

# TOGETHER, INVINCIBLE:

## A Bold Agenda for Young Texans

### Forward

Young Texans want a prosperous future. A future with access to an affordable education and an in-demand career. A future where parenting students, who make up almost a quarter of all Texas students, have access to the resources needed to thrive. A future with comprehensive and affordable health care coverage and mental health care. Instead, the future seems insurmountable, as young Texans battle high inflation, increasing demand for mental health care, a student debt crisis, racial and economic injustice, and gun violence in our schools and public places. Amidst one of the states with the highest maternal mortality rates in the country, Texas has also enacted policy in the overturning of *Roe vs. Wade* which endangers young people in seeking medical care.

Substantive and comprehensive investments in our workforce, access to higher education, and health care are necessary for this prosperous future. Almost a third of young Texans find themselves without health coverage, as Texas continues to have the highest percent and number of those who are uninsured. 66% of young Texas borrowers say that student loan debt stops them from getting what they want in life.

Texas' efforts to expand apprenticeship and workforce programs come at a time when many young people seek new careers, yet women currently make up just 10% of those in registered Texas apprenticeship programs.

Excitingly, young people are at the table. We seek to collaborate, to build, to listen, and to become a part of creating the future in front of us. Through our statewide surveys listening to over 2,000 young Texans on student debt and workforce access, and listening sessions and feedback on health care with hundreds of young Texans, we present policy priorities by and for young people in Texas.



## Workforce Development

Expand apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities with a commitment to increasing access for women and parents.

- Ensure that young voices are at the table in key decisions with the Texas Commission on Community College Finance, career pathways, and work-based learning state policy planning.
- Pursue state-level outreach initiatives that will ensure women and mothers learn about available programs and are equipped with resources to complete them.
- Explore innovations in micro credentials and buildable credentials, to create opportunities for immediate skillbuilding alongside degree completion and career planning.
- Increase gender and racial equity in STEM, health care, and high paying in-demand apprenticeship programs.
- Increase access to child care, especially for parents working early morning and overnight hours, and sustainably expand the child care workforce.

## Higher Education Affordability and Accessibility

Invest in data infrastructure, state postsecondary finance, and student support systems that promote degree completion and economic stability for young people.

- Address the growing mental health care crisis on college campuses by creating a Texas Healthy Minds Campus Checklist designation, bolstering evidence-based solutions and statewide innovation.
- Drive decisions toward college affordability, including increasing investment in community colleges across the state and supporting students' non-tuition costs through benefit navigation systems
- Increase support for parenting students and students experiencing homelessness through data collection and campus liaisons

## Student Debt

Enable more borrowers of color to eliminate debt and build and maintain wealth.

Protect students as they navigate existing debt, including analyzing statewide student loan debt data and finding alternatives to transcript withholding

Support borrowers on their pathway by offering re-enrollment programs that encourage non completers to return to school by offering debt forgiveness

Increase the number of mental health professionals working in Texas by increasing funding for a loan repayment program

Introduce a housing assistance program that enables borrowers to build assets in the form of homeownership

## Health Care

Create a pathway so that young people across the state have access to comprehensive, affordable health coverage.

Solidify a path to affordable and comprehensive health coverage for young people in Texas.

Build upon efforts in the 87th legislative session to reduce maternal mortality, such as expanding access to Medicaid for a full twelve months postpartum and long-term comprehensive coverage before, during, and after birth.

Support continuity of care for those enrolled in Healthy Texas Women, CHIP, and Medicaid.

## Civic Engagement

Ensure that Texas students are able to exercise political civic engagement by increasing voting access

Pursue access to voting for students by pursuing a Student ID as a Voter ID.

Expand polling places on college campuses, so that campuses with over 10,000 students include an on-campus voting option.

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