



Post-coronavirus Economic Recovery Plan for
Texas Congressional District 30
Addressing social and economic conditions in the Southern Sector of Dallas County

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I. INTRODUCTION

Every community deserves an equal opportunity to succeed. The unrestricted access to economic opportunity and resources should be a fundamental civil right granted to all Americans regardless of their race, color, sex, creed or socioeconomic status. Yet today, we find that more than a quarter of the 435 U.S. House of Representatives districts, classified as majority-minority districts, still remain underserved in the areas of: economic development, access to resources, declining education, poor housing conditions, and crime infestations – Texas Congressional District 30 is one of those underserved districts.

For nearly 30-years, the southern sector of Dallas County (Texas Congressional District 30) has faced paralyzing economic and social challenges without congressional accountability. In fact, social and economic problems have progressed over the years in the district because congressional leadership has ignored the conditions and maintained the status quo. As a law enforcement officer who has patrolled communities in District 30 since 1999; I have personally witnessed the slow deterioration of the district to include: increasing levels of violent crime, poverty, homelessness, unemployment, incarceration rates, and limited access to healthcare. Many of these problems have been directly attributed to failed congressional policies that have marginalized the interests of the people in this district for years.

Presently, the economic crisis created by the coronavirus pandemic and now national protests relating to the police-related killing of George Floyd has ushered in a new paradigm for change. America's inconsistent response to the crisis and the lack of support provided to people and businesses in underserved districts has exposed the fallacy in the belief that government will financially support everyone. Based on this revelation, I have set forth an economic plan for Texas Congressional District 30 that can be adopted by other underserved congressional districts to help break government dependency, promote opportunity, increase workforce training and encourage volunteerism.

Reminiscent of America's economic response to the Great Depression; in which public works projects were used to help restore public confidence and jump-start the economy, the EARN-IT plan seeks to leverage government, corporate and people partnerships for the mutual benefit of economic success. Under this economic recovery plan, government will play its traditional role of

supporting initiatives through tax credits; through these tax credit corporations would finance training and opportunities for workers in the district; and people that benefit from the program would then use their workforce experience to help the district recover and subsequently “pay it forward” through volunteerism.

To effectively recover from the impending economic crisis, outdated political philosophies that have historically benefited the well-connected and leveraged unsustainable economic policies on the backs of the working-class can no longer be used in a post-coronavirus world. It’s time for a new vision and energy to truly balance the scales of equity to give all Americans an opportunity to “earn it” by reinvesting in training, human capital and infrastructure projects.

II. PLAN STRUCTURE

EARN-IT stands for *Economic – Academic – Reward – Network – In – Training*. Under the EARN-IT plan, government will play its traditional role of supporting initiatives, but corporations and people will have an opportunity earn economic and social rewards based on their contributions to the recovery process.

- (a) **Economic:** Improve community conditions and create jobs by encouraging investments in infrastructure and public works projects.
- (b) **Academic:** Train people to work in different economic markets through internships and apprenticeship programs.
- (c) **Reward:** Benefits vary based on the entity.
 - Government benefits by building a strong working-class in underserved communities.
 - Corporations benefit by receiving tax credits and growing their qualified applicant pools.
 - People benefit by improving social outcomes and receiving valuable workforce career training.
- (d) **Network:** The network is comprised of stakeholders that have a vested-interest in improving the viability of underserved communities. It involves partnering with: healthcare professionals, law enforcement officials, educators, corporations, non-profits, churches, federal, state and local governments, and the people.
- (e) **In-Training:** The goal of the plan is to improve economic outcomes by academically training people for a career, rewarding participation in the program and building a cooperative network between government, corporations and people.

III. EMERGENT CHALLENGES

It's no secret that Texas Congressional District 30 has remained underserved in many areas since its inception in 1993. These problems have progressed over the years with minimal efforts for change.

- **Crime:** For nearly three decades, Texas CD30 has faced significant challenges related to violent crime. According to recent crime statistics, violent crime rates in South Dallas are 300% higher than the national average. Adjacent congressional districts have continued to experience spikes in crime due to their relative proximity.
- **Economic Development:** For years, Texas CD30 residents have complained about the lack of economic development and limited access to resources. Years of neglect in the area of economic development has resulted in the district having poor housing conditions, limited access to express mail services and grocery stores. The lack of large chain grocery stores in Texas CD30 has essentially rendered many areas of the district a food desert, limiting access to healthy food choices.
- **Lack of jobs:** Historically, large corporations have not invested in Texas CD30 due to progressive social policies. The unwillingness to relocate businesses to the area has led to a lack of career choices and opportunities. Additionally, many small and minority-owned business leaders have complained about being unable to qualify for federal grants and financial loans because of qualification restrictions and access requirements.
- **Healthcare:** Many Texas CD30 residents have long complained about having access to quality healthcare services, high prescription costs and limited number of pharmacies.
- **Education:** Many residents have complained about the lack of educational resources and job training opportunities in the district to help promote economic independence. Residents of Texas CD30 have also raised concerns about the lack of diversity training for police officers. Conversely, police officers are claimed that community complaints have increased over the years because of the communities' lack of knowledge about police policies and procedures.
- **Veteran Homelessness:** Texas CD30 is home to the Veteran Administration's second largest healthcare system in the United States; sadly, the district also has the largest concentration of homeless veterans in North Texas.
- **Poverty/Hunger:** Texas CD30 has an increasing homeless population with a significant amount of people becoming reliant upon food kitchens for support.

IV. PROGRAM ELEMENTS

EARN-IT emphasizes three key components: government-corporation-people partnership, volunteerism/civic duty and workforce career training. The EARN-IT plan involves building a strong economy by redefining the roles of stakeholders' in the economic recovery process. It focuses on building communities by training people for sustainable careers and reinforcing ideas of civic duty, instead of relying on government social programs.

EARN-IT was designed to be a long-term plan with progress evaluations occurring every two years to measure accountability for the plan's objectives.

1. **Government, corporation and people partnerships:** Government, corporations, and people will earn economic and social rewards by participating in the economic recovery process.
2. **Volunteerism/Civic Duty:** Volunteerism is the universal expression of appreciation and commitment to civic duty. In President John F. Kennedy's 1961 inaugural address, he famously stated, "...ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country." These historic words called Americans to action and challenged them to contribute to the common good. The EARN-IT plan values "sweat capital" earned through volunteering.
3. **Workforce Career Training:** EARN-IT focuses on building communities by training people for sustainable workforce careers while reinforcing ideas of civic duty. EARN-IT encourages economic independence instead of settling for unskilled jobs and relying on outdated government programs.

V. DELIVERABLES/SOLUTIONS

- **Crime:**
 - Based on research, there are two key theories that facilitate the rise of crime in underserved communities: The Broken Windows Theory & Not Me Syndrome.
 - a) Broken Windows Theory suggests that visible signs of social disorder facilitate the rise of crime.
 - b) Not Me Syndrome holds that people overlook crime that does not directly involve them.
 - **People:** Address crime by targeting the conditions that create crime and empowering people to take a part in the crime prevention process. Clean trash from communities, paint over vandalism and encourage people to report crime.
 - **Government:** Initiate public works projects to revitalize communities and address conditions of social disorder. Encourage people to join citizen crime watch groups. Work with police agencies to enhance community-policing initiatives, while also directly addressing criminal behavior that victimizes residents.
 - **Corporations:** Invest in building projects and work with law enforcement and the community to protect their investments.
- **Economic Development:**
 - Offer tax credits to companies that invest in building projects to create jobs.
 - Provide five-year property tax exemptions for manufacturing firms that relocate to the district.
 - Offer additional tax credits to companies that hire Texas CD30 residents with focus on employing: minorities, veterans and disable residents.
 - Offer tax credits to companies for facilitating training and apprenticeship programs.
 - Work with the Small Business Association (SBA) and the Minority Business Development Administration (MBDA) to make business loans and grants more accessible to business owners in Texas CD30.
 - Work with Housing and Urban Development to help improve neighborhoods through revitalization grant projects.
 - Incentivize financial lenders to offer low cost loans to business owners to improve their properties.

- **Lack of Jobs:**
 - Establish partnerships with corporations to create internships and workforce training programs for residents in the district.
 - Train people to work in critical fields needed for economic recovery such as: public service, medical and research fields, and food service industries.
 - Reinvest in American manufacturing to reduce reliance on resources from China. Return pharmaceutical and medical supply production plants to America and employ workers from underserved districts to provide infrastructure support.
- **Healthcare:**
 - Work with federal and state entities to ease malpractice premiums for physicians willing to offer free services to low income families.
 - It is estimated that 19 million Americans import medicine from other countries to save money; on average they save 56% more on world imports. Medicare is the largest purchaser of medicines from pharmaceutical companies; however, federal law prohibits the system from negotiating prices. Encourage Congress to allow Medicare to negotiate drug prices directly with pharmaceutical companies to get better rates.
 - Work with Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to remove inefficiencies that impede access to healthcare such as inconsistent payment rates for similar services performed at hospitals and physician offices.
 - To expedite treatment for seniors and low-income patients in need, partner with pharmaceutical companies to offer free or reduced-cost medications.
 - Work with corporations to bring more accessible pharmacies to poverty-stricken areas of the district.
 - Work with hospitals and clinics on preventative health programs. Promote community health education to help people manage and monitor chronic conditions such as: high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.

- **Education:**
 - At the height of the coronavirus pandemic, medical and public safety staff across the country faced unexpected shortages. State and local governments must ease certification requirements to encourage more people to enter critical support fields such as: public safety, medical, research and public health professions.
 - Work with community colleges and universities to design an academic-based diversity and legal-context course for police officers and citizens. This course will help police officers better understand cultural diversity in communities of color. It will also provide citizens with greater understanding of legal procedures for police interactions.
 - Encourage corporations to partner with colleges and universities in the district to offer apprenticeship programs for students.
 - Implement financial and business literacy programs to help community members start businesses and purchase land and property in designated opportunity zones.
- **Veteran Homelessness:**
 - Target veteran homelessness by creating initiatives to better coordinate resources such as: working with state and local governments on early intervention, offering transitional-housing, creating targeted work-training programs, and working with mental health facilities to provide greater access.
- **Poverty/Hunger:**
 - Partner with restaurants, farmers and food distributors to re-distribute food to assist in feeding the community.
 - Encourage recipients of the benefit must do their part in helping to improve the community by volunteering to support community “sponsored” initiatives.
 - To prevent the mass closure of restaurants, allow corporations and government to subsidize training initiatives in which restaurant buildings are modified to train people to work in the culinary industry.

VI. SUMMARY

EARN-IT provides a new vision for dealing with existing socioeconomic challenges in underserved districts across America like Texas Congressional District 30. Over the past few months, government strategies intended to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus such as implementing mandatory stay-at-home orders and enforcing business closures has now attributed to the highest unemployment rate in the U.S. since the Great Depression. Although the pain experienced by the economic crisis was equally felt across the U.S., those in underserved districts faced far greater financial hardships. In fact, the economic impact of the coronavirus crisis coupled with persistent ideas of inequality and injustice set the stage for national protests in the wake of the George Floyd murder. Consequently, riots ensued across the country that are now estimated to result in billions of dollars in property loss.

EARN-IT recognizes that difficult times lie ahead and solutions can only occur with new and bold ideas for socioeconomic change. The only way for America to stabilize its economy is to reinvest in a system that works for everyone. Over the last 40 years, economic recovery from recessions have been inconsistent, having significant benefit for the upper-class; while minimally providing opportunities for lower- and middle-class communities. In 2020, we face the direst economic crisis since the Great Depression; this plan seeks to change that trend. Unlike other economic recovery plans that solely rely on more government aids, EARN-IT focuses on leveraging relationships, ideas and opportunities for the mutual benefit of economic success.

EARN-IT is fluid plan that seeks to provide an inclusive approach to addressing the systemic socioeconomic issues that have plagued Texas Congressional District 30 for nearly three decades and similar underserved congressional district across the country. As events in the district evolve, so will the plan and its methodologies for addressing those emergent issues.