

# Proposed 2008 Platform, 46<sup>th</sup> District Democrats

(As of January 2008)

## 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:**

- ✓ Pursuing peaceful solutions, resorting to force only when there is no alternative
- ✓ Protecting the environment for ourselves and future generations
- ✓ Protecting individual rights and freedoms, with church and state kept strictly separate
- ✓ Economic justice, with living-wage jobs and fairness in tax policy
- ✓ Health care for all
- ✓ Fighting poverty and providing a safety net for those in need
- ✓ Quality public education
- ✓ Fiscal responsibility, integrity, openness and accountability in government
- ✓ Redesigning the criminal justice system to redeem wasted lives

## 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 all farm subsidies and encouraging crop diversity
2. Sustainable agriculture, including conservation and environmental efforts that preserve agricultural land and 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
6. Production of renewable energy on farms, including biodiesel, methane, solar, ethanol and wind power
7. Clear labeling of food, including national origin and genetic modification

## ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND TAXES

**We are committed to strong communities based on opportunity, fairness, and shared prosperity. "Taxes are the dues we pay for the privileges of membership in an organized society" (Franklin D. Roosevelt).**

We support:

1. Raising the Federal minimum wage to \$9.50, adjusted annually for inflation
2. Rollback of the Bush tax cuts for the very wealthy
3. Restoring the Federal estate tax for estates of \$5 million or more, and retaining the Washington state estate tax
4. Pay-as-you-go Federal financing, except in extraordinary circumstances

5. Removing the \$102,000 cap on income subject to Social Security tax
6. 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
7. Restraint in taxation while providing funds sufficient to meet constitutional requirements and to promote the general welfare
8. A progressive income tax for Washington, and reduced reliance on property tax, sales tax, and business and occupation (B&O) taxes
9. Automatic sunseting of special-interest state tax exemptions after 10 years
10. Disclosing tax exemptions as expenditures in the state budget
11. Protecting pensions from employer bankruptcy and pension fund manipulation
12. Providing a homestead exemption from property tax for any family making less than the median income for that county
13. Expanding and strengthening consumer protections
14. Capping the annual percentage rate of interest on payday loans at 36%, as Federal law does for military families
15. Rescuing victims of predatory mortgages before mortgage companies are offered bailouts

We oppose:

1. Arbitrary spending limits
2. U.S. businesses incorporating offshore to evade taxes
3. Tax breaks to corporations and other forms of corporate welfare

## EDUCATION

**Education is a basic right. 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 for the non-college bound
  - d. Competitive pay and benefits for all public educators, including continuing education and compensatory adjustments for high-cost areas
2. State-funded universal pre-school and kindergarten, including such early-learning and pre-kindergarten services as Head Start
3. Alternatives to the WASL
4. Increased capacity to accommodate all who wish to pursue higher education
5. Free tuition at community colleges and technical schools for state residents
6. Sustainable use of public lands that produce revenue for Washington school
7. Increased funding for public libraries
8. Doubling the size of Pell grants, with annual adjustments for inflation
9. College loan forgiveness for graduates who choose public service careers
10. Repeal of the No Child Left Behind Act

We oppose:

1. Charter schools and 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 AND ENERGY**

**Our well-being and very survival depend on worldwide clean air, clean water, safe food and sustainable ecosystems. Steps to protect them will strengthen our economy.**

We support:

1. Aggressive actions to minimize global climate change and protect 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. Moving toward energy self-sufficiency to reduce our dependence on foreign oil
3. Expanding efforts to reduce residential and business waste and promote the reuse and recycling of materials
4. 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 in 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. Requiring electronic equipment manufacturers to recycle and safely dispose of computers, televisions and other e-waste
5. Preserving our precious natural environment by all available means, including:
  - a. Maintenance of our national parks and wilderness areas as pristine national treasures
  - b. Protection of wetlands, 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
6. 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. Exporting banned chemicals or toxic waste to other countries
3. Drilling for oil or natural gas in U.S. waters, and mining, drilling, or any other activity likely to deface or pollute our national parks, wilderness areas or other public lands
4. Selling off or privatizing the staff of national parks, national forests or other public lands

## **FOREIGN POLICY**

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

We support:

1. Resolving international conflicts through diplomacy
2. Rebuilding Iraq, using international agencies and local labor, with U.S. financial aid.
3. Compliance with the provisions of all international human rights treaties to which we are a party
4. International aid for family planning
5. Ratifying and complying with the International Land Mines treaties, International Criminal Court, and Genocide convention
6. Recognition that Palestinian and Israeli lives are equally precious and that both are entitled to peace, justice, and security. U.S. aid to the region should be contingent on:
  - a. Commitments not to use the aid for killing each other or for occupying the other's territory
  - b. Dismantling the Israeli "security wall" and returning all lands confiscated by the wall's construction
  - c. Compensating dispossessed Palestinians for their losses
  - d. Withdrawing Israeli settlers and troops from the West Bank
7. The Cuban people's right to political and economic self-determination and an end to the U.S.-imposed embargo and travel ban
8. Withdrawing from trade treaties, such as the WTO, NAFTA, and CAFTA, that undermine basic human and labor rights, restrict our ability to protect the environment and public health, and override U.S. laws. Those treaties must be replaced by agreements that incorporate human rights, labor rights, public health, and environmental justice
9. Forgiving onerous debt owed by poor countries forced to choose between debt repayment and essential services

We Oppose:

1. U.S. training of foreign military or police forces that suppress human rights in their own countries
2. The Senate's granting "fast track" authority to the President, thus abdicating its duty to review and urge amendments to treaties
3. International Monetary Fund policies that compel privatization of vital government services, such as water, as a condition of refinancing national debt
4. Entering into the proposed Global Agreement on Trade in Services, which would privatize such public services as education, water, police, and firefighting

## **GOVERNMENT AND 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. Direct election of the U.S. President, and abolition of the Electoral College that unduly magnifies the role of small states and narrow pluralities
3. Same-day voter registration
4. Restoring felons' right to vote after they have served their time
5. Use of electronic voting machines only if accompanied by a verifiable paper record of each vote cast, and increased security for vote-counting machines
6. Public campaign financing for all elections
7. State funding of public debates for statewide offices
8. Free radio and TV time for major-party candidates and ballot issues before each election
9. Reinstating the media Fairness Doctrine in election campaigns to promote more balanced reporting by broadcast media, including cable networks
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

We oppose:

1. Use of proprietary software in voting machines that cannot be verified or audited
2. Improperly removing or challenging registered voters from the voting rolls
3. Corporations exerting undue influence on our government
4. Executive branch secrecy
5. Giving any legal effect to Presidential "signing statements"

## 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 support:
  - a. Increased access to the Washington Basic Health Plan
  - b. Legislation to have state law provide universal health care
  - c. Including dental, vision, mental health, contraceptive, substance abuse treatment, and alternative therapies in all medical coverage
  - d. Assured access to and adequate funding for Medicare and Medicaid
  - e. Repeal of the 2003 Medicare Modernization Act prohibition on negotiating volume discounts on prescription drugs
2. Emphasis on preventive care
3. Timely dispensing of all legally prescribed medicines by every pharmacy
4. Public funding of quality long-term care with options for in-home care
5. Removing politically motivated restrictions from medical research
6. Establishing programs to combat obesity
7. Regulating tobacco as a drug
8. A strong federal Patient's Bill of Rights

## HUMAN 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 the USAPATRIOT Act 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, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity
4. Every woman's right of reproductive choice
5. The right to medically assisted death with dignity
6. Enforcing the Americans with Disabilities Act
7. Rapid processing of requests for legal entry into the U.S., including temporary work permits, "green cards" and granting asylum status to refugees
8. Greater legal immigration and options for undocumented immigrants to normalize their status
9. The right of foreign nationals to have access to consular officials if accused of a crime

We oppose:

1. The Bush Administration's persistent erosion of civil liberties guaranteed by the Bill of Rights
2. Detainees in U.S. custody being subjected to torture here or abroad, or being removed to other countries where they may face torture
3. The use of military tribunals and indeterminate detention of "enemy combatants"

## **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. Welfare reform that will reduce poverty, not just the welfare rolls
2. Quality, affordable childcare, education, training and substance-abuse treatment to help working parents get off welfare
3. Galvanizing the political will to end homelessness and to ensure that all people have access to safe and affordable housing
4. Weighting affordable housing subsidies toward those who need them most
5. Programs to enable more widespread home ownership
6. Public assistance (General Assistance-Unemployable) and Medicaid to safeguard the vulnerable poor and people with disabilities who cannot reasonably provide for themselves
7. Education and access to birth control and family services to minimize the need for abortion

## **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, starting in Seattle
2. Equal pay for equal work
3. A Workers' Bill of Rights that includes:
  - a. A safe and healthy workplace with rights of association, assembly and free speech, and due process including protection for whistleblowers and union activities
  - b. Democratic and fair elections within unions
4. National Labor Relations Board reform including a streamlined appeals process and meaningful financial penalties for employers found to have engaged in unfair labor practices
5. Repeal of the union-restricting Taft-Hartley Act
6. Extended unemployment benefits, retraining opportunities and protection from reprisal or permanent replacement for workers locked out or on strike
7. Accurate unemployment statistics that include persons whose benefits have been exhausted or who have given up on looking for work
8. Safe and adequate housing, sanitary facilities, medical care and education for migrant and seasonal workers and their families

We oppose:

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

## **LAW AND JUSTICE**

**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. Independent investigation and prosecution, including impeachment, of any government officer responsible for ordering or participating in violations of law
3. Greater emphasis on preventive and rehabilitative measures in criminal justice to redeem wasted lives
4. DNA testing to convict the guilty and exonerate the innocent
5. Accountability in law enforcement, with effective civilian review
6. Assuring each detainee's Constitutionally guaranteed right to counsel, *habeas corpus*, and a fair and speedy trial by an impartial jury, with adequate funding for the defense in cases of indigency
7. Including in state and federal substance-abuse policy:
  - a. Greater emphasis on treatment and rehabilitation, and drug education that reflects established scientific knowledge
  - b. More drug courts and a reduced priority for minor drug offenses
  - c. Limitation of asset forfeitures to defendants convicted of a crime
8. Universal gun registration and licensing, a completed background check before each gun sale (including at gun shows), required safe gun storage in the home, and prohibition of fully automatic weapons
9. Legislation to prevent state and local governments from taking property on behalf of a private developer in order to increase tax base
10. Emphasizing and funding the prosecution of white-collar crime

We oppose:

1. Capital punishment, because execution of a human being in our name is unacceptable
2. Affording to corporations, under the flawed doctrine of "corporate personhood," the same rights and protections that individuals are entitled to

## **THE MEDIA**

**A free press is essential for democracy to flourish.**

We support:

1. Multicultural media and minority ownership
2. Increased funding of public radio and public television
3. Fair compensation by cable companies for their use of the public right-of-way
4. Establishment of low-power broadcasting for educational and non-profit institutions
5. A shield law to protect journalists from being pressured to reveal their sources

We Oppose:

1. Concentration of media ownership
2. Political pressure on public radio and television
3. Government-funded propaganda disguised as news
4. Government intimidation of the news media
5. False claims of "national security" to suppress investigative journalism

## **NATIONAL SECURITY**

**Our government has the sovereign right and duty to defend the United States against external attacks and aggression**

We support:

1. Our troops. Therefore we support:
  - a. Increased benefits for them and their families
  - b. Their retaining full enlistment bonuses despite being wounded
  - c. Equipping them, while in harm's way, with the best armor protection industry can produce
  - d. Instructing them thoroughly in their rights and responsibilities under the Geneva Conventions
  - e. Their right to serve free of sexual harassment and sexual assault, and we support the prosecution of offenders
  - f. Legislation to ensure that sexual orientation ceases to be a basis for discrimination in our armed forces
2. Prompt withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq
3. Strengthening the United Nations and paying our share
4. Expanding humanitarian programs that address the root causes of instability and terrorism
5. Strengthening and complying with international nuclear disarmament treaties, including the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions, and Space Preservation Treaty against space-based weapons
6. Revision of the War Powers Act to assure that Congress can declare an end to a war
7. Vigorous multinational diplomatic initiatives, including economic sanctions if necessary, to require that Saudis and Saudi institutions that have materially supported Al Qaeda be brought to account by their own country

We oppose:

1. The notion of a "global war on terror" to justify military action against Iran or any other country without a Congressional vote
2. Preemptive war and covert action to effect regime change
3. Permanent U.S. military bases, prisons or an oversized U.S. embassy in Iraq
4. Using contractors not subject to the rule of law in military or paramilitary operations
5. Developing new nuclear weapons and continuing to use depleted uranium
6. Exporting weapons systems that contribute to the international arms race
7. Federalizing the National Guard to make up for recruiting deficiencies in our regular military forces
8. The undue influence of the military-industrial complex over national policy.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

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

We Support:

1. Developing and funding a public transportation system that will better serve the public and reduce auto use and emissions
2. High-density development and economical rapid transit in urban areas, including a light rail connection to Northgate by 2015
3. Local input in 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 seawall our highest-priority infrastructure improvement
6. Eliminating all tax breaks for SUVs and light trucks, and imposing a luxury tax on new gas-guzzling vehicles
7. Sidewalks and marked crosswalks for pedestrians and wheelchair users; bicycle lanes and storage facilities for cyclists; and convenient bus stops and shelters