

The Alliance Party 2020 Manifesto* – America: The Gold Medal Nation

The Olympic games are the greatest field of international competition, where athletes from every nation compete to win gold, silver, or bronze medals. The gold medal is awarded to the best of the best. The competitor who represents the pinnacle of performance and achievement. Unfortunately, when America is measured against its national competitors in the contests that truly matter, we, too often, do not even earn a place on the medal stand.

In the critical measures of educational outcomes for our children, incidences of violence, individual carbon footprint, likelihood of upward social and economic mobility, and affordable quality healthcare and individual longevity, our country consistently ranks below our global competitors. The glaring statistics on our performance should force all of us to demand better from our elected leaders – and from ourselves. Why shouldn't America rank as the absolute best example in the world in the outcomes that determine the quality of life of our citizens?

Our political reform movement's singular goal is to dramatically transform our dysfunctional partisan democracy of extremism into a functional democracy driven by innovative and term-limited political leaders. Unlike the duopoly, our aims are not to move the direction of the country Left or Right, but Forward. We want to create a revitalized, world-leading United States: America 2.0. If we want to be the example for the rest of the world to emulate, we must achieve success by leading our nation towards better outcomes in combating the human challenges we all have in common: climate change, poverty, ignorance, sickness, income inequality, and injustice. We must earn the credibility to lead through superior achievement, because no one wants to emulate a loser. America must truly outperform global standards if we want to be the gold medal winner of nations.

The Alliance Party, and its candidates, believe that we should put our national efforts towards excelling in the critical areas that determine quality of life for all Americans, our global communities, and our planet itself. This requires that at a national level we have a unified vision of what success looks like, as well as unity of effort to achieve our objectives. Universal and equal realization of benefits means that our elected officials must be a voice for all the people that they represent, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identification, sexual orientation, religious preferences, etc. They should embrace various cultures and identities to create an inclusive society representative of our tremendous diversity. The United States has one of the most diverse populations on the planet, which is an incredible advantage and opportunity that we should leverage in our aims to be the Gold Medal Nation.

The Alliance Party believes that we are the nation that can lead the world, because we have done it before and still do in a variety of areas, which means that our success in winning the gold is not a matter of ability, but will. We must immediately set our sights on winning the gold in the critical areas of economic renewal [\[add hyperlink\]](#), environmental stewardship [\[add hyperlink\]](#), providing quality and affordable healthcare [\[add hyperlink\]](#), and educating the future generations of Americans [\[add hyperlink\]](#) to successfully compete on the world stage. These tasks should begin immediately. Today. Without regard for partisan politics, ideological constraints, or historical limitations.

* We are using the Oxford English Dictionary definition of manifesto as a “public declaration of policy and aims, especially one issued before an election by a political party or candidate.”

A FiscalPrint for the Future: Creating America 2.0 and Winning the Economic Renewal Gold Medal

The economy of the United States has been caught in the riptide of recession. Its struggles against the fiscal burdens of social security; the exploding costs of healthcare; the crumbling of critical infrastructure; and the metastasizing of income inequality; are all being endured without meaningful progress towards a nation-saving shore. The Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis has had serious public health, economic, and fiscal implications – including the loss of tens of thousands of lives – setting our trajectory to take us away from the safety of the beach and threatening to wash us out into the sea of another historic Great Depression.

The federal government has spent trillions of dollars and the Federal Reserve has engaged in a range of unprecedented actions to try and stabilize the economy and help those who have been adversely affected. But they have been made at a time when the country was already on an imprudent and unsustainable fiscal path. We will defeat this virus. The real question is, will we emerge from it willing and able to do what is necessary to put our nation's finances in order and save our country?

The truth is our growing national debt as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) represents a much greater threat to a much larger percentage of our population than the Coronavirus. Increased government spending combined with the contraction of our economy related to the public health crisis will grow our debt-to-GDP from just under 80 percent prior to the crisis, to as high as 110 percent of GDP by the end of 2020 based on recent Congressional Budget Office (CBO) models. This will shatter the prior record debt-to-GDP ratio of 106 percent set just after World War II. At that time, however, we had several factors working in our favor: the United States accounted for 50 percent of global GDP, demographics were working in our favor, the dollar was the gold standard currency for the world, and our elected officials took their duties as stewards of the government's finances seriously. These allowed us to reduce our post-war high ratio of debt-to-GDP down to just 35 percent by 1980 – yet another gift from the Greatest Generation. Unfortunately, none of those conditions of success exist today.

Our leaders have abandoned their fiduciary responsibility to be good financial stewards of the public's finances because the American voter has let them off the hook time and time again. As financial stewards, our public officials should focus their energy and resources on not just delivering positive economic results today, or being satisfied with leaving things better at the end of their term, but they instead must also aspire to build a renewed, innovative, and sustainable system that ensures the economic health of our nation for future generations. As citizens, we must require and support a whole-of-government economic transformation that is visionary in its breadth and depth and acted upon with urgency and at a scale that is commensurate with the threats we are facing. It must begin today, for it is always more difficult and costly to solve a problem the longer it goes unaddressed.

If we are to create a whole-government transformation to repair and renew our economy, and to ensure that it is sustainable and delivers benefits to all Americans, we must have a shared sense of purpose and success in its outcomes. We need to agree on a foundation of principles that cut-across our political differences to find the places where Americans of all political stripes find common ground. Polling done by the Comeback America Initiative in 2012 found more than an 80 percent agreement on the following six principles for economic reform and renewal that our efforts should utilize as our "True North":

- Pro-growth – focus on growing the denominator faster than the numerator and decreasing our debt-to-GDP ratio to reasonable and sustainable levels over time.
- Socially Equitable – costs should be fair, equitably realized by all socioeconomic groups, and must provide a secure social safety for those who are truly in need.
- Culturally Acceptable – there are limits to which the American people will consent to be taxed, suffer crucial services to be cut, or damage the competitiveness of American businesses in the global ecosystem.
- Mathematical Integrity – we must measure the right things in the right way to incentivize necessary behaviors; base our targets on reasonable, evidence-based assumptions; and transparently measure and report our progress to the American people regarding our successes and setbacks.
- Politically Feasible – we must include a balance between revenue increases and spending reductions that can pass Congress and be signed into law by the President.
- Meaningful Bipartisan Support - reforms must pass with significant bipartisan support so they will be deemed fair by a broad percentage of the public, and so they can be sustained politically over time.

These core principles will provide our True North guidance when the hard decisions need to be made on if, how, and when to implement proposals like the ones the Alliance Party outlines below.

STRUCTURE OUR BUDGET PROCESS AND MANAGEMENT TO PROMOTE FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Adopt a balanced scorecard approach to measure economic health that looks at where we are compared to plan, how we are trending, and how we compare to our competition.
- Measure and set targets for public debt by its ratio to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rather than the size of the debt alone without context.
- Get rid of the short-term joke of a debt ceiling in favor of a Constitutional Amendment for Fiscal Responsibility that acts as a credit card limit that can be exceeded for one-year – but only by Congressional declaration of war or because of a national crisis with the support of a super-majority of Congress.
- Change to 2-year budgets and separate capital and operating expenses similarly to business accounting and to stop treating the desirable increases in capital investment in our economy the same as potentially harmful increases in spending.
- Cap all spending except that which cannot be capped – Social Security and interest on the debt – and implement changes to how we budget for these significant expenses such as:
 - Social Security
 - Maintain or increase benefits for the majority and decrease them for the wealthy
 - Raise the cap on taxable earnings
 - Dramatically increase employee contributions through a guaranteed employment program
 - Defense
 - Set the bi-annual budget at 3 percent of GDP, with any increases allowed only based on clear and credible analysis of current and future threats
 - Right-size the largest bureaucracy in the world by rationalizing our force structure, global footprint, and reduce overheads

- Healthcare
 - The single largest programmatic challenge for government, the private sector, and individuals. Next to interest on the debt, it is the largest driver of our fiscal imbalance. Refer to the Alliance Party’s CarePrint for advocated reforms that will deliver financially efficient and clinically effective outcomes for all Americans.

TAX INDIVIDUALS AND CORPORATIONS EQUITABLY AND ELIMINATE PREFERENCES

- Set corporate tax rates at an internationally competitive level.
- Implement flatter rates on individual taxes with a top rate of 28 percent.
- Tax capital gains and dividends the same as earned income.
- Aggressively eliminate tax preferences, eliminating everything except for incentives towards:
 - Retirement savings
 - Interest on mortgage for primary residence only with a cap of 300 percent of the regional median home value above which interest cannot be deducted
 - Corporate investments in basic research, not applied research
- Implement a wealth tax with a progressive scale starting at an annual net wealth of \$50 million and adjust the qualifying limit of the start of the estate tax to estates valued at greater than \$10 million.

DRAMATICALLY INCREASE THE INVESTMENT IN THE CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE THAT ENABLES OUR ECONOMY AND CREATES JOBS

- Invest comprehensively across all elements of infrastructure to include roads, water, energy, public education, healthcare, and communications.
- Empower regional and local planning authorities of infrastructure investments to place decision-making where the unique challenges and opportunities of its citizens are known and understood.
- Encourage public-private partnership and innovative project finance strategies. Ensure that long-term projects that address critical needs have sufficient and sustainable funding.
- Elevate the priority of connectivity and access to affordable housing and transportation when planning and setting standards for policy objectives.
- Require equity in costs and benefits of programs to avoid the imposition of unnecessary social costs on impoverished communities or the accumulation of unnecessary benefits to affluent ones, when making decisions on investments and/or the location of assets.
- Foster innovation in the design, planning, and implementation of “smart city” and “smart rural” capabilities.
- Make community infrastructure safer and more resilient to damage from natural disasters, changes in climate conditions, and allow for improved adaptability in response to changing social and economic conditions.

PROTECT THE DIGNITY OF WORK AND PROVIDE A LIVING WAGE

- Create a job guarantee program for those who can work that will provide a direct mechanism for achieving permanent full employment.

- Government to provide grants to eligible entities, including state, county, and local governments, to engage in direct employment projects that address community needs and provide socially beneficial goods and services.
- The program will cover wage, benefits, and material expenses.
- Employment can be either part-time or full-time depending on the needs of the employee.
- Wage will be set at a living wage standard for workers in the program and incentivize non-government employers to provide better wages and benefits to compete with the program.
- For our population that is unable to work as a result of a medically-validated disability, guarantee a living income aligned with federal poverty guidelines that factor in geographic variances in cost of living such as a federal poverty level + 30 percent rather than a national minimum hourly wage.
- Protect workers' rights to freely associate and organize on both an industry basis as well as a firm-by-firm basis.
- Implement globally competitive policies on workplace safety, employment mobility, personal and family leave, and child-care support.

A GreenPrint for the Future: Winning the Environmental Stewardship Gold Medal

From this moment forward, every decision that we make as a society must be done within the context of combating the existential threat of climate change. All of our scientific insights and evidence regarding the severity and pace of climate change demonstrate that we have only a few years – not decades – to mitigate the most serious of consequences.

This is not about a fight to “save the planet.” Earth will continue with or without us. It is a fight to “save us from ourselves,” because our choices have exacerbated conditions to the point where they have become a threat to the foundations of security and prosperity for every nation. It is a problem that our individual and collective decisions have created, and which only our individual and collective decisions can resolve.

The United States generates four times the global average of carbon per capita. We are the worst global offender, but we have it within our means to reverse our course and become the global example of a decarbonized society. What we need is the will to tackle and succeed in this challenge. If America will not lead, who will? And if we won't now, when?

TRANSFORM TO A LOW-CARBON ECONOMY

- 100% clean and renewable electricity
- Eliminate harmful emissions from energy production
- No new offshore drilling for fossil fuel
- A ban on new fracking
- A just transition from coal
- Federal and state divestment from fossil fuel
- Invest in nuclear power as a transitional technology to reduce carbon footprint while investing in renewable energy platforms
- Community ownership and public participation in renewable energy projects
- Create rigorous building energy standards
- Incentivize investment and purchasing of non-fossil fuel transportation
- Increase emissions standard on passenger vehicles

GUARANTEE THE RIGHT TO CLEAN AIR AND CLEAN WATER

- Maintain and enhance National Clean Air Standards
- National lead pipe replacement and infrastructure upgrades
- Guarantee access to safe and affordable drinking water
- Protect and improve water quality in all waterways

PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES

- Reforest 40 million acres of public and private land
- Restore 5 million acres of wetlands
- Expand sustainable farming and soil practices

- Support sustainable fishing and agriculture practices.
- Cleanup brownfields and all hazardous sites
- Lead a global research and action plan to rid our oceans and waterways of plastics and toxins.
- Vigorously research and pilot methodologies to extract carbon dioxide and methane from our atmosphere

STRENGTHEN URBAN SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

- Establish a national fund for urban and rural resilience
- Manage resources in a way that guarantees the welfare and promotes equity of current and future generations
- Expand public green space and recreational land and waters
- Modernize urban mobility and mass transit
- Zero waste: ban single use plastics
- Promote hemp as an agricultural/industrial alternative
- Promote a transition to organic farming
- Promote local and community farming, phasing out agribusiness subsidies

PUT A GENERATION TO WORK

Create 10 million new public and private industry green jobs over 10 years through:

- Employment and training programs
- Grants for projects in new green industries and technologies

ENSURE JUST TRANSITIONS

All GreenPrint programs grants and projects must develop new training and certification standards and comply with:

- Environmental justice standards
- Collective bargaining and labor organization protections
- Job quality standards

A CarePrint for the Future: Winning the Health Care Gold Medal

At its best, our health system is among the most expensive in the world – with over 50% of personal bankruptcies caused by an inability to pay medical debt – yet still delivers quality outputs and health outcomes below that of most developed nations. Addressing the deficiencies and disparities within our medical delivery system must be a top priority to restore our economy and stem the tidal wave of personal medical bankruptcies. The federal government must ensure universal access to basic primary, chronic disease, and psychiatric care for all Americans, as well as in-home and skilled nursing home care for the elderly.

The failure to deliver medical care that is both financially efficient and clinically effective has had a deleterious effect on our individual longevity, the quality of our lives, and our economic well-being. Comprehensive and meaningful reform is required for us to compete on the international stage, but more importantly, it will demonstrate that we understand that the health of our society is directly linked to the physical, psychological, and financial health of every individual and that caring for others is the highest American ideal.

The Alliance Party believes we must provide every American with a publicly funded basic single payer health plan. A plan where the patient chooses and employs their personal physician: not a large hospital system or government agency. This universal single payer basic health care plan should be administered by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which already pays for 70 percent of America's health care costs. If citizens want more or different coverage than the basic plan provides, they can pay for it. The taxpayer-funded universal access health plan would provide coverage without a copay for services within its scope.

EXPAND ACCESS TO PRIMARY, SPECIALTY, AND PSYCHIATRIC CARE FOR ALL

- Prenatal, delivery, and one year of postpartum care.
- Well child visits and vaccinations.
- Annual preventative care visits for adults to a primary or specialty care provider.
- Quarterly preventative and specialty care visits to a provider for the chronically ill.
- Unlimited telephone care and up to 12 telehealth consultations annually.
- Six sick visits per year to a primary care provider for non-emergency care.
- Unlimited telephone care by primary or specialty care providers.
- All A or B-rated services recommended by the US Preventative Services Task Force

PROVIDE PUBLIC HEALTH AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

- Create a fully funded Pandemic Task Force staffed by medical, scientific, and economic experts to proactively plan for early detection of threats and enhance response times and efficacy through universal testing, treatments, accelerated vaccine development, and economic intervention alternatives.
- Medically necessary and urgent or emergency care.
- Any medical care related to a public health threat such as the COVID-19 or coronavirus pandemic.

CARE FOR OUR ELDERLY

- Five years of family support, home health, therapy, and nursing services for those aging in place.
- Three years of skilled nursing home care.
- Medical equipment for home health care and therapy as authorized by a primary care physician.
- Hospital and hospice care authorized by a primary care physician.

An EduPrint for the Future: Winning the Education Gold Medal

The best indicator of what an individual or society values is where they spend their money. The United States has increased its military spending by \$150 billion a year since 2015, a point at which we were already spending as much on defense as the next seven countries combined. We are told this is necessary to ensure our national security, but the ability of a nation to secure its future is not determined by military strength alone. It is dependent upon how it educates its population and prepares its children and young adults to succeed in a competitive global ecosystem.

Our ability to secure the future we want for ourselves – to be a gold medal nation – starts with the quality of the educational opportunities available for every child. We were the first modern society to believe and invest in the idea of public education for all. But now, other nations have taken our ideas of universal education and beaten us at our own game in every category and every measure.

The American dream was built on the foundation that education was the engine that drove the vehicle of upward social and economic mobility. We were right to identify its underpinning role, but somewhere we lost the fuel and the fire to keep making forward progress. Our society today is one of the least upwardly mobile on the planet.

Economic inequalities are inextricably linked to educational inequalities. Children raised in poverty are two or more years behind their more affluent peers in language proficiency and mathematics by the fourth grade, and a disproportionate percentage either never finish secondary education or never close the gap. We must reopen the doors of opportunity that education provides. We must create an environment where the two greatest determinants of a child's quality of education – and thus the quality of their life – are not their zip code or the color of their skin.

ELEVATE AND REINVIGORATE TEACHING PROFESSION

- National minimum wage for teachers based on rates for careers with comparable education and skill requirements
- Forgive student loans after 10 years in the classroom for all teachers, in 6 years for those who willingly go to high-poverty schools
- Build talent pipeline starting in high school for those who identify an interest in teaching
- Increase participation of minorities and men in the classroom at all levels of schooling and curriculum
- Respect the experts: create a national endowment for innovation led by a blue-ribbon panel of former national and state Teachers of the Year

PREPARE OUR CITIZENS FOR GLOBAL COMPETITION

- Set minimum, basic standards for math, science, language proficiency, and civics standards across all states
- Set our standards commensurate to those among our international competitors

REMOVE BARRIERS TO ACCESS TO QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION

- Free, universal pre-school education

- Develop a Choice-Driven PUBLIC-School System
 - Create pilot schools that safely experiment with innovative curriculum and traditional or virtual education delivery systems
 - School districts committees of parents, teachers, and local business leaders to evaluate strengths and weaknesses, and recommend new needed curriculum and delivery options
 - Provide grant funding to implement preferred solutions within 3 years
 - If no viable option becomes available after 3 years, parents can choose to take their per pupil expenditure to another district that provides the desired option
- Provide greater post-secondary training and school-to-work bridge programs to apprenticeship or trade professions.
- Free, national online university that any individual or employer can leverage to expand their professional skills and improve their professional adaptability.

INCENTIVIZE PUBLIC SERVICE AMONG OUR YOUTH

- Design new American Service-Corps Program to complement proven options such as AmeriCorps, City in Schools, and the Peace Corps.
 - For every year of service, a percentage of student loans would be forgiven
 - If service is undertaken prior to, or during, one's education or apprenticeship, tuition credits for future study would be awarded