

Committee Draft, 46th District 2010 Platform

OUR VALUES

We are the Democrats, the party of the people, the party of good government.

We cherish our American heritage of opportunity and inclusion. We pledge ourselves to restoring a government that serves and protects its people, with justice for all as guaranteed by the Constitution.

We are dedicated to:

- ✓ Seeking peace through cooperation
- ✓ Protecting the environment for ourselves and future generations
- ✓ Affordable health care for all
- ✓ Fighting poverty and ending homelessness
- ✓ Economic justice, with living-wage jobs and fair tax policies
- ✓ Quality public education
- ✓ Fiscal responsibility, integrity, openness and accountability in government
- ✓ A criminal justice system that heals our communities and prepares offenders for reintegration into society
- ✓ Keeping our judicial system free of politics and preserving the rule of law
- ✓ Protecting freedom of conscience by upholding the separation of church and state

AGRICULTURE

We recognize farmers as stewards of the land, and we support programs that strengthen rural communities, preserve family farms, ensure the availability of high-quality food, and maintain the viability of the land.

We support:

1. Phasing out farm subsidies that prop up prices artificially or keep lands fallow, and all subsidies to large farms and agribusiness, and
2. Sustainable agriculture, including conservation, crop diversity and environmental efforts that preserve agricultural land and other natural resources
3. Organic farming, and a reduction in all other use of herbicides, pesticides and other toxic materials
4. Local farmers' markets
5. Encouraging school districts to use local foods in their lunch programs, and teaching students about locally available foods
6. Zoning and other assistance for renewable energy production on farms, including solar and wind
7. Clear labeling of food, including national origin and genetic modification
8. Increased reliability and effectiveness of food and livestock inspections to ensure food quality and animal welfare, and to enhance safety and marketability
9. Promoting equitable, sustainable and fair distribution of water to protect resources for future use
10. Increased efforts to preserve soil and establish conservation of trees and habitat

CORPORATE POWER & MEDIA REFORM

An informed citizenry and persistently inquisitive media are essential for democracy to flourish. Corporations, however, as pseudo-persons created by states, are not entitled to the Constitutional rights of citizens and other human beings.

We support:

1. A Constitutional amendment to establish that a corporation shall not be considered a "person" for purposes of political activity, and to reverse the pernicious notion that money equals speech
2. Separating investment banking from retail banking and subjecting both to tighter regulation, transparency and accountability
3. A fast, affordable, publicly owned broadband telecommunications system in every major U.S. city, and in all other cases fair compensation by cable companies for their use of the public right-of-way
4. Internet neutrality, in which all users and content providers have equal access to Internet service without discrimination or prioritization based on the content transmitted
5. Multicultural media and minority ownership
6. Increased funding of public radio and public television
7. Free radio and TV time for major-party candidates and ballot issues before each election
8. Reinstating the media Fairness Doctrine in election campaigns and extending it to cable networks, to promote more balanced political coverage
9. Allocating low-power broadcast frequencies for educational and non-profit institutions
10. A shield law to protect journalists from being pressured to reveal their sources
11. Providing grants to nonprofit media to support reporting on local governments and issues

We oppose:

1. Corporations exerting undue influence on our government
2. Corporate concentration of media ownership
3. Political pressure on public radio and television
4. Government-funded propaganda disguised as news
5. Government intimidation of the news media
6. False claims of "national security" to suppress investigative journalism

ECONOMIC JUSTICE, JOBS & TAX FAIRNESS

We are committed to strong communities based on equal access to job opportunities, tax fairness, and shared prosperity. "Taxes are the dues we pay for the privilege of membership in an organized society" (Franklin D. Roosevelt).

We support:

1. Fair and equitable taxation to provide revenue sufficient to meet constitutional requirements and promote the general welfare
2. Federal and state efforts to create sustainable, living-wage jobs
3. Repealing tax breaks and incentives for companies that move jobs out of state
4. Tax reform, including a state income tax, to make state and local taxes fairer and less regressive
5. Raising the Federal minimum wage to \$10.00 and adjusting it annually for inflation
6. Rolling back the Bush tax cuts for the very wealthy
7. Restoring the Federal estate tax for estates of \$5 million or more, keyed to inflation
8. Removing the \$106,800 cap on income subject to Social Security tax
9. Expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit to help the working poor, and applying an inflation index to the Alternative Minimum Tax to protect the middle class
10. Protecting pensions from employer bankruptcy and pension fund manipulation
11. Property tax circuit-breaker legislation to assist low-income homeowners and renters
12. Preventing unnecessary foreclosures by requiring mortgage lenders to negotiate in good faith, in a timely manner, with distressed homeowners
13. Expanding and strengthening consumer protections, including protection of homeowners from faulty construction
14. Capping the annual percentage rate of interest on payday loans at 36%, as Federal law does for military families
15. Government efforts to nurture new businesses, using such techniques as credit expansion, micro-lending, and new-business incubators

16. Requiring genuine efforts by banks to adjust mortgages to keep distressed homeowners in their homes
17. Encouraging use of local banks and credit unions for savings, and providing community investment opportunities through lower-denomination municipal bond offerings
18. Investing in clean energy and conservation jobs by retrofitting homes, businesses and government buildings

We oppose:

1. Corporate welfare, including tax breaks that don't provide significant public benefit
2. U.S. businesses incorporating offshore to evade taxes

EDUCATION

Education is essential to a democracy and to a strong economy. It is the responsibility of our state and its citizens to provide a high-quality education for all children.

We support:

1. Full funding for public schools as mandated by our State Constitution to provide:
 - a. Upgrading of school facilities, libraries, computer systems and other resources; counselors and nurses in every school; and a decrease of class size to below the national average
 - b. After-school programs and strong environmental education, and inclusion of fine arts education in the Basic Education Act
 - c. Strong programs for students needing extra help and for gifted students, and job training, vocational education, and apprenticeship programs
 - d. Competitive pay and benefits for all public educators, including continuing education and compensatory adjustments for high-cost areas
2. Sustainable use of public lands that produce revenue for Washington schools
3. State-funded universal pre-school and kindergarten, including such early-learning and pre-kindergarten services as Head Start
4. Alternative schools and other educational reforms that have been shown to improve children's learning
5. Evaluating teachers on the basis of student progress
5. Repeal of the No Child Left Behind Act
6. Honoring of the federal government's promise of adequate funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (~~1975~~1990)
7. Increased capacity to accommodate all who wish to pursue higher education
8. Free tuition at community colleges and technical schools for state residents, and tuition at all other state colleges and universities that is affordable for the average family
9. Doubling the size of Pell grants, with annual adjustments for inflation
10. College loan forgiveness for graduates who choose public service careers
11. Increased funding for public libraries

We oppose:

1. Private school vouchers, because they drain resources from our public schools
2. Commercial marketing to students in public schools
3. Aggressive military recruiting in public schools

ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY

Our well-being and very survival depend on worldwide clean air, clean water, safe food and sustainable ecosystems. Steps to protect them will create significant opportunities for American enterprise.

We support:

1. Aggressive action led by the United States, including a carbon tax, to minimize global climate change, ocean acidification, and loss of the ozone layer
2. Increasing global conservation of energy and resources by all available means, including:
 - a. Replacement of polluting energy generation by renewable, non-polluting, non-nuclear sources such as wind, solar, hydrogen, ocean, micro-hydro, geothermal and biomass
 - b. Assisting other nations in implementing appropriate technology, energy efficiency and alternative renewable energy systems
 - c. Investing in research to develop sustainable biofuel production, to help us become energy self-sufficient and end our dependence on carbon fuel sources such as oil and coal
 - d. Tax incentives for installing energy-saving systems
3. Ending the tax exemption for coal purchases by the state's largest polluter, the coal-fired power plant in Centralia, and establishing a timetable for its early closure
4. Requiring that Environmental Impact Statements include climate change impacts
5. Expanding efforts to reduce residential and business waste and promote the reuse and recycling of materials
6. Reducing toxic waste and funding the science to clean up and dispose of existing waste by all available means, including:
 - a. Treatment and disposal of radioactive and other hazardous wastes near their origin
 - b. Making Hanford cleanup a top priority
 - c. Reducing use of herbicides, pesticides and other toxic materials, to decrease environmental contamination and protect our food supply and health
 - d. Assessing the toxicity of chemicals prior to their manufacture and release into the environment
 - e. Reinstating the Superfund Tax to make polluters pay for cleanup
 - f. Incentives for businesses to conserve energy and clean up their toxic waste
 - g. Continuing development of recycled-material markets that meet strict environmental and worker-health standards
 - h. A national program requiring electronic equipment manufacturers to recycle and safely dispose of computers, televisions and other e-waste
7. Preserving our precious natural environment by all available means, including:
 - a. Adequate funding for maintenance of our national parks and wilderness areas as pristine national treasures
 - b. Protection of wetlands (including restoration of those in the Mississippi delta), the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve and other wild or environmentally sensitive areas, including a permanent ban on road building, logging, motorized recreation and any other type of development in threatened roadless areas
 - c. Maintaining the viability and diversity of plants and animals within watersheds and other ecosystems, including protection of the Northwest forests and adequate river flows that provide habitat for wild salmon and steelhead
8. Enforcing and strengthening our state's Growth Management Act to protect against further urban sprawl that consumes farmland, forests, wildlife habitat and natural resources

We oppose:

1. Shipping more waste to Hanford until the site is brought into compliance with existing regulations and the impact of past waste disposal has been fully remedied
2. Government funding of research into "clean coal" technology
3. Exporting banned chemicals or toxic waste to other countries
4. Drilling for oil or natural gas in U.S. waters, and mining, drilling, mountain top removal or any other activity likely to violate the Clean Air or Clean Water Act on public or private lands

FOREIGN POLICY

To strengthen our security and promote peace throughout the world, America must work within the international community, using the tools of development, diplomacy and defense, in a spirit of mutual respect, friendship, and cooperation.

We support:

1. Increased emphasis on resolving international conflicts through diplomacy
2. Reforming and expanding sustainable development aid, thus addressing the instability that is a root cause of terrorism
3. Rebuilding Iraq, using international agencies and local labor
4. Reconstruction of Afghanistan, including education, especially for women
5. Diplomatic engagement with multiple parties in the Afghanistan and Pakistan region, aiming at a peaceful resolution of the conflict
6. Strengthening the United Nations and paying our share
7. Use of the full influence of the United States, in an even-handed manner, through serious, constructive engagement and a U.N.-based multilateral peace process, to promote negotiations and other actions leading to a sustainable resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on mutual recognition, that ensures peace, justice, economic growth and quality of life for the peoples of the sovereign state of Israel and a sovereign state of Palestine. We call upon the international community to stop arming the conflict.
8. Reducing the world's nuclear stockpiles and strengthening and complying with international disarmament treaties, including the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions, and Space Preservation Treaty against space-based weapons
9. Ratifying and complying with the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, International Land Mines treaties, International Criminal Court, Genocide Convention, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and Convention on the Rights of the Child
10. Restoring and reaffirming our historic adherence to the Geneva Conventions, and affording those rights to any person detained in a combat zone by the US Military
11. Complying with the provisions of all international human rights treaties to which we are a party
12. Replacing trade treaties, such as the WTO, NAFTA, and CAFTA, with agreements that incorporate human rights, labor rights, public health, and environmental protection
13. International aid for family planning
14. Forgiving onerous debt owed by poor countries forced to choose between debt repayment and essential services
15. Revision of the War Powers Act to assure that Congress can declare an end to a war
16. The Cuban people's right to political and economic self-determination, and an end to the U.S.-imposed embargo and travel ban

We oppose:

1. Using the "global war on terror" to justify military action, against Iran or any other country, without a Congressional vote
2. Preemptive war and/or covert action to effect regime change
3. Permanent U.S. military bases, prisons or an oversized U.S. embassy in Iraq
4. Exporting weapons systems that contribute to the international arms race
5. International Monetary Fund policies that compel privatization of vital government services, such as water, as a condition of refinancing national debt

GOVERNMENT & POLITICAL REFORM

A real democracy ensures that its voting process is fair, transparent and open to all citizens.

We support:

1. Vigorous enforcement of the right to vote for all citizens
2. A Constitutional amendment providing for direct election of the U.S. President and abolition of the Electoral College that unduly magnifies the role of small states and narrow pluralities in larger states
3. Restoring the functionality of the U.S. Senate by abolishing the filibuster and "holds" on appointments
4. Permanent voter registration and same-day voter registration for new voters
5. Counting felons, for census and voting purposes, as residents of their last home address rather than their place of imprisonment
6. Use of electronic voting machines only if accompanied by a verifiable paper record of each vote cast, and increased security for ballots and vote-counting machines
7. Public campaign financing for all elections
8. Party primaries to select candidates for the general election
9. State funding of public debates for statewide offices and ballot measures
10. Limits on use of corporate and special-interest funds to influence legislative votes and executive decisions
11. Full disclosure of the source of campaign funds, including separately controlled campaigns and issue advertising
12. Extending elective-office contribution limits to include contributions made to any PAC or other organization supporting or opposing a candidate or ballot issue
13. Congress and the judiciary being pro-active in preventing unconstitutional expansions of executive power
14. Requiring that government decisions involving scientific issues be based on sound science and that all materials affecting those decisions be disclosed to the public
15. Fair and transparent procedures in government contracting and procurement
16. Requiring local governments to post meeting notices, agendas, minutes, documents and databases on the Internet in a timely and user-friendly manner, and to partner with new media to inform citizens about issues
17. Disclosing tax exemptions as expenditures in the state budget
18. A state-owned Bank of Washington
19. Legislative approval of state budgets and revenues by simple majority vote
20. Automatic sunseting of non-performing state tax exemptions after 10 years

We oppose:

1. Use of voting machines with proprietary software that cannot be verified or audited
2. Improperly removing or challenging registered voters from the voting rolls
3. Depriving felons of their right to vote
4. Arbitrary state spending limits imposed by initiative
5. Congressional "earmarks" for pork-barrel projects
6. Executive branch secrecy
7. Presidential "signing statements" being used to countermand the will of Congress

HEALTH CARE

Health care is a basic human right and is recognized as such by the rest of the industrialized world. It is the responsibility of government to ensure the health and safety of its citizens.

We support:

1. Establishment of a nationwide, publicly funded, nonprofit, single-payer universal health care plan, including affordable prescription drug coverage. Until this is attained, we recommend:
 - a. Immediate access to the Washington Basic Health Plan for everyone qualified
 - b. Legislation to have state law provide universal health care

- c. Inclusion of dental, vision, mental health, contraceptive, substance abuse treatment, durable medical equipment and alternative therapies in all medical coverage
 - d. Assured access to and adequate funding for Medicare and Medicaid
 - e. Replacement of Medicare Part D with a more effective and efficient prescription drug program for seniors, including immediate repeal of the 2003 Medicare Modernization Act prohibition on negotiating volume discounts on prescription drugs
2. A primary-care physician for everyone, to assure regular preventive care
 3. Grants to encourage medical students to specialize in primary care
 4. Education and access to birth control to minimize the need for abortion
 5. Timely dispensing of all legally prescribed medicines by every pharmacy
 6. Public funding of quality long-term care with options for in-home care
 7. Establishing programs to combat obesity
 8. Regulating nicotine as a drug
 9. A strong federal Patient's Bill of Rights

HUMAN RIGHTS & CIVIL RIGHTS

The rights guaranteed by our Constitution and international human rights law are at the heart of the American identity and should not be compromised for any reason. Their preservation requires our vigorous defense.

We support:

1. Repealing provisions of the USAPATRIOT Act and Protect America Act that violate the U.S. Constitution, and ending warrantless governmental eavesdropping
2. Strong antidiscrimination and affirmative action laws and policies applicable to employment, promotion, education, and housing
3. Every adult couple's right to marry and be afforded all civil rights associated with marriage, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity
4. Every woman's right of reproductive choice
5. Enforcing the Americans with Disabilities Act
6. Reinstating federal recognition of the Duwamish tribe
7. The right of foreign nationals to have access to consular officials if accused of a crime

We oppose:

1. The use of military tribunals and indeterminate detention of "enemy combatants"
2. FBI abuse of the USAPATRIOT Act for investigation of second and third parties who are not authorized targets of an investigation

HUMAN SERVICES

A caring community provides a safety net of social services to meet the basic needs of its people, especially those on the margins of society, so that each may attain his or her full potential.

We support:

1. Increasing the Disability Lifeline (General Assistance-Unemployable) stipend from \$339, to safeguard the vulnerable poor and people with disabilities who cannot reasonably provide for themselves
2. Galvanizing the political will to end homelessness to ensure that all people have access to safe and affordable housing
3. Weighting affordable housing subsidies toward those who need them most

4. Workforce housing programs aimed primarily at those who fall between minimum wage and a living wage, but in no case more than 80% of the median wage
5. Welfare programs that will reduce poverty, not just the welfare rolls
6. Quality, affordable childcare, education, training, medical care and substance-abuse treatment to help working parents get off welfare and poor people escape poverty
7. Redirecting resources to programs that rehabilitate and reintegrate people experiencing mental illness or addiction, rather than programs based on crisis and emergency response
8. Programs to provide temporary housing and jobs to people being released from prison.
9. Restructuring and adequately funding the foster child system
10. In-home elder-care alternatives to nursing homes

IMMIGRATION

Throughout our history, immigrants have strengthened America. All immigrants should be afforded full human rights and a fair, safe, and timely path to legal status.

We support:

1. Comprehensive immigration reform, providing for greater legal immigration and options for undocumented immigrants to normalize their status, while protecting the integrity of our borders and recognizing the basic human rights of immigrants and protecting them with due process in all proceedings
2. Policies to more fully integrate immigrants into our community with shared prosperity, greater opportunities and higher living standards for all
3. Discouraging illegal immigration and encouraging lawful immigration by adjusting quotas and speeding processing of applications for legal entry, asylum, temporary work permits, permanent residence ("green cards"), and citizenship where that status is sought
4. Fair and humane treatment of all who enter the United States, including nondiscriminatory access to education and human services, and family reunification where appropriate
5. Provisions to prevent discrimination in wages and working conditions for immigrant workers, including access to safe and adequate housing, medical care and educational opportunities, to protect them from exploitation and to protect American workers from being undercut by employers taking advantage of an illegal and exploited workforce
6. Using diplomacy and sustainable development to improve the social, economic and environmental conditions in other nations that contribute to illegal immigration into the U.S.

LABOR

We believe in the dignity of work and demand fair wages and benefits in return. We insist on the right of all workers to join labor unions, to bargain collectively and to take part in setting their working conditions.

We support:

1. Establishment of a living wage
2. Equal pay for equal work
3. Paid sick leave for all employees
4. A Workers' Bill of Rights that includes:
 - a. A safe, healthy and toxin-free workplace with rights of association, assembly and free speech, and due process including protection for whistleblowers and union activities
 - b. Health care for all employees and their families
 - c. Democratic and fair elections within unions
5. National Labor Relations Board reform including a streamlined appeals process and meaningful financial penalties for employers found to have engaged in unfair labor practices
6. Repeal of the union-restricting Taft-Hartley Act

7. Extended unemployment benefits, education and retraining for unemployed workers
8. Protection from reprisal or permanent replacement for workers locked out or on strike
9. Accurate unemployment statistics that include persons whose benefits have been exhausted or who have given up on looking for work
10. Safe and adequate housing, sanitary facilities, medical care and education for migrant and seasonal workers and their families

We oppose:

1. Mandatory overtime
2. Mandatory indoctrination meetings
3. So-called "right-to-work" laws

LAW & THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Government must provide for the safety and security of the general public with care, even-handedness and respect for the individual.

We support:

1. Reasonable security measures to protect the public without sacrifice of civil liberties
2. Using the existing criminal justice system to prosecute accused terrorists
3. Independent investigation and prosecution, including impeachment, of any government officer responsible for ordering or participating in violations of law
4. Greater emphasis on preventive and rehabilitative measures in prison, and alternative sentencing that emphasizes rehabilitation
5. Providing special mental health courts for mentally ill people caught up in the criminal justice system, to assist in their medical treatment and rehabilitation
6. Removing non-violent crime from the "Three Strikes" list
7. DNA testing to convict the guilty and exonerate the innocent
8. Accountability in law enforcement, with effective civilian review
9. Including in state and federal substance-abuse policy:
 - a. Emphasis on treatment and rehabilitation, and drug education that reflects established scientific knowledge
 - b. More drug courts and a lower priority for minor drug offenses
 - c. Treating marijuana use the same as use of alcohol
 - d. Prohibiting asset forfeiture until a defendant is convicted of a crime
10. Universal gun registration and licensing; a comprehensive background check before each gun sale (including at gun shows), sufficient to keep guns out of the hands of felons and mentally unstable people; required safe gun storage in the home; and prohibition of automatic weapons
11. Restoring FBI funding to investigate white collar crime

We oppose:

1. Capital punishment, because killing a human being in our name is unacceptable
2. Racial profiling
3. Privatizing prisons

MILITARY

We are proud to honor the service of those who choose to serve in our country's armed forces, always at some personal sacrifice, and we insist that they be used only in accordance with Constitutional requirements.

We support:

1. Our troops and our veterans. Therefore we support:

- a. Increased benefits and quality medical care for them and their families
 - b. Full funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs
 - c. Their retaining full enlistment bonuses despite being wounded
 - d. Instructing them thoroughly in their rights and responsibilities under the Geneva Conventions
 - e. Protecting them from sexual harassment and assault and from discrimination based on sexual orientation.
2. Completing the withdrawal of U.S. combat forces from Iraq, and the expeditious and orderly withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan on a time-table
 3. Maintaining a well-trained and well-equipped military, sufficient for our defense against external enemies
 4. Using our military to protect the American people, our vital interests and our treaty partners pledged to protect us whenever we are attacked or imminently threatened, and only when all other means of protection are exhausted
 5. Congress asserting its Constitutional powers to regulate and govern the military

We oppose:

1. The undue influence of the military-industrial complex over national policy
2. Federalizing National Guard units to make up for recruiting deficiencies in our regular military forces
3. Sending National Guard personnel overseas
4. Using contractors not subject to the rule of law in military or paramilitary operations
5. U.S. training of foreign military or police forces that suppress human rights in their own countries
6. Developing new nuclear weapons and continuing to use depleted uranium

TRANSPORTATION

Better public transportation will promote equal opportunity and will improve the quality of life for all.

We Support:

1. Establishing public transit as a priority over road construction, so as to better serve the public and reduce auto use and emissions
2. High-density development and economical rapid transit in urban areas
3. Incorporating vital local concerns into transportation planning
4. Repeal of the 18th Amendment to the Washington Constitution, so that state gasoline taxes may be used to fund transit as well as highways
5. Keeping roads, bridges and ferries in good repair, with replacement of the Alaskan Way viaduct and SR 520 bridge our highest-priority infrastructure improvements

LOCAL ISSUES

The 46th District Democrats have a tradition of leadership on local issues.

We support:

1. Funding Seattle North End neighborhood schools to provide adequate capacity
2. Promoting and funding basic civics education for students and the general public
3. Connecting every home and business in Seattle to a publicly owned high-speed broadband network, utilizing existing fiber-optic infrastructure
4. Renegotiating the Metro bus allocation formula so that Seattle gets its fair share (per ridership) and increased frequency along at-capacity routes
5. Reviewing Seattle planning and zoning to reduce automobile use by promoting density around transit centers and route intersections

6. Increasing pedestrian safety, including streetlights, permeable sidewalks and visible crosswalks for pedestrians and wheelchair users, with a sidewalk on at least one side of each arterial in Seattle within 10 years
7. Bicycle lanes and storage facilities for cyclists, and convenient bus stops and shelters
8. Ending "sweeps" of homeless encampments, respecting personal property of campers and finding a semi-permanent home for an organized encampment on public land
9. Funding Seattle and King County housing and human services, especially services to homeless individuals and families transitioning from military service, domestic violence, foster care, foreclosure, criminal justice and mental health institutions
10. Developing and adequately funding more senior centers in Seattle
11. Increasing the number of public health clinics in Seattle from three to five
12. Preserving and increasing our tree canopy in Seattle & King County
13. Providing drop boxes for return of ballots at Seattle and King County libraries