Egalitarianist Party Platform

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By: Ellie Robert, Mikayla Hunt, Jaden Price & Christina Yoo

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# Health Insurance Reform

 Egalitarianists recognize the importance of, and essential need for, quality health care for every American. We believe health care should be a right, not a privilege in America. Therefore, we believe that health care should be accessible to all Americans.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) strives to reduce the cost of healthcare and make it more accessible and we support this policy and hope to expand its reach to more Americans. But, the ACA could be improved. We believe instead of fining (averaging $470) those without healthcare that we should focus more on expanding universal healthcare and decreasing the cost of fines. We recognize that because some Americans would rather pay the fine than get healthcare, this tactic hasn’t been a significant influencer to obtain health insurance.

Currently, 15 percent of elderly Americans are covered by Medicare. Egalitarianists believe Medicare should continue to be offered, but information about Medicare and how to access it should be more explicitly explained to those who need it. We also recognize the importance of Medicaid for the poor and disabled and support this policy as well.

We believe healthcare is a necessity even undocumented immigrants should have access to. Currently, undocumented immigrants have a lower rate of health insurance coverage than documented immigrants or U.S citizens. Today, federal law bans undocumented immigrants from accessing Medicaid. Egalitarianists hope to expand emergency Medicaid access for undocumented immigrants.

Healthcare should be accessible to all people living within the U.S. Your zip code, race, income, or ability to work should not define the care you can acquire.

# Gay Marriage/Gay Rights

Egalitarianists understand the importance of equal rights for everyone, especially when it comes to the LGBTQ+ community in America. We believe the LGBTQ+ community should be granted the same rights as everyone else and for gay marriage to continue to be legal.

We believe in rights supporting the LGBTQ+ to promote equality, but also because it now reflects the attitude of a majority of Americans. In May of 2018, a poll showed that 67 percent (a majority) of Americans approve of gay marriage. But the right for gay couples to get married is not all that needs to be protected. In 2008, a poll recorded that about one in seven members of the LGBTQ+ community said they lived in fear of homophobic violence. It is not acceptable to discriminate against members of the LGBTQ+ or to harm them for their beliefs. We need to ensure that members of the LGBTQ+ are protected under law.

People’s religious beliefs may cause them to see gay marriage or overall rights for members of the LGBTQ+ community as nonessential. In a 2017 case, *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*, the Supreme Court ruled that a Colorado baker could refuse the right to make a cake specifically for a gay wedding. Egalitarianists see this as a clear act of discrimination which should not be allowed. In light of this, and other controversy, we believe that gay marriage should not depend on approval from (a) religion(s), but depending on the couple's choice of marriage. If a same-sex couple wishes to be married, no officiate, church, public area, store, etc. should decline them of their choice, under discrimination toward a same-sex couple.

HB2, or the “Bathroom Bill” in North Carolina, excluded transgender individuals from accessing the bathroom of their preferred sex. Although this bill was repealed, Egalitarianists want to prevent a law like this from happening again. We view this bill as discriminatory and unnecessary. In fact, there has never been a case of a transgender individual harming another person in the bathroom.

Egalitarianists understand that these ideas are still controversial, but we believe that others will recognize the need for equality for all Americans. We can make the change so our LGBTQ+ community can feel free and most importantly, accepted.

# Gun Control/Gun Rights

Egalitarianists believe in the importance of safety and protection in the U.S. Firearms, and their low regulation, have sparked fear in many Americans. People worry about their safety in schools, places of employment, restaurants, and public places due to firearms. Police brutality also continues to affect Americans, especially those who are African-American. Egalitarianists want to work towards securing safety in America when it comes to firearms.

We believe enforcing gun control will promote safety in our country. In some stores you can buy a gun within minutes. We believe Americans have a right to own a gun, but restrictions and regulations must be put in place. If one owns a gun then they must have a legal permit, they must provide medical records to make aware of any for any mental illnesses (if said illnesses are present, their right to own a gun can be taken away) and a birth certificate. We acknowledge that some want to ensure their right to own a gun, but we must make sure that safety is a priority.

Stricter gun control laws need to be enforced. Some states don’t require a special permit, fingerprint or waiting period to buy a gun. We believe these qualifications are necessary to keep Americans safe, and research supports the idea that stricter gun control can improve safety. In multiple studies, research found that “permit to purchase laws” reduce homicide, suicides and gun trafficking.

In 2017, 1,147 people were fatally shot by police. Twenty-five percent of those deaths were those who are African-American, despite only representing 13 percent of the population. Officers should only use a firearm to protect citizens and defend themselves in last-resort instances. Any use of a firearm that is used against a man or woman because of ethnicity solely, shall serve time according to their crime. Racial profiling exists in policing today and Egalitarianists want to fight this problem and spread awareness of it.

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# Immigration

America is made up of immigrants, of new and old generations. Americans must recognize the importance of immigrants in our country and the culture and knowledge they bring to the U.S.

Today, immigrants are commonly discriminated against. President Donald Trump has referred to immigrants as “rapists” and “drug dealers”, but Egalitarianists see immigrants as people starting over and hoping to accomplish the “American Dream”.

Egalitarianists understand that immigrants can have urgent needs to cause them to come to the United States. We support legal immigration and see it as a way of diversifying America through ethnicity, culture, and knowledge.

We recognize that undocumented immigration is a subject of national importance, and the number of undocumented residents in the United States continues to increase. In 2016, about 1.3 million people immigrated into the United States without documentation. Egalitarianists recognize that for various factors -- personal safety, religious freedom, escaping poverty -- immigrants might be compelled to come to the U.S. We believe it should be easier to get citizenship, without sacrificing safety in the U.S.

Egalitarianists support Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a.k.a., the “DREAMers”, and want to continue this policy. We recognize that DREAMers came here as infants or children, without say, and now are students, members of the workforce, and even serving in the military. We recognize DREAMers as fellow Americans and support their role in the U.S. We believe DREAMers should not be deported, and continue to be able to apply for college and employment without difficulty.

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# The Death Penalty

The Egalitarianist Party opposes the death penalty because we believe it to be “cruel and unusual punishment”. Some argue that the death penalty should be of limited use and for very horrific crimes, but how can you ever be sure that the perpetrator is the true perpetrator? There has been plenty of evidence of the death penalty being applied too frequently and often in a discriminatory way. Today, innocent people are sent to prison for crimes they didn’t commit. You can exonerate and release innocent people that have been put into jail, but you cannot resurrect someone.

Proponents of the death penalty say that it’s a tool for the preservation of law and order and retribution. Egalitarianists believe that the death penalty wrongly gives the government the power to take human lives and practice prosecutorial misconduct. It also contributes to social injustices by targeting people of color and of low economic status who may not be able to afford the best possible lawyer. Since 1976, over 75 percent of murder victims in cases resulting in an execution were white, even though nationally only 50 percent of murder victims are white. In North Carolina, two African-American brothers, Henry McCollum (age 19 at the time, with an IQ less than 51) and Leon Brown (age 15), spent 30 years incarcerated for a rape and murder they didn’t commit. They didn’t know they were signing a confession and maintained their innocence throughout the trial, even after they were sentenced to death. It was discovered that DNA implicated another person and the brothers were released.

The Framers believed in the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, something that Americans still abide by today. The death penalty stands against that.

Murder of any kind that isn’t related to self-defense is a capital offense. Proponents of the death penalty would argue an “eye for an eye” should apply to these criminals. They would argue that the criminal doesn’t get the right to life, liberty or the pursuit of happiness because they infringed on someone else’s rights. However, why should we fight fire with fire? Why should we reward death with death if we argue for the right to life? Especially when there are plenty of alternatives to the death penalty, such as spending the remainder of their life in solitary confinement or in prison. There’s also the option of mentally institutionalizing the criminal.

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# Abortion

In America, we base our beliefs on freedom. It is arguably the foundation to our Constitution and to our government. We believe that the woman’s right to control her body is non-negotiable and we unequivocally support *Roe v. Wade*. Having an abortion is a decision that belongs to a pregnant woman alone. The government has no reason or legal standing to interfere. In the US, about half of all pregnancies are unplanned every year, and of those, nearly 43 percent end in abortion. Imagine if that 43 percent were prohibited from having an abortion.

However, we also believe that abortion should be regulated. Federal law says that states and their laws cannot interfere with abortion in the first trimester, but they can manage it in the second trimester. In the third trimester, a baby is more likely to be able to survive outside of the womb and abortion at that time should be prohibited, unless the mother is facing life-threatening circumstances and an abortion is the only way to save her life. As Egalitarians, we agree with this, as long as the regulations that states make don’t cause undue burdens on the woman.

If a pregnant woman decides that she wants to have an abortion, she should be able to have a safe and legal one, regardless of her age, economic or marital status. Abortion clinics and also all forms of contraceptives, such as the “morning-after pill”, should be affordable and accessible to everyone.

In 2014, 10% of women who had an abortion were 15-19 years old and in 2015, they accounted for 9.8% of abortions. The Egalitarian Party would like to see that number continue to drop by reforming the sexual education program in public schools.

# Education

Egalitarianists believe that every child in the U.S. should have access to a quality education at no cost. Well-educated graduates are better prepared to enter the word workforce and participate in voting and other civic responsibilities. Education should be a right, not a privilege.

Currently, about 15 percent of high school freshman fail to graduate in four years. These students sometimes have put their families’ needs ahead of their education, and this is especially true for low-income students. While the decision to drop out is made by the individual, Egalitarianists want to make sure that students have resources at school to help them succeed.

Common Core, launched under the Obama administration, created standards in English and mathematics for students. In a 2015 national poll, 54 percent of respondents were against Common Core. Egalitarianists support Common Core, but recognize its shortcomings. Critics of Common Core feel that it overemphasizes testing. Although Common Core testing is not federally mandated, most states use testing methods that are similar or identical as other states. Egalitarianists believe Common Core should instead focus on setting national standards for topics such as innovative problem thinking and character development while letting individual schools/teachers focus on setting specialized goals for students.

Teachers are a key component of education and even the economy. Teachers educate future business people, scientists, politicians, and so much more. In 2016, the national average salary for teachers was $58,030. In some states like South Dakota, the average teacher pay is as little $42,700. Teaching is an undervalued profession in America, and teachers deserve higher pay and better quality benefits.

# Military

Egalitarianists believe currently far too much government funding goes to a military defense. While we are the most powerful nation in the world, we are also one of the most debt-ridden. A large amount of our debt can be directly attributed to military spending by the government.

 According to the Peter G. Peterson Foundation, the U.S. has “spent more on national defense than China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, India, France, U.K., and Japan combined.” If counted all together, these seven nations amount to $578 billion whereas the U.S. alone has spent over $610 billion just within the past year. Yet several of these countries have proven to have much higher scores in areas of science and math. Our party wants your child to grow up with a book in their hand, not a gun.

 Currently, the U.S.’s debt is $21.8 trillion and approximately 54 percent of our budget goes towards military spending. That’s approximately $11.8 trillion total if you take the most recent percentage into account. So, over half of our national debt is due to military spending, where it could have been used for so much more. On the other hand, only 21 percent of the national budget is spent on education in the United States. The U.S. ranks only #17 regarding education which is embarrassing considering that we are the strongest country in the world yet also one of the lower ranking ones education-wise.

 In order to better this country, we need to restructure the way our military works. If the Pentagon continues to focus their efforts on high-tech weaponry instead of on the soldiers themselves, we will not be able to combat this active terrorism problem. Terrorist tactics are not uniform like the Pentagon’s tactics are. The Egalitarianist Party would make strides to make military spending more equal upon weaponry and staff.