

Democratic Party of Wisconsin 2012 Platform

Adopted by Convention on June 9, 2012 in Appleton, WI

Preamble

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

Justice, Human Concerns, and Democracy

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

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

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

We must fully fund our state and local protective services. The men and women who serve us protect our lives and property and are our first line of defense, and we must provide for them.

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

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

Empowerment of citizens in all civic affairs strengthens our nation. Government must be an open institution that people trust, complying with open meeting and public record laws and elected through transparent, publicly-funded state and national elections. We support a fair, non-partisan redistricting process.

Every citizen is guaranteed the right to vote and equal access thereto, including non-incarcerated felons. We support same-day registration and early voting. We oppose voter ID requirements as discriminatory, equivalent to a poll tax, a voter suppression tactic, and a fraudulent solution to exaggerated voter fraud. We have the right and duty to inspect and count all votes and to have a voter-verified paper ballot that guarantees accurate vote counting. The President should be elected by popular vote.

1
2 Our goal is a government and an electoral process free of the corrupting influences of money and power. We
3 strongly oppose the decision of the US Supreme Court to allow unlimited campaign advertising by
4 corporations, foreign and domestic. A new Amendment to the Constitution must be adopted to make clear
5 that Corporations are not People and that money is not speech.
6
7 We expect the swift impeachment and removal from office of officials who commit high crimes and
8 misdemeanors.
9
10 Access to accurate information and a diversity of viewpoints are essential to citizen empowerment. The
11 broadcast spectrum belongs to all citizens. Therefore we will work to ensure diverse local ownership of
12 media outlets. We will provide strong support for public broadcasting and other community-owned media
13 outlets. We support free and equal access to news media for all candidates for public office.
14
15 We respect the religious liberties of all people and welcome them into the Democratic Party. It is vital that
16 we observe separation between government and religion. It is imperative to the survival of our Democratic
17 Republic that the rights of citizens to choose their own religious and philosophical beliefs remain intact.
18
19 We require a fair immigration policy providing a reasonable legal path to residency and citizenship. The
20 policy must include a fair opportunity for current undocumented residents to achieve legal status. All people
21 should be afforded the same basic principles of life, liberty, justice, and fair access to economic security.
22
23 It is important to care for all generations. We need affordable, quality, licensed daycare centers and
24 government support to pay for childcare. We cannot neglect our nation's future. We need health education
25 and disease prevention programs concerning smoking, alcohol, drug abuse, and sexually transmitted
26 infections.
27
28 It is essential that we preserve Social Security programs for our elderly, disabled, and eligible children.
29 Privatizing Social Security threatens the financial security of the most vulnerable. We must enhance
30 programs for the aging and disabled, including subsidized long-term in-home or nursing home care.
31
32 We believe access to affordable, quality health care is a right and that the best solution to our national health
33 care crisis is a single-payer system. Such a system must provide universal access for individuals of all ages,
34 promote preventive measures, provide medications, therapy and cover all physical and mental illnesses
35 equally. Until that system is available, we support broader coverage and increased funding for the current
36 health care programs on local, state and national levels, including BadgerCare and Medicaid.
37
38 Personal moral, religious, and medical decisions should be left up to the competent individual. We believe in
39 freedom of reproductive choice, as well as the individual's right to choose death with dignity. Everyone has
40 the right to timely obtain medications, properly and legally prescribed by their health care provider, from any
41 licensed pharmacy. Funding for stem-cell research should not be influenced by religious beliefs but
42 supported on its scientific merits.
43
44 Considering Wisconsin's high rate of incarceration, associated correctional costs, and long-lasting effects of
45 incarceration, we support responsible alternatives to prison.
46
47 We oppose the death penalty as an inhumane and ineffective means of punishment. We believe in equitable
48 sentencing standards and increasing the authority of judges to modify sentences.
49

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

4
5 We support reasonable firearms regulations to ensure the safety of citizens and law enforcement officials.
6 We support the right to hunt, to bear arms, and a concealed carry ban.

7 8 **Education, Labor, and Economics**

9
10 Quality public education for all is critical to a healthy democracy and economy. Public funding for private
11 schools diverts resources from and adversely impacts public schools. Increased governmental funding and
12 financial aid is essential for all levels of public education. Nobody should be denied a quality education
13 because of a personal lack of financial resources.

14
15 We believe that students have the right to receive their education in a safe, respectful, and nurturing
16 environment, free from harassment or discrimination by teachers, staff, parents, or other students. We
17 support fair and equitable funding for all elements of the curriculum, including the arts and physical
18 education.

19
20 Wisconsin's current educational funding system has failed. Teacher and support staff compensation must
21 keep pace with costs of benefits and inflation.

22
23 Revenue caps on school districts and other local governments must be eliminated. State or federal
24 governments must fully fund their mandates.

25
26 Public investment in arts and humanities promotes healthy communities and a healthy economy. We
27 support increased local, state, and federal funding of arts and humanities.

28
29 A strong and secure nation depends on sound economic policy that promotes and sustains full, meaningful
30 employment. Business, labor, and the public must work together to re-establish American jobs on American
31 soil. We support small business as a means of economic growth. We must resist outsourcing, thus
32 reinvigorating domestic industries.

33
34 The Federal government should fund a safety net of transitional jobs for all individuals who cannot find work
35 and have no unemployment compensation.

36
37 Public and private workers have rights to safe and equitable workplaces, living wages, pay equity for women,
38 and secure benefits. Workers' rights to organize, bargain collectively, and strike without fear of reprisal must
39 where lost be restored and otherwise be strengthened. Election by card check is supported to reduce
40 employer intimidation of employees' choice of representation. Employees who benefit from union contracts
41 should pay fair-share dues. We support public employees' rights to speedy mediation and binding arbitration
42 of labor disputes. Businesses must be held accountable for contracts with their employees. "Right-to-work"
43 legislation and the hiring of strikebreakers are anathema to a strong, justly-compensated workforce. Pension
44 and other retirement funds must be strictly safeguarded and responsibly managed through regulation. In the
45 event of bankruptcy, workers' unpaid wages must be the first claim on remaining assets.

46
47 We support a tax system that is based on ability to pay. It is immoral to overtax those less able to pay while
48 the wealthy are taxed too little as a percentage of income. The Federal budget must reflect responsible
49 spending and fair taxation. We call on the State Legislature to make corporate taxes on par with the national
50 average.

1
2 Financial markets should be more effectively regulated to prevent fraud, excessive speculation, inappropriate
3 compensation, predatory lending, and the need for taxpayer bailouts of mismanaged firms. The needs of
4 Main Street should supercede the needs of Wall Street.

5
6 Mining authorizations should provide adequate tax revenue to support the affected communities.

7
8 America must invest in a healthy economy by supporting worker training, affordable tuition at our state-
9 supported universities and technical colleges and ample funding for research.

10
11 American companies have an obligation to our nation to be established here at home, follow our labor and
12 environmental laws, and pay taxes for the good of the commons. Furthermore, we must protect our
13 industries from competition by enforcing tariffs against nations that tolerate unfair worker conditions and
14 environmental degradation.

15
16 Our wealth should be measured not only by the GDP but also by broad measures of well-being, such as the
17 United Nations Human Development Index, that incorporate factors like health, education, literacy,
18 employment and wages, and environmental quality.

19 20 **Agriculture and Environment**

21
22 We must preserve family farming by creating market systems that assure a fair return to both farmers and
23 processors. True Cooperatives and family farm subsidies are essential to the economic viability and quality of
24 life in rural areas. In addition we support value-added agriculture which includes farming endeavors outside
25 traditional forms of agriculture. Regulations controlling environmental pollution from agriculture should be
26 strengthened.

27
28 We support farming systems that are humane to animals, preserve our soil, water and forest resources, and
29 produce wholesome, safe food for consumers. We support agricultural sustainability through growth in “buy
30 fresh buy local” practices which insure markets for local farmers and save fuel by eliminating costly transport.
31 We also support truth in labeling of conventional, organic, and genetically modified food.

32
33 We oppose practices by genetically modified seed producers which attempt to monopolize the seed business
34 by requiring that all seed be purchased from them.

35
36 Protecting the ecological systems of our planet is essential to the economic and social welfare of our state
37 and nation and to the future of humanity. Our legislators and leaders must pay heed to soil, water, and
38 atmospheric pollution; scientific evidence of climate change; all invasive species; and decreasing biodiversity
39 while enacting appropriate legislation to safeguard our environment. We must maintain the integrity of the
40 vast fresh water supply in the Great Lakes. We must expand our recycling efforts.

41
42 We support retaining and expanding publicly-owned recreational and wild lands.

43
44 We must reduce greenhouse gases by developing alternative and sustainable fuels and energy sources
45 without relaxing regulation of nuclear energy; increase production of fuel-efficient vehicles; reduce urban
46 sprawl onto prime agricultural soils; improve and expand local, regional and national mass transportation
47 systems; and increase recycling and waste management, all while maintaining biodiversity. We support
48 responsible environmental regulations affecting open space, wilderness areas, soil conservation, forest
49 management, toxic and hazardous waste disposal and cleanup, and watershed protection. We call for the use
50 of advanced technology and environmentally-friendly practices to be implemented in industrial settings and

1 mining natural resources and the enforcement and strengthening of safety and environmental regulations.
2 To ensure the protection of our state's valuable natural resources, we support the re-establishment of a
3 Public Intervener's Office and an independent Department of Natural Resources.
4

5 **Foreign Affairs**

6
7 We stand for human rights, social and economic justice, the rule of law, and popularly adopted democratic
8 government worldwide. Our leaders and policies must honor international law and honor and promote
9 international agreements that provide groundwork for a just, prosperous, environmentally healthy, and
10 peaceful world. Our United Nations dues must be fully paid.
11

12 We call on our government to be a cooperative and effective leader, a partner in the pursuit of global accords
13 to improve the human condition and protect the environment. We encourage international efforts to
14 combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, discrimination, genocide, torture, genital mutilation, human
15 slavery and trafficking, capital punishment, pollution, and climate change. We support expansion of the
16 Peace Corps.
17

18 We oppose unfair trade and immigration policies that undermine our economy, harm working people in our
19 country and elsewhere, and harm the environment.
20

21 We oppose unfettered international arms trade, nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, land mines,
22 radioactive materials in conventional munitions, ballistic missile defense systems, cluster bombs,
23 militarization of space, American-run or funded internment camps, and torture.
24

25 We support a military sufficiently strong to safeguard national security. We must provide amply for the
26 health and well-being of members of the military during and after their service. We support efforts to
27 eliminate the use of National Guard troops in undeclared wars.
28

29 Our military budget is disproportionately large compared to all other nations. With only 5% of the world's
30 population we make nearly 50% of the world's total military expenditures. Our military budget should be
31 reduced with greater emphasis placed on economic development and diplomacy to achieve global security
32 and curtail the undue influence of the "Military Industrial Complex."
33

34 War must always be a last resort. We must address the grievances that foster terrorism rather than fight
35 wars that perpetuate them. We must abide by the Geneva Conventions.
36

37 Preemptive war without direct threat to our country is fraudulent, illegal, and disastrous. Congressional
38 action to stop funding for pre-emptive wars and end military assistance to nations conducting preemptive
39 war is long overdue.
40

41 We call upon Congress to pass laws displaying visions and values that uphold our Constitution, reverse the
42 failures and illegalities of the executive branch, and maintain the global community's respect and admiration
43 of our country.
44

45 **Conclusion**

46
47 The membership of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin has crafted and adopted this platform. Our state and
48 our country will become stronger and better by following the principles outlined herein. We expect all
49 candidates supported by the Democratic Party to support this Platform and, when elected, to work to
50 implement it.