

The Good Life

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AN AGENDA FOR FULLER LIVES,
A STRONGER ECONOMY, AND RENEWED TRUST

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“Our agenda focuses relentlessly on giving Americans the building blocks of a good life: affordable access to quality goods and services, strong and stable incomes, and time to spend with loved ones and doing what gives us purpose.”

Elizabeth Wilkins, Roosevelt Institute President and CEO, and coauthor of [*The Good Life Agenda*](#)

The Good Life Agenda is a blueprint for our economy and democracy to do what they're supposed to: make people's lives better.

At a moment when people are angry with their government for favoring the wealthy over working families, this agenda rests on the understanding that neither their anger nor that structural imbalance is new. Working people have felt left behind and unheard in this economy for five decades, and they've repeatedly signaled that they expect their government to respond with bold action.

Tinkering around the edges of systems that aren't working won't be sufficient. We have to reimagine our democratic infrastructure and rewire the economy to control costs, bolster incomes, and expand time and agency in our lives. We have to rebalance power toward workers and away from corporations and concentrated wealth. And when it comes to transformative forces like AI, we need to ensure that policymaking reflects the will of the people—not a small group of tech executives and shareholders.

Ultimately, all institutions, government included, are made up of people. Those people have to be willing to fight, and do everything they can, to make good lives possible for everyone—which, in turn, creates a stronger and more innovative economy.

Reviving the Governing Tools and Capacities We Need

This report introduces what we call governing tools for a good life—more muscular policy approaches that have largely been left on the shelf in this country, some for half a century, but have a proven record of results. These tools include public options, taxes, industrial policy, antimonopoly policy, monetary policy, and mechanisms to build countervailing power. Throughout the report, we show how policymakers can apply these tools to help everyday Americans solve their biggest challenges and build good lives.

Making Life's Essentials Affordable

The Good Life Agenda offers tangible paths to make housing, medical costs, childcare, higher education, and energy more affordable for everyone. But while affordability is top of mind—as it should be for anyone who thinks about policy—no one defines a good life by affordability alone, and neither should policymakers.

Boosting Incomes Throughout Our Lives

We explore four critical components of any agenda to create stability and rising incomes throughout people's lives: a fair labor market, worker power, social security, and retirement savings. Here, we also look beyond these basic building blocks, discussing what is required for people to be able to look for the right job or start the business of their dreams, to have a voice in their workplaces and the way they do their work.

Reclaiming Time for What Matters

When people look back on their lives, they're usually not thinking about their 9–5 and the things they bought. They're thinking about the time they spent caring for and enjoying their families and loved ones, and finding what gives life meaning. This report spotlights policies that give people more time for the important things. Better care options, shorter workweeks, and fewer taxes on our time can create more opportunity for leisure, community building, and democratic practice.

Achieving these goals is doable, but only if policymakers break with the limited imagination of what government can deliver, what tools are available, and how they can be wielded. In doing so, they could both transform people's day-to-day lives and rebuild trust in democracy.

Read more in [*The Good Life Agenda*](#), by Elizabeth Wilkins, Suzanne Kahn, Matt Hughes, Rey Fuentes, and Noa Rosinplotz.

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