

Prevent Child Abuse America: Voter Guide

Advocacy by non-profits is especially important in an election year. Election years offer the opportunity to bring awareness to an organization's cause and for Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America), an equal playing field for the healthy development of all children. Elections present a platform for PCA America to promote child abuse and neglect prevention policies and strategies and investments in funding to support these vital initiatives. This time allows us to introduce candidates to our organization and the issue of child abuse and neglect prevention. These activities serve as an opportunity to show candidates and elected officials our work and the critical importance of supporting families and improving both child and parent well-being.

Elected officials hold a great deal of power over the lives of children and their families through the policies they introduce and fund, and there are a large number of offices up for election in 2020, including:

- ✿ 435 seats in the United States House of Representatives
- ✿ 35 seats in the United States Senate
- ✿ 11 State Governorships and 2 Territories
- ✿ 6,000 seats in State Legislatures
- ✿ Municipal elections – Mayors and City Council positions

There are many steps a non-profit can take to conduct advocacy during an election year, including issue advocacy, mailing campaigns, voter outreach and education, and candidate education, questionnaires, debates, and forums in a nonpartisan way. **Remaining impartial and nonpartisan while focusing on educating the candidates and the public is critical.**

Attached to this memo is a resource document that outlines successful non-profit advocacy strategies and ideas to get out the vote. Please take a look and let the policy team at PCA America know if you have any questions or if you would like additional information or support. I hope it inspires even more ideas on how we can amplify the issues important to the success and well-being of children and families.

Together, we can Prevent Child Abuse, America.

Prevent Child Abuse America: Voter Guide

The following is content compiled by the Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America) policy team in an effort to provide information on voting in an Election Year. The resource includes links to online references that we hope are helpful in assisting you and your networks in becoming informed and active participants during this Election Year and beyond.

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The information contained in this Voter Guide and any websites referenced are being provided for informational purposes only. In viewing this Voter Guide resource, we encourage you to independently verify the rules and regulations on non-profit election, voter engagement activities, and state specific voter requirements. In addition, please also verify if there are legal requirements or restrictions on any verbal or written public communication.

I. WHAT NON PROFITS CAN AND CANNOT DO

Nonprofit organizations *can* conduct advocacy during an election year. In fact, an election year offers a unique opportunity to influence the agendas of our future policymakers by educating the candidates running for public office about child abuse and neglect prevention strategies.

While advocacy during an election year is permissible, it is important to know the legal limitations nonprofits must adhere to when conducting this work. Fundamentally, nonprofits are not allowed to engage in what is termed “electioneering.” This means that nonprofits are not permitted to express or imply support or opposition to any candidate or political party. While, 501(c)(3) organizations are prohibited from supporting or opposing a candidate or political party, they can continue to promote issues and policy change to further its mission, connect with candidates on a nonpartisan basis, and conduct voter engagement or registration activities in an election year.

Candidate Education

The [federal tax code](#) defines the prohibition of partisan political activities by 501(c)(3) charitable organizations. It states 501(c)(3) organizations are “prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in – or intervening in – any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for elective public office.” Whether activities are considered partisan political activity on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate depends on the “facts and circumstances” in each situation. While partisan activities are prohibited, it is clear there is still a lot a 501(c)(3) can do on a nonpartisan basis to promote voter and civic engagement as part of its charitable and educational mission during the election season and beyond. As an example, [see Appendix A for PCA America’s Candidate Questionnaire](#).

Permissible Nonpartisan Activities and Common Examples include:

- Advocate on public policy reason; not preference or endorsement for any candidate
- Advocate for an organization’s issues during an election year
- Voter education (e.g. educate voters in a nonpartisan way about candidates)
- Candidate education
- Voter outreach (e.g., register voters, encourage voters to vote or educate voters on the voting process)
- Distribute sample ballots or nonpartisan voter guides
- Share lists, poll results, and resources
- Participate in ballot measures

The guidelines of election related activities apply to 501(c)(3) staff and volunteers who act on behalf of 501(c)(3). These *do not* apply to people acting as an individual on their own time. If you work for a 501(c)(3) you can support candidates on your own time, but cannot use organizational resources when doing so. Here is a [website](#) for more information on the role 501(c)(3)s play in nonpartisan candidate education.

*** Voter Registration Activities**

There are many opportunities for nonprofit organizations to ensure that their communities are well-represented at the ballot box. While there are guidelines for conducting voter registration drives, understanding these rules will guide nonprofits in planning their activities this election season. For more in-depth information on nonprofits and voter engagement, see Bolder Advocacy’s [The Rules of the Game: A Guide to Election-Related Activities for 501\(c\)\(3\) Organizations](#).

For 501(c)(3) public charities planning to engage in voter registration:

DO	DON'T
Do keep your voter registration activities nonpartisan, making sure your activities do not attempt to influence the outcome of a candidate election.	Do not plan, begin, or increase voter registration activities in order to influence which candidates or parties win an election for public office.
Do ensure that any coordination of voter registration activities with other 501(c)(3) organizations remains neutral about which candidate or party wins an election.	Do not coordinate your voter registration drive with any candidate or party. Do not collaborate with nonprofits that are trying to influence which candidate or party wins an election.
Do focus your voter registration activities on community members or clients with whom your organization already engages in its programs or advocacy work.	Do not prioritize outreach to certain demographic populations because they are more likely to vote for a particular candidate.

Source: <https://bolderadvocacy.org/resource/want-to-conduct-or-fund-a-voter-registration-drive/>

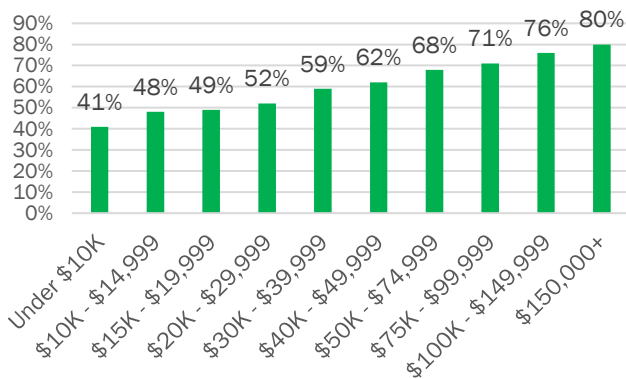
II. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO VOTE

We need to make sure that the issues PCA America cares about are discussed by the candidates and included in election platforms. Particularly for PCA America, we represent children who don’t have a voice in politics or elections. We also represent communities that are struggling on many levels, economically, socially, etc., and individuals in those communities who may be disengaged or even disinterested in elections. For those reasons (among many more), it is that much more critical for us to make sure that the issues we work on are incorporated into candidates’ platforms and made a high priority. Among other important issues, a few examples include candidate support for measures that serve to prevent child abuse and neglect, increase economic supports for families, funding for research to help prevent child sexual abuse and ACEs, as well as work to find ways to decrease child poverty.

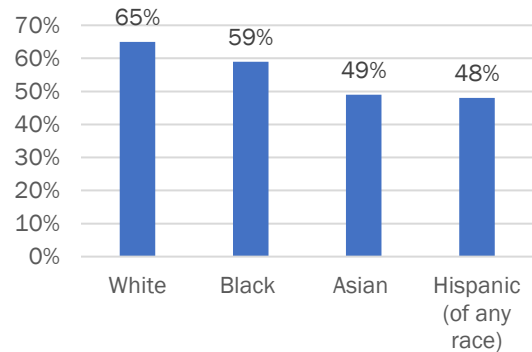
Elected officials hold a great deal of power over the lives of children and their families. These officials play a significant role in:

- Developing legislative agendas & policy priorities
- Supporting or opposing legislation & adequate funding levels
- Deciding how to set a budget
- Creating and shaping laws that can improve, or harm, child and family health and well-being
- Setting priorities for our nation and communities

2016 Voter Turnout - Household Income



2016 Voter Turnout - Race, Ethnicity



Source: U.S. Census Bureau [Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2016](#).

 **How Important is my Vote?**

YOU can make a difference in the course of the future for our children and their families. Your power to vote provides you with the opportunity to bring awareness to your cause and creates an equal playing field for the healthy development of all children. Your vote provides a unique opportunity to influence the agenda of future policymakers by educating the candidates running for public office on issues like the protective factors, home visiting, evidence-based programming, and child abuse and neglect prevention strategies.

Lastly, your vote holds candidates (and potentially future elected officials) accountable for supporting your work. The **impact of the current pandemic** makes this election year an especially important one to have your voice heard and represented.

COVID-19 Hardship on Families



* More than **one in six** non-elderly adults and more than one in five parents living with children **struggled to put food on the table**.

* **19 million children** (one in four) live in a household that **didn't pay rent on time** in the previous month and/or did not have enough to eat in the past week.



* Just **over one-third (33.8%) of parents** reported food insecurity and/or **problems paying for housing, utilities, or medical costs** in the past month.



* **Tens of millions of Americans** have found themselves either permanently or temporarily out of work since the onset of the coronavirus. We cannot forget the families and people who were teetering on the edge of the financial cliff even before the pandemic hit. These families are struggling to pay rent, buy groceries and keep their lights on which can increase parental stress. Policies to provide economic stability and other supports to keep families fed, housed and together are more vital than ever.

III. WHERE TO VOTE

To encourage get out the vote drives in your respective community it's important that your networks know how to:

- * [Register to vote](#),
- * [Locate their polling stations](#), and
- * [Request an absentee \(or mail in\) ballot](#).

You can register to vote *online* in 39 states and the District of Columbia. We strongly encourage everyone to **register early and vote by mail** if possible, and as soon as possible. If you do so, because of the expected high number of voters that will vote by mail and because of recent issues with the United States Postal Service, please mail in your ballots ASAP! Otherwise, have a plan, get out and vote early to avoid crowds, and cast your ballot before Election Day. Lastly, for anyone voting on Election Day, please plan to arrive as soon as the polls open if you can to avoid long lines and stay safe while casting your vote.

The following are links to further information on voter registration requirements and deadlines as well as voting and election laws.

- * [Nonprofit Vote](#): Provides up to date information regarding each state's voter registration requirements and deadlines; and also has tools for Election Day that allows voters to find their polling place and learn about any Voter ID laws that have been passed in their state.
- * [USAGOV](#): This is an online guide to government services and information with a section specific to voting and election law. Among a plethora of voting related issues, the site provides Voter ID requirement details, information for first time voters, as well as voter registration and contact information to speak with election officials.

IV. WHO ARE THE CANDIDATES

It's important to become familiar with new candidates and those up for re-election. Each candidate has ideas and issues that they hope to advance while in office and understanding how or if they align with your organization's mission are important before casting a vote. The following are helpful links that include information about candidates at the state and national levels:

✿ National

- [On the Issues](#): Allows you to easily compare candidates using information taken directly from their respective campaign sites and statements.

✿ Congressional

- This [website](#) offers a nonpartisan overview of all the candidates running in the [2020 Congressional elections](#), with tools to allow voters to easily find and research who is running in their district.

✿ State Elections

- [U.S. Government Election Assistance Commission](#): Features a US map that allows voters to easily find and research who is running for state and local office in their jurisdiction.

✿ Nonpartisan Sites for more candidate information:

- [Ballotpedia](#): Billing itself as “An interactive almanac of state politics”, this site provides voters with information regarding local, state and congressional candidates. It also includes a state by state guide of measures that will appear on November ballots.
- [Vote411.org](#): From the League of Women Voters, Vote411 provides a tool that allows voters to enter their address to find their polling place, and learn more about who is running in their local, state and federal elections. It also allows voters to “build” a ballot that they can print out and take to the polls with them.
- [Fact Check.org](#): This site, run by the Annenberg Public Policy Committee, is a nationally recognized nonpartisan leader in analyzing campaign rhetoric to provide voters with solid facts about key issues.
- [Politifact](#): This Pulitzer Prize winning site uses an easily understood “Truth Meter” to rate statements made by candidates running for office in terms of their factual accuracy.

V. WHO IS FUNDING EACH CAMPAIGN

In any political campaign it is of great benefit to voters to be aware of the organizations, individuals, businesses, lobbying firms, and organizations that support and/or have made financial contributions to a candidate. Looking into campaign donations is also a good way for the public to learn about the priorities of the candidates, as well as get a glimpse into how they run their campaigns logistically. For example, understanding how much money an influential advocacy group gives to a candidate could give voters some insight into a candidate's policy priorities. It is also important for voters to be

on the look-out for any donations, particularly large ones that originate from a person or organization with extremist views. Candidates are required to file reports about all political donations and campaign expenses with the Federal Election Commission.

- ✿ [The Sunlight Foundation](#): This non-partisan site provides a breakdown of money that's being spent by Super PACs, a new campaign funding vehicle made possible by the Supreme Court decision *Citizens United*. The Sunlight Foundation has also developed a free app called "Ad Hawk" that allows users to instantly discover the source of funding for the barrage of political ads during election season.
- ✿ [Open Secrets](#) and [Follow the Money](#): These two sites provide users with a breakdown of donors to every national and state political campaign in the nation.

VI. HOW TO "GET OUT THE VOTE"

Voter turn-out is critical. It is important to get out the vote in high numbers so that we as an organization can ensure that our voices are heard. **Only 60% of the nation's 231 million eligible voters cast ballots in 2016 – meaning tens of millions of eligible Americans did not exercise their right to vote.** There is power in numbers. When we vote, and get our community to vote, we can impact outcomes and change the debate.

Looking back even on the recent history of presidential elections, one can see that 20 years ago Al Gore lost a White House bid to former president George W. Bush by a mere 537 votes cast in the state of Florida, while just four years ago, current President Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton in an extremely close election that was ultimately decided by voters in a small number of swing states. Both cases represent evident and quite significant examples of the critical importance of the adage "every vote matters." There are also numerous examples of congressional and local elections being decided by 100s, or even as little as a handful of votes.

Get out the vote efforts are aimed at increasing voter turnout. **Remember when getting out the vote, don't mention or suggest a favored or un-favored party or candidate.** 501(c)(3)s can educate voters and get them to the polls, as long as they aren't supporting or opposing any candidate. When you engage in voter registration or remind people to vote, it demonstrates the importance of voting, encourages active citizenship, and gives voice to the communities you serve. Below are helpful ideas and steps to increase voter turnout directly in your community.

- Make a concrete plan.
- Encourage staff and volunteers to vote.
- Use your normal internal communication efforts (i.e. email, staff mail, etc.), staff meetings, events, etc. to encourage voting.
- Encourage everyone to call or text five people to encourage them to vote.
- Encourage voter that will be voting by mail to register and mail their ballot in immediately.

The following is further information on Get Out the Vote efforts.

- * [Nonprofit Vote](#): This is a link for a nonprofit Get Out the Vote toolkit and other helpful templates and factsheets on voting.
- * [2020 General Election Registration Deadlines by State](#)
- * 10 Things to Do From Now Until Election Day: See the [flyer](#) below from Nonprofitvote.org

10 Things to Do from Now Until Election Day

- 1 Promote Early Voting Opportunities**
Early voting can allow voters to avoid lines and provides additional flexibility in casting a ballot prior to Election Day. Let your constituents know about their options for casting a ballot by mail or in-person at an early voting location.
- 2 Tie Your Mission to the Election**
Help voters understand the connection between voting and the services you provide. Give your community a reason to go to the polls.
- 3 Talk to Candidates**
Candidates are looking for opportunities to engage the community. Your nonprofit can put a spotlight on your issues and constituents by inviting candidates to visit your organization.
- 4 Advocate on Ballot Measures**
Take a "yes" or "no" position on a ballot question or instead provide a nonpartisan guide to the issues explaining what a "yes" or "no" vote means.
- 5 Distribute Sample Ballots**
Help voters familiarize themselves with who and what is on the ballot before they head to the polls.

- 6 Mobilize Staff and Volunteers**
Educate staff and volunteers about how and when to vote and then involve them in get-out-the-vote activities.
- 7 Educate Voters on the Voting Process**
Demystify the voting process by helping voters determine where, when, and how to vote. Look up polling locations and describe to new voters what will happen at the polls.
- 8 Encourage and Remind People to Vote**
Incorporate voting reminders into services and programs in the two weeks leading up to Election Day. Make the election highly visible in your communications and at your agency.
- 9 Advertise Election Day Help**
Make sure your staff and constituents know where to get help on Election Day. Have the phone number for your local board of elections ready, as well as these national hotlines: **866-OUR-VOTE** and **888-VE-Y-VOTA**
- 10 Plan an Election Day Celebration**
Create a celebratory atmosphere on Election Day and continue to remind people to vote!

VII. Considerations for Voting Safely

As election officials plan for upcoming elections in 2020, they are weighing options to ensure elections are safe, secure, accessible and accurate. Planning for the potential increase in voters casting an absentee or mail in ballot is one such consideration, but election officials are preparing for in-person voting as well. The federal U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) is committed to assisting local election officials administer safe in-person voting operations during this uncertain time. The following resource page includes recommendations for voters so they can be prepared if they decide to vote in-person: [CDC Recommended Precautions for Preventing Spread of COVID-19 in Election Polling Locations, including Cleaning and Disinfection](#) (updated June 22, 2020).

Recommendations for Voters:

- ✿ **Practice [healthy behaviors to protect yourself](#) and slow the spread of COVID-19**
 - [Wash your hands](#) before entering and after leaving the polling location.
 - While in the polling location, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol frequently, especially after touching surfaces frequently touched by multiple people, such as door handles or voting machines.
 - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in lined trash cans.
 - Wear a [mask](#). Children under 2 and anyone who has trouble breathing, is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance should not wear a mask.
 - Maintain at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) of distance from others. It is important to continue [social distancing](#) even when you and others are wearing masks.
- ✿ **Consider voting alternatives available in your jurisdiction that minimize contact.** Voting alternatives that limit the number of people you come in contact with or the amount of time you are in contact with others can help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Check your [local election office website's external icon](#) for more information on voting alternatives available in your jurisdiction.
- ✿ **Do not disinfect or wipe down the voting equipment yourself.** Electronic voting equipment can be damaged by cleaners and disinfectants. If you use hand sanitizer before touching the voting equipment, ensure your hands are completely dry to avoid damaging the equipment. Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer **after** using the voting equipment.
- ✿ **Avoid crowds**
 - Use early voting if available in your jurisdiction.
 - Vote at off-peak times, such as mid-morning.
 - If driving to the polls and your schedule allows, monitor the voter line from your car and join it when it's shorter.
- ✿ **Be prepared**
 - Check your voting location and requirements in advance because they may have changed due to COVID-19.
 - Verify your voter registration information is correct in advance of reporting to the polling location.
 - Contact your [local or state election office's external icon](#) for additional information for voters with disabilities.
 - Make sure you have all necessary documents to avoid delays at the polling location.
 - If possible, complete any registration forms prior to arriving at the polling location.
 - Where possible, review or complete a sample ballot at home to speed the process of casting your ballot at the polling location.
 - Bring your own black ink pen. Bring a stylus or similar object for use with touchscreen voting machines. Check with poll workers before using.



APPENDIX A: PCA AMERICA CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AMERICA PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE 2020

Dear Presidential Candidate:

The future of America depends on what we do for our children today because our children are our future. Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America) was founded in 1972 on the belief that every child should have an equal opportunity for healthy development and no child should suffer from abuse or neglect.

Our nation is recognized for meeting any challenges brought before us, and our position of leadership is greatly impacted by how we support our children. That is why we call on you as candidate for the office of President of the United States of America to start a national conversation about the grave consequences of trauma and the importance of prevention.

The research is clear that investing in families to provide prenatal and early childhood support improves birth outcomes, child development and educational achievement and reduces premature mortality, mental illness, violent crime, substance abuse and addiction, and child abuse and neglect. See Appendix A for facts on child abuse and neglect.

Our extensive network of chapters in nearly 50 states and nearly 600 Healthy Families America® evidence-based home visiting program sites in 38 states, the District of Columbia, and all five U.S. Territories, work alongside us every day to promote the full range of strategies, policies and, programs that make a difference locally, as well as nationally. Collectively, we provide direct services to nearly 150,000 children, adults, and families.

There is nothing more important for the future success of our great nation than to ensure that children and families in every community have the support they need to thrive. In an effort to inform our national networks of your policy priorities and your plans to prioritize children and families, we have developed the enclosed questionnaire. It addresses many of the issues that help promote stable communities, healthy families, and the prevention of child abuse and neglect. We look forward to learning more about your vision for America!

You can find out more about PCA America on our [website](#) and about our signature home visiting program [Healthy Families America](#). Each candidate's response will be posted verbatim on our website and shared widely across our extensive networks. Please return responses to Marissa Morabito, Chief Government Affairs and Policy Officer, Prevent Child Abuse America, mmorabito@preventchildabuse.org.

Prevent Child Abuse America
c/o Marissa Morabito

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2020 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

Promoting healthy child development and preventing ACEs:

Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, defined as traumatic events that occur in childhood (0–17 years), including experiences like violence; abuse or neglect; witnessing violence in the home; having a family member attempt or die by suicide; or, growing up in a household with substance misuse and mental health problems, have been given increased attention. ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood. Preventing ACEs could reduce a large number of health conditions, including up to 21 million cases of depression, 1.9 million cases of heart disease, and impact education, employment, and earnings potential.¹

- ✿ **In your administration’s budget outlay, how would you continue to promote the increases in funding for ACEs studies and implementation of policies that can reduce ACEs that are currently underway at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)? What do you see as effective strategies, programs, or policies to address ACEs?**

Emergency funding and support during COVID-19 pandemic:

The Coronavirus is one of the greatest health and economic challenges in American history. Parenting itself is a challenge– even without the added stress of uncertainty, social isolation, job loss or reduction in wages, or inadequate food and shelter. We urge dedicated funding to support essential services to families that will aid in reducing the stress and anxiety associated with this pandemic and ensure the safety and well-being of our nation’s children.

- ✿ **Access to concrete supports can be instrumental in lowering familial stress and incidence of child abuse and neglect. What policies would you enact or expand to alleviate child and familial suffering during this difficult time?**

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019). Vital signs: Adverse Childhood Experiences: Preventing early trauma to improve adult health. <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/aces/pdf/vs-1105-aces-H.pdf>

Child care and high-quality early childhood education and its role in child abuse and neglect prevention:

Recognizing that quality child care can make a powerful difference in children's development and families' well-being, the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act provides federal funding to states for child care subsidies for low-income families. High-quality or even adequate child care to ensure a child's health and safety is not accessible or affordable for many working families. In fact, many parents, due to nontraditional working hours, cannot find or afford adequate child care. They are often forced to leave their children alone or with caregivers who do not have the capacity to provide safe and appropriate supervision, leaving them vulnerable to endangerment, neglect or abuse. In addition, affordable high-quality child care aids in preventing child abuse and neglect by reducing parental stress and isolation.

✿ **What will you do to make sure that all families have access to affordable, high-quality child care?**

High-quality early childhood programs promote safe and nurturing family environments and focus on the physical, social, and emotional development of young children. This is especially important for children in families with less access to resources, who often face greater obstacles to success. Investing in high-quality early childhood education is one of the most effective ways to break the pervasive cycle of poverty and ensure equal opportunity for all. In fact, there is an estimated cost-benefit ratio of approximately \$7 for every \$1 invested in high-quality early childhood experiences for at-risk children.² Children who are able to participate in early childhood education programs grow to be healthier, graduate from high school and college, and are employed at higher levels.

✿ **Programs that help children learn and grow in their earliest years can change the trajectories of their lives; what would you do to close the opportunity gap for the millions of children now being left behind? How would you increase access to high-quality early childhood education?**

Addressing health disparities and racial inequities in our nation:

With respect to the issue of health disparities and racial inequities in the United States, PCA America believes that to be truly successful, we must actively dismantle the root causes of stress and anxiety that can lead to child abuse, including systemic, structural racism and discrimination. Communities of color have long experienced disparities and inequities related to equal access and quality of care which have contributed to high rates of morbidity and mortality in these communities.

² Heckman, J. J., Moon, S. H., Pinto, R., Savellyev, P. A., & Yavitz, A. (2010). The Rate of Return to the High/Scope Perry Preschool Program. *Journal of Public Economics*, 94(1-2), 114-128.

- ✿ **How would you treat and address the health disparities and racial inequities in the United States and work to prevent them in the future?**

Maternal mortality and morbidity:

PCA America is concerned about recent studies demonstrating the high incidence of maternal mortality among women of color, and firmly believes that voluntary home visiting is an important tool to address this serious health issue. Evidence-based home visiting promotes healthy development, addresses health risks and prevents future health issues for women and their children. Moreover, home visiting contributes to the prevention and reduction of the impacts of negative early childhood experiences, improving health trajectories for mothers and infants alike. It also targets social determinants of health affecting families, such as social support, parental stress, access to health care, income and poverty status, and environmental conditions.³

- ✿ **What measures would you take to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity?**

Expansion and increased funding for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program:

One of PCA America's top priorities is to support the expansion and funding of home visiting programs, including Healthy Families America, an evidence-based multi-generation model that demonstrates powerful outcomes for mothers and babies. Currently, however, home visiting and MIECHV program funding reaches only an estimated 3% of families in need.

- ✿ **What plans does your administration have to coordinate closely with governors, local government entities and local communities and non-profit organizations to ensure that there is increased funding for MIECHV that serves all children and families in need?**

Strengthen economic supports for families:

Paid family leave policies help working people care for a new child without jeopardizing their economic security and are significantly associated with reductions in hospitalizations for abusive head trauma, higher rates of successful breastfeeding and maternal health, and lower rates of family stressors and risk factors. Studies show that paid leave improves worker retention and reduces turnover costs citing that new mothers who take paid leave are more likely than mothers who take unpaid leave or no leave to be working again after childbirth⁴ and return to the same employer.⁵

³ Artiga, S., Hinton, E., (2018). Beyond Health Care: The Role of Social Determinants in Promoting Health and Health Equity.

⁴ Houser, L., & Vartanian, T. P. (2012). Pay matters: The positive economic impact of paid family leave for families, businesses and the public. Center for Women and Work.

⁵ Laughlin, L. (2011). Maternity leave and employment patterns of first-time mothers: 1961-2008. U.S. Census Bureau.

- ✿ **In what ways do you support paid family and medical leave for workers, and, if so, what is your vision for a substantive paid family leave law?**

Creating a shared vision and public health approach to reduce violence:

Public health is what we, as a society, do collectively to assure the conditions in which (all) people can be healthy. The focus of public health is on the health, safety and well-being of entire populations. A public health approach also emphasizes input from diverse sectors including health, education, social services, justice, policy and the private sector. The United States needs a systematic approach to creating and sustaining public and political will for investment in healthy child development. This starts with a shared vision for America's children, recognizing the interconnectedness and shared root causes of violence and early life adversity.

- ✿ **What are examples of public health strategies, programs or policies that you would support or enact to prevent violence?**

Poverty and child health in the United States:

One in five babies and toddlers in the U.S. live with families whose incomes are below or near the poverty line. Our persistently high level of child poverty proves we are not doing enough to ensure that every child has a fair shot at success. Moreover, due to COVID-19 and significant rises in unemployment and poverty, 25% of children nationally are projected to experience food insecurity. The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine released a landmark consensus study on child poverty that confirms that child poverty is a solvable problem when there is the political will to address it.⁶

- ✿ **What are your plans to address poverty and what do you see as the best way to alleviate the effects of poverty on very young children?**

Food Insecurity:

Tightened work requirements for the federal food stamp program has eliminated thousands from benefits. However, we know that when kids get the nutrition they need, they grow up healthier, are ready to learn.

- ✿ **What plans do you have to address food insecurity for low-income populations and those that are one incident away from not being able to put food on the table?**
- ✿ **What are your plans to reduce the stigma of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participation; raise awareness and understanding**

⁶ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2019. A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25246>.

of food insecurity; and, amplify compassion for individuals and communities in need of assistance?

Medicaid:

Medicaid is a federal and state program that helps with medical costs for some people with limited income and resources. As the primary health care program for low-income pregnant women and children, states seek Medicaid funding for their home visiting programs because these programs successfully promote positive health and wellbeing outcomes among these vulnerable populations.

✿ **What changes would you seek in Medicaid, which currently covers nearly 67 million (one in five) Americans, a large portion that are children?**

Federal/State partnerships & Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) grants:

[Community Based Child Abuse Prevention](#) (CBCAP) grants provide grants to all 50 states for the sole purpose of preventing child abuse and neglect, including key services like state helplines, voluntary home visiting programs, parent support programs, baby pantries, distribution of food and medication, family resources centers, child care, respite care services, services specific to domestic violence, and coordination and connection with mental health and substance use services, among others. Additionally, CBCAP supports community-based services that are trusted by families and its infrastructure helps to ensure that funding gets to the communities that need it most. Very few resources are allocated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and instead large sums of money are spent each year on child welfare services, often after child maltreatment has occurred. Nearly \$30 billion is spent a year on child welfare services⁷ yet, CBCAP services – the largest dedicated federal source for primary prevention funding for child abuse and neglect – is funded at a substantially lower rate of just under \$56 million a year.

✿ **How would your administration ensure that CBCAP is funded at appropriate levels to meet the expansive mission of the law and support upstream prevention of child abuse and neglect directly in communities?**

Immigration Policy and Child Separation:

As a nation, we must set the highest standard possible in our unwavering pursuit to prevent the abuse and neglect of children. PCA America recognizes the proven science surrounding toxic stress and the lifelong negative consequences trauma can have on a child and their brain development. Data overwhelmingly demonstrates that putting a child in a confusing and frightening situation, away from their parents or caregivers, can, and will lead to long-term, negative health outcomes. Despite the June 2018 emergency declaration of an end to

⁷ Rosinsky, K. & Williams, C. (2018). Child Welfare Financing SFY 2016: A survey of federal, state, and local expenditures, Child Trends.

immigration policies that lead to familial separation, more than 2,000 unaccompanied children have been expelled from the United States. Reports that children continue to be separated from their families is a concerning trend and furthers the traumatic experiences for these children.

✿ **What is your position on immigration policies that separate children from their families?**

Appendix A: Child Abuse and Neglect Facts

- In the United States, at least one in seven children experience child abuse and/or neglect annually.⁸
- Every day, an estimated four to eight children die from abuse and neglect.⁹ Children who die from abuse and neglect are overwhelmingly young; approximately one-half are less than a year old, and 75% are under three years of age.
- According to the most recent brain research, abuse and neglect of children in the early years negatively impacts the formation of pathways in the brain that are essential to later learning and growth. Victims of child maltreatment are at high risk for a host of adverse short and long-term outcomes, including chronic health problems, mental health issues, developmental delays, substance abuse, poor educational well-being, and future involvement with the juvenile and criminal justice systems.
- A recent study estimates that each victim of child abuse and neglect will incur expenses in excess of \$830,928 over their lives in treating the short- and long-term consequences associated with the abuse. These include areas such as child welfare, juvenile justice, special education, and productivity losses.¹⁰
- The high costs of child abuse and neglect include increased use of foster care and child welfare costs, increased short- and long-term health and mental health care costs, and long-term costs in areas including juvenile justice and later adult criminal justice.
- Child abuse and neglect impacts everyone – it occurs across the socioeconomic and geographic spectrum. 37%, or nearly 4 out of 10 children, will experience a child protection services (CPS) investigation by the age 18.¹¹ And, an estimated 674,000

⁸ Finkelhor, D., Turner, H. A., Shattuck, A., & Hamby, S. L. (2015). Prevalence of childhood exposure to violence, crime, and abuse: Results from the National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 169(8), 746-754.

⁹ Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities. (2016). [Within our reach](#): A national strategy to eliminate child abuse and neglect fatalities. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

¹⁰ Klika, J.B., Rosenzweig, J., & Merrick, M. (2020). Economic burden of known cases of child maltreatment from 2018 in each state. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 37, 227-234.

¹¹ Kim, H., Wildeman, C., Jonson-Reid, M., & Drake, B. (2017). Lifetime Prevalence of Investigating Child Maltreatment Among US Children. *American journal of public health*, 107(2), 274-280. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2016.303545>

children were determined to be victims of child maltreatment with millions of children having reports of abuse and neglect each year.¹²

- Research and evidence confirm the importance of protective factors to buffer families from child abuse and neglect. Child abuse and neglect occurs in all socio-economic backgrounds of our country. There are ways to decrease it and there are strategies that can stop intergenerational abuse. Prevention is possible.
- Evidence-based home visiting programs that provide parenting support and education, such as Healthy Families America, improve both child and parent well-being. This strategy strengthens the relationship between a parent and a child, leads to long term improvements in a child's ability to learn and later success in school and life. Evidence-based home visiting is an effective approach to child abuse prevention and solidifies the importance of early childhood development programs with impacts that reach into adulthood.

¹² <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/media/press/2019/child-abuse-neglect-data-released>