

EMPOWERING PEOPLE, EMERGING STRONGER

AFP's policy roadmap for reimagining the role of government and empowering people to create a stronger, more prosperous future.

In 2022, America continues to face unprecedented challenges as we work to recover stronger from the pandemic and adapt to a transforming economy. Mounting inflation, supply chain gridlock, and labor shortages have exacerbated the ongoing battle to defeat COVID and find a new sense of normal. AFP's policy roadmap, *Empowering People, Emerging Stronger*, lays out a series of key priorities that will help unlock America's potential by reimagining the role of government and empowering people to seize the moment and drive progress. This is not intended to be a comprehensive list, but rather a starting point where we see the greatest opportunity.

Build a Thriving Economy

A thriving, adaptable society is the foundation that enables every individual to discover and deploy their unique gifts and talents. This is achieved when unnecessary barriers are removed, and free people are empowered to solve the challenges they see in their communities and across the country. That means lower burdens of taxes and debt, a free labor market that offers opportunity and flexibility, and an inclusive process to ensure government services are providing the value Americans deserve. To that end, there are three key principles we should commit to today:

- » Congress should fund the government's core competencies with the least burdensome sources of revenue, not by piling debt on future generations.
- » Workers should be free to seek employment opportunities that use their unique skills to contribute to society, and businesses should have the flexibility to offer choices to diverse potential workers and clients.
- » Congress needs — but does not have — coherent and inclusive budget and policy processes to equip lawmakers to effectively adjust priorities, evaluate tradeoffs, and ensure that taxpayer resources finance the most valuable services for the American people.

Policy Solutions:

Promote a tax system that expands opportunity.

- » Make pro-growth provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act permanent, such as low marginal income tax rates, full and immediate expensing, and higher death-tax exemption levels.
- » Eliminate the SALT deduction or cap the deduction at the lowest amount possible. The SALT Deduction amounts to a subsidy for largely wealthy individuals in high-tax states that neither the people nor the states need.
- » Stop picking winners and losers through the tax code: Congress should end the practice of reauthorizing tax extenders, which are narrow tax breaks for special interests.

Get people back to work and meet consumer supply chain needs in the changing economy.

- » **The Modern Worker Empowerment Act (S. 526/H.R. 1523)** by Sen. Tim Scott and Rep. Elise Stefanik.
- » **The Working Families Flexibility Act (S. 247/H.R. 1980)** by Sen. Mike Lee and Rep. Mary Miller.
- » **The Save Local Business Act (S. 1636/H.R. 3185)** by Sens. Roger Marshall and Tim Scott, Reps. James Comer and Virginia Foxx.

Fix the broken budget system.

- » **Prevent Government Shutdowns Act (S. 2727)** by Sens. James Lankford and Maggie Hassan
- » Adopt a holistic “unified budget” process. [\[Read more\]](#)
- » Enact reasonable budget targets — and automatically increase the debt limit if met.

Learn More:

- » [Congress needs better budget approaches](#)
- » [Taxes: Promoting economic growth and opportunity](#)

Restore Congress’ Policymaking Leadership

Today the executive branch is instituting one of the most aggressive expansions of the administrative state in history. This approach effectively removes accountability and bypasses the will of the people by taking their elected representatives out of the equation – taking power away from Congress and their constituents and moving it to unelected administrative agencies and bureaucrats. Our country deserves more accountability and transparency in the policymaking process, and there are several major opportunities for Congress to reassert its policymaking role in 2022:

- » Congress should take back its Article I constitutional authority and support policies to reform our regulatory system,
- » Resist top-down environmental and climate regulations that constrain consumer choice, and
- » Remove barriers to housing and land use that drive up costs and slow economic mobility.

Policy Solutions:

Push back on top-down executive branch overreach. Congress should use the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to challenge the Biden administration through public comments and potential legal challenges around actions at DOL/ OSHA, NLRB, EPA, SEC, and other agencies. These actions have a significant economic impact on millions of Americans and Congress should have a say in their implementation.

Eliminate environmental and climate regulations that constrain choice and hurt the most vulnerable.

- » **The Strategic Production Response Act (S. 3287/H.R. 6235)** by Sen. John Barrasso and Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers
- » **The UNSHACKLE Act (S. 717/ H.R. 3814)** by Sen. Mike Lee and Reps. Liz Cheney and Don Bacon

Remove burdensome financial regulations that limit access to capital.

- » **The Encouraging Public Offerings Act (H.R. 294)** by Rep. Ted Budd
- » **The SEED Act (H.R. 5458)** by Rep. Patrick McHenry
- » **The Clarity for Digital Tokens Act (H.R. 5496)** by Rep. Patrick McHenry

Reform land use regulations.

- » **The Yes In My Backyard Act (S. 1614/H.R. 3198)** by Sens. Todd Young and Brian Schatz and Rep. Derek Kilmer

Protect the consumer welfare standard and defend status quo antitrust laws.

- » **The Tougher Enforcement Against Monopolies Act (S. 2039)** by Sen. Mike Lee

Modernize our harmful regulatory state.

- » **The REINS Act (S. 68/H.R. 1776)** by Sens. Rand Paul and Lee and Rep. Kat Cammack

Learn More:

- » [Promoting a bottom-up approach to energy and the environment](#)
- » [Reform burdensome regulations that limit access to capital](#)
- » [Reform land use regulations that drive up the cost of housing](#)
- » [Push back on executive overreach](#)
- » [Work flexibility in the 21st century](#)

Provide a Personal Option for Health Care

American health care is some of the best in the world, but it is too costly and there is too much bureaucracy and paperwork. A government takeover of health care, like Medicare for All or a Public Option, would only worsen things and make it even harder for patients to see the providers they trust. Instead, we should keep what works in the current system and fix what is broken with a personal option. A personal option removes barriers that impede access to coverage and care, offering Americans more choice and control over their own health care and trusting them to select the options that are right for them and their families – without new taxes. It includes proven, bipartisan reforms such as expanding health savings accounts, increasing telehealth access, promoting price transparency, and giving patients more access to affordable, life-saving drugs, among others.

Policy Solutions:

Empower patients to be consumers.

» **The Personalized Care Act (S.153/H.R.725)** by Sen. Ted Cruz and Rep. Chip Roy

Remove barriers between patients and doctors.

» **The CONNECT for Health Act of 2021 (H.R.2903)** by Reps. Mike Thompson, David Schweikert, and Bill Johnson

» **The Patient Access to Higher Quality Health Care Act (H.R.1330)** by Rep. Michael Burgess

Learn More:

» [Empower clinicians to care](#)

» [Empower health care consumers](#)

» [Expand health care facility capacity](#)

» [Expand telehealth access](#)

End a Failed Approach to Addiction and Substance Use

America spends more than \$46 billion in taxpayer money annually to maintain our criminal-justice-first approach to addiction and substance use. Neither trends in the use of illicit drugs nor the black-market have been significantly impacted by this approach and overdose deaths only continue to rise. Law enforcement agencies have shifted more and more resources away from their core mission of solving and preventing property and violent crime and toward drug enforcement efforts. Police now arrest someone as a suspect in a historically low percentage of violent (42 percent) and property (14 percent) crimes – leaving too many victims without justice and jeopardizing public safety. After decades of trying the same tactics without improved results, it is time for our country to approach the problems of addiction and harmful substance use differently.

Policy Solutions:

Restore State Autonomy Over Cannabis Policy

» **States Reform Act (H.R. 5977)** by Rep. Nancy Mace

End Unjust Sentencing Practices

» **EQUAL Act (H.R. 1693 / S. 79)** by Sens. Rob Portman, Cory Booker, Reps. Kelly Armstrong, and Hakeem Jeffries

» **Prohibiting Punishment of Acquitted Conduct Act (H.R. 1621 / S. 601)** by Sens. Richard Durbin, Chuck Grassley, Reps. Steve Cohen, and Kelly Armstrong

Remove Barriers to a True Second Chance

» **Kenneth P. Thompson Begin Again Act (H.R. 1924 / S. 2502)** by Sens. John Cornyn, Chris Coons, Reps. Van Taylor, and Hakeem Jeffries

» **Driving for Opportunity Act (H.R. 2453 / S. 998)** by Sens. Chris Coons, Roger Wicker, Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick, and Mary Scanlon

Learn More:

- » [States Reform Act](#)
- » [EQUAL Act overview](#)
- » [Myths vs. Facts about the Driving for Opportunity Act](#)
- » [Begin Again Act overview](#)

Strengthen and Modernize America's Immigration System

Our country should be open to those who are searching for opportunities to contribute and responsive to the demand of U.S. families and businesses. Our legal immigration system must be paired with border security reforms that increase personnel in understaffed areas, update malfunctioning security technology, and improve incentives in our asylum system. Such solutions are overdue and widely popular with voters yet continue to be held up by partisanship. We need immigration reform that leverages border security and legal immigration as complementary, not competing, objectives.

Policy Solutions:

Pass a border security and Dreamer solution.

- » **Bipartisan Border Solutions Act (S. 1358/H.R. 2839)** by Sens. John Cornyn and Kyrsten Sinema, and Reps. Henry Cuellar and Tony Gonzalez
- » A solution that provides a pathway to permanent legal status for Dreamers that meet a strict set of requirements.

Expand legal channels.

- » **Farm Workforce Modernization Act (H.R. 1603)** by Reps. Zoe Lofgren and Dan Newhouse

Learn More:

- » [Creating a pathway for Dreamers](#)
- » [Strengthen our border](#)

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