's why we call on our decision-makers both to take interim steps and make bold moves to make the system more accessible and responsive to the needs of average citizens. We encourage you to check out a few ideas we have about how to do this at the end of the Blueprint.

WHICH OUTCOME IS MORE IMPORTANT TO YOU IN SEEING THE CHANGE YOU WANT IN 2016?



80%
A fair and inclusive democratic process.

20%
Seeing your candidate win.

ROOSEVELT @ DC

One of the most important single fixes to our system is to enact citizen funding that incentivizes small donors to give to political campaigns they support. A Roosevelter is working with IssueOne to tell the stories of these programs, including the Clean Elections program in Connecticut. With more than 80 percent of qualified candidates participating, the program is the best in the nation for elevating all voices and ensuring elected officials are focused on their constituents, not on fundraising. Much of the funding for the program comes through the sale of abandoned property in the state of Connecticut, though it also accepts voluntary contributions.

To be a part of the process, candidates must demonstrate substantial public support by raising a certain number of small-dollar monetary contributions (donations ranging from \$5 to \$100) from individuals residing in their district or state. The amount candidates receive is based on the level of public support they gain and, in some instances, the number of nominating petition signatures they obtain.⁴²



The Results

WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT?

64%

Decrease influence of money in politics.

GREATEST CONSENSUS

17%

Improve the voting system.

10%

Increase participation in policymaking.

8%

Diversify representation in government.

2%

Other

WHAT'S PRACTICAL?

35%

Improve the voting system.

28%

Decrease influence of money in politics.

19%

Increase participation in policymaking.

17%

Diversify representation in government.

2%

Other

PRIORITIES FOR 2016

FOREIGN POLICY

*It is impossible to separate our domestic priorities from our foreign ones. **Every issue that shapes the average American's daily life is deeply and inextricably connected to what's happening on the global stage, from supply chains to immigration to quality jobs to taxes.***

To build a foreign policy reflective of our values, Rooseveltters believe we must achieve our COP21 objectives while actively encouraging global accountability (38 percent); take measures to intervene in ongoing human rights abuses—most immediately, the refugee crisis in Syria (23 percent); and engage with our historic adversaries, like Iran, to develop mutually beneficial diplomatic relationships (13 percent). In pursuing more practical goals, Rooseveltters hope to focus our efforts on building relationships with rising economic powers (29 percent) to go along with the international cooperation around climate change that COP21 implementation aspires to (25 percent).

The implications of our foreign policy are made evident at home and abroad. Yet in this moment of anxiety and uncertainty, we have the opportunity to overcome fear and champion robust civil society, collective prosperity, and constructive international engagement in pursuit of freedom and security. We reject the rising tide of isolationism, but we also reject the idea that America must always use expensive, overwhelming, and often ineffective military force to bend the world to its will. We are eager for a constructive debate about America's evolving role in the world.

Rooseveltters are a part of a globalized generation,

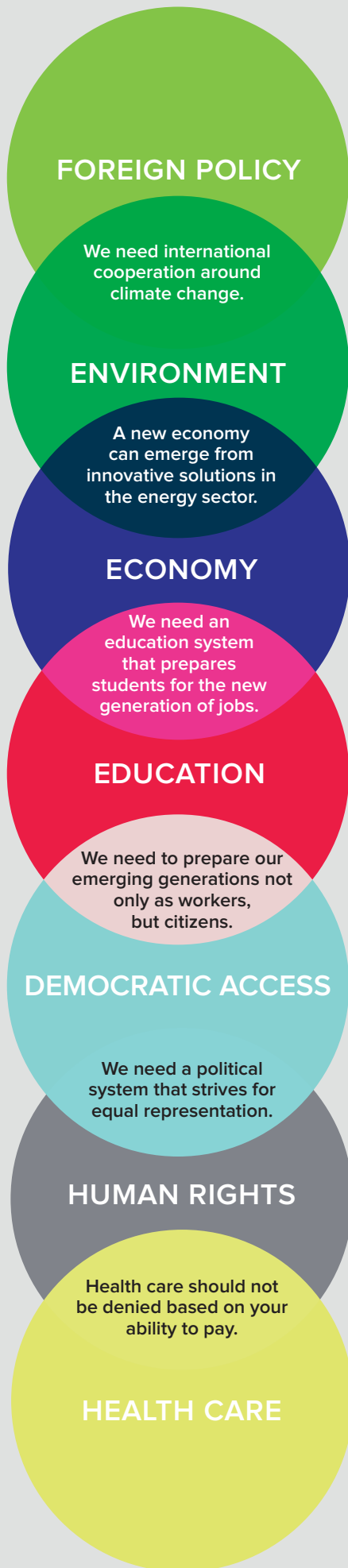
defined by two costly wars, terror and displacement, and the rise of new and powerful international actors. We've also seen free and fair elections in former military dictatorships and a historic agreement on climate change forged through strong international institutional action. We can and must move forward with a clear vision for global engagement in the 21st century. **We believe in:**

- Strengthening domestic and international institutions to address global challenges across and within borders in a 21st century context
- Promoting freedom, democracy, and development as core tenets of a more peaceful world
- Implementing measures that provide security for Americans at home and abroad, which requires strategic and effective use of both hard and soft power

“If a candidate for 2016 listened to our priorities, our government would start to truly look like ourselves. Our local governments would be more participatory, our national government would be more proactive, and governments at all levels would be more responsive and inclusive to all citizens. We would be focusing on what matters, and not what causes the most controversy. We would be genuinely caring for the citizens of our nation and creating opportunities for equitable development across the board. If a candidate were to embrace these priorities, it would mean that they actually respect our thoughts and ideas as young people.”

— Rooseveltter

“IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD, DOMESTIC POLICY IS FOREIGN POLICY.” - ROOSEVELTER



The Results

WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT?

38%

Achieve COP21 commitments.

23%

Intervene in human rights abuses – most immediately, Syria.

13%

Engage with historical adversaries.

12%

Build relationships with rising economic powers.

5%

Serve as an intermediary for non-state actors.

WHAT'S PRACTICAL?

29%

Build relationships with rising economic powers.

25%

Achieve COP21 commitments.

17%

Engage with historical adversaries.

11%

Intervene in human rights abuses – most immediately, Syria.

8%

Serve as an intermediary for non-state actors.

Results shown represent only the top issues polled.

***“The test of our progress
is not whether we add
more to the abundance
of those who have much;
it is whether we provide
enough for those who
have too little.”***

*– President Franklin D. Roosevelt,
Second Inaugural Address, 1937*

IT MATTERS NOT ONLY WHAT RULES ARE WRITTEN, BUT WHO WRITES THE RULES.

Political power—in its various forms—will always be critical for effectuating change. We are not naïve. Yet we believe government can and should organize itself in ways that enable meaningful participation from individuals and communities, allowing average people who ordinarily have less power to have a greater say in crafting the policies that shape society.

The young people who will inherit the repercussions of today's decisions are, most often, not in the room when those decisions are made—a reality that deepens skepticism and discourages participation. While the bulk of this document is a crowdsourced vision backed by a set of actionable priorities, the following is a list of concrete steps elected officials can take to open the doors of government to our generation—a necessary step to restore faith and galvanize commitment.

The status quo of a disenchanted and unreliable voting bloc is real, but not insurmountable; we believe it just requires some creativity and political muscle to overcome. **Here are a few of our ideas on how to get started.**



#WHOSERULES

Change who participates in how the rules get made.

- Designate a staff member to liaise with young people throughout legislative and decision-making processes.
- Introduce new civic tools that open the door to new constituencies and channel citizen's priorities.
- Publicly commit to early and active inclusion of the constituent groups most affected by proposed legislation or rules.
- Support efforts to increase entry-level salaries for public servants and introduce pay for interns.
- Identify and act on opportunities to introduce participatory budgeting.

Reform the system for choosing the decision-makers.

- Commit to meaningful actions that decrease the influence of money in politics.
- Lower the voting age to 16 in municipal and state elections.
- Support redistricting reform and the creation of model redistricting commissions that include at least one voting member under the age of 35.
- Lift restrictions on voting by repealing voter ID laws and implementing online voter registration, early voting, and same-day registration.

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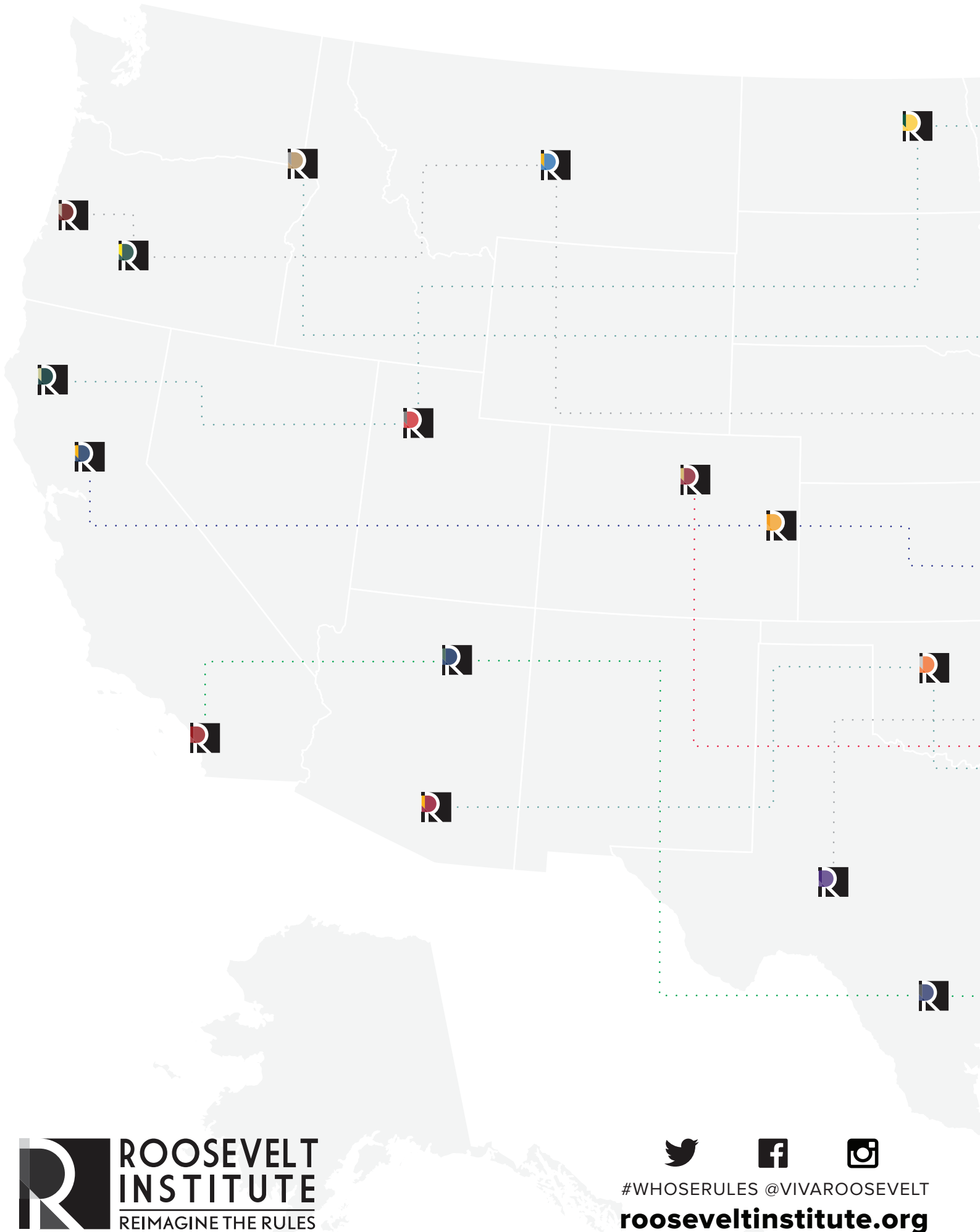
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