

## AN ECONOMY BUILT ON CARE

### The Problem

Chronic underinvestment in the care economy and essential public services has left millions without access to the services they need to live full, healthy lives. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of families lacked access to affordable child care, care for people with disabilities, and care for the elderly. In many parts of the country, the number of children outnumber the number of child care slots by more than four to one. This gap contributes to gender inequity by keeping many women out of the workforce. Meanwhile, those who provide such critical care work — disproportionately women of color — are all too often unpaid, underpaid, and systematically undervalued. Beyond the care economy, the pandemic also has spotlighted a glaring gap in other essential services, such as emergency preparedness for health and climate calamities. As a society, we remain ill-equipped to limit the damage from climate-related storms and droughts or to respond to outbreaks of disease. Disinvestment in emergency preparedness is a gamble we cannot afford.

### The Solution

We urgently need to recognize the importance of care work and essential public services by reinvesting in caregivers to reflect the enormous value of the services they provide. That means building and upgrading care facilities; increasing pay, training, and benefits for care workers; and offering families safe, high-quality, and affordable access to child care and long-term care. It means reinvesting in our public infrastructure for health, including community services that support preparedness for climate and health emergencies. By directing investments away from pollution-intensive, extractive activities and toward the low-carbon care economy, we can simultaneously support community health, gender equity, and greater climate stability.

### The Jobs

Investments in care work and public services would provide good jobs for hundreds of thousands of workers. Specifically, Congress should:

- **Provide over 2.2 million jobs by mobilizing a Caregiving and Education Force:** Congress needs to invest \$77.5 billion per year for 10 years to bolster the care economy (child care, including early child-



hood education, care for people with disabilities, and care for the elderly), as proposed in The Biden Plan for Mobilizing American Talent and Heart to Create a 21st Century Caregiving and Education Workforce.

- **Provide nearly 77,000 jobs by reinvesting in public health infrastructure and capabilities:** Congress needs to invest \$4.5 billion per year for 10 years to support core public health capabilities at the state, territory, local, and tribal levels, including through the State Climate and Health program of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, improvements in public health emergency preparedness, and funding to address social determinants of health and to advance health equity.
- **Provide 40,000 jobs by sustaining and modernizing the Postal Service:** As a vital part of our country's economic, political, and cultural infrastructure, the U.S. Postal Service requires sustained investment. Congress should invest \$2.5 billion per year for 10 years to support and modernize postal infrastructure and operations, including by purchasing clean delivery vehicles and improved processing equipment.

### And More ...

For a complete list of care economy and public services investments, see economic analysis from the Political Economy Research Institute and Sierra Club's letter to Congress, which outlines specific priorities for a bold stimulus package that puts millions of people back to work to build a healthier, more equitable clean energy economy.