

THE FAMILY SECURITY AGENDA

Families are at the nexus of America's present political upheaval, yet progressives have spun their wheels with diffuse and granular policies. A cohesive family agenda is the foundation for strong, self-sufficient families and a healthy economy. It is also a cornerstone of the integrated progressive agenda needed to move our nation forward.

The Center for Partnership Studies' **Family Security Agenda** provides hard working, self-respecting American families real support for the work of caring for children, seniors, and other family members and prepares the next generation with an education that can meet the challenges of our new, automated world. Truly valuing Family, the **Security Agenda** will greatly reduce the immediate expenses of healthcare, addiction, crime, courts, prisons, and lost human potential that often fall to the tax-paying public.

Strengthening America's Economy by Strengthening its Families

- **People must be cared for** -- *Most of the 18 years required for full human development take place within the family and neuroscience shows us that the early years are especially important. Sound early childhood and educational policies must be a top political and social priority.*
- **Our values are shaped by our family experiences** -- *Families are the primary transmitters of values. It is in families that people develop the core belief systems that determine how we engage in all facets of life, from the personal to the political.*
- **Well-developed citizens are critical to successful democratic societies** -- *People are the real wealth of nations. Families and education contribute significantly to the development of authentic, creative human beings, preparing them to create solutions to the challenges of the postindustrial era. This is essential not only for our nation's well being but is a prerequisite for American competitiveness in today's global economy.*
- **Domestic Tranquility is the Front Line of our National Security.** *While military strength is critical, our national security is even more fundamentally grounded in its self-respecting and productive citizenry that understands and advances the values of a successful democracy.*

Key Components of the Family Security Agenda

Recognizing the economic value of the care work provided for free in families and low-wage jobs, and making effective education a priority, are key to reducing family stress, cutting through cycles of poverty, and producing the "high quality human capital" needed for the new post-industrial age.

- **Home Caregiver Tax Credits will reward and give visibility to the countless Americans who do this vital work and often live below the poverty line.** America's families, especially the "sandwich generation" squeezed between caring for children and elders while holding down a job, deserve respect and compensation for their essential contributions.

- ***State funded Child Care.*** Neuroscience shows that children’s early years are critical for developing their capacities as adults. Well-trained and well-paid licensed caregivers, as well as tax and other incentives for employers to provide good childcare, are required. We must show that this directly benefits children, families, the economy, and society.
- ***Universal Paid Family Leave for Part- and Full-Time Employees.*** This includes family and medical leave for both fathers and mothers of babies as well as for caregivers for the elderly, as provided by every other developed nation.
- ***New Economic Measures such as Social Wealth Economic Indicators that Include the Real Value of Care and Education, including Caregiving Work Done in Households.*** Statistical analyses in the U.S. and other nations show that unpaid work is the largest contributor to economic productivity, yet GDP fails to include this work. To guide sound policies, we need a Social Wealth Economic Index (based on the Center for Partnership Studies’ Social Wealth Economic Indicators) that demonstrates the enormous economic return from investing in this work.
- ***Pro-Business Is Pro-Family.*** The 2014 White House Summit on Working Families gave an initial indication of how businesses benefit from caring family policies. We can reframe the debate by convening such businesses across the country, leapfrogging past the old debates over economy v. care to ones of a stronger economy through caring policies.
- ***Retirement Security for Caregivers.*** Today, Social Security only covers work in “the market”, therefore women over 65, most of them caregivers in homes, are twice as poor as men. We must recognize the value of the work of caregiving in families through changes in our Social Security system. This is not only fair but also practical, as health and other social costs for people living in poverty are high.
- ***Family Caregiver Training.*** Caregivers deserve the best available knowledge and skills. This includes parenting education that prepares them to understand stages of child development and learn the skills needed to help their children grow up as competent and caring adults.
- ***Quality Education and Increased Pay for Teachers.*** Next to parents, schoolteachers contribute more to children’s development than any other group. We must invest in this profession so that our children and our economy can flourish.
- ***Living Wage Legislation at the Local, State, and Federal Levels.*** Adequate recompense for care work must include equal pay for work of equal value. This is not only just; it is essential as our elderly population soars. The living-wage debate has narrowly focused on fast-food jobs, which will continue to evaporate as artificial intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IOT) advance. But Care work will grow, as it depends on human-to-human skills and relationships, for which there is no artificial substitute.
- ***Sources of Funding for Americans ‘ number one Priority: The Family.*** Funding for the Family Security Agenda can be supported by taxing and/or penalizing activities that are harmful or useless for our nation’s well being. Some of the recommended sources of revenue include closing the carried interest loophole, enacting luxury goods purchase taxes, re-assessing and increasing civil penalties for businesses that engage in activities that harm consumers.