1. More than one in five children lives in poverty in this country, and its impacts on children’s health can be severe and lifelong. How do you propose to help lift children and families out of poverty?

I have spent my entire career fighting for the health and wellbeing of children across the country. When I first graduated from law school, I went to work at the Children’s Defense Fund, where we fought for children with disabilities to have access to a quality education. As First Lady, I worked to help create the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which now covers 8 million children across the country.

As president, I will continue our fight to tackle poverty in America. That starts with creating jobs, particularly in communities too often left out and left behind. In my first 100 days, I will make the largest investment in job creation since World War II. I will fight for working families to have the supports they need—like affordable child care and paid family leave. And I will increase rental assistance for low-income families, and help them choose from a wider range of neighborhoods to live.

We also must do more to expand access to education, which I believe provides the ultimate pathway to opportunity. That starts with our youngest learners, which is why I will work to expand Early Head Start and make pre-school universal for every four-year old in America. We also must invest in K-12 education to modernize America’s public schools and elevate the profession of teaching. And finally, I believe that every student in America should be able to attend a public college in their state debt-free. That means earning a degree and being able to cover the full cost without taking out any loans—and in the case of community colleges, without paying tuition.

I understand, however, that we have much more to do so that children across the country are well cared for and that hard-working American families are not forced to live in poverty. As president, I will fight so every child has the opportunity to get ahead and stay ahead.

2. In 2014, there were 2,549 children under age 19 who were killed by guns. How do you plan to protect children from gun violence?

More than 33,000 people die from gun violence every year. It is the leading cause of death for young African American men, more than the next nine leading causes combined. I believe—and the vast majority of Americans agree—that there are common sense actions we need to take to address this epidemic.

As president, I will fight for comprehensive background checks and closing the gun show and Internet sales loopholes. I will also crack down on gun stores that flood our cities with illegal guns and keep weapons of war off our streets.

As a nation, we can no longer allow guns to fall into the hands of domestic abusers, other violent criminals, and the seriously mentally ill. It is a rebuke to the families that have lost loved ones, to the communities that are plagued by gun violence, and to this nation that we love.
3. More children have health insurance coverage in the United States than ever before. How will you continue to build on this trend and ensure access to affordable, high-quality health care for all children, no matter where in the country they live?

Under the Affordable Care Act, President Obama’s Administration has made great strides to provide 20 million Americans with the care they need. As president, I will commit to protecting and defending the health care law from Republican attacks, and will continue to expand coverage – for both physical and mental health needs – bringing our country closer to universal health care.

I will allow families to buy health insurance on the health exchange, regardless of their immigration status. I will support efforts to expand telemedicine, and will increase our investment in federally qualified health centers (FQHC) and rural health clinics – so that Americans across the country can receive care, regardless of their zip code. About 25 million people rely on community health centers for care each year, which is why we will double the funding for primary care services at these centers, expanding funding over $40 billion over the next 10 years.

There’s more we must do to make sure that everyone has access to the health care they need. Right now, due to the refusal of 19 states to expand Medicaid in their states, 3 million Americans have been left without health insurance. There are approximately a quarter of a million children who are uninsured and have a parent that falls within this coverage gap. By expanding coverage, we are not only helping the parents, but the children who depend on them. I will work with these governors and legislatures to ensure these Americans, who qualify for coverage, can receive health insurance. Though I can’t do this alone, I will work tirelessly so that children across the country receive the care they need, giving them every opportunity to live long, healthy, and productive lives.

4. Children are 25% of the U.S. population and 100% of the future. How do you propose to provide for the future by investing in children?

As a proud grandmother to two beautiful grandchildren, I think constantly how our actions today will impact our future generations. There are many areas we need to invest to provide our children with a promising future.

To start, we must take steps to combat climate change. As president, I will launch a $60 billion Clean Energy Challenge, providing communities the tools they need to cut carbon pollution and expand clean energy. We must cut our greenhouse gas emissions. I will commit to cutting our emissions to 30 percent below 2005 levels by 2025, surpassing the goals set by President Obama at the Paris Climate Accord and will work to cut our methane emissions by 40 – 45 percent over the next 10 years. I will invest in our clean energy infrastructure, and defend our pollution and efficiency standards – protecting the Clean Power Plan. Protecting this standard also has important public health implications for our children, as the reforms outlined in the plan will help prevent 90,000 asthma attacks each year, and 3,600 premature deaths.
As I have mentioned, we must foster quality public education at all levels and remove barriers for all those pursuing their education - both inside and out of the classroom. We must reform our schools and dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline – providing resources for our educators, and re-thinking how we discipline our students. Too often, children with the greatest economic and social needs receive punishments instead of support. These disciplinary practices take students out of the classroom, moving them away from the education that will help lift them up.

In addition to making higher education affordable, we will not force parents to choose between their children and their future. I will work to expand access to childcare for families, offering scholarships to student parents, and increasing access to child care on college campuses. Studies have shown that children with parents who have received higher education are far more likely to pursue and receive an advanced degree. By removing these barriers, student parents can focus on their education, improving both their lives, and the future of their children.

Though these are important examples, they are only the beginning. Investing in our infrastructure, growing our economy, supporting our seniors, protecting labor, expanding healthcare access, and caring for our veterans are all ways we will support and strengthen this great country. As we think about this election, we must remember how our decisions today will impact the lives of those that follow. As president, the interests of our children will remain at the forefront of our policies.