

A selection of issues at stake in the presidential election and their impact on Americans:

Abortion

Persistent Republican-led efforts to restrict access to abortion and to curb government funding for Planned Parenthood have been hotly debated in Washington and in states. The issue will be shaped in some way by the next president and could be shaped profoundly if the election winner manages to tip the balance of the Supreme Court.

Trump, in the third and final presidential debate, said he would appoint justices open to overturning *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 decision that established a constitutional right to abortion. Clinton vowed to appoint justices who would uphold that ruling, saying: "We have come too far to have that turned back now."

Child care/pay equity

In much of the U.S., families spend more on child care for two kids than on housing. And if you're a woman, it's likely you earn less than your male colleagues. That's according to the latest research, which suggests that while the U.S. economy has improved, women and their families still are struggling to make the numbers work.

Women comprise about 57 percent of the labor force and many of them have young children. If they aren't getting paid enough to make ends meet, more families will seek out government aid programs or low-quality, unlicensed day care for their children.

Clinton wants a 12-week government-paid family and medical leave program, guaranteeing workers two-thirds of their wages up to a certain amount. Trump proposes six weeks of leave for new mothers, with the government paying wages equivalent to unemployment benefits.

Both candidates propose tax relief for child care costs. Trump's plan provides for a new income tax deduction for child care expenses, other tax benefits and a new rebate or tax credit for low-income families. Clinton says no family should spend more than 10 percent of its income on child care. She would double the child tax credit for families with children 4 and younger, to \$2,000 per child.

China

Tensions have been rising over China's assertive behavior in the seas of Asia. The U.S. also accuses China of unfair trading practices and cyber theft of business secrets.

Trump says that the sheer



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Race and policing

The continued deaths of unarmed African-Americans at the hands of police are turning into one of the most consequential civil rights issues of the new millennium. Since the death in 2014 of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, the sharing of video-recorded deaths of African-Americans at the hands of law enforcement has sparked unrest in many cities around the country, and prompted calls for additional training and more monitoring of police forces.

Clinton has offered specific proposals,

including legislation that would help end racial profiling, providing federal matching funds for more police body cameras and overhauling mandatory minimum sentencing.

Trump has described himself as the "law and order" candidate, and has not specifically addressed plans on race and policing. He endorsed a former New York City police policy called "stop and frisk" after unrest in Charlotte, North Carolina, over the police shooting of Keith Lamont Scott.

volume of trade gives the U.S. leverage over China. He accuses China of undervaluing its currency to make its exports artificially cheap and proposes tariffs as high as 45 percent on Chinese imports if Beijing doesn't change its behavior. Such action could risk a trade war that would make many products in the U.S. more expensive.

Clinton says the U.S. needs to press the rising Asian power to play by international rules, whether on trade or territorial disputes.

While many of China's neighbors are unnerved by its military build-up, the wider world needs the U.S. and China to get along, to tackle global problems. The U.S. and China also are economically interdependent, and punishment by one party could end up hurting the other.

Climate change

It's as if Trump and Clinton live on two entirely different Earths: one warming, one not. Clinton says climate change threatens us all, while Trump repeatedly tweets that global warming is a hoax.

Measurements and scientists say Clinton's Earth is much closer to the warming reality. And it is worsening.

From May 2015 to August 2016, 16 months in a row set records globally for heat,

according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The world is on pace to break the record for hottest year, a record already broken in 2010, 2014 and 2015. It is about 1.8 degrees warmer than a century ago.

But it's more than temperatures. Scientists have connected man-made climate change to deadly heat waves, droughts and flood-inducing downpours. Studies say climate change is raising sea levels, melting ice and killing coral. It's making people sicker with asthma and allergies and may eventually shrink our bank accounts.

Trump calls attempts to remedy global warming "just a very, very expensive form of tax."

Clinton proposes to spend \$60 billion to switch from dirty fossil fuels to cleaner energy. She promises to deliver on President Barack Obama's pledge that by 2025, the U.S. will be emitting 30 percent less heat-trapping gases than in 2005.

Debt

The federal government is borrowing about one out of seven dollars it spends and steadily piling up debt — to the tune of about \$14 trillion held by investors. Over the long term, that threatens the economy and people's pocketbooks.

Most economists say rising debt risks crowding out investment and forcing interest rates up, among other problems. At the same time, rapidly growing spending on federal health care programs like Medicare and the drain on Social Security balances caused by the rising tide of baby boomers could squeeze out other spending, on roads, education, the armed forces and more.

It takes spending cuts, tax increases or both to dent the deficit. Lawmakers instead prefer higher spending and tax cuts.

Neither Clinton nor Trump has focused on the debt.

Trump has promised massive tax cuts that would drive up the debt and he's shown no interest in curbing expensive benefit programs like Medicare.

Clinton, by contrast, is proposing tax increases on the wealthy. But she wouldn't use the money to bring down the debt. Instead, she'd turn around and spend it on college tuition subsidies, infrastructure and health care.

Education

The U.S. has some 50 million K-12 students. Teaching them, preparing them for college and careers, costs taxpayers more than \$580 billion a year, or about \$11,670 per pupil per year. A better education usually translates into higher earnings.

And while high school

graduations are up sharply and dropout rates down, the nation has a ways to go to match the educational outcomes elsewhere. American schoolchildren trail their counterparts in Japan, Korea, Germany, France and elsewhere.

Clinton wants to make pre-school universal for all 4-year-old children within 10 years by providing new federal dollars to states. Trump proposes to spend \$20 billion during his first year in office to help states expand school choice programs. He wants states to divert an additional \$110 billion of their own education money to help parents who want their children to go to other schools.

Energy

Energy independence has been a goal of every president since Richard Nixon. Clinton and Trump have very different ways to get there. How energy is produced and where it comes from affect jobs, the economy and the environment.

Domestic production of all types of energy except coal has boomed in recent years, spurred by improved drilling techniques such as fracking and discoveries of vast oil supplies in North Dakota and natural gas in states such as Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York and West Virginia.

Clinton vows to continue the boom while ensuring the U.S. generates enough renewable energy to power every home in America within 10 years.

Trump vows to "unleash American energy," allowing unfettered production of oil, coal, natural gas and other sources to push the U.S. toward energy independence and create jobs.

Both Clinton and Trump support natural gas, a cleaner alternative to coal. Trump calls for rescinding the Clean Power Plan, a key element of Obama's strategy to fight climate change. Clinton is committed to Obama's climate-change goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by up to 30 percent by 2025.

Foreign policy

How the U.S. uses its influence as the world's sole superpower is a central feature of presidential power.

It can mean taking the country to war — to protect the homeland or to defend an ally. Or it can mean using diplomacy to prevent war. It can affect U.S. jobs, too, as choices arise either to expand trade deals or to erect barriers to protect U.S. markets.

In the contest between Clinton and Trump, America's role in the world is a point of sharp differences. Each says the U.S. must be the predominant power, but they would exercise leadership differently. Trump

calls his approach "America first," meaning alliances and coalitions would not pass muster unless they produced a net benefit to the U.S. Clinton sees international partnerships as essential tools for using U.S. influence and lessening the chances of war.

These divergent views could mean very different approaches to the military fight and ideological struggle against the Islamic State, the future of Afghanistan and Iraq, the contest with China for influence in Asia and the Pacific, and growing nervousness in Europe over Russian aggression.

Guns

The right to bear arms is carved into the Constitution and seemingly embedded in the national DNA. But after a seemingly endless stretch of violence, Americans are confronting how far those rights extend.

Do Americans have the right to have AR-style firearms, the long guns with a military look used in the past year in several mass shootings? Should they be able to buy magazines that hold 10 or more bullets? Should every gun buyer have to pass a background check?

Trump casts himself as an ardent protector of gun rights and proclaims that if more "good guys" were armed there would be fewer gun tragedies. He's made fealty to the Second Amendment a quality he wants in Supreme Court nominees.

Clinton wants to renew an expired ban on assault-type weapons instituted when her husband was president. She's also called for measures to ensure background checks are completed before a gun sale goes forward, mandating such checks for gun-show sales and repealing a law that shields gun manufacturers from liability.

Health care

About 9 in 10 Americans now have health insurance, more than at any time in history. But progress is incomplete, and the future far from certain. Rising costs could bedevil the next occupant of the White House.

Millions of people previously shut out have been covered by Obama's health care law. No one can be denied coverage anymore because of a pre-existing condition. But "Obamacare" remains divisive, and premiums for next year are rising sharply in many communities. As well, some major insurers are leaving the program.

Whether Americans would be better off trading for a GOP plan is another question. Recent studies found Trump's proposal would make 18 million to 20 million people uninsured. GOP congressional leaders have a more comprehensive approach, but key details still are missing.

Overall health care spending is trending higher again, and prices for prescription drugs — new and old — are a major worry.

Medicare's insolvency date has moved up by two years — to 2028.

Clinton would stay the course, adjusting as needed. Republicans are united on repealing Obama's law, but it's unclear how they would replace it.

Homegrown extremism

Radical Islamic militancy has inspired a series of deadly attacks on U.S. soil, shaking the American psyche and leaving the presidential contenders at odds over how to respond.

The culprits typically have no ties to foreign terrorist organizations, no explicit directions from overseas and no formal training.

Instead, they've blended into American society and skated beneath the radar of federal investigators grappling with a frenetic threat landscape and hundreds of investigations across the country.

The bombing in Manhattan in September that injured more than two dozen people crystallized concerns: A journal found with the Afghan-born U.S.



Trade

In this angry election year, many American voters are skeptical about free trade — or hostile to it.

The backlash threatens a pillar of U.S. policy: The United States has long sought global trade.

Economists say imports cut prices for consumers and make the U.S. more efficient.

But unease has simmered, especially as American workers faced competition from low-wage Chinese labor. Last year, the U.S. ran a \$334 billion trade deficit with China — \$500 billion with the entire world.

The Democratic and Republican presidential candidates both are playing to public suspicions about trade deals. Clinton broke with Obama by opposing an Asia-Pacific trade agreement (TPP) that she supported as secretary of state.

Trump vows to tear up existing trade deals and to slap huge tariffs on Chinese imports.

But trade deals have far less impact on jobs than forces such as automation and wage differences between countries. Trump's plans to impose tariffs could start a trade war and raise prices.