

# Questions for the Presidential Candidates

The following questions are offered to advance public discussion on the 12 national priorities identified through the Grand Challenges for Social Work initiative of the American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare.

The Academy encourages the candidates to explain their position on each of these issues.

1. Access to preventive care can improve the health of Americans and save money in the long run, but behavioral health is often overlooked in policy discussions about prevention. What will you do to unleash the power of prevention in behavioral care?
2. Twenty-seven million Americans remain uninsured, and most people think that everyone should have access to health care. What will you do to ensure that everyone has health coverage and access to health care?
3. Six children die every day from child maltreatment in this country, and six million children are maltreated every year. This maltreatment is often accompanied by partner abuse. What will you do to protect the lives of vulnerable children and women who are victims of family violence?
4. Nearly every older American will rely on long-term care from a family member at some point, and people give up careers or shoulder other difficulties to stay home for family. Pending legislation offers some federal help. Would you sign this legislation, and what will you do to ensure that family caregivers can meet their own needs as well as those of their elders?
5. Experts now say that social isolation is as deadly as smoking but that the social connections in infancy and childhood are a remedy. How will you ensure that child care in the United States fosters proper social-emotional development?
6. Over one million people are homeless at some point every year, and too many of them are children. What will you do to ensure that no American children experience homelessness?
7. Climate change and natural disasters like the summer's flooding in Louisiana have displaced many Americans. What will you do to meet the needs of people displaced by climate change and to address the effects of global climate change?
8. Americans now need Internet access to search for a job, find a place to live, apply for college, and access health information, but access is severely limited in low-income neighborhoods and rural areas. What will you do to ensure that all Americans can participate in everything that this technological society has to offer?
9. Over two million people are in jail or prison on any given day, most are there for nonviolent offenses, and the system costs over a trillion dollars a year. How will you fix mass incarceration and its devastating effects in American communities?
10. American workers need protection from employers who maximize profits by adopting harmful labor practices like last-minute scheduling and by paying wages so low that their employees qualify for public welfare benefits. What steps will you take to protect workers from the labor practices of their employers?
11. Research points to numerous social-emotional and financial benefits for children whose parents open Child Development Accounts for them, and progressively structured accounts opened at birth can ensure that even the poorest children benefit. Will you commit to opening and funding such an account for every child born in America?
12. In schools across the United States, zero-tolerance policies and excessive use of expulsion feed a school-to-prison pipeline that has disproportionately captured children of color. But research has identified effective alternatives to these disciplinary approaches. How will you dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline and keep children in school while preserving an environment in which all can learn?

## *About the Grand Challenges for Social Work initiative*

The American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare's Grand Challenges initiative engages social workers and allies in transdisciplinary efforts to foster innovation powered by science. The debate questions emerged from its policy conference, Social Innovation for America's Renewal, which was organized at Washington University by the Center for Social Development and the Brown School of Social Work. Supported by the National Association of Social Workers, the Society for Social Work and Research, and the Council on Social Work Education, the Grand Challenges initiative represents a dynamic social agenda focused on improving individual and family well-being, strengthening the social fabric, and creating a more just society. For more on the Grand Challenges initiative, contact the American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare at [academy@aaasw.org](mailto:academy@aaasw.org) or see <http://aaasw.org>. #Up4theChallenge