



Philadelphia, 8 November 2016. Voters queue outside the Land Title Building on South Broad Street to cast their ballots. Photograph by A. Shaker, Voice of America, via Wikimedia Commons (public domain). Cropped.



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You Want Power Back. Tell Americans What You Will Do With It.

An Open Letter to Democratic Leadership

Letter to America, No. 3 · Prompted by a conversation with my friend Larry Lee of Boulder, Colorado

On 3 November 2026 Americans decide whether to hand Democrats control of Congress. Before they vote, Democratic leaders owe them more than an agenda described to reporters: a written program of bills, sponsors, costs, and dates.

Five commitments that reach beyond restoring January 2025, and a deadline of 3 December 2026 to answer them.

To Hakeem Jeffries, Leader of the House Democrats; Chuck Schumer, Leader of the Senate Democrats; and the leadership of the Democratic Party:

Americans know that life costs too much. They see it at the supermarket, the filling station, and the pharmacy. They feel it when the health insurer raises the premium, when the rent climbs, and when another bill arrives before payday. On 3 November 2026, millions of them will vote for your candidates in the hope that you will change these things. They deserve to know exactly what you will change.

You have begun to answer. The New Democrat Coalition published its Affordability Agenda in February 2026, and the Congressional Progressive Caucus published ten bills in April [1, 2]. On 14 October 2026, House Democrats described a first-hundred-days agenda: restore the Affordable Care Act tax credits that expired in 2025, reverse the Republican Medicaid cuts, force votes to end the Iran war, undo the tariffs, and investigate corruption in the Trump administration [3]. An agenda described to reporters binds no one. Voters need the program in writing: the bills, their sponsors, the order of business, the cost, and the date by which each should take effect.

A party that asks for power without stating what it will do with it asks voters for blind trust. Donald Trump demanded that trust, and you rightly condemn him for it. Hold yourselves to a higher standard.

Your own party set that standard. In 2006 Democrats campaigned on “Six for ’06,” with Senator Schumer among its authors [4]. Once they won the House, they passed all six bills within the hundred hours they had promised, finishing on 18 January 2007 [5]. Voters could check every promise against the record. Project 2025, the Heritage Foundation’s blueprint for a second Trump administration, showed what a movement achieves when it arrives with

policies, personnel, and a plan to carry them out [6]. Democrats must arrive as well prepared, and far more accountable.



The Capitol, where House Democrats passed all six bills of their 2006 pledge in the first hundred hours of the new Congress, January 2007.

Photo: Architect of the Capitol, 1997, via Wikimedia Commons (public domain).

The program must reach beyond undoing the latest damage. Trump inherited a political system in which concentrated wealth already commanded extraordinary influence. His administration has exploited its weaknesses and attacked the institutions capable of restraining a president. Defeating his candidates will leave that machinery intact. A program that merely restores January 2025 will restore the conditions that produced him [4].

I ask you to make five commitments.

1. Put a Concrete Household-Relief Program Before the Country

Name the legislation that will restore affordable health coverage, protect Medicaid, cut prescription costs, and curb the prices that dominant insurers, hospital systems, and pharmacy benefit managers set. Lay out a credible path to coverage that people can afford to use.

Set out your measures for food, housing, childcare, and energy. Address the tariffs that raise costs for households and businesses, unlawful price collusion, the shortage of housing, and the barriers that smaller producers face. Say which remedies can bring relief within months and which require years of investment.

Count the Iran war among those costs. Since the United States and Israel launched it in February 2026, disruption of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has pushed energy prices to multi-year highs. Americans pay through gasoline, diesel, freight, and the cost of everything those fuels produce and move. The oil majors, meanwhile, expect a sharp rise in third-quarter profit from refining and trading [7]. Americans pay for the war at the pump while the oil companies book its windfall. Pursue a negotiated end to the war, insist that Congress exercise its constitutional power over military action, and tell the public plainly what emergency relief can achieve and where it stops [8].



Eugene, Oregon, 26 September 2026: unleaded at \$4.99 a gallon and diesel at \$6.89, seven months into the Iran war.

Photo: Rick Obst, via Wikimedia Commons. CC BY 4.0.

Protect paychecks as well as prices: enforce wage laws, punish wage theft, and restore workers' power to bargain for a fair share of the value they produce.

For every major measure, state who benefits, how it works, what it costs, and when people should see results.

2. End Self-Dealing and Break the Hold of Concentrated Money

Voters have told you what they want fixed besides prices. A survey for Third Way, the centrist Democratic think tank, found in July 2026 that affordability remains voters' top concern and that government corruption ranks second [9]. In October 2026 a Fox News poll found 60 percent of registered voters extremely concerned about government corruption, against 58 percent about inflation and high prices [10]. The concern crosses party lines. In an August 2026 survey by Change Research, 46 percent of independents, 43 percent of Democrats, and 36 percent of Republicans named corruption among their three most important political issues [11].

Corruption now begins at the top. A Reuters investigation found that the President's family made about \$2.3 billion from four cryptocurrency ventures through April 2026, while outside investors lost roughly the same sum [12]. Require the president and vice president to divest or place their holdings in a genuine blind trust. Bar them, members of Congress, and their families from issuing or promoting financial products while in office. Give Congress the right to sue to enforce the Constitution's Emoluments Clauses, which forbid a president to accept payments from foreign governments and, beyond his salary, from the federal government or the states [8].

Restore the ownership disclosure that the Corporate Transparency Act required. In March 2025 the Treasury exempted American companies from reporting their real owners, an exemption the Government Accountability Office says covers over 99 percent of the entities that once had to report [13]. Anonymous shell companies sustain the kleptocracy that Anne Applebaum, the historian and journalist, describes, in which rulers bind themselves together through money rather than ideology [14].

Commit to public financing of campaigns, so that candidates can compete without depending on wealthy patrons. Require disclosure of the original sources of major political spending. Enforce the law against unlawful coordination, and attach real penalties to conflicts of interest [15]. Hold your own party, its officeholders, and its donors to the same standard.



Friendship Heights, Maryland, 17 October 2026. A No Kings protester's sign: no corruption, no chaos, no cruelty.

Photo: G. Edward Johnson, via Wikimedia Commons. CC BY 4.0.

Confront *Citizens United v. FEC*, the Supreme Court's 2010 decision that cleared the way for unlimited independent political spending, and the rulings built on it [16]. Only a constitutional amendment or a differently composed Court can reverse it outright. Send an amendment to the states. Meanwhile pass the disclosure the decision itself upheld, by eight votes to one, and support the states that test what the corporations they charter may spend. On 3 November 2026, Montana voters decide whether to withhold that power altogether [17]. Never make present progress wait on the hardest reform.

Reform taxation with equal resolve. The Government Accountability Office found that from 2014 to 2018, on average a quarter of profitable large corporations owed no federal income tax in a given year [18]. Working

households have no such latitude to arrange their affairs. Past losses and legitimate credits explain some cases; they do not show that the system distributes obligations fairly.

Publish a program to curb profit shifting, review unjustified tax preferences, strengthen minimum taxation, and prosecute sophisticated evasion. Show who gains from existing concessions and what the public receives in exchange.

3. Restore Enforceable Limits on Presidents and Accountability for Courts

Use congressional oversight to establish what has happened to public money, government contracts, agency duties, and official records. Follow the evidence wherever it leads, protect witnesses and whistleblowers, and publish findings that citizens can examine.

Legislate limits on emergency powers, safeguards against political interference in prosecutions, and enforceable procedures that compel the executive to spend what Congress appropriates.

No statute can overrule *Trump v. United States*, the Court's 2024 ruling that gave presidents broad immunity from criminal prosecution for official acts [19]. Only an amendment or a future Court can. More than 130 House Democrats cosponsor the Presidential Accountability Amendment, which Representative Joe Morelle reintroduced on 22 July 2025 [20]. Make it a party commitment and send it to the states.

Where the ruling leaves room, act now. Justice Department memoranda holding that a sitting president cannot be indicted are policy, not law [21]. Pause the statute of limitations while a president holds office, declare a self-pardon void, and bring pardons under the bribery statute, as the Protecting Our Democracy Act proposed [22].

Address Supreme Court ethics, financial disclosure, recusal, and tenure. Distinguish what Congress can enact by statute from what requires an amendment.



Arlington Memorial Bridge, 28 March 2026. No Kings marchers carry their signs from Arlington National Cemetery toward Constitution Gardens.

Photo: G. Edward Johnson, via Wikimedia Commons. CC BY 4.0.

Strengthen voting rights and fair representation. No government answers to voters when politicians can choose who votes or draw districts chiefly to protect themselves.

Bind a future Democratic president as firmly as a Republican one. These restraints protect the country from whoever holds the office.

4. Rebuild the Public Institutions That Protect People and Establish Facts

Medical research, disease surveillance, weather forecasting, environmental monitoring, and reliable statistics protect every household. Their destruction harms patients and the economy for years after the cuts leave the news.

In 2025 the administration froze or cut more than \$3 billion in grants that the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation had already awarded, and the terminations stripped funding from 383 clinical trials then under way [23, 24]. Account for everything lost: experienced staff, interrupted studies and trials, abandoned enforcement, damaged records, and services people can no longer obtain. Publish a funded recovery plan.

Protect researchers who report findings an administration dislikes. Require stated reasons and fair review whenever an agency withdraws research funding. Preserve public data. Rebuild a professional civil service, shielded from partisan retaliation and accountable for its performance.

Bring the same public purpose to technology. Require privacy protections, independent scrutiny of high-risk systems, and a meaningful appeal whenever an automated decision affects a person's job, health care, credit, or public benefits. Americans finance technological progress through their taxes and supply its data through their lives. They deserve a voice in its direction and a share of its benefits.

5. Make Delivery Visible and Evasion Difficult

Publish your program for the first hundred days in writing: each bill, its sponsors, its committee, its funding, and its intended result.

Separate what you can achieve by controlling one or both chambers, through rules, oversight, appropriations, and investigations, from what requires the president, the states, or a constitutional amendment. Voters understand constraints. They deserve to know how you will work within them and how you will challenge them.

Report progress in public. When a measure fails, name the decision and the votes. When a proposal changes, explain why. When your own members resist, apply the same scrutiny to them.

The Deadline: 3 December 2026

Together, these commitments could begin a new American reconstruction: rebuilding the public capacity this administration has dismantled, and changing the arrangements that let wealth and presidential power escape public accountability.

I ask you to publish a substantive response to these five commitments by 3 December 2026, thirty days after the election.

Americans are entitled to more than sympathy for their difficulties. Tell us what you will change, what you will fight for, and how we will know whether you have kept your word.

Philippe Foubert

What You Can Do Next

Your representative and your two senators answer to you. Ask each of them, in writing, where they stand on the five commitments, and ask for a written reply by 3 December 2026. Open with one sentence of your own about what costs too much where you live: congressional staff weigh a personal message far more heavily than a form letter [25].

[Find your representative by ZIP code](#)

[Find your two senators by state](#)

[Download the letter \(Word\)](#)

Use the Word file or the copy on the last page. Add your own sentence, then send it through each member's official contact form.

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YOUR LETTER TO CONGRESS

Subject: Five commitments: will you answer by 3 December 2026?

Dear [Representative or Senator] [last name],

I live in [your town], in your [district or state]. [Write one sentence of your own: what costs too much where you live, and what it does to your household.]

Whatever the result on 3 November 2026, I want to know in writing what you will do with the power you hold. Please tell me by 3 December 2026 whether you will support each of these five commitments:

1. A household-relief program, published in writing, that names the bills, sponsors, costs, and dates for health coverage, Medicaid, prescription costs, housing, childcare, and energy.
2. An end to self-dealing in office: divestment or a genuine blind trust for the president and vice president, a ban on officials and their families promoting financial products, restored disclosure of companies' real owners, and public financing of campaigns.
3. The Presidential Accountability Amendment to reverse presidential criminal immunity, a pause in the statute of limitations while a president holds office, a void self-pardon, and binding ethics and recusal rules for the Supreme Court.
4. A funded plan to rebuild medical research, public data, and a professional civil service.
5. Public reporting of progress: when a measure fails, name the decision and the votes.

A yes or no to each, with your reasons, is all I ask. I will judge your record against your answer.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Street address, town, ZIP code]