

Policy Platform 2020—The American Institute of Architects

Policy origins and party affiliation

The following document provides background on the policy ideas within the AIA Policy Platform 2020. Some of the ideas are new, generated by AIA members and staff. However, many of the ideas are grounded in legislative proposals that have previously been offered or amended. We did this intentionally to ensure that our proposals are rooted in political reality.

AIA is committed to working bipartisanly. Many of the policies noted in this piece are based on bipartisan legislation. Others are based on historically Republican ideas, while others are based on historically Democratic ideas.

This guide provides a color-coded snapshot of the policy origins of our recommendations and their partisan affiliation. **Red denotes a Republican-only bill**, **blue is Democratic-only**, and **green is bipartisan**.

We have also included a note where our policies align with the 2016 Policy Platforms from each party. The 2020 Party Platforms may be different from the earlier platforms, but neither the RNC nor the DNC has released their platforms yet. This document was created with the benefit of only the 2016 Party platforms for reference.

Please note, AIA does not necessarily endorse the entirety of the legislation listed below. We reference the legislation due to the

provisions that we support, but there may be other provisions that we do not support. This guide is meant as a reference for the policy ideas in the AIA Policy Platform, not a list of AIA endorsed legislation.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to AIA federal staff.

A Future Economy

Increase STEAM investment & student debt relief to strengthen diverse and inclusive talent pathways into the profession

Increase investment in the Carl D. Perkin's Career and Technical Education (CTE) program

- H.R. 2353, Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (115th Congress)
- Sponsor: Rep. Glenn Thompson (R-PA-05)
- Bipartisan: 11 Democrats, 29 Republicans

Supplement Department of Education funding for STEAM outreach in historically underserved school districts and communities

- This can be done through the reauthorization of a variety of federal bills which have historically been bipartisan, including:
- Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act

Formally include architecture as a unique STEAM category to streamline federal student aid applications

- Architecture is a STEM category, but it is nested under the E for Engineering. We have begun making progress on this front. In the last Perkin's CTE Reauthorization Act from 2018

(below), architecture was identified by name in two key places within the bill that would promote outreach to historically underserved communities and allow funding to update CTE curriculum. This formal recognition in the statute is important, but it is only the beginning.

- H.R. 2353, Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (115th Congress)
- 115th
- Sponsor: Rep. Glenn Thompson (R-PA-05)
- Bipartisan: 11 Democrats, 29 Republicans

Allow employers to contribute directly to their employee's student loan repayment the same way they can contribute to retirement savings

- S.1428/H.R. 6276, Retirement Parity for Student Loans Act
- Senate Sponsor: Sen. Wyden (D-OR), House Sponsor: Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL-07)
- Senate Bill - Partisan: 6 Democrats
- House Bill - Bipartisan: 5 Democrats, 3 Republicans

Strengthen workforce training for new, sustainable building technology & practices

Establish a university-based Building Training and Assessment Center for architects and other building industry professions to learn energy-efficient design and technology best practices, coordinated with the Department of Energy, the National Labs, and state-accredited community colleges.

- This idea comes directly from this bipartisan bill (below). While we cannot endorse the whole bill due to other provisions, we support this idea.
- H.R. 3962/S.2137, Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act of 2019
- Sponsors: Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT-AL), Sen. Portman (R-OH)
- House bill Bipartisan: 8 Democrats, 2 Republicans

- Senate bill Bipartisan: 7 Democrats, 2 Republicans, 1 Independent

Reauthorize the Workforce, Innovation and Opportunity Act, which is set to expire in 2020, to continue the services currently provided through the Department of Labor

- H.R. 803, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (113th Congress)
- Sponsor: Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC-05)
- Partisan: 23 Republicans, 0 Democrats

Strengthen the inclusion of businesses owned and operated by historically underrepresented communities including women and racially and ethnically diverse business owners

Develop a Civil Service Corps option for graduates

- This idea is partially based on H.R. 2938, National Design Services Act (114th Congress)
- Sponsor: Rep. Perlmutter (D-CO)
- Bipartisan: 9 Democrats, 1 Republican

Leverage private investment

Utilize tax incentives to spark resilient, sustainable, & equitable development

179D, the Energy Efficient Commercial Buildings Deduction: Increase the credit from \$1.80 per square foot to \$3.00 and make the credit permanent

- H.R. 2, The Moving Forward Act
- Sponsor: Rep. DeFazio (D-OR-04)
- Partisan: 129 Democrats, 0 Republicans

25C, the Non-Business Energy Property Tax Credit: Double the credit from \$1,200 to \$2,400 and the eligible expenditures from 15% to 30%

- H.R. 2506/S. 2588, Home Energy Savings Act of 2019
- Sponsors: Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-CA-34), Sen. Hassan (D-NH)
- House Bill Bipartisan: 1 Democrat, 2 Republicans
- Senate Bill Bipartisan: 1 Democrats, 1 Republican
- The bill increases the credit and the eligible expenditures. Given the current financial crisis, we'd expand on this bill to increase the credit all the way to \$2,400.

45L, the New Energy Efficient Home Credit: Increase the credit to \$2,500 for 2021 and 2022

- H.R. 2626/S. 2595, New Home Energy Efficiency Act
- Sponsors: Rep. Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-CA-34), Sen. Hassan (D-NH)
- House bill bipartisan: 2 Democrats, 1 Republican
- Senate bill bipartisan: 1 Democrats, 1 Republican

Invest in low-income housing tax credits

- H.R. 3077/S.1703, Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act of 2019
- Sponsors: Rep. DelBene (D-WA-01), Sen. Cantwell (D-WA)
- House Bill Bipartisan: 145 Democrats, 76 Republicans
- Senate Bill Bipartisan: 26 Democrats, 11 Republicans, 2 Independents

Recommit to historic preservation tax credits

- H.R. 2825/S. 2615, Historic Tax Credit Growth and Opportunity Act (HTC-GO)
- Sponsors: Rep. Blumenauer (D-OR-03), Sen. Cassidy (R-LA)
- House Bill Bipartisan: 33 Democrats, 31 Republicans
- Senate Bill Bipartisan: 7 Democrats, 5 Republicans

Adopt business-friendly tax policies

Prioritize favorable tax policies for small businesses

Maintain the increased business interest expense deduction at 50%

- Updated via H.R. 748, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act)
- Sponsor: Rep. Joe Courtney (D-CT-02)
- Bipartisan: 200 Democrats, 169 Republicans

Allow net operating loss carrybacks for S-corporations and small businesses

- Bipartisan: 200 Democrats, 169 Republicans
- Updated via H.R. 748, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act)
- Sponsor: Rep. Joe Courtney (D-CT-02)
- Bipartisan: 200 Democrats, 169 Republicans

Establish another expanded version of small business interruption loans once the Paycheck Protection Program ends

- PPP created via H.R. 748, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act)
- Sponsor: Rep. Joe Courtney (D-CT-02)
- Bipartisan: 200 Democrats, 169 Republicans

Establish federally-backed pandemic risk insurance for business interruption losses and event cancellations due to future pandemics or other public health emergency declarations

- [H.R. 7011, Pandemic Risk Insurance Act of 2020](#)
- Sponsor: Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY-12)
- Partisan: 24 Democrats, 0 Republicans

Provide research & development tax credits & research funding

Expand the Research & Development Tax Credit with an emphasis on small businesses

- H.R. 5520/S. 2207, Research and Development Tax Credit Expansion Act of 2019
- Sponsors: Rep. Neguse (D-CO-02), Sen. Hassan (D-NH)
- House bill bipartisan: 1 Democrats, 1 Republican
- Senate bill bipartisan: 2 Democrats, 1 Republican

Increase federal funding for the Department of Energy's US Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), the Lawrence Berkeley National Labs (LBNL), and the National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL)

Increase federal funding for chemical safety research including the Environmental Protection Agency's Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) database and Chemicals of Concern Action Plan

Climate Action

Provide research & development tax credits & research funding

- H.R. 9, Climate Action Now Act
- Sponsor: Rep. Castor (D-FL-14)
- Bipartisan: 223 Democrats, 1 Republican

Promote science-based environmental regulation & research

Increase federal funding for chemical safety research including the Environmental Protection Agency's Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) database and Chemicals of Concern Action Plan

Support Department of Energy (DOE) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) programs that are critical to the practice of sustainable design including Energy Star and its suite of programs (Portfolio Manager, Target Finder, etc.), the Commercial Building Energy Consumption Survey (CBECS) database, and NOAA's US Climate Reference Network (USCRN)

Provide DOE and EPA support for the AIA 2030 Commitment's Design Data Exchange

Advance the 2012 EPA Guidelines for Water Reuse in developing rigorous guidelines for graywater and storm water reuse

Promote DOE's US Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), the Lawrence Berkeley National Labs (LBNL), and the National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL)

Support chemical safety research including the EPA's Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) database and Chemicals of Concern Action Plan

Provide federal leadership on climate & cross-departmental integration

Make addressing climate change a top priority of national policy

Integrate and better coordinate the administrative departments that assist communities and individuals in responding to disaster recovery and weather-related impacts

Continue to support the General Service Administration's (GSA) leadership in lowering building operating costs through high

performance, designing healthy and sustainable buildings, and attracting top talent to public service

Actively address the disproportionate impact of climate change & environmental degradation on communities of color

Strengthen and expand intra-governmental partnerships to focus specifically on providing direct assistance and planning support to state, municipal, and tribal governments serving overburdened and underserved communities

Expand the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) national Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) Program to help overburdened and underserved communities access environmental impact analysis tools and advance environmental protections

Accelerate the work of the EPA's National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) to provide independent advice to the Administrator on broad, crosscutting matters of environmental justice, and greatly expand its national agenda for public meetings

- While not entirely derived from this bill, this idea would have precedent in S. 2236, the Environmental Justice Act of 2019
- Sponsor: Sen. Booker (D-NJ)
- Cosponsors: 13 Democrats, 0 Republicans

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency in buildings

Support the 2030 Commitment by architecture and engineering firms and building developers.

Promote the adoption and enforcement of energy codes by state and local governments

- While AIA does not endorse the whole bill, we support the promotion of code adoption in this bipartisan bill:

- H.R. 3962/S.2137, Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act of 2019
- Sponsors: Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT-AL), Sen. Portman (R-OH)
- House bill Bipartisan: 8 Democrats, 2 Republicans
- Senate bill Bipartisan: 7 Democrats, 2 Republicans, 1 Independent

Fund deep retrofits and mechanical and electrical system replacement in outdated existing buildings across the country

Provide federal support for municipal benchmarking and disclosure, including sharing best practices

Advance federal infrastructure investment in micro-utilities and networked district systems

Promote renewable energy & embrace building electrification

Promote all-electric buildings

Promote electric mobility

- H.R. 5428, Grid Modernization Research and Development Act of 2019
- Sponsor: Rep. Lamb (D-PA-17)
- Bipartisan: 2 Democrats, 2 Republicans

Increase development of microgrids and grid harmonization

- H.R. 5428, Grid Modernization Research and Development Act of 2019 - [Link](#)
- 116th
- Sponsor: Rep. Lamb (D-PA-17)
- Bipartisan: 2 Democrats, 2 Republicans

- S. 2332, Grid Modernization Act of 2019

- 116th

- Sponsor: Sen. Cantwell (D-WA)
- Partisan: 4 Democrats, 0 Republicans

Promote the growth of renewable power by incentivizing US states to adopt uniform national grid interconnection, net metering, and distributed generation regulations

Increase solar tax credits and green power procurement

- H.R. 2, The Moving Forward Act
- Sponsor: Rep. DeFazio (D-OR-04)
- Partisan: 129 Democrats, 0 Republicans

Require solar install on all new construction

Advocate for the elimination of fossil fuels from buildings

- Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (Sec. 433)
- Sponsor: Rep. Rahall (D-WV)
- Bipartisan: 195 Democrats, 3 Republicans

Promote development of biogas options at scale

Create federal incentives for the adoption of net zero carbon building codes

- H.R. 3962/S.2137, Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act of 2019
- Sponsors: Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT-AL), Sen. Portman (R-OH)
- House bill Bipartisan: 8 Democrats, 2 Republicans
- Senate bill Bipartisan: 7 Democrats, 2 Republicans, 1 Independent

Adopt ZERO Code for all federal building and buildings receiving federal funding

- Related Legislation: 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)
- Provided free training and 2009 IECC code books

- Incentivized localities to adopt the 2009 IECC

Support the ZERO Code as a national building energy standard for new building construction that integrates cost-effective energy-efficiency standards with on-site and/or off-site renewable energy, resulting in net zero carbon buildings.

Create funding mechanisms and tie the highest energy incentives to Zero Code to improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings will yield a public benefit.

Reduce embodied carbon & encourage carbon-smart materials

Establish a whole-building life cycle assessment requirement and adopt the 2030 Challenge for Embodied Carbon reduction targets for all federal buildings and buildings receiving federal funds

Continue and expand USFS leadership on mass timber construction and forest health

Create a zero-net carbon jobs task force to identify economic growth targets

Require manufacturers to be responsible for end-of-life of products (product takeback)

Incorporate projected building service life into the building code

Create tax incentives for buildings meeting the 2030 Challenge for Embodied Carbon

Renovate, adapt, & preserve existing buildings

- H.R. 2825/S. 2615, Historic Tax Credit Growth and Opportunity Act
- Sponsors: Rep. Blumenauer (D-OR-03), Sen. Cassidy (R-LA)
- House Bill Bipartisan: 33 Democrats, 31 Republicans
- Senate Bill Bipartisan: 7 Democrats, 5 Republicans

Preserve historic structures

Increase funding support for the Department of Interiors Standards for Historic Preservation

Expand historic preservation tax credits

- H.R. 2825/S. 2615, Historic Tax Credit Growth and Opportunity Act
- Sponsors: Rep. Blumenauer (D-OR-03), Sen. Cassidy (R-LA)
- House Bill Bipartisan: 33 Democrats, 31 Republicans
- Senate Bill Bipartisan: 7 Democrats, 5 Republicans

Healthy and Equitable Communities

Catalyze accessible & affordable housing

Repeal the Faircloth Amendment, which currently limits the construction of new public housing units funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) if doing so results in a net increase in Public Housing Unit (PHA) owned, assisted, or operated as of October 1, 1999

- [H.R. 2, The Moving Forward Act](#)
- Sponsor: Rep. DeFazio (D-OR-04)
- Partisan: 129 Democrats, 0 Republicans

Expand funding for the Section 8 Housing Voucher Program, which allows HUD to assist low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled so they can afford housing in the private market

- H.R. 5793, Housing Choice Voucher Mobility Demonstration Act of 2018 (115th Congress)
- Sponsor: Rep. Sean Duffy (R-WI-07)
- Bipartisan: 1 Democrat, 1 Republican

- H.R. 3045, Section 8 Voucher Reform Act of 2009 (111th Congress)
- Sponsor: Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA-35)
- Bipartisan: 9 Democrats, 1 Republican

Expand the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)

- H.R. 3077/S.1703, Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act of 2019
- Sponsors: Rep. DelBene (D-WA-01), Sen. Cantwell (D-WA)
- House Bill Bipartisan: 145 Democrats, 76 Republicans
- Senate Bill Bipartisan: 26 Democrats, 11 Republicans, 2 Independents

Streamline the multiple agency review process (such as those from the EPA, FEMA, and then state and local agencies) for affordable housing developers to better enable and incentivize affordable housing construction and investment.

- This is an idea we discussed directly with senior staff in the Trump Administration Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Promote toxin-free living

Expand the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) national Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) Program to help overburdened and underserved communities access

environmental impact analysis tools and advance environmental protections.

Accelerate the work of the EPA's National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) to provide independent advice to the Administrator on broad, crosscutting matters of environmental justice and greatly expand its national agenda for public meetings.

Confront the legacy of discriminatory zoning & housing policies on communities, including Black, Indigenous and other populations who have been historically marginalized with deleterious economic disinvestment

House the homeless & provide related supportive services

Protect the Housing for Elderly program (Section 202, established under the Housing Act of 1959) and Supportive Housing for persons with disabilities (811 Program, established by the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990)

Increase funding to address the public housing capital backlog and the backlog of capital needs for Section 515 and 514 (of the Housing Act of 1949) rural housing stock

- [H.R. 5187, Housing Is Infrastructure Act of 2019](#)
- [Sponsor: Rep. Maxine Waters \(D-CA-43\)](#)
- [Partisan: 56 Democrats, 0 Republicans](#)

Promote equitable development, including mass transit-oriented development, multimodal streets, & opportunity zones

Provide continued investment in Opportunity Zones, created in the TCJA of 2017

Reform Opportunity Zones to incentivize investments that lead to concrete measures of equitable success for community residents, like real estate and infrastructure development and local job creation

- [H.R. 5042, Opportunity Zone Reform Act](#)
- Sponsor: Rep. Clyburn (D-SC-06)
- Partisan: 9 Democrats, 0 Republicans

Fund best practices for school design to promote healthy, safe learning environments

Update the School Safety Clearinghouse established by the federal government in 2019 to include a dedicated section on design strategies that minimize threats of violence, foster a stronger sense of community, and promote positive learning environments

- [S. 2530, School Safety Clearinghouse Act](#)
- Sponsor: Sen. Perdue (R-GA)
- Bipartisan: 2 Democrats, 4 Republicans

- [S. 2779/ H.R. 5229, Luke and Alex School Safety Act](#)
- Sponsor: Sen. Johnson (R-WI)
- Senate bill partisan: 3 Republicans, 0 Democrats
- House bill bipartisan: 11 Republicans, 6 Democrats

Use architects as a resource for design strategies to control access points, reduce blind spots, and facilitate a welcoming, pro-social, age-appropriate learning environment

Amend existing federal funding sources for school safety, including the STOP School Violence Grants, to allow design services to be an eligible use of funding so school districts can take a holistic approach to physical security investment

- [H.R. 4909, STOP School Violence Act of 2018](#)
- Sponsor: Rep. Rutherford (R-FL-04)

- Bipartisan: 36 Democrats, 64 Republicans

Increase federal funding for necessary school retrofits. While much school construction funding is local, federal infrastructure investment should include long overdue funding for schools to enhance student health, such as increased daylighting, updated ventilation, asbestos and lead paint abatement, and other needs.

- H.R. 865, *Rebuild America's Schools Act of 2019*
- Sponsor: Rep. "Bobby" Scott (D-VA-03)
- Partisan: 212 Democrats, 1 Republican

Provide federal funding to support health care surge capacity

Invest in community & civic infrastructure

Invest in vertical infrastructure in any infrastructure package to support critical community structures such as hospitals, schools, first responder facilities, and affordable housing

Invest in mass transit including bus, bus rapid transit, fixed rail lines, and intermodal transit facilities

- H.R. 2, *The Moving Forward Act*
- Sponsor: Rep. DeFazio (D-OR-04)
- Partisan: 129 Democrats, 0 Republicans

Develop a US heavy and high-speed rail strategy

Invest in the development of parks, open spaces and the civic realm

- S. 3422, *the Great American Outdoor Act*
- 116th
- Sponsor: Sen. Gardner (R-CO)
- Bipartisan: 42 Democrats, 15 Republicans, 2 Independents

Improve building resilience & adaptation to allow populations to shelter-in-place

Hasten the adoption of updated building codes and standards so the emerging built environment is resilient to future natural disasters and better equipped to shelter-in-place, including incentives for localities to adopt voluntary stretch codes related to energy efficiency, including the Zero Code Renewable Energy Appendix

- H.R. 3962/S.2137, Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act of 2019
- Sponsors: Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT-AL), Sen. Portman (R-OH)
- House bill Bipartisan: 8 Democrats, 2 Republicans
- Senate bill Bipartisan: 7 Democrats, 2 Republicans, 1 Independent

Provide direct incentives to homeowners and business owners alike to improve the resilience of existing buildings so high-risk areas can proactively prepare for future natural disasters, including tax incentives for 25C and 45L

- H.R. 3462/S. 1958, the Shelter Act
- Sponsors: Rep. Bilirakis (R-FL-12), Sen. Bennet (D-CO)
- House bill bipartisan: 3 Democrats, 1 Republican
- Senate bill bipartisan: 1 Democrats, 1 Republican

Integrate buildings into the grid to promote energy resilience

Increase federal funding for the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) grants to increase investment in R&D, training and technical assistance in emerging technologies, and renewable energy generation and energy storage

Increase federal funding for the Building Technologies Office within the Department of Energy to advance research in grid-responsive buildings

Expand the federal government's role in evaluating, accelerating, and showcasing "smart" building technologies

- [H.R. 2741, Leading Infrastructure for Tomorrow's America Act](#)
- [Sponsor: Rep. Pallone \(D-NJ-06\)](#)
- [Partisan: 43 Democrats, 0 Republicans](#)

Fund flood & risk mapping & prioritize resilient land use policies

Strengthen water & air quality policy

Urge the EPA to issue final risk studies on the first 10 chemicals required under the Toxic Substances Control Act; only one of the 10 (methylene chloride) has been reviewed on time under that law

Reverse the EPA's recent regulatory changes on methane, asbestos, and hydrofluorocarbons

- [This is contrary to current Trump Administration policy.](#)

Reverse the EPA's recent regulatory changes to the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule

- [This is contrary to current Trump Administration policy](#)