

# A New Year's Resolution from Bernie Sanders

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Here is a New Year's resolution.

**Yes. In the wealthiest country on earth let us Make America Healthy Again.** Let us go forward together to lead the world in terms of life-expectancy, quality of life and human happiness. But let's be clear. In order to accomplish those goals, slogans and rhetoric will not be enough. We need concrete policy changes. We need to take on powerful special interests who make billions in profits by making us sick and shortening our lifespans.

**This is some of what we have to do.**

**Medicare for All.** Health care is a human right. The function of a rational health care system is to guarantee quality health care to all, not huge profits for the insurance industry. The United States cannot continue to be the only wealthy nation that does not provide universal health care. It is not acceptable that, while spending almost twice as much per capita on health care as other countries, 60,000 Americans die each year because they can't afford the health care they need.

**Lower the cost of prescription drugs.** As Americans we should not be paying, by far, the highest prices in the world for life-saving medications. It is absurd that, while the pharmaceutical industry enjoys huge profits and benefits from U.S. taxpayer research, one out of four Americans cannot afford to purchase the prescription drugs their doctors prescribe. We must cut prescription drug prices in half by making sure that we pay no more for medicine than the Europeans or Canadians.

**Paid Family and Medical Leave.** Workers should not have to go to work when they are sick. Mothers and fathers should have ample time to stay home with their new-born babies. A parent should not get fired when they stay home with a sick kid. We must guarantee at least 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave to every worker in America.

**Reform the food industry.** Large food corporations should not make record-breaking profits addicting children to the processed foods which make them overweight and prone to diabetes and other diseases. As a start, we must ban junk food ads targeted to kids and put strong warning labels on products high in sugar, salt and saturated fat. Longer term, we can rebuild rural America with family farms that are producing healthy, nutritious food.

**Raise the minimum wage to a living wage.** Millions of workers should not have to worry about how they'll pay the rent or buy food for their kids. Working class Americans live far shorter lives than the rich because of the

stress of trying to survive on a paycheck-to-paycheck existence. We must raise the minimum wage to at least \$17 an hour.

**Lower the work week to 32 hours with no loss of pay.** People will live longer and healthier lives if they can spend more time with family and friends and have the opportunity to enjoy leisure time activities. Advancements in technology, automation and artificial intelligence must benefit workers, not just billionaires on Wall Street or Silicon Valley.

**Combat the epidemic of loneliness, isolation and mental illness.** Too many Americans are struggling with intense anxiety and “diseases of despair” - alcoholism, drug addiction and even suicide. Not only do we need to greatly increase access to mental health care, we need to rebuild our sense of community and create a culture in which we better enjoy and appreciate each other as human beings.

**Address climate change and the environmental crisis.** Every American is impacted when the Earth’s temperature rises and the air we breathe is polluted. Climate change and extreme weather disturbances will cause more widespread suffering, economic disruptions and population dislocation. Air pollution is a major risk factor for respiratory and heart disease, cancer and other health problems. The fossil fuel industry cannot be allowed to continue making us sick and shortening our lives.

**Create a high-quality public education system.** Life-long education is a human right and should be obtainable for all in a wealthy nation like ours. Health, life expectancy and economic wellbeing is often tied to educational attainment. Instead of spending a trillion dollars a year on the military we should make certain that all Americans, from childcare to graduate school, are able to enjoy free, high-quality education.

Let’s be clear. The way forward to creating a healthy society is not radical. Many of the components, in one form or another, already exist in countries throughout the world. But that struggle will not be easy.

The ruling class of this country is not content with the unprecedented level of income and wealth we are experiencing. They are not content with the extraordinary concentration of ownership that exists, or the immense political power the billionaire class has achieved through the corrupt campaign finance system they created.

The truth is that their ideology of greed requires them to want more, and more and more. And if that greed makes us sicker or shortens our lives, that’s the price they require us to pay.

But we say NO. We are fighting back. We can and will create a government and economy that works for all, and not just the few. We can and will create a society which enhances human health and well-being, and not the wealth and power of the billionaire class.

Let’s go forward together.

In Solidarity,

Bernie