

# Mike Bloomberg's Native American Policy

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America's [574 federally recognized tribes](#) have a government-to-government with Washington, based on their historic status as sovereign nations.<sup>1</sup> In recent decades, tribes have increasingly exercised their right of self-determination. They have preserved their languages and cultural traditions. The federal government, for its part, has a trust responsibility to provide the funding and assistance tribes need to make their governments and social systems – including hospitals, schools and courts – work well, and to help tribes with economic development.

Indigenous people, like all Americans, have a right to quality, affordable health care, good education, economic opportunity and a voice in government. They need good roads, courts and police and fire agencies, as well as access to capital and support for entrepreneurs.

**Mike Bloomberg believes the federal government can, and must, be a cooperative and supportive partner for tribes.** He will work to improve the lives of all Native Americans. He will respect their sovereignty, and insist that agencies fully and meaningfully consult with tribes. He will listen to their concerns, and take their interests into account when formulating national policies. He will bring more land into trust, protect voting rights, expand tribal jurisdiction to prosecute crimes on reservation lands, protect indigenous girls and women from violence, improve tribal infrastructure and health care, and address the challenge of climate change.

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## 1. Reaffirm tribal home lands, maintain infrastructure and improve resilience to climate change.

Since 1934, when the federal government finally abandoned a policy of [selling parcels of tribal lands to settlers](#),<sup>2</sup> the U.S. government has returned only a fraction of that land into trust status to be [managed by the tribes](#).<sup>3</sup> These efforts have recently been slowed [by litigation](#),<sup>4</sup> and by the [Trump administration's reluctance](#) to defend tribal land claims.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, there is a [several hundred million dollar maintenance backlog](#)<sup>6</sup> for [tribal roads](#)<sup>7</sup> and [Bureau of Indian Education schools](#).<sup>8</sup> And natural habitats on tribal lands are suffering from the effects of [climate change](#).<sup>9</sup> To better help tribes manage their land and infrastructure, Mike will:

- **Reaffirm and restore the Interior Department's authority to take land into trust for tribes.** As president, Mike will improve the process for taking land into trust at the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and work with Congress to clarify the law so that the Interior secretary can take land into trust for all tribes, not just those that [were recognized before 1934](#).<sup>10</sup> He will direct his Interior secretary to actively help tribes bring land into trust, to defend those efforts in court and to affirm the status of existing trust lands.

<sup>1</sup> National Congress of American Indians, [Tribal Nations & the United States: An Introduction](#), February 2020

<sup>2</sup> National Congress of American Indians, [Trust Land](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>3</sup> Department of Agriculture: Natural Resources Conservation Service, [Definition of "Indian Country"](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>4</sup> National Congress of American Indians, [Testimony of the National Congress of American Indians House Natural Resources Committee – Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States, Hearing on H.R. 375](#), April 2019

<sup>5</sup> Associated Press, [Land-trust case raises red flags across Indian Country](#), July 2018

<sup>6</sup> Washington Post, [What Do Native Americans Want From a President?](#), May 2019

<sup>7</sup> Department of the Interior, [Deferred Maintenance Backlog](#), June 2019

<sup>8</sup> Bureau of Indian Affairs, [Fiscal Year 2019 The Interior Budget in Brief](#), February 2018

<sup>9</sup> National Congress of American Indians, [Climate Change](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>10</sup> Cornell Law School: Legal Information Institute, [Carcieri v. Salazar](#), February 2009

- **Assure funding for the Highly Fractionated Land Loan Program.** As land parcels allotted to tribal members in the late 19th and early 20th century have passed through the generations, [title has been divided](#), often among hundreds of owners.<sup>11</sup> This “fractionation” makes it hard for owners to use the land. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s [Highly Fractionated Indian Land Loan Program](#) helps tribal members get funding from intermediary lenders to buy fractionated lands.<sup>12</sup> In recent budget proposals, the Trump administration [has not requested](#)<sup>13</sup> funding for [the loan program](#).<sup>14</sup> As president, Mike will fully fund the program.
- **Assess and fund tribes’ infrastructure needs.** The federal government’s obligation to tribes includes helping provide and maintain roads, running water, electricity, school buildings and other infrastructure. Mike will eliminate the existing maintenance backlog at both the BIA and Indian Health Service and continue to fund improvements to infrastructure on tribal lands. As part of [his infrastructure plan](#), Mike will provide money directly to local officials, preserve and increase funding for the [Essential Air Service](#) program,<sup>15</sup> and promote regional air hub initiatives to improve connectivity and opportunity in rural areas.
- **Reauthorize the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA).** [NAHASDA](#)<sup>16</sup> provides housing assistance in the form of [block grants](#),<sup>17</sup> which tribes can use at their discretion to build or improve housing. Although Congress continues to provide funding, authorization for most of the programs [expired in 2013](#),<sup>18</sup> leaving tribes uncertain about the future. Mike will support [a bipartisan effort in the House](#)<sup>19</sup> to [reauthorize NAHASDA](#).<sup>20</sup>
- **Expand broadband access.** At the end of 2017, [roughly 21 million Americans](#) lacked a broadband connection, including almost a third of people living on tribal lands.<sup>21</sup> Mike will expand broadband access by auctioning off federal subsidies to private bidders who agree to build high-speed networks in rural communities at the lowest cost. He will open the bidding to cable companies, electric cooperatives, municipalities – whoever can provide the best value. And he will direct the Federal Communications Commission to authorize sharing unused C-band spectrum with rural internet service providers to offer “wireless fiber.” Mike’s goal is to expand broadband access to 10 million more Americans by 2025 and to all by 2030.
- **Work to mitigate climate change, which particularly affects indigenous communities, and include tribes in the process.** One of [Mike’s first priorities](#) will be to bring the U.S. back into the Paris Agreement and begin working in consultation with tribes, states and cities to reduce U.S. greenhouse-gas emissions beyond America’s original commitments. Mike will negotiate for indigenous rights protection in all international climate agreements. He will include U.S. tribes in [his Climate-Safe Communities program](#) and work with them to make communities, lands and infrastructure more resilient. He will consult with tribes to include tribal lands in programs to

<sup>11</sup> Department of the Interior, [Fractionation](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>12</sup> Department of Agriculture, [Highly Fractionated Indian Land Loan Program](#), August 2019

<sup>13</sup> National Congress of American Indians, [Analysis of the FY 2020 President’s Budget](#), March 2019

<sup>14</sup> Department of Agriculture, [FY 2021: Budget Summary](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>15</sup> Department of Transportation, [Essential Air Service](#), November 2017

<sup>16</sup> Department of Housing and Urban Development, [NAHASDA](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>17</sup> Department of Housing and Urban Development, [Indian Housing Block Grant Program](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>18</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition, [NAHASDA Reauthorization Bill Introduced in House](#), December 2019

<sup>19</sup> Congresswoman Deb Haaland, [Bipartisan Bill Introduced in House to Improve Housing Conditions in Indian Country](#), December 2019

<sup>20</sup> Congress.gov, [H.R.5319 - Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Reauthorization Act of 2019](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>21</sup> Federal Communications Commission, [2019 Broadband Deployment Report](#), May 2019

restore lands and increase carbon sequestration. He will reverse [President Trump's rollbacks](#)<sup>22</sup> of clean-air and clean-water regulations and work with tribes to encourage [clean energy](#) development on tribal lands.

- **Engage in full and meaningful consultation with tribes on federal land management.** Tribes have longstanding complaints about the federal government's [failure to consult](#) with them<sup>23</sup> in managing public lands to which they have treaty rights or other cultural and historical relationships, or which they use for traditional activities. Mike will invite tribes to identify lands that need management changes. This could address access for ceremonial purposes; for hunting, fishing and harvesting; or for sustainable economic activity, and could include tribal management roles. He will also work with tribes to explore other economic opportunities, including jobs in land management and maintenance, and in cultural and educational programs. And Mike will ensure that the federal government is a productive partner in furthering [tribal water rights settlements](#).<sup>24</sup>
- **Clean up toxic waste sites and abandoned mines on tribal land.** Some lands owned by or important to indigenous communities contain [toxic waste sites](#)<sup>25</sup> and [abandoned mines](#).<sup>26</sup> These sites may be suitable for re-use – for solar energy development, for example. Unfortunately, the Trump administration [has proposed budget cuts](#)<sup>27</sup> that could [impede cleanup efforts](#).<sup>28</sup> Mike will increase funding for cleanup and consult with tribes on cleanup plans. He will support tribal economic development by helping to assess the economic potential of former waste sites.
- **Include tribes and tribal lands in environmental justice initiatives.** Low-income communities are [disproportionately affected by environmental problems](#),<sup>29</sup> and [Native American communities](#) have been particularly hard-hit by the effects of climate change.<sup>30</sup> Mike will include tribes and tribal lands [in environmental justice initiatives](#) – including mapping and data-gathering on environmental damage – and will consult with tribes on related policymaking.

## 2. Strengthen tribes' legal authority and protections, and give them a greater voice in the White House and the federal judiciary.

American Indians and Alaska Natives often have a limited voice in law enforcement, justice and the national government. Yet they have a responsibility to keep their tribal communities safe. And tribal members have rights – including voting rights – that they must rely on state and federal governments and courts to protect. Mike Bloomberg will work to strengthen tribes' jurisdiction, protect indigenous women, expand Native American representation in the U.S. justice system, protect voting rights and ensure that tribes have influence over national policy.

<sup>22</sup> New York Times, [95 Environmental Rules Being Rolled Back Under Trump](#), December 2019

<sup>23</sup> NBC News, [Native American tribe says Pentagon failed to consult on border wall construction](#), February 2020

<sup>24</sup> Congressional Research Service, [Indian Water Rights Settlements](#), April 2019

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, [EPA Should Improve the Reliability of Data on National Priorities List Sites Affecting Indian Tribes](#), January 2019

<sup>26</sup> Navajo Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Department, [SOLICITATION: Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Economic Development Pilot Project](#), January 2019

<sup>27</sup> High Country News, [Uranium pervades homes on and near Navajo Nation](#), August 2017

<sup>28</sup> The Hill, [Trump budget slashes EPA funding, environmental programs](#), February 2020

<sup>29</sup> National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, [Environmental & Climate Justice](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>30</sup> New York Times, [Climate Change an Extra Burden for Native Americans, Study Says](#), August 2011

- **Work with Congress to expand tribal jurisdiction over crimes committed on tribal lands.** With appropriate protections in place, it should be possible to give tribes greater authority to try non-Natives who commit crimes on reservation land.
- **Pass Savanna’s Act.** Over half of American Indian and Alaska Native women have [faced sexual violence](#), and roughly one-third have been raped.<sup>31</sup> For Native girls and young women ages one to 19, [homicide was the third leading cause of death](#) in 2016.<sup>32</sup> [Thousands of women](#) are missing.<sup>33</sup> And these alarming figures [may not tell](#) the whole story,<sup>34</sup> because data on violence and missing women [are incomplete](#).<sup>35</sup> [Savanna’s Act](#)<sup>36</sup> will improve [the reporting of crime data on reservations](#), require closer cooperation between tribes and U.S. attorneys on sexual violence, and train and assist tribal police.<sup>37</sup> In addition to supporting Savanna’s Act, Mike will direct the Justice Department to work with tribes to investigate crimes against indigenous women.
- **Support the reauthorization of the [Violence Against Women Act \(VAWA\)](#)**,<sup>38</sup> Mike will work to reauthorize VAWA with the [strong protections](#) for Native communities that are included in the House bill.<sup>39</sup>
- **Focus on appointing more Native American judges to the federal bench.** Far too few Native Americans [serve as federal judges](#).<sup>40</sup> Mike will seek out Native Americans as candidates for judgeships.
- **Encourage and work with states to accept tribal ID cards as adequate identification for voter registration.** Native Americans were not able to vote [in every U.S. state until 1962](#),<sup>41</sup> and [states have imposed](#) poll taxes, literacy tests and voter intimidation tactics to suppress the Native vote.<sup>42</sup> In the 1960s and ’70s, Congress outlawed literacy tests and guaranteed language assistance, but Native voters too often continue to face [strict voter ID laws](#).<sup>43</sup> Tribal members should be able to use [well-designed tribal IDs](#) not only to vote but also to register to vote.<sup>44</sup> Mike will encourage states to make this possible, and [eliminate discriminatory laws and practices](#), such as unreasonable ID requirements and voter roll purging. He will also back [legislation](#)<sup>45</sup> to establish accessible polling and voter registration sites and support election infrastructure in Native communities.

<sup>31</sup> National Institute of Justice, [Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men: 2010 Findings From the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey](#), May 2016

<sup>32</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Health Equity: Leading Causes of Death – Females – Non-Hispanic American Indian or Alaska Native – United States, 2016](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>33</sup> Urban Indian Health Institute, [Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls: A snapshot of data from 71 urban cities in the United States](#), November 2018

<sup>34</sup> New York Times, [Rural Montana Had Already Lost Too Many Native Women. Then Selena Disappeared.](#), January 2020

<sup>35</sup> Associated Press, [Scope of Missing, Murdered Indigenous Women in Idaho Unknown](#), December 2019

<sup>36</sup> Congress.gov, [S.227 – Savanna’s Act](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>37</sup> Bloomberg Opinion, [An Epidemic of Violence Against Native American Women](#), February 2019

<sup>38</sup> Congress.gov, [H.R.1585 - Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>39</sup> Friends Committee on National Legislation, [Reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act with Strong Provisions for Native Women](#), July 2019

<sup>40</sup> Center for American Progress, [Building a More Inclusive Federal Judiciary](#), October 2019

<sup>41</sup> Brennan Center for Justice, [The State of Native American Voting Rights](#), March 2019

<sup>42</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center, [Weekend Read: The struggle for Native American voting rights](#), November 2019

<sup>43</sup> Ibid

<sup>44</sup> Associated Press, [Bill amendment would allow tribal IDs for voter registration](#), February 2020

<sup>45</sup> Congress.gov, [H.R.1694 - Native American Voting Rights Act of 2019](#), accessed February 2020

- **Appoint a senior White House adviser for Native issues and restore the Tribal Nations Conference.** Trump [waited two and a half years](#) to appoint a permanent White House adviser on tribal issues.<sup>46</sup> Mike will make it a priority to appoint an adviser on Native issues and will work with all federal agencies to include tribal members in cabinet leadership roles. Trump has also failed to convene regular cabinet meetings on tribal concerns or the White House Tribal Nations Conference that [President Obama held annually](#).<sup>47</sup> This has diminished consultation with tribes on federal policy. Mike will restore the regular convening of tribal leaders with senior government officials.
- **Support and defend the Indian Child Welfare Act.** A federal court is [considering a challenge](#) to the Indian Child Welfare Act,<sup>48</sup> which helps ensure that tribal children are not [unnecessarily separated from Native communities](#).<sup>49</sup> Before Congress [passed this law in 1978](#), state child welfare and private adoption agencies were too often needlessly separating Native children from their families and communities and placing them with non-Native families.<sup>50</sup> Mike will join [the many states and tribes](#) supporting and defending the Indian Child Welfare Act.<sup>51</sup>

### 3. Improve health care for American Indians and Alaska Natives.

The Indian Health Service (IHS), which [serves tribal members](#),<sup>52</sup> is [severely underfunded](#),<sup>53</sup> even though American Indians and Alaska Natives experience alarming health disparities – including high rates of [diabetes](#),<sup>54</sup> [pregnancy-related deaths](#),<sup>55</sup> and [opioid](#)<sup>56</sup> and [methamphetamine abuse](#).<sup>57</sup> Mike understands that all Americans have a right to quality, affordable health care, and that the federal government has a special obligation to ensure health care for Native Americans. As president, he will:

- **Fully fund the IHS and make funding mandatory.** In 2017, [IHS spending amounted](#) to about \$4,000 per capita – a very low amount compared with more than \$8,000 for Medicaid, more than \$13,000 for Medicare and nearly \$10,700 for the Veterans Health Administration.<sup>58</sup> Mike will push to adequately fund facilities operated by the IHS and tribes, as well as [Urban Indian Health Programs](#),<sup>59</sup> and will work with Congress to make full funding mandatory in future years and to exempt it from sequestration. He will also [support legislation](#)<sup>60</sup> to provide Urban Indian facilities [the same Medicaid reimbursement rates](#) that other IHS-funded facilities receive.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Indianz, [Cherokee citizen Tyler Fish hired to work on Indian issues at White House](#), July 2019

<sup>47</sup> The White House: President Barack Obama, [Fact Sheet: The 8th Annual White House Tribal Nations Conference](#), September 2016

<sup>48</sup> Vox, [How a white evangelical family could dismantle adoption protections for Native children](#), February 2020

<sup>49</sup> Associated Press, [Court case centers on Native American kids in foster care](#), March 20109

<sup>50</sup> National Indian Child Welfare Association, [About ICWA](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>51</sup> Associated Press, [Court case centers on Native American kids in foster care](#), March 20109

<sup>52</sup> Indian Health Service, [IHS Profile](#), June 2019

<sup>53</sup> Indian Health Service, [FY 2017 Indian Health Service Level of Need Funded \(LNF\) Calculation: Resources Needed, Resources Available, and LNF Scores Summarized by IHS Area](#), February 2018

<sup>54</sup> Summary Health Statistics: National Health Interview Survey, 2018, [Table A-4a. Age-adjusted percentages \(with standard errors\) of selected diseases and conditions among adults aged 18 and over, by selected characteristics: United States, 2018](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>55</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance System](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>56</sup> Indian Health Service, [Opioid Crisis Data: Understanding the Epidemic](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>57</sup> American Addiction Centers, [Alcohol and Drug Abuse Among Native Americans](#), February 2020

<sup>58</sup> Government Accountability Office, [Indian Health Service: Spending Levels and Characteristics of IHS and Three Other Federal Health Care Programs](#), December 2018

<sup>59</sup> Indian Health Service, [Office of Urban Indian Health Programs](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>60</sup> Congress.gov, [S.1180 - Urban Indian Health Parity Act](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>61</sup> United States Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, [Udall, Luján, New Mexico Delegation Introduce Legislation to Address Health Disparities for Native Americans Living in Urban Areas Off the Reservations](#), April 2019

- **Ensure culturally sensitive care.** The [health disparities](#) for Native people are vast, with life expectancy among American Indians and Alaska Natives more than five years lower than for all races in the U.S.<sup>62</sup> In a 2017 study, [almost a quarter of Native Americans](#) said they had been discriminated against when visiting a doctor or health clinic and about 15% said they had avoided seeking care for themselves or their families over worries of discrimination or poor treatment due to being Native.<sup>63</sup> Mike will aim to close the gap in life expectancy between Natives and non-Natives. He will encourage the IHS and tribes to [build on best practices](#)<sup>64</sup> – such as the use of [community health representatives](#)<sup>65</sup> and [health aides](#)<sup>66</sup> – to ensure that care is delivered in a culturally appropriate manner. And he will support the inclusion of [health data](#) from tribes in national research.<sup>67</sup>
- **Expand the [National Health Service Corps](#)<sup>68</sup> to provide loan repayment and scholarship opportunities for medical students from Native communities.** The [vacancy rate](#) for doctors, nurses and other care providers at IHS clinics is 25%.<sup>69</sup> Mike will help build a large workforce of clinicians available to work at the IHS and tribal-run health care centers. To further expand access to care, Mike will also expand telehealth services and increase federal grants to Community Health Centers, [which can go to Native health centers](#).<sup>70</sup>
- **Work with Congress to permanently reauthorize the Special Diabetes Program for Indians.** American Indians and Alaska Natives [have a greater incidence of diabetes](#) than any other racial group.<sup>71</sup> [The Special Diabetes Program for Indians](#), created in 1997, and recently funded at \$150 million per year,<sup>72</sup> [has been effective](#)<sup>73</sup> in treating and preventing [the disease](#).<sup>74</sup> But [funding will run out](#) this spring unless Congress acts.<sup>75</sup> Mike will work to permanently reauthorize the program.
- **[Provide public-option insurance](#) to people who would qualify for expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act if they did not live in states that have not yet agreed to the expansion.** In non-expansion states, Medicaid is required to cover new mothers for only [60 days postpartum](#),<sup>76</sup> even though [almost 12% of pregnancy-related maternal deaths occur 43 to 365 days after delivery](#).<sup>77</sup> This can hurt American Indian and Alaska Native women, [whose pregnancy-related death rate is 30 per 100,000 live births](#) – more than double that of non-

<sup>62</sup> Indian Health Service, [Disparities](#), October 2019

<sup>63</sup> NPR, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, [Discrimination in America: Experiences and Views of Native Americans](#), November 2017

<sup>64</sup> Indian Health Service, [Culturally Relevant Best Practices](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>65</sup> Indian Health Service, [Community Health Representative](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>66</sup> Alaska Community Health Aide Program, [About the Alaska CHAP Program](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>67</sup> National Institutes of Health, [NIH facilitates first Tribal data-sharing agreement with Navajo Nation](#), May 2019

<sup>68</sup> Health Resources & Services Administration, [National Health Service Corps](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>69</sup> Government Accountability Office, [Indian Health Service: Agency Faces Ongoing Challenges Filling Provider Vacancies](#), August 2018

<sup>70</sup> American Journal of Public Health, [American Indian Health Policy: Historical Trends and Contemporary Issues](#), June 2014

<sup>71</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Better diabetes care can decrease kidney failure](#), January 2017

<sup>72</sup> Indian Health Service, [Special Diabetes Program for Indians](#), October 2016

<sup>73</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Vital Signs: Decrease in Incidence of Diabetes-Related End-Stage Renal Disease among American Indians/Alaska Natives — United States, 1996-2013](#), January 2017

<sup>74</sup> Indian Health Service: Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention, [Obesity Issues in American Indian and Alaska Native People](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>75</sup> National Indian Health Board, [Congress Releases Final, Bicameral FY 2020 Spending Package](#), December 2019

<sup>76</sup> Health Affairs, [Extending Medicaid Coverage For Postpartum Moms](#), May 2019

<sup>77</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Vital Signs: Pregnancy-Related Deaths, United States, 2011–2015, and Strategies for Prevention, 13 States, 2013–2017](#), May 2019

Hispanic white women.<sup>78</sup> [Mike will work to improve health outcomes for pregnant women and their babies.](#)

- **Provide culturally appropriate treatment, including medications, for people with opioid- and other drug-use disorder who enter hospitals or the criminal justice system.** In 2017, drug overdose was [a leading cause of injury-related death](#) in the U.S.<sup>79</sup> American Indians and Alaska natives [have higher rates of death from drug overdose](#) than the national average.<sup>80</sup> In Indian Country, [hundreds of children](#) have been taken into protective custody because their parents suffer from drug-use disorder.<sup>81</sup> [Mike will work to get people the treatment that works best](#), to reduce the stigma still associated with it and to ensure care is culturally competent.
- **Work to improve mental health care for American Indians and Alaska Natives.** Native Americans have [the highest rate of death by suicide](#) of any racial or ethnic group in the U.S.<sup>82</sup> But suicide is [often preventable](#).<sup>83</sup> Mike will integrate behavioral health into primary care and improve screening for depression. He will enhance suicide screening and prevention in mental-health specialty settings. He supports [the Native American Suicide Prevention Act](#), which would help states and tribes work together on suicide prevention.<sup>84</sup> And as described in [his gun safety plan](#), Mike will regulate access to firearms.

#### 4. Improve economic and educational opportunities for tribal members.

American Indians and Alaska Natives fall behind on various measures of economic well-being. In 2018, [their poverty rate was 24%](#), the highest for any race.<sup>85</sup> The Native American unemployment rate [was 6.6% in 2018, 70% higher than the national rate](#).<sup>86</sup> In 2017, Native women working full-time and year-round [earned 58 cents](#) for every dollar earned by their non-Hispanic white male peers.<sup>87</sup> And among all minority-owned businesses, [only a tiny fraction belong](#)<sup>88</sup> to [Native Americans](#).<sup>89</sup> Mike will help minorities, including tribal members, thrive in the U.S. economy. His administration will:

- **Raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour** and [increase it automatically in future years](#) by linking it to growth in earnings.
- **Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).** [Mike will have the EITC paid monthly](#). To give businesses an added incentive to employ people in distressed communities, he will pilot a place-based EITC that lowers costs for employers. As laid out in [his criminal justice reform plan](#), Mike will expand “ban the box” initiatives to stop employers from asking job seekers about

<sup>78</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance System](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>79</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Opioid Overdose: Understanding the Epidemic](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>80</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Injury Prevention & Control: Tribal Violence and Injury Prevention](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>81</sup> Pew, [In Cherokee Country, Opioid Crisis Seen as Existential Threat](#), September 2019

<sup>82</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Suicides Among American Indian/Alaska Natives — National Violent Death Reporting System, 18 States, 2003–2014](#), March 2018

<sup>83</sup> National Institute of Mental Health, [Suicide Prevention](#), July 2019

<sup>84</sup> Congress.gov, [H.R.1191 - Native American Suicide Prevention Act of 2019](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>85</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation, [Poverty Rate by Race/Ethnicity](#), 2018

<sup>86</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, [American Indians and Alaska Natives in the U.S. labor force](#), November 2019

<sup>87</sup> National Women’s Law Center, [Equal Pay for Native Women](#), September 2019

<sup>88</sup> Minority Business Development Agency, [U.S. Minority-Owned Firms](#), January 2016

<sup>89</sup> Research in Business and Economics Journal, [A study of Native American small business ownership: opportunities for entrepreneurs](#), October 2014

criminal history in the initial stages of the hiring process. And Mike will work to ensure that tribes are treated equally in tax and economic policy.

- **Make [quality child care more affordable](#)** and ensure that all workers [have paid sick and family leave](#).
- **Make it easier for entrepreneurs from minority communities to start new businesses.** Too many people struggle to make use of federal small business programs and access capital. Through the Small Business Administration (SBA), [Mike will help communities set up one-stop shops to support local entrepreneurs](#) and will focus on programs that deliver real, measurable results for underrepresented groups. And he will make federal funding flexible, so that areas can innovate to meet local needs, for example by developing mobile apps that allow entrepreneurs to set up businesses quickly from anywhere.
- **Create a national corps of business mentors.** Mike will emphasize connecting people from underrepresented groups with mentors who can help them start and expand their businesses. And he will offer targeted matching funds to create or expand small-business incubators and affordable shared workspaces in local industries.
- **Increase funding for the SBA’s Small Business Investment Company (SBIC) Program.** [Access to capital](#) can be major obstacle to starting a business<sup>90</sup> and a particular issue for [minority-owned businesses](#).<sup>91</sup> [The SBIC program](#), which licenses private providers of equity capital and offers them subsidized financing,<sup>92</sup> helped [only one Native American-owned business in FY2018](#).<sup>93</sup> [Mike will provide incentives](#) for private investors to focus on underserved communities.
- **Increase federal investment in [Community Development Financial Institution \(CDFI\) Fund](#).**<sup>94</sup> Too many minority-owned businesses can’t get the credit they need to expand; they experience [higher denial rates](#) and, when they do get loans, pay higher interest rates.<sup>95</sup> Mike will invest more in CDFIs – including [Native CDFIs](#)<sup>96</sup> – which focus on lending in underserved communities. He will require financial institutions to report data on their small-business lending, including relevant statistics on race and gender, [as mandated by the Dodd-Frank Act](#).<sup>97</sup> And he will expand the SBA’s [Community Advantage](#)<sup>98</sup> and [microloan](#)<sup>99</sup> programs, which help small businesses in underserved markets and minority entrepreneurs.
- **Encourage so-called anchor institutions, such as universities and hospitals, to buy goods and services from businesses in their local communities.** [Minority-owned businesses](#)<sup>100</sup> do not

<sup>90</sup> Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, [Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs: Removing Barriers](#), April 2019

<sup>91</sup> Marin Consulting, [Access to Capital among Young Firms, Minority-owned Firms, Women-owned Firms, and High-tech Firms](#), April 2013

<sup>92</sup> Small Business Administration, [SBICs](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>93</sup> Congressional Research Service, [SBA Small Business Investment Company Program](#), July 2019

<sup>94</sup> U.S. Department of the Treasury Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, [What Does the CDFI Fund Do?](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>95</sup> Minority Business Development Agency, [Disparities in Capital Access between Minority and Non-Minority Businesses: The Troubling Reality of Capital Limitations Faced by MBEs](#), January 2010

<sup>96</sup> Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, [Native Initiatives](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>97</sup> Mayer Brown, [Data Collection for Small Business Lending: How Much Is Enough?](#), May 2017

<sup>98</sup> Small Business Administration, [Community Advantage Participant Guide](#), October 2018

<sup>99</sup> Small Business Administration, [SBA Microloan Program](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>100</sup> Department of the Interior, [Procurement Opportunities for Federally Recognized Tribes](#), accessed February 2020

receive enough [contracting opportunities](#).<sup>101</sup> Mike will [support the promulgation](#) of an SEC rule requiring public companies to publish information on the racial composition of their procurement.

- **Provide matching funds to double the number of college counselors in public high schools.** Fewer than three in 10 of public schools had [a part- or full-time college counselor](#) in the 2018-2019 school year, compared with 48% of private schools.<sup>102</sup> [About 90%](#) of Native American children attend public schools.<sup>103</sup> Mike will ensure that every high-need school – and every Bureau of Indian Education school – has at least one college counselor for every 300 students. He will expand the pipeline of such advisers by increasing advising programs modeled on CollegePoint, an organization supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies that [gives students free, virtual college counseling](#).<sup>104</sup>
- **Increase school completion rates for low- and middle-income students by helping more of them attend selective colleges with high graduation rates.** Students from the bottom economic quartile make up [only 3% of enrollment at the most competitive schools](#).<sup>105</sup> Young people who qualify for admission but don't enroll in these schools reduce their chances of earning a degree and eventually having a high-paying job. [Mike will expand support](#) for advising and retention programs, modeled on CollegePoint and others, to help guide low-income students through the college-admissions and financial-aid application process. He will reward selective schools that increase low-income and middle-class enrollment – and publicize the best and worst performers. And he will work with Congress on legislation to allow Pell Grants to cover enrollment for high school students in early college programs who are identified as college-ready.
- **Triple direct federal Title III funding to Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), including tribal two-year and four-year colleges.** Uses for the money will include need-based financial-aid and evidence-based strategies to raise graduation rates. Mike will also establish an office in the executive branch to help MSIs access research funds and other federal grants.

<sup>101</sup> Minority Business Development Agency, [Contracting Barriers and Factors Affecting Minority Business Enterprises: A Review of Existing Disparity Studies](#), December 2016

<sup>102</sup> National Association for College Admission Counseling, [2019 State of College Admission](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>103</sup> National Congress of American Indians, [Education](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>104</sup> CollegePoint, [Who we are](#), accessed February 2020

<sup>105</sup> Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, [True Merit: Ensuring Our Brightest Students Have Access to Our Best Colleges and Universities](#), January 2016