

Democratic Party of Wisconsin 2016 Platform

Adopted by Convention on June 4, 2016

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Preamble

The Democratic Party of Wisconsin strives to build an open, just, and strong society where all people have equal rights and equal opportunities to live meaningful, secure lives. We work actively for open, honest, and responsive government that is accountable to the needs and the will of the people.

Justice, Human Concerns, and Democracy

Our government must support the values of freedom, family, fairness, and responsibility to community and to all persons.

One of the primary jobs of government is to ensure that everyone can lead dignified, healthy, and fulfilling lives. We value love, commitment, stability, and nurturing of all family members. Our Constitution guarantees that we are all equal regardless of race, color, class, religion, actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, age, occupation, national origin, physical disabilities or appearance, or political beliefs. We support marriage equality for all couples. We will work to ensure that basic civil liberties are forever preserved.

It is vital that government respect, support, and protect freedom of expression. When government attempts to limit the rights of its people, the fundamental philosophy on which our nation was established is destroyed. We hold sacrosanct our civil liberties, including but hardly limited to freedom of speech, the right to privacy, the presumption of innocence, the principle of *habeus corpus*, and due process under law. Nothing less than humane treatment of our fellow human beings is acceptable. Our government, with its checks and balances among the three branches, serves us, and protects our constitutional rights.

We must fully fund our state and local protective services. We recognize their contribution to our health and safety, and expect them to equitably protect the lives and property of all people in the community.

We will work to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed, an equal voice in government and fair and equal treatment under the law. We recognize that minorities, seniors, and the poor often face formidable challenges, including obstacles to voting and other discriminatory practices. Many people also suffer inadequate access to nutritious food, healthcare, education, and housing. We shall work to eliminate those obstacles.

We shall pursue legislation and cultural change that end racial and ethnic profiling, respect the sovereignty of our indigenous Native American host nations and ensure equality between men and women. We shall work for gender-balanced, qualified representation at all levels of government.

Empowerment of people in all civic affairs strengthens our nation. Government must be an open institution that people trust, complying with open meeting and public record laws and elected through

1 transparent, publicly-funded state and national elections. We support the reestablishment of fair, non-
2 partisan oversight of elections. We support a fair, non-partisan redistricting process.

3
4 Every citizen is guaranteed the right to vote and equal access thereto. We support same-day
5 registration, special registration deputies, early voting, automatic voter registration, and making election
6 days official holidays. We oppose voter ID requirements. We have the right and duty to inspect and
7 count all votes and to have a voter-verified paper ballot that guarantees accurate vote counting. The
8 President should be elected by popular vote.

9
10 Our goal is a government and an electoral process free of the corrupting influences of money and
11 power. We support limiting out-of-state campaign contributions. We strongly oppose the U.S. Supreme
12 Court's decisions to allow unlimited political spending. The U.S. Constitution must be amended to make
13 clear that corporations are not people and that money is not speech.

14
15 Access to accurate information and a diversity of viewpoints are essential to empowerment. The
16 broadcast spectrum belongs to all citizens. Therefore we will work to ensure diverse local ownership of
17 media outlets. We support public broadcasting and other community-owned media outlets. We
18 support free and equal access to news media for all candidates for public office.

19
20 We respect the religious liberties of all people and welcome them into the Democratic Party. It is vital
21 that we observe separation between government and religion. It is imperative to the survival of our
22 Democratic Republic that the rights of people to choose their own religious and philosophical beliefs
23 remain intact.

24
25 We advocate for comprehensive immigration reform providing a reasonable legal path to residency and
26 citizenship. The policy must include a fair opportunity for current undocumented residents to achieve
27 legal status. All people should be afforded the same basic principles of life, liberty, justice, and fair
28 access to economic security.

29
30 It is important to care for all generations. We need affordable, quality, licensed daycare centers and
31 government support to pay for childcare. We need health education and disease prevention programs
32 concerning substance abuse, sexual health, and firearm safety.

33
34 It is essential that we preserve Social Security programs for our elderly, disabled, and eligible children.
35 Privatizing Social Security threatens the financial security of the most vulnerable. We must enhance
36 programs for the aging and disabled, including subsidized long-term in-home or nursing home care.

37
38 Access to affordable, quality health care is a right and the best solution to our national health care crisis
39 is a single-payer system. Such a system must provide universal access for individuals of all ages,
40 promote preventive measures, provide medications, therapy and cover all physical and mental illnesses
41 equally. Until that system is available, we support broader coverage and increased funding for the
42 current health care programs on local, state and national levels, including BadgerCare, Medicare,
43 Medicaid, and the Veteran's Administration.

44
45 Personal moral, religious, and medical decisions should be left up to the competent individual. We
46 believe in freedom of reproductive choice, family planning, and the individual's right to choose death
47 with dignity including physician-assisted end-of-life. Everyone has the right to timely obtain
48 medications, properly and legally prescribed by their health care provider, from any licensed pharmacy.

1 Funding for stem-cell research should be supported on its scientific merits.

2
3 Considering the high rate, associated costs, and long-lasting adverse effects of incarceration, we support
4 effective alternatives and oppose privatization of prisons. Measures are needed to reduce the prison
5 population.

6
7 We oppose the death penalty as an inhumane and ineffective means of punishment. We believe in
8 equitable sentencing standards and increasing the authority of judges to modify sentences.

9
10 The war on drugs is a colossal failure. We must discourage dangerous drug use without criminalizing the
11 user and provide rehabilitative treatment to addicted persons. We encourage non-penal sanctions for
12 initial minor drug violations. Marijuana should be legal and regulated like tobacco and alcohol.

13
14 We support the right to hunt, to bear arms, a concealed carry ban, background checks on all gun sales,
15 banning the sale of assault weapons, and limits on the size of magazines.

16 17 **Education, Labor, and Economics**

18
19 We affirm the Wisconsin Idea. Quality public education for all is critical to a healthy democracy and
20 economy. Public funding for private schools diverts resources from and adversely impacts public
21 schools. Increased governmental funding and financial aid is essential for all levels of public education.
22 We advocate for free public education from pre-kindergarten through college or technical school. We
23 must end the student debt crisis.

24
25 Students have the right to receive their education in a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment, free
26 from harassment or discrimination. We support funding all elements of the curriculum, including the
27 arts and physical education. Teacher and support staff compensation must keep pace with costs of
28 benefits and inflation.

29
30 Revenue caps on school districts and other local governments must be eliminated. State or federal
31 governments must fully fund their mandates.

32
33 Public investment in arts and humanities promotes healthy communities and a healthy economy. We
34 support increased local, state, and federal funding of arts and humanities.

35
36 A strong and secure nation depends on sound economic policy that promotes and sustains full,
37 meaningful employment. Business, labor, and the public must work together to re-establish American
38 jobs on American soil. We support small business as a means of economic growth. We must resist
39 outsourcing by eliminating tax breaks to employers who ship jobs overseas and creating incentives to
40 bring jobs back to the U.S.

41
42 The Federal government should provide transitional jobs for all individuals who cannot find work and
43 have no unemployment compensation.

44
45 Public and private workers have rights to at least \$15 per hour, pay equity for women, safe and
46 equitable workplaces, and secure benefits. Workers' rights to organize, bargain collectively, and strike
47 without fear of reprisal must, where lost, be restored and otherwise strengthened. Election by card
48 check reduces employer intimidation of employees' choice of representation. Employees who benefit

1 from union contracts should pay fair-share dues. We support public employees' rights to speedy
2 mediation and binding arbitration of labor disputes.

3
4 Businesses must be held accountable for contracts with their employees. "Right-to-work" legislation
5 and the hiring of strikebreakers are anathema to a strong, justly-compensated workforce. Pension and
6 other retirement funds must be strictly safeguarded and responsibly managed through regulation. In
7 the event of bankruptcy, workers' unpaid wages must be the first claim on remaining assets.

8
9 We support a tax system that is based on ability to pay. It is immoral to overtax those less able to pay
10 while the wealthy are taxed too little as a percentage of income. The Federal budget must reflect
11 responsible spending and fair taxation. We call on the State Legislature to make corporate taxes on par
12 with the national average.

13
14 Financial markets should be more effectively regulated to prevent fraud, excessive speculation,
15 inappropriate compensation, predatory lending, and the need for taxpayer bailouts of mismanaged
16 firms. The needs of Main Street should supercede the needs of Wall Street.

17
18 Mining authorizations should provide adequate tax revenue to support the affected communities.

19
20 America must invest in a healthy economy by supporting worker training, affordable tuition at our state-
21 supported universities and technical colleges, and ample funding for research.

22
23 American companies have an obligation to our nation to be established here at home, follow our labor
24 and environmental laws, and pay taxes for the good of the commons. Furthermore, we must protect
25 our industries from competition by enforcing tariffs against nations that tolerate unfair worker
26 conditions and environmental degradation.

27
28 Our wealth should be measured not only by the GDP but also by broad measures of well-being, such as
29 the United Nations Human Development Index, that incorporate factors like health, education, literacy,
30 employment and wages, and environmental quality.

31 32 **Agriculture and Environment**

33
34 We must preserve family farming by creating market systems that assure a fair return to both farmers
35 and processors. True cooperatives and family farm subsidies are essential to the economic viability and
36 quality of life in rural areas. We support value-added agriculture which includes farming endeavors
37 outside traditional forms of agriculture. Regulations controlling environmental pollution from
38 agriculture should be strengthened.

39
40 We support farming systems that are humane to animals, preserve our soil, water and forest resources,
41 and produce wholesome, safe food for consumers. We support agricultural sustainability through
42 growth in "buy fresh buy local" practices which ensure markets for local farmers and save fuel by
43 eliminating costly transport. We also support truth in labeling of conventional, organic, and genetically
44 modified food.

45
46 We oppose practices by genetically modified seed producers which attempt to monopolize the seed
47 business by requiring that all seed be purchased from them.

1 Climate change poses an existential threat to life on Earth. We support aggressive action to mitigate its
2 effects. We must cut carbon emissions by all available means. Protecting ecological systems is essential
3 to the economic and social welfare of our state, nation, and the future of humanity. Our legislators and
4 leaders must pay heed to soil, water, and atmospheric pollution; scientific evidence of climate change;
5 all invasive species; and decreasing biodiversity. Ecological sustainability requires a stable population
6 and responsible consumption.

7
8 We must maintain the integrity of the vast fresh water supply in the Great Lakes. We support retaining
9 and expanding publicly-owned recreational and wildlands.

10
11 We must develop clean, renewable, and sustainable energy sources without relaxing regulation of
12 nuclear energy; increase production of fuel-efficient vehicles; reduce urban sprawl onto prime
13 agricultural soils; improve and expand local, regional and national mass transportation systems; and
14 increase recycling and waste management, all while maintaining biodiversity.

15
16 We support responsible environmental regulations affecting open space, wilderness areas, soil
17 conservation, forest management, industry, toxic and hazardous waste disposal and cleanup, and
18 surface and sub-surface water protection. We oppose the transportation of shale and tar sands oil
19 through Wisconsin.

20
21 We must prioritize public health, environmental protection, and the land and water treaty rights of
22 native communities in the planning and implementation of all mining projects, including frac sand
23 extraction. We support public, local control of municipal water and sewage systems. To ensure the
24 protection of our state's valuable natural resources, we support the re-establishment of a Public
25 Intervener's Office and an independent Department of Natural Resources.

26 27 **Foreign Affairs**

28
29 We stand for human rights, social and economic justice, the rule of law, and popularly adopted
30 democratic government worldwide. Our leaders and policies must honor international law and honor
31 and promote international agreements that provide groundwork for a just, prosperous, environmentally
32 healthy, and peaceful world. Our United Nations dues must be fully paid.

33
34 We call on our government to be a cooperative and effective leader, a partner in the pursuit of global
35 accords to improve the human condition and protect the environment. We encourage international
36 efforts to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, discrimination, genocide, torture, genital
37 mutilation, human slavery and trafficking, capital punishment, pollution, and climate change.

38
39 We oppose unfair trade and immigration policies that undermine our economy, harm working people in
40 our country and elsewhere, and harm the environment.

41
42 We oppose unfettered international arms trade, nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, land mines,
43 radioactive materials in conventional munitions, ballistic missile defense systems, cluster bombs,
44 militarization of space, American-run or funded internment camps, and torture.

45
46 We support a military sufficiently strong to safeguard national security. We must provide amply for the
47 health and well-being of members of the military during and after their service. We support efforts to
48 eliminate the use of National Guard troops in undeclared wars.

1 Our military budget is disproportionately large compared to all other nations. With only 5% of the
2 world's population we make nearly 50% of the world's total military expenditures. Our military budget
3 should be reduced with greater emphasis placed on economic development and diplomacy to achieve
4 global security and curtail the undue influence of the "Military Industrial Complex."
5

6 War must always be a last resort. We must address grievances that foster terrorism, not fight wars that
7 perpetuate them. We must abide by the Geneva Conventions.
8

9 Preemptive war without verified direct threat to our country, including the use of drone strikes, is
10 fraudulent, illegal, and disastrous. Congressional action to stop funding for pre-emptive wars and end
11 military assistance to nations conducting preemptive war is long overdue.
12

13 We call upon Congress to pass laws displaying visions and values that uphold our Constitution, reverse
14 the failures and illegalities of the executive branch, and maintain the global community's respect and
15 admiration of our country.
16

17 **Conclusion**

18

19 The membership of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin has crafted and adopted this platform. Our state
20 and our country will become stronger and better by following the principles outlined herein. We expect
21 all candidates supported by the Democratic Party to support this Platform and, when elected, to work to
22 implement it.