



Photo Credit: Jim Slosiarek/The Gazette

## A VIEW FROM IOWA'S MAIN STREETS

# CANDIDATE BRIEFING BOOK

Main Street Alliance has created this candidate briefing guide to orient policymakers and presidential candidates to the priorities of small business owners in Iowa and nationally.



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## OVERVIEW

There are more than 267,000 small businesses in Iowa, representing 99 percent of all Iowa businesses.<sup>1</sup> The owners of these businesses employ almost half of Iowa's workforce.

Like their neighbors, small business owners know what it's like to struggle to make ends meet. In Iowa, the median income for a self-employed person with an incorporated business was \$44,504 in 2016, or \$25,494<sup>2</sup> for those whose businesses were not incorporated.

They also vote. In fact, small business owners are significantly more likely than the public as a whole to be registered, to vote and to be civically engaged.<sup>3</sup>

Iowa's Main Street small businesses and family farmers aren't like big businesses. To prosper, they need thriving communities and policies that support quality jobs. They're rooted in their communities. They can't and won't simply leave to seek higher profits, bigger tax breaks, cheaper labor, or to avoid responsibility for environmental waste. They reject the idea that

Iowa will be safer or more prosperous by closing our communities to immigrants, or mistreating people based on gender, sexual identity, or religion.

Instead, Iowa businesses—including the members of Main Street Alliance of Iowa—know their bottom line depends on a strong social fabric with respect for all the people who make up Iowa. This election season, Iowa's small business owners are thinking about these values and policy priorities.



Small Business Roundtable in Waterloo, IA

# VIEW FROM THE IOWA MAIN STREET SMALL BUSINESS VOTER

## FOR MAIN STREET BUSINESSES, HEALTHY FAMILIES ARE PART OF OUR BOTTOM LINE.

**Iowa has approximately two million voters.**<sup>4</sup> Among these voters, small business owners—the operators of local groceries, family farms, restaurants, accountancy firms, retail shops, light manufacturers, construction firms and more—represent an important constituency with particular needs and concerns.

**Iowa's Main Street businesses believe in community and continuity**—they're in it for the long haul. This commitment serves communities well. For example, compared to large retail chains, small businesses return more of their dollars to the communities in which they're located and contribute to vibrant local economies.<sup>5</sup>

**As big corporations grow larger and more powerful, Iowa's small businesses are feeling the squeeze.** The explosion of big box stores, online commerce, and corporate agriculture shrinks the room to maneuver for small businesses and family farms. Instead of prioritizing Main Street businesses, policymakers are subsidizing large corporations like Monsanto, Deere & Co., and Pfizer<sup>6</sup> and have handed over the state's Medicaid program to private insurers like UnitedHealthcare, which recently abandoned the program.

**Meanwhile, new tariffs have almost doubled the number of farmers filing for bankruptcy,**<sup>7</sup> and bailout dollars meant to cushion the blow of the tariffs have benefitted the richest farms and large corporations while leaving true family farms<sup>8</sup> with little or nothing. One hundred Iowa farmers received checks for less than \$25.00, the Des Moines Register reported in November.<sup>9</sup> Multinational giant Smithfield Foods was to receive \$240,000—until its contract was cancelled following public scrutiny.<sup>10</sup>

**Iowa's small businesses and farmers need investment in communities and families.** Recent floods—which may force many small businesses to close<sup>11</sup>—underscore how desperately Iowa needs infrastructure improvements and capital to rebuild<sup>12</sup> from sources such as the Small Business Administration. Finally, many of Iowa's small business owners are struggling to find affordable health care, with progress under the Affordable Care Act threatened by a lawsuit that would repeal the ACA, including its protections for people with pre-existing conditions.

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1. <https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/advocacy/2018-Small-Business-Profiles-IA.pdf>
  2. <https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/advocacy/2018-Small-Business-Profiles-IA.pdf>
  3. <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20180919005143/en/Thumbtack-Survey-Finds-U.S.-Small-Business-Owners>
  4. <https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/pdf/VRStatsArchive/2019/CoApril19.pdf>
  5. <http://nebula.wsimg.com/09d4a3747498c7e97b42657484cae80d?AccessKeyId=8E410A17553441C49302&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>; [https://www.mecep.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/MECEP\\_Report\\_-\\_Buying\\_Local-12-5-2011.pdf](https://www.mecep.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/MECEP_Report_-_Buying_Local-12-5-2011.pdf)
  6. <http://www.iowapolicyproject.org/2019Research/190222-RAC-bgd.htm>
  7. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/this-one-here-is-gonna-kick-my-buttfarm-belt-bankruptcies-are-soaring-11549468759>
  8. <https://littlevillagemag.com/many-small-iowa-farms-are-squeezed-out-of-the-governments-family-farm-designation/>
  9. <https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/money/agriculture/2018/11/25/federal-trade-assistance-trickles-iowa-farmers-hurt-trade-war/2065652002/>
  10. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2018/11/07/chinese-owned-pork-producer-get-cash-bailout-program-spurred-by-chinas-tariffs/?utm\\_term=.72917a65067e](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2018/11/07/chinese-owned-pork-producer-get-cash-bailout-program-spurred-by-chinas-tariffs/?utm_term=.72917a65067e); <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-china-smithfield-foods/usda-terminates-chinese-owned-smithfield-farm-aid-contract-idUSKCN1NL2BZ>
  11. <https://www.iowapublicradio.org/post/hamburg-small-business-owners-face-uphill-struggle-after-western-iowa-flooding#stream/0>
  12. <https://www.opinion-tribune.com/content/rebuild-or-abandon-flooded-businesses-southwest-iowa-have-decision-make>
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Waterloo Bicycle Works - Waterloo, IA

## FACTS ABOUT IOWA SMALL BUSINESSES<sup>13</sup>



**267,733**

Small Businesses



**5,636**

Small, Independent Family Farms<sup>14</sup>



Small Businesses with **fewer than 20 employees** are seeing the most job growth



**14,686**

Businesses Owned by People of Color



**\$25,494**

Median Income for Sole Proprietors with Unincorporated Businesses



**\$44,504**

Median Income for Sole Proprietors

**For Iowa's small businesses, family and loved ones are part of the bottom line.** That means that Iowa's Main Street small business owners want a support system that allows them and their employees to balance work and family life and care for themselves and their loved ones in times of need. They want high-quality, universal health care so they can rest assured that they, their employees and everyone in Iowa can get the health care they need, without discrimination based on the size of their wallet, their gender identity or where they were born.

Iowa's small businesses want economic rules that, rather than prioritizing the profits of large corporations, recognize the vitality and importance of Main Street, and invest in the people who make our Main Streets hum. Finally, Iowa's small business owners know they thrive best in a state that values and respects all people who call Iowa home. They want policies that welcome and protect Iowans, including immigrants, refugees, Muslims, LGBTQ people and more.



Raygun - Des Moines, IA

## MAIN STREET BUSINESSES IN IOWA WANT:

- ☀️ A strong **paid family and medical leave** that covers all Iowa businesses and employees, spreads the costs and makes it affordable for workers to care for their new babies, their loved ones and themselves.
- ☀️ Increased public investment to make **high-quality, stable child care** affordable for families, and make work life more manageable for parents, grandparents and other adults responsible for children.
- ☀️ A **universal health care program** that provides the high-quality care small business owners, their employees and Iowa families need, regardless of pre-existing conditions, how much money they have, where they were born or their gender identity.
- ☀️ Creating the conditions for a **small business economy** built on investment in people and communities, racial and gender equity, fair availability of capital and a thriving small business sector.
- ☀️ Promoting a **welcoming community** in Iowa by supporting the small businesses that know how important it is to protect the rights of LGBTQ people, immigrants, Muslims and members of other communities that have come under attack.

13. <https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/advocacy/2018-Small-Business-Profiles-IA.pdf>

14. <https://www.iowawatch.org/2018/09/16/family-farms/>, Refers to farms with small or medium acreage and owned and run by a single family.

## **FAMILY IS A PART OF OUR BOTTOM LINE: PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE**

At some point, most of us will need time off from work to care for a new baby, an ailing family member or ourselves. Iowa small business owners want paid family and medical leave for themselves and their employees, but the private market doesn't offer good, affordable leave policies. They need policymakers to adopt a program that takes advantage of strength in numbers and makes paid leave a reality for everyone in the country.

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### **IOWA SMALL BUSINESSES NEED AND WANT A PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE PROGRAM**

Iowa businesses benefit when employees can take time to care for their families and return ready to work. Paid leave would help reduce turnover and boost employee morale and loyalty, increasing productivity for Iowa small businesses.<sup>15</sup> Yet Iowa doesn't have a paid family and medical leave program like eight other states and the District of Columbia do. This hands the advantage to large corporations that wield the market power to offer paid family and medical leave.

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### **A PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE SOCIAL INSURANCE PROGRAM IS THE MOST SMALL BUSINESS FRIENDLY APPROACH**

A paid family and medical leave social insurance program would make things simple and affordable for Iowa's small businesses. The program would spread costs with minimal administration. When an employee or owner needs time from work, they draw income from the fund to get by until they're back. Small business owners can use the salary of their on-leave employees as they see fit. Most importantly, workers with paid leave are more likely to return to their jobs, significantly reducing turnover costs. This is a business-friendly solution.

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### **FAILURE TO ADOPT PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE HANDS THE ADVANTAGE TO BIG CORPORATIONS**

Main Street businesses can't go it alone. Large corporations have the market power to offer paid leave... Iowa small businesses don't. This gives corporate America one more leg up on small businesses and means small businesses lose valued, talented employees. Iowa's small businesses need a solution that levels the playing field.

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### **PAID LEAVE IS A MAIN STREET SOLUTION THAT WILL MAKE OUR STATE AND COUNTRY MORE EQUAL**

We have a racial wealth gap that means employees and business owners of color have less financial cushion for taking time off and less access to paid leave. And women still shoulder the bulk of caregiving in this country. Paid leave makes it more likely that women will return to work with the same or higher wages. With a good national paid leave program, Iowa's small businesses can be part of the solution, ensuring even the smallest business can offer paid leave to those that need it the most.

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15. <https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/CostofTurnover.pdf>

“On almost every issue, politicians like to talk about the needs of main street businesses like mine, but it's the rare one who puts out policies that reflect our needs and values. The issue of paid family and medical leave is case-in-point.”



— **Reshonda Young**, Founder of Popcorn Heaven in Waterloo, IA

## A MAIN STREET SOLUTION FOR PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

- ☀ Lets employees and business owners take **12 weeks of qualifying leave** each year to care for an ailing family member, welcome a new child, or take care of one's own health needs
- ☀ Increases financial security by providing **wage replacement** to enable employees to take time off and meet their expenses
- ☀ Spreads the cost of leave through a self-sustaining **national insurance fund** with small employee and employer contributions (estimated at about \$2 each week)
- ☀ **Covers freelancers** and the self-employed
- ☀ Provides leave to care for parents, children, spouses, domestic partners, and **other family**
- ☀ Gives **security to business owners** and employees alike
- ☀ Is **publicly administered** to ensure ease of administration by small business

## **FAMILY IS A PART OF OUR BOTTOM LINE: CHILD CARE**

The lack of a good, affordable child care system is crushing families, workers and small businesses. Twenty-four percent of Iowans live in a “child care desert,” where there is little or no access to quality child care.<sup>16</sup> These deserts exist primarily in rural areas.

This doesn’t just hurt small businesses owners and our employees—it also contributes to inequality when it comes to race, gender and wealth. Political leaders who care about small businesses, our employees, and our communities will support public solutions for affordable, quality child care for all.

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### **WE CAN'T HAVE THRIVING LOCAL ECONOMIES WITHOUT A CHILD CARE INFRASTRUCTURE**

Robust child care infrastructure creates regions conducive to business growth, making them more attractive to young families, especially rural and low-income urban areas, where child care is scarce and does not meet the needs for the number of children in the area. This would help grow the employee talent pool for small businesses, and foster local economic growth.

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### **INVESTING IN CHILD CARE IS GOOD FOR OUR EMPLOYEES—WHICH MEANS IT’S GOOD FOR US**

Access to stable, quality, affordable child care improves employee morale, reduces absenteeism and increases business productivity. It creates a more stable workforce, reducing recruiting, training and turnover costs.

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### **CHILD CARE INVESTMENTS HELP LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD BETWEEN SMALL BUSINESS AND BIG CORPORATIONS**

Increased public investment in child care levels the playing field for small businesses so they can compete with large corporations and attract the greatest talent. Small businesses operate on thin margins, making it nearly impossible to provide child care benefits to employees. In a tight labor market, that means losing potential employees to large corporations who wield the market power to provide child care benefits. When all employers abide by the same rules, the playing field is more level.

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### **IF WE WANT TO CARE FOR OUR IOWA SMALL BUSINESSES, WE HAVE TO CARE FOR ALL OUR FAMILIES**

Small business owners are entrepreneurs, but they need a foundation of social stability to succeed, and the lack of child care can be a barrier to starting or expanding a business. Every tear in the social safety net prevents people from pursuing their dream of small business ownership, stifling innovation.

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### **WE CAN'T HAVE RACIAL AND GENDER EQUITY WITHOUT A GOOD, AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE SYSTEM**

High child care costs hit women and people of color the hardest, and expanding public investment in child care creates greater gender and racial equity. Businesses benefit when they can retain their female employees, and the economy grows when fewer women leave the labor force because they are not able to find affordable, quality child care.

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<sup>16</sup>. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2017/08/30/437988/mapping-americas-child-care-deserts/>

# A MAIN STREET SOLUTION FOR CHILD CARE



- ☀ Ensure that no family pays more than **7 percent of their income**, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' affordability benchmark.
- ☀ Increase the availability of care for nontraditional hours, with the choice of a child care center or a home-based provider, to achieve the **flexibility** that small business owners and their employees need given complex work schedules.
- ☀ Strengthen high-quality child care programs for infant to school age children, and for children with disabilities, by promoting **quality standards and fair compensation** and giving child care providers the resources and the supports to improve.
- ☀ Create **well-paying care jobs** in the child care industry by increasing compensation for child care providers, setting a wage floor, and creating wage parity between child care educators and K-12 teachers with similar levels of education, experience and competency.
- ☀ Support small business child care providers in starting and growing their businesses, particularly in child care deserts—areas with a severe undersupply of licensed child care—**bolstering licensed care in underserved communities**.
- ☀ Ensure that small businesses also benefit from **tax incentives for employer-provided child care**, through tax credits and subsidies that support small business child care cooperatives, and small business pooling, in which small businesses collaborate with other area small businesses to provide on or near-site child care, and share the cost.
- ☀ Generate a sustainable public revenue stream for child care investment by closing corporate tax loopholes, and creating a more a **progressive income tax structure**.

## WE NEED TO VALUE CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

### WE NEED TO VALUE OUR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Investing in higher compensation and paid training opportunities for currently underpaid child care teachers and caregivers will help attract and retain a talented, dedicated and well-trained workforce, leading to higher-quality child care.

### YOU DON'T VALUE MAIN STREET BUSINESSES IF YOU DON'T VALUE CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Increasing public investment in child care would support the development of new small business child care providers and enable current providers to grow and expand their businesses. It has the potential to create millions of new well-paying jobs across the country.

## HEALTH CARE FOR ALL: A MAIN STREET VALUE, A VALUE FOR MAIN STREET BUSINESSES

Small businesses need affordable, reliable health care for ourselves, our employees and our customers. We need to build a strong, universal health care system to level the playing field between small businesses and large corporations, freeing entrepreneurs for new ventures and allowing Main Street businesses to attract and retain talent. The ability to run a successful business should not be jeopardized by unpredictable, out-of-control health care costs.

### SMALL BUSINESSES WANT SIMPLICITY, QUALITY AND AFFORDABILITY—NOT COMPLEXITY

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One of the best things you could tell an Iowa small business owner is, “You’ll never have to shop for health insurance again.” We don’t want to “comparison shop.” We don’t want “skinny plans” that drive us to bankruptcy when we get sick. We don’t want health savings schemes or other bells and whistles. These so-called options just pad insurance corporation profits. We want a simple, affordable, easy-to-use health plan that covers all our health care needs. That will let us focus on what our businesses do best.

### THE INSURANCE COMPANIES HAVE HAD THEIR CHANCE—IT’S TIME FOR A PUBLIC PROGRAM

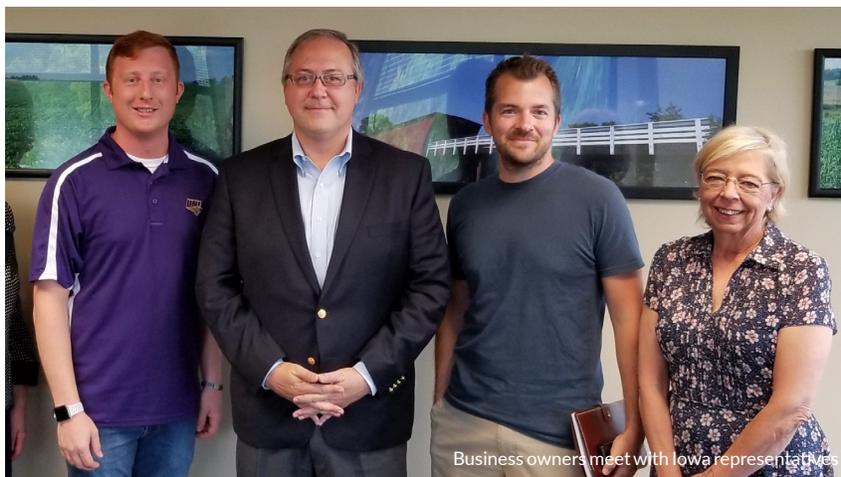
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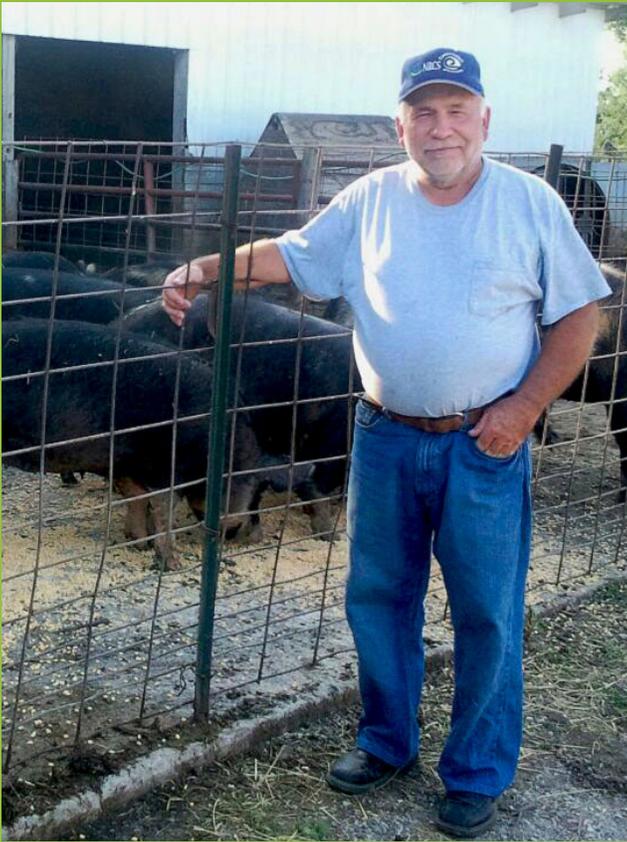
Passing the Affordable Care Act was an important step in the right direction. It set essential rules for insurance companies, like not rejecting people or charging more for a preexisting condition. Those insurance companies haven’t delivered for us. They come in and out of our insurance exchange at their convenience, when they can make a big enough profit off us. It’s time for another approach.

### WE WANT HEALTH CARE FOR OUR FAMILIES, OUR EMPLOYEES, OUR CUSTOMERS AND EVERYONE IN IOWA

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Healthy families and communities are part of our bottom line. We have a business interest in making sure everyone in our state can spend money on the goods and services we provide—instead of sending it to medical debt collectors. But making sure everyone in Iowa can get health care is just part of being decent. There’s no good reason to deny anyone health care.





“As any family farmer can tell you, running a successful farm is hard under the best of circumstances. Years of hard work can come crashing down in an instant. Before the ACA, one health crisis could mean losing it all.”

— **Chris Petersen**, Independent Family Farmer, Clear Lake, IA

## MAIN STREET PRINCIPLES ON HEALTH CARE

- ☀️ **Universal.** Everyone should have access to high-quality health care—whether you run a small business or a Fortune 500 company, no matter your race, your income, your gender identity, or where you were born.
- ☀️ **Publicly funded.** We can make health care work if everyone pitches in. We believe in a shared commitment among business, employees and government.
- ☀️ **Affordable costs.** We need affordable, predictable costs we can plan and budget for and that let small businesses compete with big corporations.
- ☀️ **High quality.** Small business owners and our employees need a health plan that covers all the essentials, not barebones plans worth less than the paper they're written on.

Main Street Alliance of Iowa supports proposals such as a **public option and Medicare for all**, that move us toward these principles.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) was a step in right direction—the starting point for a strong universal health care system. Policymakers' undermining of the ACA has led to skyrocketing premiums, worse coverage and threats to our bottom line. Instead of going backwards, we need to build a strong, universal health care system.

## SMALL BUSINESS ECONOMY: A FOUNDATION OF EQUITY, STABILITY AND FAIRNESS FOR MAIN STREET BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES

Main Street businesses can't thrive when communities are whipsawed by big corporations, trade wars, and a taxation system that funnels wealth to the richest among us. We need a foundation of stability and equity built on fair taxation, a banking system for Main Street, investment in Main Street people and communities, and trade policy that reflects our needs. That's just business common sense.



### INVESTING IN PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES IS AN INVESTMENT IN MAIN STREET BUSINESSES

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Our shops, farms and offices depend on customers and clients having enough income to circulate in local businesses and local economies, and in feeling security for the future. Our businesses grow in places where people can live, work, and prosper. And our communities must have the schools, health care facilities, roads, bridges, safe drinking water systems and clean environment to sustain business activity and a thriving workforce.

### PUBLIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DOLLARS SHOULD SUPPORT MAIN STREET BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES

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Our government should stop subsidizing the profits of large corporations through tax incentives and other subsidies. Public economic development funds should be used to support small businesses that apply high-road employment standards, contribute to local economies, and promote economic and racial equity.

### BANKING FOR MAIN STREET, NOT WALL STREET

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Banks and other financial institutions should serve the needs of the public—including Iowa's Main Street businesses, family farms and communities—not the other way around. And any small business owner applying for a loan or other financing should know they'll be treated fairly, without racial or gender discrimination, and protected from abusive products.

### MAIN STREET NEEDS PREDICTABILITY, STABILITY AND FAIRNESS IN TRADE

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In a trade war, there's no guarantee that Main Street will come out a winner. Recent evidence tells us the opposite. New tariffs have sent a ripple effect through Iowa small businesses from family farms to retail outlets to car washes. We need a trade policy that sets a foundation of stability for small businesses and farms instead of exposing us to unpredictability and letting big corporations call the shots.

# POLICIES TO SUPPORT A SMALL BUSINESS ECONOMY

## Tax fairness:

- ☀ Repeal the regressive 2017 tax legislation and create a progressive tax structure, end incentives for offshoring profits and close corporate loopholes.

## Banking for small business:

- ☀ Extend consumer protections—including truth in lending—to small business borrowers, and protect small business borrowers from predatory financing practices, such as the use of confessions of judgment.
- ☀ Promote equity in lending by implementing section 1071 of the Dodd-Frank Act, requiring financial institutions to report on lending to women-owned businesses, businesses owned by people of color, and small businesses.
- ☀ Create public banking opportunities to boost the local economy and small business lending.
- ☀ Increase funding for and access to small-scale loans and strengthen Small Business Administration support for microfinancing.

## Main Street-scale economic development:

- ☀ Reverse subsidization of large corporations. Support increased public investment by and for local communities, protect small businesses from displacement, and create high-quality, living-wage jobs with common sense standards.
- ☀ Renew and update anti-trust enforcement, including protecting Iowa farmers from further corporate consolidation in agriculture through a moratorium on mergers and acquisitions and by reversing anti-competitive mergers

## Trade policy:

- ☀ Curb multinational corporations' tax avoidance, incorporating taxation measures into trade agreements and ending banking secrecy.
- ☀ Protect Main Street from the big corporate race-to-the-bottom by revising current trade deals to include the following protections, and ensuring that any new deals:
  - > Contain strong health, safety, environmental, and workplace protections that are equally enforceable and binding as other parts of the deal.
  - > Protect the ability of local, state and federal policymakers to support local and regional economies and invest in research, development and training.
  - > Prevent large corporations from suing to overturn common-sense local, state and federal laws that protect our communities, job quality, health and environment.
  - > Support the efforts of local, state and federal governments to purchase from locally or regionally-based businesses.
  - > Allow state and federal lawmakers to establish farm safety net programs that provide small, independent farmers the strongest protection from volatility and downturns.

***“A lower corporate tax rate gives more power [to] and profits the big corporations who are destroying family farms. It provides large corporations with an unfair edge over small farmers and creates a rigged economy.”***

— **James Berge**, Owner of Berge Farms, Kensett, IA [“GOP Tax Plan Hurt Farmers, Small Businesses”](#)  
Iowa Starting Line

## A WELCOMING IOWA IS A PROSPEROUS IOWA



Across Iowa, Main Street entrepreneurs—no matter our race, religion, or where we were born—have declared that hate has no business in our establishments. We don't close our doors to immigrants, Muslims, LGBTQ people or others based on their race, their gender or their ability. Our leaders—and our laws—shouldn't either. We need to reverse hateful policies and replace them with policies that protect all the people who are creating the future for Main Street Iowa.

### IMMIGRANT SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS ARE HELPING CHART A FUTURE FOR MAIN STREET IOWA

In Iowa, immigrant business owners have helped bring hope and new life to many communities facing an uncertain future. Across our state, Main Streets that would otherwise be boarded up and lonely have been revived by immigrant business owners and their customers—they've seen promise in places that others have written off or big corporations have abandoned. Travel to towns like Carroll and Storm Lake and you'll see the difference immigrant business owners make to Iowa.

### IMMIGRANT BUSINESS OWNERS ARE HELPING BUILD PROSPERITY FOR MAIN STREET IOWA

We can't count on large corporations to create a foundation of prosperity in Iowa. We need people who see a future in our state. In Iowa, more than 24,000 people work at businesses owned by immigrants.<sup>17</sup> These businesses, in turn, generate \$4 billion in annual sales.<sup>18</sup> With establishments ranging from grocery stores and medical practices to farms, tortilla factories and accounting firms, immigrant small business owners—and their families, employees, and customers—are helping Iowa build stronger local economies and investment in our communities.

### PUNITIVE IMMIGRATION POLICIES THREATEN IOWA'S REBOUNDING MAIN STREETS

Every time federal immigration officials descend on our Main Streets—removing loved ones, friends, employees, and fellow business owners—our towns face yet another blow just as we're rebuilding our future. These raids tear apart our social fabric, remove breadwinners from our communities, and make people afraid to go outside for everyday needs. As people, Main Street business owners see the devastation in human terms. As business owners, we also feel the financial hit.

On top of that, every year deportation agents and immigration detention camps get more and more of our federal dollars—money that should go to our schools, clinics, flood prevention, and small businesses that want to get off the ground and invest in our communities.

17. <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/locations/iowa/>

18. <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/locations/iowa/>

## ALL BUSINESS OWNERS HAVE A STAKE IN A JUST AND WELCOMING IOWA

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For Main Street businesses, trust is our currency. Our success counts on everyone walking through their doors knowing they're welcomed and respected—no matter their race, national origin, religion or gender. Iowa's Main Street businesses are also esteemed community institutions—places where people not only buy what they need or earn a living, but also gather and build connections to one another. Policies that create fear undermine the trust that Main Street businesses depend on. That's why Main Street businesses stand for freedom and hope for all.

### IOWA'S MAIN STREET BUSINESS OWNERS WANT POLICIES THAT SUPPORT WELCOMING BUSINESSES

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We need policies that embrace and support the importance of small businesses as welcoming places, recognizing that Iowa is made up of people of many walks of life, genders, birthplaces and races. As leaders in our communities, we oppose policies that take rights away from Muslims, immigrants, women and trans and other LGBTQ people. These policies hurt all of us who want a good future for our businesses, our families and Main Street communities. We want policies that create the foundation for welcoming communities and thriving small businesses.

## MAIN STREET PRINCIPLES FOR A WELCOMING IOWA:

- ☀ Provide an accessible, equitable, and efficient **roadmap to full citizenship**
- ☀ Promote **family reunification** by making visas available without restrictive family definitions and visa caps; allow deported family members to reunite with their loved ones
- ☀ **Prevent the federal government from requiring small businesses to participate in immigration enforcement** through mandatory e-verify; protect hospitals, schools and courthouses from federal immigration agents
- ☀ **Divest from immigration detention** and enforcement and invest those dollars in Main Street; let immigrants stay at home and at work (instead of detention) while seeking asylum and/or citizenship
- ☀ Provide **equitable access** to education, health care, housing and other basic needs
- ☀ **Protect Main Street small businesses** from race-to-the-bottom competition by ensuring that future immigrant workers have access to citizenship and workplace rights
- ☀ **Repeal the 1996 laws** that created new obstacles for people to become full citizens
- ☀ **Protect immigrants' right to seek asylum** or other relief and have a fair day in court
- ☀ **End the Muslim ban**, which has kept families separated and harmed communities
- ☀ Extend civil right protections to **LGBTQ people**
- ☀ **Protect the Census** from a new citizenship question that undermines democracy and government by the people



The Main Street Alliance works to provide small businesses a voice on the most pressing public policy issues. Our advocacy promotes vibrant businesses and healthy communities, and fosters leadership development of socially responsible business leaders.

Prepared in consultation with - Iowa Citizen Action Network

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