

# CENTRAL TEXAS INTERFAITH

## 2020 Agenda of Issues

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### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND LIVING WAGES

- Ensure employees receive a living wage (or prevailing wage, if higher) for all work funded by our tax dollars.
- Secure funding for successful long-term job training programs (like Capital IDEA) at the city, county, state (ACE Fund), and federal levels.
- Support policies which ensure worker safety in construction and building trades.
- Oppose increases to the homestead exemption unless it can be demonstrated that it will not jeopardize investments in programs that benefit the most vulnerable, including workforce development, education, living wage policies, after school program, and parent support specialists.

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

- Include affordable housing as an integral part of the land and development code and other housing policy, especially to ensure racial and socioeconomic equity.
- Preserve affordable housing in older single-family neighborhoods, mobile home parks and low-income apartments.
- Ensure a meaningful investment of affordable housing bond dollars in families below 50 percent of the Austin Median Family Income level.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy to end homelessness in Central Texas, including short-term and permanent housing options, adequate social service and mental health support, access to basic accommodations (e.g. restroom facilities, drinking water, etc.), and opposition to policies that criminalize homelessness.
- Enact legislation at city, state, and federal levels to regulate Payday Lending and provide for affordable alternatives for working class and poor families.

### COMMUNITY SAFETY

- Implement effective community policing strategies, in which police and community engage in meaningful conversation around safe neighborhoods. Training should include cultural competence and anti-racism in working with communities of color and immigrant communities.
- Work for meaningful criminal justice and court reform policies, including policies which address systemic racial and ethnic disparities, unlawful detention, plea bargaining, public defenders oversight, restorative justice, and treatment of mental health issues.
- Enact common sense gun safety measures to promote the safety of our communities and schools.

### SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- Implement policies which promote sustainability in Central Texas through meaningful investments in infrastructure, public transportation, parks, lighting, energy efficiency, drainage, and renewable energy such as solar and wind power.

- Develop programs at the national, state, and local level to prevent climate change and reduce its adverse impact, especially on the most vulnerable including low-income communities, communities of color, and the elderly.

## **IMMIGRATION**

- Overturn SB4 at the Texas Legislature and work at all levels of law enforcement to protect the safety and rights of immigrant families.
- Pass state legislation to allow all immigrants to obtain a valid Texas driver's license or work towards an alternative form of identification for the purpose of public safety.
- Pass federal legislation that would resolve the uncertain status of DACA participants.
- Pass comprehensive immigration reform at the federal level to include a pathway to citizenship for the over 11 million unauthorized immigrants living in the US; a provision to protect workers' rights; and a provision to allow for family unification.

## **ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE**

- Expand access to Medicaid and CHIP, including continuous coverage for children.
- Increase access to high-quality, affordable mental health services, elder care, disability services, and providers who accept Medicaid and Medicare.
- Reduce costs of medically-necessary prescription drugs and treatment.

## **QUALITY EDUCATION**

- Increase funding for Public Schools at the state and federal levels.
- Ensure a safe and supportive school environment for all students.
- Support neighborhood schools by promoting enrollment and parent and community engagement.
- Promote restorative discipline and a relational approach to build a positive school climate and address student behavior.

## **COVID-19 RESPONSE**

- Help families survive by providing sufficient direct income supplements, rental assistance, unemployment benefits, expanded health insurance (Medicaid and CHIP), and child care supplements; and by suspending the public charge rule for the duration of the crisis
- Protect jobs and service sector workers by offering subsidies for negatively affected companies that will keep workers on the job; and by requiring the provision of adequate personal protective equipment, hazard pay, and paid sick leave to food distribution, service, and healthcare workers.
- Support our communities by suspending all evictions, foreclosures, and utility cutoffs for homeowners and renters; by providing free internet and phone service necessary for public safety and remote public education; and by deploying a comprehensive public health strategy that includes adequate preventive measures, testing, tracing, and vaccine development.