

# Democratic Party of Wisconsin

## 2004 PLATFORM

(Adopted June 11, 2004)

### PREAMBLE

1  
2  
3 The Democratic Party of Wisconsin stands open to all citizens, responds sensitively,  
4 promotes outreach to and inclusion of all segments of society, and works actively for open  
5 and honest government responsive to the will of the people.  
6  
7

### DEMOCRACY, COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT

8  
9  
10 Government must be responsive to the needs and will of the people while respecting  
11 rights of minorities.  
12

13 Government must respect, protect and support freedom of expression, strict  
14 separation of government and religion, individuals' privacy, constitutional rights of criminal  
15 suspects and the rehabilitated, all other rights under the Bill of Rights, and equal protection of  
16 the law for all.  
17

18 We are committed to equality of rights and opportunities for individuals regardless of  
19 race, color, actual or perceived gender, marital or domestic partner status, age, occupation,  
20 national origin, disability, physical appearance, living arrangements, sexual orientation, and  
21 political or religious preference.  
22

23 We are committed to the principle that women and men are equal.  
24

25 We oppose racial and ethnic profiling.  
26

27 All governments must respect the sovereignty of and abide by treaties with Native  
28 American nations.  
29

30 We encourage initiatives to involve and empower citizens in civic affairs.  
31

32 All governments must comply with open meetings and public record laws. Public  
33 records should be available through the Internet.  
34

35 The Internet must be affordably available to all citizens without unwarranted intrusion  
36 on privacy.  
37

38 Free libraries with access to uncensored information must be adequately supported.  
39

40 We oppose consolidation of media ownership.  
41

42 We support free media time for candidate debate. The Fairness Doctrine should be  
43 re-instituted.  
44

1 We call for full public financing of all election campaigns, reform of campaign finance  
2 laws to lessen the influence of money on public policy, and programs to enhance election  
3 participation by all citizens. We oppose measures that make voting more difficult.  
4

5 We reject voting systems that do not leave a verifiable hardcopy record of votes.  
6

7 We support improvements in government efficiency but hold government accountable  
8 for outsourcing. We oppose abuse of limited term employment.  
9

10 We oppose taxes or legislation imposed under the guise of gubernatorial partial veto,  
11 and support a state constitutional amendment assuring that the Legislature approves all  
12 taxes and laws.  
13

14 Government must deal effectively with crime, terrorism, and their causes, while  
15 protecting constitutional rights.  
16

17 We oppose the death penalty.  
18

19 We support adequate funding for law enforcement.  
20

21 We support efforts to reduce the nation's crime rate. Education and jobs with decent  
22 wages are more effective and economical than imprisonment in dealing with crime.  
23

24 We support equitable sentencing standards, judges' authority to modify sentences,  
25 and alternatives to incarceration.  
26

27 Minor marijuana offenses should be processed as local ordinance violations.  
28

29 We support the right to hunt.  
30

31 We support reasonable firearm regulations to protect the safety of citizens and law  
32 enforcement officers. These include requiring safety locks on guns and background checks  
33 on all gun purchasers. We support Wisconsin's concealed carry ban.  
34

35 We advocate strengthening consumer protection laws and returning enforcement  
36 authority to the Wisconsin Department of Justice.  
37

38 We support accurate labeling of food products, including "organic" foods.  
39

40 Usurious lending should be prohibited.  
41

42 State revenue sharing should continue. The state must honor its obligation to fund two  
43 thirds of school districts' expenses.  
44

45 Federal and state governments must fully fund mandated programs.  
46

47 We support the Social Security system, with inflation indexing, but oppose its  
48 privatization, and object to misusing its Trust Fund to hide federal deficits.  
49

1 We support the arts as essential for the spiritual, intellectual and economic health of  
2 our communities.

3  
4 Our wealth should be measured not only by the GNP, but also by broad measures of  
5 well being such as the United Nations' Human Development Index.  
6

## 7 8 **HUMAN CONCERNS** 9

10 Government should ensure that everyone can lead a dignified, healthy, secure,  
11 fulfilling and useful life: one without abuse or unjust discrimination; with excellent, affordable  
12 health care; safe, sanitary, accessible, and affordable housing; access to quality public  
13 education; and opportunities for rewarding work, recreation, and meaningful participation in  
14 community affairs.  
15

16 We support individuals' rights to make their own moral, religious, philosophical, and  
17 medical decisions.  
18

19 We support family values: love, commitment, mutual support, protection, stability and  
20 nurture for all family members, especially children. Marriage by civil ceremony must be  
21 permitted for unmarried couples of marriageable age without regard to sex.  
22

23 We support the right to choose death with dignity with appropriate safeguards.  
24

25 Family planning services must be readily accessible, confidential, and available  
26 without interference by government or others. We support freedom of reproductive choice,  
27 and oppose all measures to interfere with or limit it.  
28

29 We seek an affordable single-payer health care system that provides universal access,  
30 promotes preventive health care, and covers prescription drugs, and all physical and mental  
31 illnesses.  
32

33 We support Badger Care, Wisconsin Senior Care, Medicaid and Medicare with  
34 prescribed drug and medical device benefits and oppose undercutting Medicare by HMOs  
35 and insurance companies.  
36

37 We favor enhancing programs for the aging and disabled, including subsidized long  
38 term in-home or nursing home care.  
39

40 Health insurance companies should be required to cover physical and mental illnesses  
41 equally, cover pregnancy terminations, and include contraceptives in drug coverage.  
42

43 We support health education and disease prevention programs, especially for young  
44 people, concerning smoking, alcohol, other drugs, pregnancy and STDs.  
45

46 We favor increasing government support for biomedical research, eliminating  
47 prohibitions on human embryonic stem cell research, and permitting therapeutic cloning. We  
48 oppose reproductive human cloning.  
49

1 Non-violent alcohol and other drug offenses can and should be dealt with more  
2 effectively and at less cost by treatment, education, rehabilitation, and employment, rather  
3 than by imprisonment.  
4

5 Government must adequately support rural health care, public education, and other  
6 social services. We support adequate income and living conditions, and access to health  
7 insurance for farmers, migrant workers, and their families.  
8

9 We advocate a welfare system in which able people are gainfully employed whenever  
10 jobs are available, with access to adequate affordable childcare, health insurance,  
11 transportation and job training.  
12

13 We call for additional affordable, quality, licensed daycare centers and government  
14 support for adequate pay for licensed childcare givers.  
15

## 16 **EDUCATION**

17  
18  
19 Quality public education for all is critical for individual wellbeing, economic prosperity,  
20 national security, and the health of our democracy.  
21

22 We oppose public funding of private schools and privatization of public education  
23 through vouchers or other means.  
24

25 Governments should increase funding of public education at all levels. Early childhood  
26 and preschool programs should be expanded. State government should increase funding  
27 and financial aid for the UW and Technical College Systems. Tuition in these systems must  
28 not increase faster than inflation.  
29

30 Public school teachers must be better paid.

31 The QEO system must be repealed.

32 We oppose excessive or discriminatory testing.

33 We support students' right to participate in post-secondary school governance.  
34  
35

## 36 **THE ENVIRONMENT**

37  
38  
39 We must preserve Earth's environment. This requires clean air and water,  
40 uncontaminated land, wilderness, wildlife, and other natural resources.  
41

42 We must conserve energy, develop and use renewable energy sources and alternative  
43 fuels, and improve automobile fuel efficiency.  
44

45 Biodiversity must be protected.

46 We must develop sustainable food production systems.  
47  
48  
49

1 We must be protected from pollution and unnatural radiation.

2  
3 Mining must be strictly controlled to prevent environmental damage.

4  
5 Environmentally threatening activities such as mining, quarrying, fossil fuel extraction,  
6 logging and grazing by free-roaming cattle should be banned from wilderness areas and  
7 parks.

8  
9 Soil and water conservation should be improved.

10  
11 We oppose diversion of Great Lakes water and extraction of groundwater for  
12 commercial bottling.

13  
14 We support a balanced transportation system. Walking and bicycling should be  
15 encouraged, and public transportation improved and made affordable and available to all.  
16 We support passenger rail and ferries.

17  
18 Laws to halt global warming and acid rain must be strengthened. Power plant  
19 emissions must be controlled.

20  
21 We support land use plans that encourage compact urban development, reduce  
22 sprawl and waste, preserve topsoil, green space, and Wisconsin's rural flavor.

23  
24 Recycling should be required in order to save energy and landfill space and to reduce  
25 waste. Composting, use of recycled packaging, and minimal packaging should be  
26 encouraged.

27  
28 Communities and workers have the right to information and control regarding location  
29 and transportation of nearby hazardous substances.

30  
31 We support prompt polluter-paid cleanup of toxic waste sites and banning of  
32 residential development on or near them.

33  
34 A Public Intervenor's Office should be re-established.

35  
36 An independent Department of Natural Resources should be restored.

## 37 38 39 **LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT**

40  
41 Our top priority is meaningful full employment.

42  
43 All workers must have the right to organize, bargain collectively, and strike for fair  
44 wages, benefits, and safe working conditions. We support public employees' rights to speedy  
45 mediation and binding arbitration of labor disputes.

46  
47 We favor strengthening OSHA and other safety agencies to ensure enforcement of  
48 workers' rights to a safe workplace.

1 We oppose right-to-work legislation. Hiring strikebreakers must be prohibited.

2  
3 Workers are entitled to a living wage with benefits.

4  
5 We support full equity in pay and benefits.

6  
7 We support equitable ratios of management to labor pay.

8  
9 We advocate national industrial policies to ensure thriving basic industries. We favor  
10 public investment in research and development of new technologies and worker retraining for  
11 nonmilitary domestic jobs.

12  
13 Management and labor should cooperate for competitive success of U.S.-owned  
14 businesses.

15  
16 We oppose American businesses establishing plants in foreign countries with the  
17 express purpose of evading taxes, taking advantage of sub-standard wages and  
18 circumventing environmental protection laws.

19  
20 We support tariffs against nations where unfair conditions impede American exports.

21  
22 Pension funds must be responsibly managed and strictly safeguarded. Employees  
23 and retirees must be informed regularly of anticipated retirement benefits. No employer  
24 should have access to pension fund assets.

25  
26 Workers owed wages by a bankrupt business must have first claim to the business'  
27 assets.

28  
29 Businesses must be required to give sufficient notification of job cutbacks and plant  
30 closings to help communities and workers adjust.

31  
32 Unemployment compensation should include health insurance and, in long recessions,  
33 automatic extension of benefits.

## 34 35 36 **THE ECONOMY AND TAXES**

37  
38 We support a tax system that treats work and investment income equally, is based on  
39 ability to pay, and has a progressive income tax as its core. We must reduce our  
40 dependence on regressive levies such as property and sales taxes. Taxation of land should  
41 be according to use. Property taxes should not be the primary source of school funding.

42  
43 The state must equitably fund local units of government, including school districts, and  
44 remove revenue caps.

45  
46 We oppose welfare for big business and the wealthy in the form of handouts, tax  
47 breaks, or tax loopholes. We support tax policies that create long-term economic  
48 development, good jobs, and environmentally sound development of affordable housing.

1 We oppose tax cuts for the wealthy that shift wealth inequitably away from middle- and  
2 low-income people and fail to spur economic development or job growth.

3  
4 Deficits weaken the economy and the ability of governments to implement necessary  
5 programs. The federal deficit and the state structural deficit should be eliminated.

6  
7 Businesses must stop avoiding taxation by nominally locating offshore.

8  
9 We support fair, indexed estate taxes.

10  
11 Leases for commercial use, or extraction of resources from, public land should be at  
12 fair market value and permitted only for environmentally sound activities.

13  
13 We proudly support our state's cooperatives, which are community owned and  
14 operated businesses.

## 15 16 17 **AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS**

18  
19 We are committed to preserving family farming. We favor policies that allow family  
20 farmers and farm-related enterprises in rural communities to succeed.

21  
22 We support supply policies that enhance family farmers' incomes.

23  
24 We call for farm subsidies that favor family farms over absentee-owned corporate  
25 farms.

26  
27 We discourage absentee-owned corporate farms.

28  
29 Foreign ownership of farmland should be discouraged.

30  
31 Agricultural practices must protect the environment and provide safe, wholesome food  
32 supplies. We oppose factory farms.

33  
34 We call for reducing high levels of processor involvement in agriculture and verifiable  
35 price discovery to insure fair prices.

36  
37 We seek development of fair trade international markets for agricultural products.

38  
38 Fair and safe electricity delivery to farms must be assured.

## 39 40 41 **FOREIGN AFFAIRS, WAR AND PEACE**

42  
43 Our nation should seek to befriend others, work with them to secure peace and  
44 enhance the lives of all, and address the grievances and problems that foster terrorism.  
45 America must work with others on overpopulation, environment, hunger, disease, illiteracy,  
46 and unemployment, and encourage development of representative government.

1 Law and diplomacy must replace force in international decision-making. Our nation  
2 must strengthen, participate equitably in adequate funding of, cooperate with, and use  
3 international institutions such as the UN, its agencies, and the International Criminal Court.  
4 Such institutions should be responsible for eliminating international terrorism.  
5

6 An efficient military ready to defend our country is essential.  
7

8 We must use military force only as a last resort. Our government must renounce the  
9 illegal, destabilizing policy of preemptive force when there is no imminent threat to our nation.  
10

11 Our country should work with other nations to eliminate nuclear weapons, weapons in  
12 space, land mines, chemical and biological weapons, and other weapons-related threats to  
13 people and the environment. Nuclear weapons' development must stop. Existing nuclear  
14 weapons should be de-alerted and disposed of in agreed, verifiable stages. Ballistic missile  
15 defense plans should be abandoned. The international arms trade should be brought under  
16 international control. War industries should receive assistance for converting from military  
17 manufacturing to the manufacture of peaceful products.  
18

19 A Department of Peace should be established to support national policies for a safe  
20 and peaceful world.  
21

22 We can best support our military personnel by not placing them in harm's way  
23 unnecessarily. We support fully meeting all material and medical, including psychological,  
24 needs of our active military and veterans. For those who have served in the military, the  
25 Peace Corps, or similar agencies, we support full, lifelong medical care and generous  
26 educational, housing, and employment programs.  
27

28 We support the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and urge U.S. ratification of the  
29 treaties that implement it.  
30

31 Foreign aid should be allocated to meet basic needs and encourage human rights.  
32 Our nation must never employ economic sanctions with genocidal effects.  
33

34 Our country's immigration policies should be fair and applied fairly. We should offer  
35 refuge to victims of oppressive regimes without regard to political persuasion.  
36

37 We support agreements to expand international trade, provided that they do not erode  
38 worker compensation, worker safety, environmental standards, or democratic control. We  
39 oppose fast-track legislation limiting Congress' trade authority. Our government should block  
40 multinational corporations' practices of avoiding U.S. taxes and work for international control  
41 of their monopolistic practices.  
42

## 43 **CONCLUSION**

44 We expect all Democrats to support this Platform as candidates and work to  
45 implement it when in office.  
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