

# **2006 - KING COUNTY DEMOCRATS PLATFORM PASSED 5/23/2006**

## **Introduction**

**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 justice and equality for all as guaranteed by our Constitution and its Bill of Rights. We commit ourselves to restoring good government that serves and protects all its people.

To regain the people's trust, government must:

- ✓ Respond competently to disasters and emergencies;
- ✓ Draw us together as a caring community;
- ✓ Ensure that our economic policies are just;
- ✓ Balance the budget fairly and responsibly;
- ✓ Keep our judicial system free of politics and preserve the rule of law;
- ✓ Respect religious liberty by upholding the separation of church and state;
- ✓ Seek peace and use force only when there are no peaceful alternatives;
- ✓ Protect human rights, at home and abroad; and
- ✓ Assure a healthy environment for ourselves and future generations.

## SUMMARY OF KING COUNTY DEMOCRATS PLATFORM - 2006

**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 justice and equality for all as guaranteed by our Constitution and its Bill of Rights. We commit ourselves to restoring good government that serves and protects all its people.

Civil and Human Rights – The rights guaranteed by our Constitution and by 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.

Economic Justice – We are committed to creating strong communities based on fairness, opportunity and prosperity for all.

Education – We are committed to promoting, supporting and defending public education and equal access for all. Support for education at all levels, pre-school through university, strengthens our democracy and our ability to compete in the global economy.

Environment and Energy – Our well-being and very survival depend on worldwide clean air, clean water, safe food and sustainable ecosystems. Environmental protections strengthen our economy.

Foreign Policy – The United States should work within the world community in a spirit of peace, cooperation, generosity and democracy.

Health Care – Health care is a basic human right, and our government should recognize, as does the rest of the industrialized world, its responsibility to assure accessible and affordable health care for all.

Human Services – A caring community provides a safety net of social services to meet people's basic needs so they can attain their full potential, especially those on the margins of society.

Labor – We believe in the dignity of work and the right to 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 wages and working conditions.

Law and Justice - The rule of law is a prerequisite for democracy. A good government provides for the safety and security of all with care, even-handedness and respect for the individual.

Politics and Campaign Financing – We are committed to a democracy that ensures voting is fair, transparent and open to all citizens.

Transportation and Land Use - We support transportation and land use policies that ensure equal opportunity and a greater quality of life for all.

# KING COUNTY DEMOCRATS PLATFORM - 2006

Passed on Tuesday May 23, 2006

## Civil and Human Rights

*The rights guaranteed by our Constitution and by 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 believe ...**

1. Discrimination of any kind is wrong. Those who face discrimination must be afforded the legal means and economic opportunities to overcome such injustice.
2. Laws should ensure that prejudice does not present a barrier to obtaining education, employment, promotion, housing, insurance or any other social or economic good.
3. A woman's reproductive rights, including the right to choose, regardless of age or ability to pay, must be protected in the United States and abroad.
4. The rights conferred by marriage should be available to all committed adult couples regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
5. Freedom of religion and its separation from government are basic to this country's foundation.
6. Due process rights must be secured for all immigration proceedings.
7. Privacy is a basic human right that government and business must recognize and respect.
8. Cultural pluralism makes this country strong, and we oppose efforts to legislate English as the official language.
9. An individual's right to choose medically-assisted death with dignity, with suitable safeguards, must be protected.
10. The exploitation of people, especially children, under any circumstances, is wrong.
11. Open government requires expansion and enforcement of the access rights provided by the Freedom of Information Act.
12. Provisions of the USAPATRIOT Act that infringe on constitutional rights and freedoms must be repealed.
13. Warrantless governmental eavesdropping, indefinite detention without charge, military tribunals for non-military personnel, denial of counsel and *habeas corpus*, and infringements on attorney-client privilege violate the Bill of Rights and must be stopped.
14. The rights of people with disabilities to equal access to public accommodations, employment, transportation, telecommunications, voting, and government services, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act, must be protected and enforced.
15. Our nation must guarantee the individual's right of conscientious objection, including the right to refuse to support injustices, to kill, or to destroy or occupy homes or property, without fear of reprisal.
16. Voting rights of felons who have served their time should be restored automatically.
17. Constitutional protections afforded on the pretext that a corporation is a "person" should be eliminated.
18. All detainees, regardless of citizenship and no matter where arrested, captured or detained, are entitled to:
  - a. A presumption of innocence until proven guilty;
  - b. Release from detention within seven days unless charged with a crime or classified as a POW in a declared war;
  - c. Legal representation and communication with loved ones; and
  - d. Humane conditions, including protection from physical or psychological torture.
19. Affirmative action laws, policies, numerical goals and programs to address and correct the present effects of race and gender discrimination are important, and we support all efforts to limit and eventually repeal Initiative 200.

## **Economic Justice**

*We are committed to creating strong communities based on fairness, opportunity and prosperity for all.*

### **We believe ...**

1. "Taxes are the dues we pay for the privileges of membership in an organized society."  
(President Franklin Roosevelt)
2. All levels of government should be fiscally responsible, reduce their deficits, and not pass debt on to future generations.
3. Government has a public trust to use tax dollars wisely and be accountable for their use.
4. Public services such as education, public safety, utilities, parks and human services should not be privatized, downsized, outsourced or off-shored.
5. A more progressive tax system where each of us bears only our fair share of the tax burden is needed for Washington State, including personal and corporate income tax, estate taxes and a reduced sales and business and occupation (B&O) taxes.
6. Economic policies and business practices should promote the creation of living-wage jobs and a sustainable economy that protects our environment.
7. The Social Security system is the core of most retirement planning. Privatization would undermine its long term solvency and retiree's financial security.
8. Government should protect pensions, both private and public, and the right of people enrolled in such plans to be included in the processes that affect their pensions;
9. Research and development of new technology industries should be promoted.
10. A public works program to build, repair, and maintain the nation's infrastructure should be started immediately.
11. Consumer protections should be expanded and strengthened.

## Education

*We are committed to promoting, supporting and defending public education and equal access for all. Support for education at all levels, pre-school through university, strengthens our democracy and our ability to compete in the global economy.*

### **We believe ...**

1. Excellent public education should be available to all. This should be accomplished through:
  - a. Decreasing class sizes;
  - b. Providing competitive salaries to faculty and staff at all levels;
  - c. Expanding pre-school and after school programs, including Head Start;
  - d. Providing counselors and nurses for every school;
  - e. Providing vocational education for non-college-bound students; and
  - f. Renovating decaying facilities.
2. All students deserve full inclusion in the school environment, regardless of sex, gender identity, race, ethnic origin, religious belief, sexual orientation, or disability.
3. Organized prayer has no place in public schools. Public money should not be granted to schools or other organizations that require a profession of faith or act of worship as a condition of participation.
4. Schools must be safe from violence, bullying, and harassment directed at students or staff.
5. All high school graduates in Washington State must have access to a higher education, regardless of means.
6. A simple majority vote should be sufficient to pass school levies and school bonds.
7. Public schools are the foundation of our education system. Charter schools and voucher programs for private schools drain resources from public schools and erode educational opportunities.
8. All public education employees should have the right to organize, engage in collective bargaining and strike, without fear of reprisal or replacement.
9. Education funding must be brought into compliance with our state constitution's requirement to fully fund public schools.
10. Sources of funds other than logging public lands should be identified and implemented for financing educational capital projects in Washington.
11. Age-appropriate, research-based health education on sex, alcohol and other drugs should be provided at all levels of K-12 education.
12. There is no place for commercialism (e.g., sale of junk foods, advertising) in public schools.
13. Provisions of the U. S. Higher Education Act that deny federal financial aid to students convicted of drug offenses should be repealed.
14. Restraints must be placed on aggressive military recruiting in public schools. Those with opposing views must be afforded equal access.

## Environment and Energy

*Our well-being and very survival depend on worldwide clean air, clean water, safe food and sustainable ecosystems. Environmental protections strengthen our economy.*

### **We believe ...**

1. We must respect the web of life, of which we are a part, and preserve it for future generations.
2. Global warming is the pre-eminent threat to survival of the earth as we know it. Government and individuals must take aggressive action now to reduce our production of greenhouse gasses.
3. We can and we must establish clean, sustainable and renewable energy sources while protecting our environment through:
  - a. Supporting widespread research and use of energy-efficient and renewable sources of power, including innovative methods of transforming waste into energy;
  - b. Opposing development and oil exploration in any wildlife refuge;

- c. Promoting intelligent economic incentives for energy conservation and clean energy systems, and repealing tax breaks for oil companies;
  - d. Ending the trading of energy and pollution credits that maintain current abuses of resources; and
  - e. Encouraging the development of alternative technologies that do not contribute to toxic environmental overloads.
4. Managing population and growth intelligently, limiting urban sprawl, and preserving farmland, wildlife habitat and our remaining natural resources are essential to our economic and environmental well-being.
  5. Public lands must be managed as a public trust and to preserve their scenic beauty and majesty.
  6. Environmental protections reversed or weakened by the Bush Administration must be reinstated, and all environmental laws and regulations vigorously enforced in order to sustain a livable environment for ourselves and future generations.
  7. It is the sovereign right of the people to make laws to protect their health, safety and welfare. The government should make no rule, law, treaty or agreement that would limit the application or effect of national, state, or local laws or regulations protective of clean air, clean water, food safety, or worker safety.

## **Foreign Policy**

*The United States should work within the world community in a spirit of peace, cooperation, generosity and democracy.*

### **We believe ...**

1. Our nation is vulnerable to terrorism and must have an effective, comprehensive plan to ensure our security.
2. The U.S. government should not initiate unprovoked preemptive war, including war for regime change. We must work with other nations to eliminate terrorist networks and to resolve international conflicts through diplomacy and international institutions such as the United Nations.
3. The United States should participate in and pay our full dues to the United Nations and support other organizations that promote human rights, adherence to international law, democratic elections, health and safety, peace, commerce, cultural understanding, and preservation of our planet's fragile ecosystems.
4. All governments that possess nuclear weapons should reduce their nuclear arsenals. Our government must renounce the development of new nuclear weapons and move to strengthen international arms reduction and nonproliferation treaties.
5. Our government should restore programs that support family planning worldwide.
6. Our government must sign, ratify and honor both the UN agreement forming an International Criminal Court and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
7. Our state must build government-to-government relationships with sovereign Native American nations and tribal governments.
8. The Executive Branch must sign, ratify and comply with the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, Kyoto Accords, Biological and Chemical Warfare Conventions, and the Geneva Conventions.
9. Our government should not engage in overt or covert efforts to de-stabilize other nations' governments.
10. International trade agreements should be renegotiated to incorporate human rights, labor rights, environmental laws, transparency at all levels, and basic democratic procedures accountable to the public.
11. We must complete a timely withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq, in such a way as to do the least harm to the peoples of the region.
12. The United States should commit to vigorous, serious and persistent engagement in a peaceful resolution of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, promoting negotiations that lead to a viable two-state solution and ensure security for the Israeli and Palestinian peoples.

## Health Care

*Health care is a basic human right, and our government should recognize, as does the rest of the industrialized world, its responsibility to assure accessible and affordable health care for all.*

### **We believe ...**

1. A national comprehensive health care plan, similar to Medicare, should be established for all, regardless of age or employment. This should include affordable prescription drugs, dental care and medical technology, available according to health care needs.
2. Until a national plan is established, our state should insure access to affordable health care for everyone, beginning with children.
3. We are entitled to freedom of choice in our own health care, including the right to obtain legally prescribed medications from any licensed pharmacy.
4. Health care benefits, Medicare and Medicaid, should include long-term care, home care, hospice, and support for caregivers.
5. Coverage for mental and physical health care, including treatment for substance abuse, should be treated on a par with each other.
6. We should fully support current veterans' hospitals and clinics and expand their services as needed by returning troops.
7. Public health policy should be based on sound scientific guidelines and follow the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control.
8. The budget for the National Institutes of Health for medical research must be restored. Current prohibitions against expanding stem cell research should be rescinded. Funding and support for medical research should be based on scientific merit.

## Human Services

*A caring community provides a safety net of social services to meet people's basic needs so they can attain their full potential, especially those on the margins of society.*

### **We believe ...**

1. Ensuring adequate human services must be among the highest priorities of government, especially for children, the elderly, and people who are impoverished, homeless, mentally ill, disabled, or living with addictions.
2. The only worthwhile welfare reform is one that reduces poverty, not just the welfare rolls. Quality affordable childcare, education, training and substance abuse treatment must be provided to help working parents leave welfare.
3. We must work actively to end homelessness and ensure that all people have access to safe and affordable housing.
4. Government policies should enable more widespread home ownership.
5. Public assistance (General Assistance-Unemployable/GA-U) and Medicaid are necessary to safeguard the vulnerable poor and people with disabilities who cannot reasonably provide for themselves.
6. Family planning and science-based sex education are effective tools that must be made available to give individuals and families control over their reproductive decisions and minimize the need for abortion.
7. Provision of human services should not discriminate based on immigration status.
8. Whenever a religious institution is a publicly funded provider of services, that institution must ensure nondiscrimination in hiring and firing, and must not encourage, coerce or require any profession of faith or act of worship for participation or to receive services.
9. Congress must fully fund veteran's benefits.

## **Labor**

*We believe in the dignity of work and the right to 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 wages and working conditions.*

### **We believe ...**

1. All workers should have the right to organize, engage in collective bargaining, and strike, all without fear of reprisal. We oppose right-to-work laws.
2. All workers have the right to a workplace free from discrimination based upon sex, gender identity, disability, religion, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, race, national origin, union activities, or political preference.
3. The Federal minimum wage must be increased. A livable minimum wage that increases with inflation should be mandated.
4. All employees must receive equal pay and equal benefits for comparable work.
5. Workers who are locked out should be entitled to extended unemployment benefits and retraining opportunities.
6. All workers have a right to a safe, hazard-free workplace.
7. Workers who blow the whistle on safety hazards, environmental violations, or other violations of law or regulation must be given access to courts and protected from retaliation.
8. All government contracts should be at prevailing wage rates, with a 15 percent set-aside for apprentices.
9. Public contracting should be reformed to include a "Responsible Bidder" clause embodying contractor responsibilities regarding fair wages, health insurance, retirement and training.
10. Workers have a right to establish a union shop.
11. Migrant workers deserve safe and adequate housing, medical care, education and educational facilities.
12. Unemployed persons whose benefits have expired or who have become discouraged from seeking work should be counted as unemployed.
13. We oppose the practice of discouraging people from seeking unemployment benefits.
14. Private contractors should not be used to replace regular government employees.
15. The Taft-Hartley Act, which has tilted labor law in favor of employers, should be repealed.
16. Rules providing a reasonable proportion between the pay of the highest and lowest paid person in any organization should be enacted.

## **Law and Justice**

*The rule of law is a prerequisite for democracy. A good government provides for the safety and security of all with care, even-handedness and respect for the individual.*

### **We believe ...**

1. Criminal justice should emphasize prevention and rehabilitation over incarceration alone. Prisons should provide inmates with education, training, therapy and meaningful work.
2. Our nation must invest in children and work actively to abolish poverty in order to eliminate a major cause of crime.
3. The death penalty should be abolished in favor of a life sentence without the possibility of parole.
4. Adults are responsible for safeguarding guns in the home. We support safety locks on handguns and prohibitions on private ownership of fully automatic weapons.
5. Safety training for hunters and gun owners, universal gun registration and licensing, and background checks and waiting periods on all gun sales (including gun shows and private-party sales) should be mandatory.
6. White-collar crime should be given jail time on the same basis as other non-violent crime.

7. Drug addiction isn't cured by incarceration. We support widespread drug education, treatment and community-based aftercare for every offender who needs it.
8. Asset seizures should be based on court conviction rather than mere arrest or presumption of guilt.
9. Racial profiling by law enforcement is ineffective, counter-productive, and must be eliminated.
10. All individuals who have lived and worked peacefully in the US for a period of time should be provided a pathway to legal status and be allowed to reunite with their families in a timely fashion.
11. We oppose using local law enforcement as agents of immigration enforcement.
12. Effective security measures consistent with individual liberties must be put into operation at airports, border crossings, seaports, and train and bus stations to protect the nation and its people from terrorist actions.
13. Mandatory and indeterminate sentencing should be ended, and nonviolent crime removed from the "Three Strikes" list.

## **Politics and Campaign Financing**

*We are committed to a democracy that ensures voting is fair, transparent and open to all citizens.*

### **We believe ...**

1. Campaigns should be publicly financed. Meanwhile, contribution and spending limits should be an integral part of campaign finance reforms.
2. Our electoral processes must be kept open to all who seek the challenge of serving our country, regardless of their income level.
3. The Fairness Doctrine for broadcast media during election campaigns should be reinstated and made applicable to cable networks to promote balanced political coverage.
4. Election Day should be a national holiday.
5. Every election must provide an auditable paper record of all votes.
6. The U. S. President and Vice-President should be elected by direct popular vote.
7. The sources of campaign funds, including separately controlled campaigns and "issue advertising," must be fully disclosed. Money contributions should not be given the protected status of free speech.

## **Transportation and Land Use**

*We support transportation and land use policies that ensure equal opportunity and a greater quality of life for all.*

### **We believe ...**

1. Planning decisions should be based on land use, transportation, air quality and health.
  2. We must fund essential public infrastructure projects and services to broaden practical transportation choices and reduce dependence on the automobile.
  3. Government must institute measures to reduce pollution, congestion and dependence on oil, including revised zoning codes and housing policies, provision of mass transit services and more HOV lanes, promotion of telecommuting and improved facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists and people in wheelchairs.
  4. Our communities must fully support neighborhood planning for open space, playfields, parks, libraries and other public amenities to encourage viable neighborhoods.
  5. We should create communities affordable for a wide range of income levels so that workers can live closer to their jobs.
  6. Agricultural land must be protected. Sustainable agricultural practices should be encouraged.
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