

DPW 2006 Platform

As Adopted at State Convention on June 9, 2006

Preamble

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

Justice, Human Concerns, and Democracy

Our government must support values common to all people, which include freedom, family, fairness, responsibility, and community.

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, religion, actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, age, occupation, national origin, physical disabilities or appearance, or political beliefs. We fight to ensure that these basic civil liberties are forever preserved.

The federal and the state Constitutions, as originally drafted, were intended to grant rights to individuals. These documents were never intended to impose restrictions on citizens. We are adamantly opposed to amending either Constitution in a way that limits the rights of any citizens. Any freedom lost due to government restrictions imposed on any of us, violates and endangers all of us.

It is vital that government respect, support, and protect freedom of expression in our democracy. When government attempts to limit the rights of its citizens, the fundamental philosophy on which our nation was established is destroyed. We oppose legislation that would try to limit, or take away, any of our civil liberties. No branch of government has the right to unilaterally take away our civil rights. No branch of government is above the law. We must maintain checks and balances among the three branches of government.

Government must protect the constitutional rights of citizens while effectively reducing crime and fighting terrorism. Adequate funding is necessary for law enforcement and emergency response activities. These men and women are a community's first line of defense. The defense of our country should never be dependent on most of our resources fighting foreign wars, but rather primarily be focused on guarding the gates here at home. Security cannot be achieved if we turn over our ports or cargo inspection to foreign governments. Neither can it be achieved if the resources of our National Guard and Homeland Security are not

1 available or properly deployed to respond to natural disasters, which have
2 destructive power greater than any act of terrorism. Security cannot be achieved by
3 bankrupting us with endless wars.

4
5 We are committed to the idea of fairness and will work to ensure that everyone has
6 an equal opportunity to succeed, an equal voice in government, and fair and equal
7 treatment under the law. Fairness requires that governments are responsible and
8 accountable to people. We recognize that minorities often face unreasonable
9 challenges. We pursue legislation and cultural change that will end racial and ethnic
10 profiling, respects the sovereignty of Native American nations, and ensures equality
11 between men and women. We shall work for gender-balanced, qualified
12 representation at all levels of government in order to eliminate inequities and
13 improve governmental decision-making and problem solving. Equal opportunities
14 that lead to widespread prosperity help to assure freedom and security.

15
16 Increased empowerment of citizens in all civic affairs makes our nation a true
17 democracy. The government must be an open institution that people trust. The
18 government must comply with open meeting and public record laws, enact
19 legislation for full public funding for all state and national elections, while ensuring
20 that every citizen has a guaranteed right and equal access to vote. We have the
21 right to inspect and count votes and have a paper ballot to insure voting
22 accountability.

23
24 We respect the rights of all people to their religious beliefs and welcome all citizens into
25 the Democratic Party regardless of their beliefs. It is vital that we observe a strict
26 separation between government and religion. It remains the right of citizens to choose
27 their own religious and philosophical beliefs rather than the government imposing any
28 upon them.

29
30 We must develop a fair immigration policy providing a reasonable and legal path to
31 residency and citizenship and a fair opportunity for current undocumented residents
32 to achieve legal status. All people should be afforded the same basic principles of
33 life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

34
35 It is important to care for all generations. We need affordable, quality, licensed
36 daycare centers and government support to pay for childcare. We cannot afford to
37 neglect our nation's future leaders. We need health education and disease
38 prevention programs concerning smoking, alcohol, and sexually transmitted
39 infections. By making people aware of high-risk behaviors, they will be better able to
40 adequately care for themselves.

41
42 Rather than abandoning our older generation, it is essential that we preserve Social
43 Security. Privatizing Social Security threatens the financial security of those who are
44 most vulnerable. It is important that we enhance programs for the aging and
45 disabled, including subsidized long term in-home or nursing home care.
46 We firmly believe access to affordable health care is a national right and that the
47 best solution to our national health care crisis is a single-payer system that provides

1 universal access, promotes preventive measures, and covers all physical and mental
2 illnesses equally. Until that necessary system is made available, we support broader
3 coverage and increased funding for the current health care programs on local, state
4 and national levels, such as BadgerCare and Medicaid.

5
6 Personal moral, religious, and medical decisions should be left up to the individual.
7 We believe in complete freedom of reproductive choice, as well as the individual's
8 right to choose death with dignity. Everyone has the right to obtain medications,
9 prescribed by their physician, from any licensed pharmacy in a timely manner. It is
10 neither the role of the pharmacist nor the government to interfere in the private,
11 personal decisions of its citizens. Funding for stem cell research should not be
12 influenced by religious beliefs, but this research, which would benefit all of mankind,
13 should be supported on its scientific merits.

14
15 We oppose the death penalty as an inhumane and ineffective means of punishment.
16 We believe in equitable sentencing standards and increasing the authority of duly
17 elected judges to modify sentences. Further, minor marijuana offenses should be
18 processed as local ordinance violations.

19
20 We support reasonable firearms regulations to ensure the safety of citizens and law
21 enforcement officials. We support the right to hunt and bear arms. We support
22 safety measures and Wisconsin's concealed carry ban.

23
24 We advocate strengthening consumer protection laws and returning enforcement
25 authority to the Wisconsin Department of Justice. We support accurate,
26 understandable labeling of food and medicinal products.

27 28 29 **Education, Labor, and Economics**

30
31 Quality public education for all is critical for a healthy democracy. Any form of public
32 funding for private schools diverts resources from and adversely impacts public
33 schools. Increased governmental funding is essential for all levels of public
34 education, from early childhood programs to programs providing financial aid for
35 attendance at UW and Technical College Systems. No child should be denied a
36 quality education because of a lack of financial resources.

37
38 We believe that students have the right to receive their education in a safe,
39 respectful, and nurturing environment, free from harassment or discrimination by
40 teachers, staff, parents, or other students. A strong public education system in
41 Wisconsin prepares our youth to be the next generation of leaders.

42
43 Wisconsin's educational funding system has failed. The law allowing a limited
44 qualified economic offer (QEO) has caused decreasing compensation for teachers.
45 Teacher compensation should keep pace with the costs of benefits and inflation.
46 Public school teachers must not be taken for granted. They deserve tremendous
47 respect for their work educating our youth under challenging circumstances.

1
2 A strong and secure nation depends on sound economic policy including meaningful
3 full employment. Business, labor, and the public must work together to re-establish
4 American jobs on American soil and resist outsourcing, thus reinvigorating domestic
5 industries. With a strong economy including high employment and fair wages that
6 provide stable housing and encourage strong family units for all families, we can
7 have functional communities, a properly educated workforce, and a tax base that
8 can pay for the infrastructure needed to keep our communities safe and secure.

9
10 We believe workers have rights to safe and equitable workplaces, living wages, and
11 secure benefits. They must be guaranteed the right to organize, bargain collectively,
12 and strike in order to secure those rights, without fear of reprisal. We support public
13 employee's rights to speedy mediation and binding arbitration of labor disputes. In
14 addition, businesses must be held accountable for contracts with its employees. We
15 oppose right-to-walk legislation. Hiring strikebreakers must be prohibited. Pension
16 funds must be regulated in order to be responsibly managed and strictly
17 safeguarded. In the event of bankruptcy, workers are entitled to the first claim on
18 remaining assets.

19
20 In addition, it is crucial that we support a tax system that is based on ability to pay.
21 It is immoral to increase the tax burden on the lower and middle classes by cutting
22 taxes for the wealthiest among us. This fails to spur economic and job development,
23 and hurts those who have the least income. Furthermore, we must balance the
24 Federal budget through wise spending and fair taxation. We believe this generation
25 should be responsible for paying its own debts rather than saddling future
26 generations with the consequences of irresponsible budget practices.

27
28 America must invest in a healthy economic future by funding basic research and
29 worker training. American companies have a duty to our nation to be established
30 here at home, follow our environmental and labor laws, and pay taxes. Furthermore,
31 we must protect our industries from competition by enforcing tariffs against nations
32 that tolerate unfair worker conditions.

33
34 Our wealth should be measured not only by the GDP but also by broad measures of
35 well being, such as the United Nations Human Development Index, that incorporate
36 factors like health, education, literacy, employment and wages, and environmental
37 quality.

38 39 40 **Agriculture and Environment**

41
42 Wisconsin is, and always will be, America's Dairyland. We must preserve family
43 farming by creating market systems that assure a fair return to both the farmer and
44 the processor, support value added agriculture, and provide price supports for true
45 family farms. We encourage legislators and Democratic Party leaders to support
46 farming management systems that are humane to animals, protect our

1 environment, preserve our soil, water and forest resources, and produce wholesome
2 food for consumers. We advocate place of origin and organically produced foods
3 labeling.

4
5 We support affordable quality health care, public education and social services for all
6 citizens in rural Wisconsin. Excessive development of corporate animal mega-farms
7 is detrimental to the health and quality of life in rural areas and must be controlled.

8
9 Protecting the ecological systems of our planet is essential to the economic and
10 social welfare of our state, our nation and to the future of humanity. Our legislators
11 and leaders must pay heed to scientific evidence of global warming; soil, water, and
12 atmospheric pollution; and decreasing biodiversity. We must enact legislation and
13 provide adequate funding to protect and preserve our environment.

14
15 There is much to be done that has been ignored for too long. We must reduce
16 greenhouse gases by developing alternative fuels and energy sources, increase
17 production of fuel efficient vehicles, reduce urban sprawl onto prime agricultural
18 soils, improve and expand local, regional, and national mass transportation systems
19 and increase recycling and waste management, all while maintaining biodiversity.
20 We will restore responsible environmental regulations affecting open space,
21 wilderness areas, soil conservation, forest management, toxic and hazardous waste
22 disposal and cleanup, and watershed protection. We call for the use of advanced
23 technology and environmentally friendly practices to be implemented in mining
24 domestic natural resources, and the enforcement and strengthening of safety
25 regulations. To ensure the protection of our state's valuable natural resources, we
26 support the re-establishment of a Public Intervener's Office and the creation of an
27 independent Department of Natural Resources.

28 29 30 **Foreign Affairs**

31
32 Our nation must seek to befriend others and encourage the growth of democracy
33 worldwide. We must address the grievances and problems that foster terrorism,
34 rather than fight wars that perpetuate them. America must work with other nations
35 to end hunger, disease, illiteracy, and unemployment around the world. As the
36 world's only remaining superpower, we have an obligation to lead by example rather
37 than by force. We pledge the United States to be a cooperative and effective leader
38 and partner with allied nations in the fight against terrorism and the pursuit of
39 global accords on human rights, economic justice, ecological protection and
40 alleviation of disease.

41
42 We respect the religions of other cultures and will not use religious beliefs as a
43 rationale for going to war. A pre-emptive war is against our nation's principles and
44 harms our credibility and standing in the world. A decision to go to war should
45 always be thoughtful and considerate of different points of view. War must always
46 be a last resort. All branches of our Government and military must conform to the
47 Geneva Conventions and not tolerate the use of torture.

1
2 We must do everything possible to prevent our enemies from attacking us, but we
3 believe that this can be done without sacrificing the civil rights guaranteed under
4 the Constitution. Therefore, we call upon Congress to begin impeachment
5 proceedings immediately against President Bush, Vice President Cheney, and
6 Defense Secretary Rumsfeld.

7
8 We call for American occupation forces in Iraq to be withdrawn at the earliest
9 possible time. Multi-lateral reconstruction of Iraq can be achieved with American
10 participation and international participation so that the Iraqi people can freely and
11 peacefully determine their own future.

12
13 All countries that we trade with must offer wages, benefits and work and
14 environmental standards comparable to our own, because it is the right thing to do,
15 and should be done in order to protect the rights and jobs of workers here at home.
16 We do not support fast track trade authority in order to enrich corporations at the
17 expense of American families and the financial stability and security of our nation.

18
19 We support working with nations and organizations that support fair trade. Fair
20 trade is vital in providing all people with the opportunity to work at occupations that
21 provide a fair living wage, health benefits, safe working conditions, and the right to
22 collective bargaining, while enforcing environmentally friendly policies. We support
23 cooperative efforts to eliminate global pollution and mitigate the effects of global
24 warming.

25

26

27 **Conclusion**

28

29 The membership of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin has crafted and adopted this
30 platform. Our state and our country will become stronger and better by following
31 the principles, in line with our values, outlined herein. We expect all candidates
32 supported by the Democratic Party to support this Platform and, when elected to
33 office, to work to implement it.