

THURSTON COUNTY DEMOCRAT PLATFORM 2006 ADOPTED AT THE COUNTY CONVENTION – APRIL 8, 2006

PREAMBLE

We hold forth that Democratic principles are the very foundation of a safe, stable, and prosperous future and must be woven into the fabric of our society, culture, and economy. We declare our commitment to human rights, justice and opportunity for all. We believe political power should be wielded lightly, responsibly, and recognizing that power ultimately rests with the people. We encourage public participation at all levels of our democracy.

We believe:

- Democratic principles and diversity strengthen our nation and our party;
- Democracy can function properly only with a free and diverse media and an informed citizenry;
- Strong communities and families are the foundation for a safe, stable and prosperous future for all;
- Every individual deserves the opportunity to succeed and the right to live free from fear of injury and discrimination;
- Innovation and responsible planning are necessary to ensure our future;
- We are all responsible for the ethical, economic, environmental and educational legacy we leave our children; and
- Democratic candidates must endorse the principles and spirit of our platform to obtain Thurston County Democrat's campaign services.

DEMOCRATIC GUIDING PRINCIPLES

ECONOMY

We believe in the principles of the moral economy: reciprocity, responsible competition, conservation and cooperation, focusing on the quality of life for all citizens by supporting small businesses, family wage jobs, affordable housing, adequate healthcare, curbing corporate excesses, and economic development that benefits the community as a whole.

EDUCATION

We believe that education is a civil right and responsibility and that high quality, safe, appropriate public education with stable funding must be available to all citizens at all levels.

ENERGY and ENVIRONMENT

Our goal is a just and sustainable society in which future generations are assured of adequate pure water, clean air, fertile soil, a safe food supply, and sufficient resources to meet their needs. We believe the politicization of science in any of its forms threatens the achievement of these goals. To ensure a stable environment for future generations, we must address the issue of global warming.

FOREIGN and DOMESTIC POLICY

We support a foreign policy that respects, encourages and empowers all people of the world to gain control of their lives to achieve prosperity, equality, justice, and peace. We believe in a well-informed, just, and democratic society where all its members are treated equally, with dignity, free from discrimination and interference in their private lives, and encouraged to thrive.

HEALTHCARE

We believe in universal access to quality and affordable health care as a basic human right for all people and essential to the national well-being.

LABOR

We support the rights of all workers to organize, bargain collectively, and strike if necessary without threat of permanent replacement, in order to ensure a safe and healthy workplace, just compensation for their work and for job-related injury, and security for unemployment and retirement.

VETERANS

We strongly believe in honoring our obligations to our veterans of all branches of service and their families.

COMPREHENSIVE PLATFORM

ECONOMY

We believe the Democratic Party should support the four principles of a “moral economy”, which are reciprocity, responsible competition, conservation and cooperation. A moral economy would focus on the quality of life of all citizens while allowing greater long-term return on investment.

Local Economy

Small business is the backbone of community. We understand small business have concerns regarding the burden of regulation and taxation. We urge small businesses to join with Democrats to develop mutually beneficial solutions that will benefit the entire community.

This will be accomplished through:

- Tax incentives for small businesses to provide health care benefits to their employees
- Restore and increase Federal funding for small business development programs that provide credit, training and technical assistance
- Encouraging all jurisdictions to adopt a sustainable economy chapter in their comprehensive plans
- Supporting a voluntary certification program which supports the principles of a moral economy
- Sustainable economic development to attract living wage jobs locally
- Small business help line
- Supporting policies that foster a rich and diverse fabric of local businesses
- Supporting local community business

Taxation

We support the creative use of tax incentives to promote a verifiable public interest. All business must be held accountable for delivery of the benefits promised.

- Incentives for businesses to provide family wage jobs, adequate healthcare, pension benefits, and on-site daycare
- Accountability in how taxes are spent
- The Washington State Legislature should consider comprehensive tax reform including a state income tax, elimination of the B&O tax and lowering the sales tax
- Change the B&O tax to encourage small business growth
- Provide tax incentives to encourage low-cost housing
- Continuation of federal estate taxes with an inflation adjustment so that the minimum value of the Estate taxed is greater than \$3 million

Social Security

- We oppose privatization of social security.
- We support social security and Medicare reform and an understandable prescription drug benefit for seniors.

Fair Employment Practices

- Promote full funding and early vesting of employee pension funds by providing tax incentives to employers;
- A plan for fully funding all public employees' salaries to meet levels deemed fair by sound and scientific studies of similar work being performed at competitive market rates;
- Employers should contribute to healthcare costs for all employees;

- Insure a living wage in Thurston County using the guidelines in the sustainable economy chapter of Olympia's comprehensive plan. This wage is approximately \$11.30 for a single adult;
- Government employees should not be required to work overtime without monetary compensation; and
- We oppose the exploitation of undocumented workers by business and industry.

Economic Development

- Economic Development should proceed in a manner to benefit the community as a whole;
- All communities should develop an economic chapter for their comprehensive plan to be coordinated on a regional basis;
- Development should be focused on growing locally-owned businesses instead of attracting large companies; and
- Employee-owned businesses, co-operatives and other business structures that distribute profits more equally should take priority in receiving incentives.

Corporate Reform

Corporations being necessary to our economy and standard of living, we support laws equally beneficial to consumers and to businesses that behave responsibly. Corporations should not exert an undue influence on our government or use claimed constitutional rights in the courts to thwart democratically enacted laws. In order to restore the necessary balance between corporations and the public we urge the following reforms:

- Revoking the charters of corporations that repeatedly violate our laws;
- Corporations and individuals should be on equal footing in regard to political donations;
- Tax breaks to corporations and other corporate welfare should not be given unless a verifiable public interest is served;
- Congress pass legislation, and if necessary, begin the process of constitutional amendment, to repeal the concept of corporate personhood; and
- Insure corporate bankruptcy laws do not circumvent employer obligations to previously held employee contracts.

EDUCATION

We believe education is a civil right and responsibility. Therefore, a high quality, safe, appropriate public education, with stable funding adequate to meet legislative mandates must be available to all.

We support:

- Full and consistent funding for basic education (grades K-12), for early learning (0-4 years old), and post-secondary education (college and technical schools);
- Expanded investment in higher education and research, which are essential to the state's civic and economic health;
- Equalization of public funding for school programs regardless of geographic location;
- School facilities that are adequately maintained and regularly certified as safe and healthy by public health authorities;
- Viable alternative programs within public schools that foster a life-long interest in learning in each student and creativity in teachers;
- Providing access to higher education for all, through financial aid and work-study programs;

- Providing facilities and programs that advance vocational and technology education, apprenticeships, and other alternative programs consistent with full funding of public schools; k-12 and post-secondary;
- Age-appropriate, research-based, medically-accurate health education concerning issues of sexuality and alcohol/drug abuse for K-12 students;
- Skills and civics training in order to prepare our students to be productive members of our society;
- Using a simple majority to pass school levies and bonds;
- Sustainable methods of funding educational capital projects;
- Maintaining the separation of church and state, while protecting students' freedom of association and freedom of expression;
- Adult access to meaningful, quality continuing education, training and skills upgrading programs;
- Exploration of alternatives to non-sustainable logging as a source of funding for capital projects;
- Minimum education on nutrition in primary education; and
- Children's health be protected at school – nutrition affects learning and behavior, fresh local food support state farmers, no GMO, Irradiated, HFCS, hydrogenated oil, aspartame foods or drinks.

We oppose:

- Programs that take funding away from public education, including charter schools, and voucher payments to private schools;
- The commercial exploitation of students in our schools (e.g. "junk food" and advertising);
- Funding educational capital projects with non-sustainable logging of public lands, utilizing wetlands, and otherwise adversely impacting our natural resources; and
- Any attempt to privatize public education.

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

A healthy environment is essential to the quality of life for humans and all planetary organisms. Yet, we know that the finite resources of our environment and ecosystems are strained from pressures of human activity. As responsible stewards we must address the real threats and affects of global warming, develop sustainable energy policies, ensure clean air and water for future generations, and educate ourselves about the environmental consequences of population growth. We accomplish this through actively monitoring and engaging in local, state, national, and international policy dialogue and development, empowering citizens and communities, and by ensuring that critical decisions are informed by reliable scientific knowledge and that our programs are sustainable, adequately funded, and implemented. Funding spent on the environment is an investment in our society that pays back in the long run, and efficient, effective solutions should be our first priority. Our goal is a sustainable society in which future generations are assured of adequate pure water, clean air, fertile soil, and sufficient sources of renewable energy to meet their needs.

Agriculture

Agriculture is the number one industry in Washington. Environmental decisions that impact agriculture should be based on sound, credible economic and scientific information. Federal funding earmarked for agriculture subsidies should go to sustainable family farms and not to agribusiness. We must ensure the viability of American farming to ensure a self-sufficient nation.

We support:

- Programs to ensure the survival of family farms;
- Funding for agricultural commodity programs to assure long-term, economic viability of agriculture, availability of high quality food, and the economic security of the nation;
- Conservation and environmental programs and economic incentives that help conserve agricultural land and natural resources such as soil, water, forests, and wildlife habitat;

- International programs for biomass conversion to process American farm products and byproducts into renewable energy, including bio-diesel and ethanol;
- Development of domestic and international marketing opportunities for crop and animal products and international trade agreements that assure fair marketing and employment practices;
- Antitrust laws should be enforced and applied to prevent agribusiness monopolies;
- Responsible management of ocean fisheries to prevent dangerous depletion of marine resources;
- Substantial land grant college funding of research in sustainable, non-toxic farming techniques;
- Implementing strong organic farming standards;
- Clear food labeling including full and complete disclosure of nation of origin, genetically modified organism status, irradiation, and organic status - the public's right to know must supersede corporate secrecy;
- Requiring food chain inspection of all animals at risk of spongiform encephalopathy disease and other emerging disease threats.
- We strongly advocate adequate governmental support for research and extension programs to develop, improve, and protect crops and livestock and improve quality, marketability, and safety of agricultural products;
- Programs that provide an economic stimulus for survival, protection, and improvement of rural communities, including development of affordable high-speed internet access and rural transportation services;
- Increased support for preservation of agricultural land and organic farming;
- Reconsideration of the potentially far-reaching and unforeseen effects of seed and plant genetic engineering and their potential threats to native plant diversity;
- Shifting of government subsidies from non-organic to organic food products to make them competitive with pesticide/non-organic crops and more accessible to the entire population; and
- An end to international trade agreements with provisions protecting transnational, corporate control of the "Intellectual property" of genes as proprietary products, many of which are used by indigenous peoples and have been for thousands of years.

Energy & Toxic Waste

We believe that research and development of clean energy technologies is an investment in the future and it will concurrently produce new jobs and support a healthy economy. The U.S. should be a leader in sustainable energy production and a partner with developing nations in providing inexpensive, local, renewable energy technologies. We must drastically alter our energy use to slow and reverse global warming, to prevent an ecological crisis that cannot be resolved. Investment in efficient, alternative, and renewable energy is a significant key to sustainability. We must learn to use less, use it wisely, and use it cleanly. We oppose the politicization of science and believe in public discourse through an open public forum of scientists, academic leaders, clean energy industry leaders and public officials to examine the ramifications of global warming and climate change and to collectively generate practical solutions.

We support:

- Initiative 937 – The Clean Energy Initiative that provides viable alternatives to reducing our dependence on fossil fuels.
- Cleanup of Hanford radioactive waste facilities (Initiative 297 passed by the people), and no further acceptance of high-level and Transuranic wastes for permanent disposal at Hanford;
- Aggressive measures to reduce greenhouse gases
- U.S. ratification of the Kyoto Treaty on Global Climate Change and urge local and state government to pass Kyoto Treaty standards;
- Enacting mandatory carbon reduction measures;
- Increased investment and tax incentives for clean, efficient, renewable, alternative energy sources, including hydrogen, solar, wind, bio-diesel, bio-mass, and ocean;
- Tax and other incentives that favor sustainable businesses that conserve energy, retrofit pollution prevention technologies, and redesign toxins out of their manufacturing processes;
- Development of State energy policies that include taxes and/or fines on energy waste;

- Incentives for utility companies to invest in renewable power to augment and eventually supplant fossil-fuel generated electricity;
- Upgrading outdated electrical grids so that power can be distributed efficiently and reliably;
- Expand the "Green Power" Plans of energy utilities to include residential loans for installation of solar panels and construction of wind generators;
- Higher Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFÉ) standards and extending application to SUVs;
- Current state law requiring voter approval of large public energy projects before bonds issuance;
- Implementation of the Global Climate Treaty signed at the 1992 Earth Summit, committing industrial nations to reduce emissions to 1990 levels;
- Use of alternative fuel vehicles by all public entities;
- Resolution by the Department of Interior and Bureau of Land Management of the long-standing U.S. debt to American Indians in compensation for decades of mineral and resource extraction from tribal lands;
- Reducing use of pesticides, herbicides, and other toxic chemicals harmful to all life forms
- Efforts to reduce waste and to promote the reuse and recycling of materials;
- Making polluters pay for cleanup by reinstating the federal tax on toxic waste under the Superfund Program;
- Legislative efforts to eliminate sources of Mercury in our environment, a total ban of Mercury amalgam dental fillings in pregnant women and children under the age of 6, the Watson-Burton Bill in Congress to eventually ban the use of Mercury dental fillings entirely, and a Medicaid dental bill allowing placement of alternative restoration materials for low income people
- Elimination of the pesticide Thimerosal (Cas54-64-8) (48% Mercury) from all vaccines used in the state of Washington;
- Aggressive regulation and inspection of oil tankers and pipelines;
- Banning offshore drilling leases;
- Public's "right to know" laws requiring full company and governmental disclosure of environmental effects from pesticides, heavy metals, and toxic chemicals produced, stored or released by industries, and laws protecting us from unwilling chemical exposure;
- Providing biodegradable forms of plastic, cardboard and Styrofoam used for packaging and review of the packaging industry, especially electronics;
- Aggressive phasing out of toxins currently used in manufacturing and our environment; and
- Revising the 1872 Mining Act to provide fair market compensation to the public and limiting exploration and extraction in environmentally sensitive public lands.

We oppose:

- Trading of energy and pollution credits.
- Regulations that relax federal standards for safe drinking water quality and air quality;
- Tax breaks to nonrenewable-energy companies, except for pollution control equipment;
- Any expansion of nuclear energy which is not a safe or acceptable alternative energy source;
- Use of depleted uranium;
- Use of cyanide leaching in mining operations;
- Incineration of municipal solid waste, sewage, non- biological medical waste, and toxic waste;
- Oil development and exploration in any national wildlife refuge or wilderness area;
- Federal assumption of Bonneville power rates;
- Waste disposal and oil exploration in designated wildlife refuges, wilderness or environmentally sensitive areas; and
- House Rule 41-76 that preempts strong state standards regarding toxics.

Fisheries & Habitat for a Healthy Puget Sound

Science informs us that Puget Sound's marine habitat is in a serious crisis, therefore, we support:

- Long-term policies giving priority to the preservation of biodiversity, protection of ecosystems and watersheds, and restoration of wild salmon and other endangered species;
- Aggressive efforts to preserve and restore wild salmon stocks;

- Strengthening the Growth Management Act, and supporting neighborhood and community planners in their efforts to protect our quality of life;
- Continuing efforts to protect and cultivate a healthy shoreline habitat and marine food chain in Puget Sound.
- Strengthening and vigorously enforcing environmental laws, including adequate funding of monitoring, enforcement, and emergency response programs;
- No new construction of oil refining facilities in Northern Puget Sound;
- Preserving road-less areas, free-flowing rivers and other wilderness; and
- Creation of a local museum for the natural sciences on the site of the historic Tumwater Brewery to be combined with the public education efforts of the proposed Deschutes Fish Hatchery project.

Forest Management & Wildlife

Urbanization of the past 35 years is rapidly eliminating the Puget Sound's basin's forest cover. State forest land management decisions must reflect the concerns of our growing population and undergo an ideological paradigm shift.

We support:

- Preserving the sustainability of our highly productive forests by insisting on full forest cover management, beginning in urbanized watersheds
- Restoration of full funding for the National Park Service and preserves wilderness, old-growth, road free areas, wildlife corridors, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive areas;
- Federal forest land management guided by best available peer-reviewed science that retains and restores natural ecological processes after the impacts of fire, wind damage and/or flooding;
- Retaining existing environmental review laws concerning salvage logging practices
- Retaining USFS land holdings instead of the current policy of liquidation of about 300,000 acres throughout Washington, Oregon and California; and
- Seeking alternative education funding sources, and amending the state constitution which ties school construction funding to harvesting public forest lands.

We oppose:

- Federal legislation that is likely to have a negative impacts on forest regeneration;
- Any harvest of state or federal old-growth forest lands;
- Export of raw logs and un-milled forest products;
- Trade in endangered hardwoods; and
- Legislation that permits commercial logging on federal forest lands in the wake of catastrophic disturbances such as fire and windstorms, without first conducting environmental review.

Sustainable Growth

We believe firmly in growth management in Washington. We are seeing a population influx – our agricultural lands, our cities, and towns, our environment, our public natural resources (our water, air, beaches, forests, and wildlife) our very quality of life—all are at stake. In short, our community and the state are at risk from unmanaged growth. Therefore, we should strongly support the state's Growth Management Act (GMA) and the purposes and intent of the Act - that communities plan development to provide adequate infrastructure, promote healthy communities and sustain our environment.

We support:

- Community planning that provides the strongest possible protections to water quality, both fresh and marine, and associated ecosystems vital to protecting water quality;

- Low impact and appropriate infill development;
- We strongly support the preservation of agricultural land from overdevelopment to sustain the ability of farm land to produce food locally;
- The use of Best Management Practices and other conservation practices in agriculture, both large and small scale, to conserve and protect our water and other natural resources;
- We support the allocation of surplus state revenues towards an Agricultural Land Conservation Fund for the purpose of purchasing development rights from farmers;
- Requesting the Legislature to pass a Growth Management Act (GMA) 10-year Anniversary Study Bill to determine if the GMA is meeting the intent of the Act;
- Aggressive efforts to preserve and restore wild salmon stocks;
- Thoughtful land-use planning and growth management practices are critical to realizing the goals of an efficient, environmentally sound, and affordable system of transportation;
- We support the necessity of planning for, maintaining, and enhancing vital public services and infrastructure, including providing for adequate law enforcement personnel and associated legal services and facilities, and we support the addition of any such personnel or services that are necessary to adequately enforce our laws and fully protect our citizens and our community;
- The proposed revisions to Thurston County's Critical Areas Ordinance that strongly protect our natural environment and public resources from the impacts of development; and
- Developer impact fees in unincorporated portions of Thurston County.

We strongly oppose Initiative 933, which would irremediably damage the ability of regional and state government to manage land use and protect our natural resources and environment for the public benefit.

Transportation

We believe that transportation systems (commercial, personal or mass transit) that are efficient, flexible and visionary are essential to a healthy economy and environment.

We support:

- Aggressively developing an integrated, multi-modal transportation system that minimizes further environmental impact through current technologies such as bio diesel, non-polluting and efficient vehicles, and supports use of our existing infrastructure;
- Investing in public infrastructure that broadens both rural and urban transportation choices and reduces automobile dependence;
- Quality, affordable transportation available to everyone, including senior citizens, the disabled, low-income families, and rural residents;
- Higher Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFÉ) standards and extending application to SUVs;
- Improved facilities for non-motorized movement of people such as pedestrian paths, bicyclists, and people in wheelchairs;
- Provide equity, parity, and public process in planning and systems for all forms of transportation (e.g. buses, ferries, light rail, heavy rail, monorail, etc.);
- Multiple funding sources including fuel taxes, excise taxes and user fees, which are as progressive as possible, as appropriate for funding essential transportation projects;
- Elimination of all tax subsidies which benefit motor vehicles not meeting gas mileage guidelines or that are not used for their original intent;
- Tax credits for vehicles that exceed gas mileage guidelines or use alternative fuels;
- Inclusion of ferry routes as major collector roads for planning and funding purposes;
- Revising safety standards for tires based on real world safety performance for new and retread passenger tires, medium and heavy vehicles;
- Safer intersections for vehicles and pedestrians through better design, improved traffic control measures, and revision of existing practices for traffic control devices to permit longer phasing to pedestrian signals to enable safer crossing at high-volume roadways; and

- Use of alternative fuels, neighborhood electric and hybrid vehicles through targeted tax incentives for vehicles that exceed a gas mileage of 40 MPH

We oppose:

- Tariffs paid solely by ferry riders that exceed the subsidies for operating other components of the state highway system; and
- Major airport expansion without public input, review and vote.

Water Resources

As responsible stewards we must plan for quality water in sufficient quantity both for today and for future generations. Thurston County must conduct an exhaustive survey, evaluation and inventory of county water resources. This includes proper delineation of saltwater intrusion areas and should address County-wide Nitrate pollution and Manganese/Iron in groundwater, especially in the shallow aquifers of Southern Thurston County. Options with associated costs must be identified for future water supplies.

We support:

- Programs to reduce polluted urban and agricultural run-off into waterways and aquifers;
- The federal "Clean Water Act" and its strict requirements for sewage discharges, wetland protection and water quality standards;
- Requiring federal, state, and local groundwater protection agencies to establish improved standards for the use of water; to provide tough and timely enforcement of laws enacted; and to protect aquifers from overuse, depletion and contamination;
- American Indian Tribes' rights regarding water, and urge fair and equitable solutions with tribes on the part of the courts and state and federal agencies;
- The public ownership of water systems in Thurston County

FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY

Election Reform

We recognize that elections are how citizens ensure that their governments accountably implement laws and institutions to serve their need for justice, prosperity, domestic tranquility, security, individual liberty, equality, and other rights as human beings. Citizen participation is key to our democratic process. We believe that the current election system does not adequately reflect the will of the people and that substantial election reform is needed to restore faith in the election system. These suggested reforms include:

- Restoration of the Fairness Doctrine;
- Open and inclusive debate of all issues during the election campaign;
- Public Financing of all election campaigns;
- Transparency in Election Financing;
- Aggressive investigation and enforcement of campaign finance laws;
- Fair voter-verifiable voting systems with an auditable paper trail;
- Accessible voter registration that encourages the maximum number of citizens to vote;
- Restore voter rights to felons who have served their time and not on parole, regardless of whether they still have court fines to pay.
- The exclusion of campaign contributions from corporation or other institutions which are not democratically accessible to their members;
- The encouragement of grass-roots and volunteer participation throughout the whole political process; and
- Making Election Day a national holiday.

End of the Iraqi & Afghanistan Wars

We believe that the primary justification for foreign intervention by any democratic society is the unequivocal need to directly defend the core values of that society. It has become apparent that the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan were not instigated to achieve this goal, nor will it have this outcome. On the contrary, these wars have disrupted domestic tranquility, produced a militarization of our society, threaten civil liberties, harmed our economy, diverted resources from essential domestic programs, encouraged violation of international treaties and conventions for civil rights and shattered lives and families on both sides of the conflict. As a consequence, we demand the following:

- A stated recognition by the U.S. administration and Congress that the presence of U.S. troops in the region is destabilizing;
- A cessation of all U.S. hostilities in Iraq and Afghanistan and an immediate rapid phased withdrawal of all coalition troops and closure of bases; and
- The U.S. Government must begin immediate negotiations with the European Union, regional Arab nations, and other interested parties to develop plans to address the civil wars now in progress in these countries, with the purpose of negotiating a peaceful ending of those wars and providing non-threatening humanitarian relief, sanctuary, and protection for people fleeing ethnic and religious strife in the region.

General Foreign Policy

We strongly support our nation's right and ability to defend itself from its enemies. We must establish a new security policy based on preventing terrorism by addressing its root causes and by strengthening international cooperation and the rule of law. We believe that it is in the interest of the people of the United States to strive to ensure prosperity, equality, justice, and peace for all of the people of the world. It is the function of democratic governments to negotiate equitable solutions to conflicts with other nations and enact agreements that promote the common welfare. To this end we advocate:

- The establishment of the Department of Peace, whose purpose is to research, design, and implement strategies to promote peace among all nations. Its basic guidelines will include non-violent conflict resolution, international multilateralism, respect for Universal Individual Human Rights, and respect for cultural diversity.
- A national policy that the United States will intervene internationally where either the legitimate representatives of the people of the foreign country invites an international coalition onto their soil with the unambiguous support of the international community and the UN National Security Council, or where U.S. citizens and our substantial national interests are directly threaten by overt and verifiable aggression. This intervention is only the last resort and that representatives of the United States who violate the spirit of this doctrine will be held accountable by Congress;
- The unilateral reduction of our nation's stockpile of nuclear weapons, weapons-grade nuclear material, and nuclear weapons delivery systems. The U.S. should begin immediate meaningful negotiations with all other nuclear powers to eliminate the stockpiling of nuclear weapons world-wide by a specified date;
- The signing, ratification, and active support of our government for all international treaties, obligations, and conventions that serve the greater good of the world community. These include, but are not inclusive to:
 - International Criminal Court;
 - United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT);
 - Geneva Convention;
 - UN Land Mine Treaty;
 - Biological & Chemical Warfare Convention;
 - ABM Treaty;
 - Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty;
 - Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty;
 - Space Preservation Treaty;

- Child Soldier Treaty;
 - CEDAW (7th convention to End Discrimination Against Women);
 - The Kyoto Protocol on Global change;
 - World Health Organization Agreements;
 - All agreements and understandings that have the wide spread support of the World community and are commensurate with the U.S. Constitution;
 - New treaties which will strengthen the ability of the world community, and particularly the United Nations, to enhance world peace, justice, and an equitable prosperity;
 - Renegotiated international Trade Agreements that provide consideration for worker rights, social justice, and environmental protection;
 - new treaties to protect the international community's commonly held interests of the world's oceans, Antarctica, and outer space;
- Encouraging health, safety, social, and environmental standards worldwide (e.g., Global Aid Fund; Repealing Family Planning Gag Rules);
 - Providing enhanced resources for the development of vaccines and treatments for pandemic diseases and parasites that strike developing countries (e.g. malaria, AIDS);
 - Honoring and upholding the rights, welfare, and healthy environment of all indigenous people;
 - Supporting a comprehensive pan Middle-East Peace Process, which protects national sovereignty and self-determination for all parties involved in all conflicts in the region;
 - Beginning a process to defuse international tensions in Asia and the Pacific, with particular emphasis on resolutions to the conflicts in North Korea, Taiwan, Nepal, Indonesia, and Tibet;
 - Re-engaging countries in South and Central America to affirm their right to a social and economic path apart from America's vision of economic globalization;
 - Developing plans with the international community to improve economic development and democratization of Africa;
 - Foreign policies that respect economic and political stability and which promote local self-determination and self-sufficiency; and
 - Developing and enforcing policies in both the public and private sectors that specifically prohibit imperialism, preemptive war, war profiteering, economic exploitation, and violation of all forms of social and economic injustice
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Corporate & Media Reform and Enforcement

We believe that corporations are legal & organizational instruments that should serve the greater public good. Modern corporations have historically had both positive and negative consequences for our commonwealth, but in recent history the negative aspects have increased as the direct result of a lack of accountability to the larger society and of the deleterious effects of the legal fiction of corporate personhood. We desire that our government only encourage the positive contributions of corporations and curtail the usurpation of the people's rule by corporate economic and political power. We require that:

- Congress pass legislation, and if necessary, begin the process of constitutional amendment, to repeal the concept of corporate personhood;
- Federal, state, and local governments must identify and constrain those aspects of corporate behavior that allow undue influence in our economic and political systems. Although the economic production that corporations generate is often desirable, the goal is to ensure that corporations ultimately serve the public interest and survive only at the public's approval;
- Corporations should not be allowed either through political or economic influence to thwart the will of the people or their democratically elected representatives;
- U.S. Corporations who operate internationally will be held accountable to the standards of international law and to the same legal standards that they are held to in the United States;
- Anti-Trust laws in all economic arenas be vigorously enforced, and in particular those that restrict monopolistic ownership of media outlets;
- Laws (and tax breaks) promoting business enterprises should be thoroughly reviewed to ensure a benefit to the local economy free of unwanted environmental, social, and economic effects;

- Our government hold media outlets accountable to serve the public interest, because they are a powerful influence in our society and all broadcast and broadband media are public resources.
- The diversity of ownership is in the public interest be recognized and that minorities should be fairly represented in all economic endeavors;
- The public control of essential utilities and of relevant portions of all media should be encouraged because of the strong component of these activities that serves the greater public interest; and
- There should be increased funding for diverse and creative media programming and the establishment of community minded non-profit non-commercial radio, TV, and WiFi broadcast.

Civil and Human Rights in Relation to Criminal Justice and National Security

The two great tasks of any culture are to establish the optimal social and physical environment for its members to thrive, and to provide for a common defense against external and internal treats. Historically, these two endeavors have often been at odds with one another, but it is our firm conviction as Democrats that these two can be complimentary. It is our belief that to meet this end criminal justice and national security must be subordinate to civil and human rights. To this end we advocate the following:

Human and Civil Rights

- That the United States at all levels of government should articulate and promote a concept of the inherent dignity and equality of all human beings and affirm that respect for individual human rights provides the essential framework for a successful, peaceful, just, and free society;
- That the U.S Congress and the Courts should protect the fundamental freedoms enumerated in the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Extra-constitutional declarations and actions taken by any branch should be strictly curtailed. Executive usurpation of Congressional authority and defiance of the rule of law should be met with censure and if necessary impeachment;
- That the Senate should only confirm new members of the federal judiciary whose temperament, philosophy, and case history demonstrate sensitivity to the personal freedoms guaranteed by the constitution. Congress should remain vigilant against members of the judiciary who act in an arbitrary or capricious manner, such that their rulings seriously erode constitutional protections;
- That our government adhere to the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1990, with emphasis on passing additional legislation that correct omissions that hinder their implementation;
- A proactive implementation of affirmative action; those who suffer the burdens of discrimination must be afforded legal means and economic opportunities to overcome such injustice;
- The legal right of senior citizens and individuals with disabilities to direct their own lives in housing, education and all other life choices, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990;
- The constitutionally mandated separation of church and state, and we oppose organized prayer or any other tactic intended to insert religious doctrine into in publicly funded schools;
- The right for medically assisted death with dignity with suitable safeguards for terminally ill and emotionally distraught patients;
- The established principle that women have the unequivocal right to choose either pregnancy or abortion as protected by Roe vs. Wade and the Washington State;
- The Reproductive Freedom Act;
- A patient's ownership and right to confidentiality of medical records and genetic information;
- The concept that individuals have sovereignty over their own bodies. We support family planning and women's reproductive rights, regardless of age or ability to pay;
- Supporting the right of couples to marry and share fully and equally in the rights, responsibilities, and commitment of civil marriage, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity;
- The principle that persons should not be discriminated against in employment, housing, public accommodation, military service, insurance, licensing, or education based on race, religion, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, size, political affiliation, or national origin;
- The principle that immigrants retain their civil and human rights regardless of their immigration status and that it is in the interest of the large community to supply educational opportunities to their children and social services to the needy;
- Opposition to any attempt to marginalize immigrants in this country by imposing official language requirements or other tactics of forced assimilation;

- That all immigrants have a right to union organizing, fair and prevailing wages, safe and adequate housing, medical care, education, and sanitary infrastructure; and
- The honoring of all treaties made with sovereign Indian Nations.

Criminal Justice

We understand that a criminal justice system is necessary to ensure a just and secure society. Our legal system must be fair, rational, and equitable with regard to all, from the most vulnerable to the most powerful. In the United States it must also adhere to the principles of the constitution and the historical tenets of human rights and democracy. We believe that in a free society a criminal justice system can only work when it respects humanity's fundamental rights. To protect this legacy we endorse the following:

- Crime prevention should be the central aspect of any criminal justice system;
- Prosecution and incarceration for drug offenses is counterproductive, inhumane, and exorbitantly costly to the community. Treatment and integration back into the community should be the norm.
- The social environment and the resources for social programs are more important to crime prevention than law enforcement and should receive a proportional amount of attention;
- Youth intervention should receive a substantial portion of community resources, since it is many times more efficient and productive than adult intervention;
- Highly punitive solutions in lieu of rehabilitation should be used sparingly, since they dramatically increase the cost, recidivism rate, and social impact on the community;
- Punitive "mandatory" and "three-strikes" sentencing laws should be repealed and replaced with rational and equitable sentencing guidelines;
- Pre-conviction property forfeiture should be abolished because it is inherently unconstitutional, encourages police corruption, and generates fear and distrust of the legal system;
- State funding to indigents should be provided in all criminal cases and the community should provide public legal services to low income persons seeking relief from injury in civil cases;
- Capital punishment is inherently impossible to deliver equitably and should be abolished;
- Police tactics should be reasonable, equitable, effective, and provide a positive outcome for the victim, community, and the perpetrator. Excessive violence by officers against community members will not be tolerated. Citizen review committees should oversee all police jurisdictions;
- Elimination of racial profiling and all other forms of racial or ethnic injustice; and
- We respect citizens' rights to own arms, however the community has a right to regulate overt hazards to its members. Reasonable state and federal gun control laws should be enacted to reduce death and injury and require responsible gun ownership.

National Security

The military and intelligence services are important to national security, but they are not the only mechanisms that will provide security for the nation. Our image in the world of greater importance and a national security system that demonstrates respect for our constitution, human rights, and international laws is of paramount importance. With respect to this, we demand the following:

- Closure of the detention facility at Naval Base Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in adherence to the recommendation of the world community. Prisoners being held there should have their cases reviewed by independent non-military U.S. Courts to determine if their continued detention is warranted. Those found to have verifiable terrorist affiliations should be remanded to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court to determine their guilt or innocence. Convicted terrorists should be sentenced by the body and serve their sentences in neutral countries with assurances that they will be released at the end of their terms;
- The U.S. practice of rendition of suspected terrorists and incarceration at clandestine detention facilities must cease immediately. The rules of Habeas Corpus must apply to all detainees. They must have access to council. The Geneva Convention must be applied to all combat detainees;
- The U.S. administration must repudiate all claims to the right of indefinite detention without trial.
- Since democratic societies maintain a military strictly for defensive purposes and eschew military adventures or the establishment of empires, the U.S. Administration must repudiate all claims to the pre-emptive war doctrine;

- Current criminal justice and national security investigations that substitute proven investigative methods that are capable of protecting civil liberties with methods that rely on data mining and electronic surveillance should be strictly regulated. We believe that the anticipated economic efficiencies are not worth the risk to our liberties;
- Many provisions of the recently passed Patriot Act are directly unconstitutional or at the very least inimical to a free and just society. The flaws are so egregious that the legislation cannot be reformed, but must be repealed and more thoughtful legislation enacted. New legislation is needed that allows investigations of threats to the country's national security, but that adheres to the dictates of constitutional civil liberty protections;
- The abolition of the U.S. military's "Don't ask, don't tell" policy and legislation to ensure all service members serving their country have equal status regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity;
- Increased instruction of all American personnel in their rights and responsibilities under the Geneva Convention and the prosecution of servicemen and their commanders guilty of war crimes against civilians;
- The rights of all persons serving in the military to serve free of sexual harassment and sexual assault, and we support the prosecution of offenders; and
- An effective emergency response to all potential disasters, both natural and human-related, which includes adequate funding, planning, mitigation, and response with the direct involvement of citizens of the affected communities.

HEALTHCARE

We believe access to quality and affordable health care is a basic human right for all people, essential to the national well-being.

We support:

- Creation of a universal, publicly funded, single-payer, not-for-profit, comprehensive health system that preserves consumer choice and provides care for all;
- Until a single-payer health care system becomes available for all, Legislative efforts, on an incremental basis, which ensure that employers contribute to adequate and affordable health care to their employees and meet their responsibilities;
- Removing obstacles and increasing incentives to ensure equal access to equal levels of health care in rural and urban areas;
- Parity of mental and physical health coverage;
- Providing fair and equitable health care access to individuals regardless of income.
- Eliminating systems where hospitals and other health care providers charge more for services to uninsured patients than to insured patients, until a single-payer health care system becomes available for all;
- A strong Patient Bill of Rights;
- A system of long term care that focuses on consumer independence and choice of residence (including home care and hospice), and ensures living wages, support,(passed) and effective training for caregivers;
- Increased funding for prevention programs (such as nutritional education, prenatal care, reproductive health education, and suicide prevention);
- Increased funding for disease research and control (including stem cell research);
- Scientific-based decisions by the FDA on reproductive and other pharmaceuticals;
- Legalization of marijuana for medical purposes;
- Protection of a woman's right to private consultation regarding reproductive decisions;
- Protection of a physician's ability to perform reproductive procedures without fear of reprisal;
- Repeal of the federal Global Gag Rule that cuts funding to international family planning agencies;
- Reduction of mercury and other toxic chemicals which affect health and our environment, including amalgam dental fillings, mercury-containing vaccines, flame retardants (PBDEs), etc.;
- A reasonable medical malpractice system that includes an affordable and equitable rate structure, preserves the right to a jury trial, ensures fair awards, and provides premium relief to medical practitioners in high-risk specialties;

- Delaying penalties for Medicare Part D signup for one year or longer;
- Eliminating the costly subsidy to pharmaceutical corporations by requiring competitive bids for Medicare and Medicaid state programs for drug purchases;
- Develop a comprehensive plan to combat West Nile virus and bird flu.

We oppose:

- Health savings accounts in lieu of a comprehensive health care system for all;
- Social Security privatization; and
- Caps on punitive damages in malpractice cases.

LABOR

Stable jobs with livable wages are the cornerstone of family values. We believe in the rights of all workers to organize, bargain collectively, and strike if necessary without threat of permanent replacement, in order to ensure a safe and healthy workplace, just compensation for their work and for job-related injury, and security for unemployment and retirement. We support:

- Democracy in the workplace, and the right of workers to form and join independent unions for the purpose of bargaining collectively. We oppose attempts to restrict collective bargaining through open shop laws (falsely labeled "right-to-work") and we support labor law reforms that will increase the ability of workers to form and join unions without employer interference;
- The right to withhold one's labor and to strike in the resolution of a labor dispute, as a basic human right, and we oppose the use of "permanent replacements" to undermine that right;
- That public government and education employees should enjoy the same rights and deserve the same respect and protections afforded private sector workers and we oppose any weakening of those rights and protections;
- The basic right of all people to have equal access to meaningful employment so that they and their families may live with dignity;
- Nondiscriminatory practices in hiring, promotions, working conditions and compensation, regardless of any distinction that has no bearing on a worker's ability to fulfill job duties. We support equal pay for equal work and commensurate pay for work of comparable worth;
- Protections such as family and medical leave, as well as employer-assisted child and elder care programs. The workplace should be structured to allow workers to meet their families' needs;
- Strong prohibitions against child labor and strong protections for young adult workers with appropriate employment;
- Strong protections for Social Security and Medicare. We believe that public and private retirement funds and pension rights are the property of employees and should be protected as such. We support the establishment of portable pension systems that allow workers to move pension coverage between places of employment. We believe in equal taxation of retirees' benefits;
- The creation of meaningful jobs by responsible businesses that provide livable wages and benefits. We strongly oppose the practice of hiring part-time or leased employees in order to avoid or reduce paying fringe benefits, including health insurance;
- The principle that any building project supported with taxpayers dollars should require that workers be paid the prevailing wage rate for their work, and that any public funds in the form of tax breaks, tax deferments, loans or grants used for economic development be tied to the creation of jobs which pay livable wages and provide adequate benefits;
- Best value bidding;
- Skill-training programs that enable prisoners to obtain employment upon release. We oppose the use of prison labor to replace workers on jobs normally performed by private sector workers.
- Safe, productive, healthy workplaces as basic right of all workers. We believe that no worker should be forced to risk their health or their life in order to earn a living, and believe that government should promote, protect and enforce workplace health and safety standards;
- Increases in the minimum wage indexed annually to increases in the cost of living to offer some minimal protection to those workers at the lowest end of the economic scale;

- Unemployment insurance for all workers that sustains the worker and his or her dependents in time of job loss due to seasonal employment, dislocation or layoff. We also believe that workers should receive unemployment insurance during a labor dispute when the employer continues to operate during the strike or lockout.
- Efficient and effective government, and are opposed to privatization of public services;
- Fair trade; however, we vehemently oppose normalization of permanent relations with all countries who engage in religious persecution, child labor abuses, forced prison labor, environmental degradation, or forcibly oppose the rights of workers to form unions. We think Congress should have a greater say in trade agreements and should have the ability to amend trade agreements;

VETERANS

We have an obligation to our veterans. Veterans, including National Guard troops who have served in a war zone, are entitled to life-long health care for any and all service-connected injuries. Dependents and spouses of service men and women killed while on active duty should be granted the support of a grateful nation.

We support:

- A 21st century GI Bill, with enhanced benefits that include education, job placement, housing, and health care support, which will not only benefit veterans but also increase the pool of well-educated, skilled workers upon which our economic prosperity depends.
- Adequate social, psychological and financial supports for military personnel, veterans, and their families;
- Extension of cost-share access to TRICARE to all members of the National Guard and Reserves regardless of their mobilization status.
- The restoration of full, no-cost treatment at military medical facilities for retirees, just as they were promised when they joined;
- Mandatory funding of all VA hospitals and medical treatment facilities, including long-term care;
- The government should pay the difference between their non-military and military pay for Guard and Reserve members activated for more than 14 days annual drill and an end to the forced stop-loss service;
- Spouses and dependents of military service members who die in the course of active duty shall be guaranteed the service members full pay and allowances and housing for one full year;
- Mandatory and continued testing and evaluation of veterans and their dependents for exposure to toxic agents such as Agent Orange and Depleted Uranium and mandatory care for affected veterans and family members.