

A **NEW DEAL** FOR **YOUTH**



OUR VISION. OUR DEMANDS.

#WhyWeCantWait

ABOUT **A NEW DEAL** FOR **YOUTH**

A New Deal for Youth is a youth-led, youth-centered effort advocating for the creation of new systems, policies, investments and structures that reimagine life for young people in America.

Through defining and advancing a transformational and holistic agenda that addresses the urgent challenges young people are facing due to COVID-19, the economic downturn and structural racism, A New Deal for Youth Changemakers, partners, and allies are developing visionary policy proposals and community solutions that help shape public discourse and that decision-makers at the federal, state, and local levels and in the private sector can implement to address this crisis.

OUR AMBITION

The New Deal for Youth Policy Platform advances radical and interconnected policy ideas that transform current systems, and that center racial, gender, and social justice. Our policies seek to redefine whose expertise, experiences, and systems of knowledge are valued, understanding that young people not only deserve a seat at the decision-making table, but that we can also shake the table and create the menu. We believe in actively combatting classist and racist systems, championing models that empower communities, and amplifying the voices of young people as decision-makers in the future of our greater society.

REPARATIONS

We champion a holistic and ongoing approach to reparations that redresses both historical and ongoing traumas, including land theft, slavery, environmental racism, mass incarceration, forced migration, voter suppression, and family separation.

LIBERATION

We believe in the liberation of all peoples, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, or immigration status. When the most marginalized are liberated, everyone is liberated.

DECriminalIZATION

Our identities and existence should not be criminalized. We must end the criminalization of young people of color, LGBTQIA+ young people, young people with a disabilities, neurodiverse young people, all immigrant communities, youth currently or formerly in foster care, and young people experiencing a mental health crisis.

ABOLITION

All systems that harm the safety, wellbeing, or prosperity of our communities should be abolished. We must imagine and create new systems centered around healing, liberation, and justice.

A person wearing a dark jacket and a beanie is holding a megaphone and speaking at a protest. They are standing in front of a crowd of people, some of whom are also holding signs. The background is slightly blurred, showing more people and what appears to be a street or public square.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND OPPORTUNITY

A New Deal for Youth envisions a world where the economy is designed to uplift all young people and abolish structural barriers; race, gender, ability, or citizenship status does not determine access to opportunities; and policies support young people and their families in times of scarcity, whether that's food, housing, or financial assistance.

DEMANDS.

1. We demand funding in youth development, education, workforce, and job training programs for middle and high school age youth and young adults, where young people can learn “soft” skills and have paid internships, apprenticeships, and job opportunities especially in the green economy and STEM sector.

2. We demand an end to the criminalization of students of color and push out policies, and better schools with the resources they need to achieve educational equity (qualified teachers and staff, books, safe and clean buildings, programs and community partnerships with colleges and community-based organizations).

3. We demand free college opportunities, the elimination of student debt, and more support to access postsecondary education (FAFSA support, guidance counselors/navigators, and financial aid for undocumented students).

4. We demand more resources for startups, entrepreneurship development, and access to financial capital and education targeted to communities of color.

5. We demand youth representation in decision-making positions of federally funded programs that serve youth and intentional incorporation of young people in leadership positions in non-profit organizations, state and local initiatives.

6. We demand an end to rental discrimination, more affordable housing options (from temporary shelter to rentals to home ownership) targeted to young people under age 35, and access to housing to end youth homelessness.

7. We demand an end to subminimum wages (youth, people with disabilities), livable wages, and workers unions for young adults, especially young people of color in the workplace.

HEALING AND WELLBEING

We envision a world where young people have the opportunity to heal, develop, and are positioned to thrive. In the New Deal for Youth, healing and well-being becomes awareness, responsiveness, support, and accessibility. This looks like destigmatizing mental health to increase access for everyone and including practices that are outside western medicine.

DEMANDS.

- 1.** We demand more access to mental health resources in more spaces including school, community, virtual, and any other spaces that are meaningful to young people.
- 2.** We demand that more folks' life experiences determine both how real needs are identified and how care is provided.
- 3.** We demand an end to systems, industries, and industrial complexes that undermine healing and perpetuate stigma.
- 4.** We demand an end to systemic racism and all forms of oppression in mental health systems.
- 5.** We demand change in the way people think about mental health to be broader; this new understanding must recognize the role of life experiences in shaping mental health, that mental health is both more than a diagnosis and includes a full range of diagnoses, and that art, music, nature, spirituality, and organizing are as much a part of healing as clinical treatment.
- 6.** We demand new structures that provide resources and create a world where personhood is a priority, meaning that people have the ability to be safe, to be their full self, and that it's okay to not be okay.





JUSTICE AND SAFE COMMUNITIES

We must re-envision what safety and justice is with abolition at the center. Where we are all safe and accepted without judgement.

DEMANDS.

- 1.** We demand a national community-based strategy to ensure every community has a baseline of core services that allow young people to heal, develop and thrive; that communities have resources to make their homes safe, ensure their basic needs are met, and that families have access to quality jobs, education, and health care.
- 2.** We demand an investment in evidence-based violence prevention services that reimagine what safety is and that holistically strengthen economic opportunities for youth and young adults living in communities, especially youth and young adults impacted by the criminal justice system.
- 3.** We demand communities that are equally beneficial for everyone who lives there. Communities where community members do not have to hide and where everyone is safe.
- 4.** We demand an end to youth incarceration and the criminalization of youth, especially the school to prison and foster care to prison pipeline. We demand that any efforts to reform do not move towards other forms of surveillance including ankle monitors and community supervision.
- 5.** We demand an end to school resource officers and to police as first responders; and instead, the presence of health and wellbeing experts that support our youth, especially those that provide emotional support for young people who have been impacted by violence.
- 6.** We demand a large-scale reallocation of resources away from police and mass incarceration and towards education, career pathways, and healing.
- 7.** We demand a restoration of communities of color through holistic investments in all the supports young people need, including free youth community and equity centers, and accessible opportunities for young people to be safe, have fun and express themselves.



DEMOCRACY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

In A New Deal for Youth, Democracy and Civic Engagement means authentically engaging youth and recognizing our power by centering our voices and collective voting bloc not just during national elections but year-round in our local communities, at the state level, and nationally. Civic engagement is challenging and changing our current systems to adapt to the needs of our communities and in doing so ensure that everyone has a right to vote, run for elected office, and be represented by our government so that elected officials work for us and not their corporate interests. We envision a world where youth and young adults are recognized as capable and competent to be in leadership positions, lead systems change and have the resources in place to make the voting process easy and accessible for all.

DEMANDS.

- 1.** We demand an overhaul in democratic infrastructure that is designed around the needs of each local community and prioritizes accessibility and ease in voting. For example: increase polling places proportionate to the local population, national same-day registration at voting sites, provide vote-by-mail as an option, ensure voting cards and mail-in ballots can be accessed in multiple languages, extend early voting periods, and restore voting rights for all citizens.
- 2.** We demand public funding for the U.S Postal Service to ensure mail-in ballots reach election offices in time and every vote is counted and securely delivered.
- 3.** We demand public funding from the Department of Education to strengthen and revamp modern civics education across public schools. The curriculum would focus on informing students about policy differences and how our government operates in the passage of laws, encouraging service-learning in our communities, registering all graduating seniors to vote, and providing an overview of the role of local elected officials.
- 4.** We demand an end to gerrymandering, voting ID laws, citizens united (super PACs), and the revolving door in Washington of Members of Congress turned lobbyists for corporate interests.
- 5.** We demand a national holiday for our general elections to celebrate our civic duty of voting and ensure everyone has the opportunity to participate in same-day voting without taking time off work.
- 6.** We demand each state support and elect a youth congress to diversify and mold future leaders. By creating a youth congress, youth will have a secured appointed seat at the table and represent their local districts by proposing legislation, issuing policy statements, and bringing awareness to local youth issues.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Environmental justice is rooted in acknowledging the disproportionate environmental burden that marginalized communities bear, including but not limited to the harmful effects of climate change, urban planning, and the desecration of sacred land. Environmental justice is an intersectional issue area, dealing with social, racial, and economic inequities, revealing the need to work towards the just distribution of decision-making and resources to foster authentic community-oriented solutions. Additionally, environmental justice assumes the necessity of giving land back to Indigenous Peoples.

DEMANDS.

1. We demand Indigenous self-determination.

2. We demand new decision-making structures that shift power to Indigenous and other marginalized communities. To achieve this, we must:

- End racial capitalism and hold corporations accountable; and
- Center Indigenous systems of knowledge, recognizing Indigenous communities as the original stewards of this land.

3. We demand a regenerative not an extractive economy. To achieve this, we must:

- End exploitative practices that take labor, resources, wellbeing, and land from BIPOC communities; and
- Create new practices that allow communities to thrive in harmony with nature, focusing on climate-resilient practices, centering care and healing, and long-term sustainability.

4. We demand the creation of quality green jobs, training, and educational opportunities that prioritize the needs of Black and Brown communities.

5. We demand access to healing-centered, culturally responsive physical and mental health care that responds to the health impacts of climate change, ensuring that new policies don't create or exacerbate health inequities.

IMMIGRATION JUSTICE

Immigration is beautiful and natural; immigrants are essential to this country. Migration in search of new opportunities has happened for thousands of years and only became unsafe when systems were created that stigmatized and oppressed it. Failed and discriminatory policies induce forced migration, whether it be Indigenous peoples forced off their land, people fleeing violence from US-sponsored military campaigns in their countries, or climate refugees impacted by failed global climate policies. Immigration justice means the collective liberation of immigrants and all people, dismantling systems of oppression, and ensuring access to basic human rights. Immigration justice means language justice. However, in order to move forward ethically we must also recognize, acknowledge, and take accountability for the harms our immigration system has enacted.

DEMANDS.

- 1.** We demand the liberation of all immigrants.
- 2.** We demand that all immigrant communities be supported and recognized without justifying their existence to their labor and their humanity to their trauma.
- 3.** We demand dismantling oppressive systems that have harmed all immigrant communities and investing in healing-centered systems that humanize all immigrant communities, including through cultural healing and language justice.
- 4.** We demand providing all immigrant communities with rights, opportunities, and privileges including access to living wages, health care, education, and citizenship.
- 5.** We demand the US be held accountable for contributing to the failed and discriminatory policies and campaigns that incurred forced migration, reparations to all immigrant communities for the harms enacted, and assurances that we will not create new systems or fund existing systems that perpetuate harm.

CHANGEMAKERS



**AARON
MACK**



**AIDAN
MCCLOUD**



**ALEXIS
OBINNA**



**ANIYA
BUTLER**



**BRENDA V.
PEREZ AMADOR**



**BRUCE
WILSON**



**CECIL
HILL JR.**



**CHRISTIAN
SUTTON**



**CONNOR
KALAHIKI**



**DAEJANAE
DAY**



**DANIEL
ROSEBUD**



**DARLECIA
DUBLIN**



**DARRION
JOHNSON**



**DAVID
BAKER**



**FREDDY
LOPEZ**



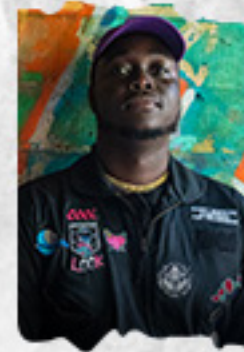
**ISABEL
CORONADO**



**JAZMINE
BANKS**



**JAZMINE
WILDCAT**



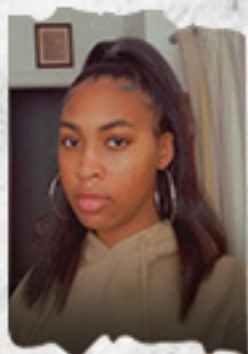
**JOSEPH
YUSUF**



**KADESHA
MITCHELL**



**KAITLYN
BAEZA**



**KAYLA
KNIGHT-BRANCH**



**KAYLYN
GOODE**



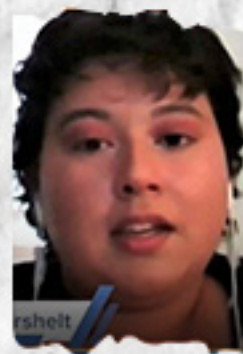
**LAWREL
BUTLER**



**LUIS
HERNANDEZ**



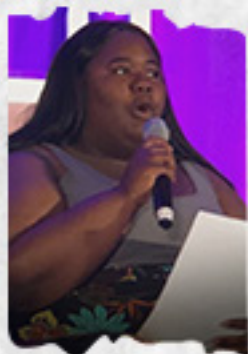
**LUKEE
FORBES**



**MARISSA
HOWDERSHOLT**



**MARS
BROWN**



**MEIYIA
COLEMAN**



**OUMOU
KABA**



**PACO
MEDINA**



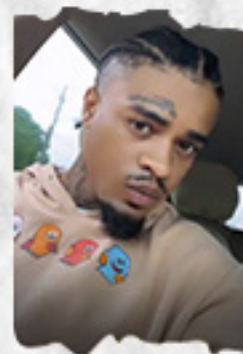
**RYAN
DALTON**



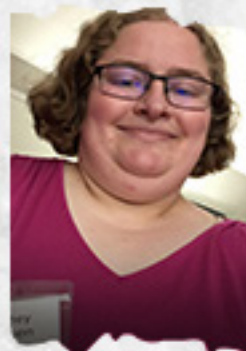
**SIXTO
CANCEL**



**SMITHA
GUNDAVAJHALA**



**TERRENCE
WOODS**



**WHITNEY
LEE**



**WILLIAM
MCCLAIN**



**WISDOM
COLE**



**YUSEF
PRESLEY**

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