

2008 PLATFORM

PREAMBLE

Since Jefferson and Jackson, the Democratic Party has led the struggle to increase democracy in our government. Democracy is the belief that the best repository of wisdom lies in the hands of an informed and educated electorate and that this electorate has a right to control the political agenda and debate those issues that are of importance to them.

In keeping with this philosophy, Maine Democrats believe in serving the people in Maine by promoting strong **sustainable** communities, fairness and opportunity for all, and investment in Maine's future. Economic opportunity and security, universal access to quality education and healthcare, good government, fair taxes, safety and national security, human rights, environmental protection, and international cooperation are the policies and principles for which we have long fought and will continue to fight.

We adopt this platform as an expression of what Democrats in Maine support and as a **guideline for elected officials in their political work.**

We support a democratic government that:

A. Economic Security, Opportunity and Justice.

1. Builds strong communities by ensuring: jobs for all who can work; a living wage; affordable housing, food, fuel, health care and other essential commodities; and support for those hit by hardship
2. Provides economic security through: a strong, non-privatized Social Security program, stricter regulation of public and private pensions, and guaranteed protection of workers' pension funds and rights.
3. Opposes reducing the Social Security benefits earned by workers because they have also earned a benefit from certain public

- retirement plans; works to repeal discriminatory laws that penalize some retired workers and their families while allowing others to receive full benefits.
4. Ensures a fair workplace by: guaranteeing the rights, and the ability, of all workers to form unions, bargain collectively, and strike without replacement or reprisal; keeping the workplace free from health and safety hazards, discrimination, and harassment; and enacting rules that respect employees' family obligations and other needs.
 5. Encourages a sustainable economy by promoting Maine-owned and operated businesses, tourism (including ecotourism), our cultural diversity, working waterfronts, high-value woodland management, active and potential farmland, in-state manufacturing and export of value-added products, and Maine food and fiber products.
 6. Creates economic opportunity by investing in ports, public and commercial transportation, renewable energy, research and development, and information technology, as well as arts, culture, and other amenities that stimulate a creative economy, attract business and tourism, and improve quality of life.
 7. Creates an equitable economic environment through strong consumer protection, banking, and corporate governance laws and by encouraging growth of local banks, credit unions, and other cooperatives.
 8. Supports a rational energy policy which seeks to protect the people of Maine from corporate speculation and profiteering.
 9. Believes that since the founders of the U.S. government did not intend to allow corporations to be included in the definition of the word "person" and "people" in the U.S. Constitution, and other founding principles and documents, corporations may not claim they are "persons" or "people" under the U.S. Constitution and obtain Constitutional rights thereby.

B. Health Care and Education

1. Believes that health care is a fundamental civil right and supports a national, universal single-payer nonprofit health system for all. Addresses the unique medical needs of all individuals, especially minorities. Protects a woman's right to choose. Keeps its promises for Medicaid, Medicare, Dirigo and veteran's benefits. Invests in initiatives and research to improve public health and health care system effectiveness.

2. Provides health care and community support for people with disabilities which make it possible for them to live with maximum autonomy and perform productive work.
3. Helps children succeed by: supporting youth and families with affordable early childhood education and other vital services; preventing domestic violence, and protecting children from abuse, neglect and the dangers of poverty; focusing on prevention and intervention and provides adequate funding.
4. Ensures a learning environment that: challenges all children to reach their highest potential; respects their backgrounds; protects them from violence, abuse and bullying; and provides programs to prevent substance abuse, suicide, and other destructive behaviors. Supports alternative educational settings and special-needs programs.
5. Invests in public educational institutions and provides lifelong learning for all; equitably funds all school districts; provides appropriate salaries and professional working conditions for all teachers and staff; develops criteria for excellence in schools; involves community members and parents in student-centered education; and improves educational quality through training and development.
6. Recognizes our responsibility to provide Post Secondary Education for everyone, with financial support and minimal student debt.

C. Ethical Government and Democracy

1. Promotes the general welfare, delivers promised social services, makes needed public investments, embraces transparency and accountability and promotes the most effective use of available financial resources.
2. Opposes contracting out the jobs of public employees to profit-making business.
3. Calls for a democratic media to foster the equitable distribution of economic, social, cultural and informational assets and ensures an informed citizenry by: promoting the diversification of communications media; supporting public broadcasting and locally-based public access television; upholding public interest standard for broadcasters; restoring the Fairness Doctrine and Equal Time Rule; expanding cable franchising; increasing public access to communications; supporting an uncensored and democratically managed Internet; and extending low cost, high speed Internet access to all communities.

4. Promotes democratic accountability through: campaign finance reform, including publicly funded elections at all levels; a fair assignment of legislative districts; increasing the number of terms for state legislators; and electoral reforms such as ranked choice voting, electoral fusion, and/or proportional representation, voter-verified paper ballots, non-partisan election commissions, Election Day National Holiday, automatic voter registration at age 18 or upon citizenship, elimination of excessive personal identification for voting, counting of every vote including valid provisional votes, and enacting a Presidential national popular vote system.
5. Restores the integrity of the Maine and the U.S. Constitutions and the Bill of Rights by strengthening the separation of powers, requiring executive, legislative and judicial accountability, initiating investigations of government corruption when there is strong evidence of its occurrence and endorsing the use of impeachment as one tool to achieve these objectives. It is the responsibility of the House of Representatives at the federal level and the State Legislature at the state level that when evidence demands action, those legislators must initiate this process without delay.
6. Supports a fair and equitable compensation for legislators and ensures that they are provided with the tools and resources to adequately perform their job.
7. Ensures a national Presidential electoral system that guarantees that whoever wins the popular vote wins the election.
8. Promotes reforms in the legislative process that increase the ability of the public to influence legislation while simultaneously reducing the influence of professional lobbyists.
9. Places a priority on negotiation, arbitration, reconciliation and restitution; and enables the prevention, management and peaceful resolution of conflict.
10. Supports a fair, progressive tax system that focuses tax responsibilities on those most able to pay, reduces reliance on property taxes, and expands the tax base to include taxes on non-essential services.
11. Limits land taking by eminent domain exclusively to federal, state and local governments, only for projects directly benefiting the public and not for private gain or benefit.
12. Supports the elimination of the income cap on Social Security taxes.
13. Calls for a democratic and accessible national presidential nomination process that is truly representative of national political

party constituencies and is not unnecessarily burdensome to the candidates in the commitment of time, money or resources.

D. Freedom, Safety, and National Security

1. Protects the full enjoyment of the Bill of Rights as a living document, especially free speech, free exercise of religion, separation of church and state, and freedom from all forms of discrimination.
2. Supports the right of women to be secure in their persons, as articulated in *Roe v. Wade*, and guarantees the right to access all forms of reproductive choices.
3. Endorses the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including its guarantee that all people have the right to food, water, shelter, medical care and a good education.
4. Does not torture or **condone** torture because torture is dangerous, ineffective and **morally wrong**.
5. Guarantees the **right to personal** privacy in all forms and rejects spying on American citizens without warrants.
6. Upholds the ancient **right to habeas corpus** for everybody by rejecting detention **that is secret, indefinite**, not subject to court review and in which detainees **lack access** to counsel and loved ones.
7. Protects our communities by requiring businesses and organizations to act responsibly toward their employees, their communities, and the environment.
8. Protects our communities by strongly prosecuting corporate crime, preventing crime of all kinds, reforming prosecution of non-violent offenders, and uniformly enforcing laws.

E. Civil Rights

1. Affirms its special **responsibility to promote** full participation of all persons in all of **society's activities**.
2. Promotes and enforces **all laws, including Affirmative Action and Hate Crimes Laws that protect civil rights; prohibits** racial, ethnic and religious profiling; **provides for equal treatment**; guarantees equal access **to higher education, employment and housing**; and prohibits **discrimination based on race, color, gender, age, physical and mental ability, religion, ancestry, national origin, and sexual orientation**.

3. Respects the dignity of all immigrants, ensures their basic human rights, and offers a path to legal residence for undocumented immigrants.
4. Extends to Gay and Lesbian couples and their families all the same legal and social rights and protections that other couples now receive through civil marriage and opposes any constitutional amendment or legislation that would deny these rights.
5. Calls for a transparent, equitable voting system where every vote counts and efforts to intimidate and discourage voters and restrict voter rights are prohibited.

F. Environmental Protection

1. Develops and implements a comprehensive Energy Resource Plan to increase efficiency, reduce pollution and reliance on fossil and unclean fuels and to mitigate global climate change by promoting the research and use of domestic, environmentally sound and renewable energy sources.
2. Conserves our working landscape and natural heritage through responsible stewardship of our environment and natural resources; and opposes environmental degradation, in accordance with the "precautionary principle".
3. Promotes protection of open space and responsible land and marine use laws and planning processes and makes comprehensive environmental and socioeconomic impact reports an integral part of the decision-making process for all proposed projects that may significantly affect Maine's communities and environment.
4. Conserves and protects land, water, forest, wetland and marine resources; expands public lands to preserve biodiversity, vital habitats, scenery, recreation, hunting, and fishing; and promotes sustainable farming and fishing.
5. Ensures access to clean, safe public drinking, bathing and swimming waters and protects supply of those waters against economic exploitation.
6. Leads New England's campaign against airborne pollution, eliminates harmful waste, and promotes recycling.

G. Global Peace, Security, and Justice

1. Safeguards our national security through peaceful solutions to international challenges; supports international law; honors

- strengthens the United Nations and its peacekeeping operations; and opposes subversion of popularly elected governments and actively works to end and prevent genocide.
2. Establishes a Study Commission to Explore the Creation of a Department of Peace in Maine for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety whose duties are Peace, Security and Justice. This commission may include oversight of environmental sustainability, oversight of corporate empires and maintaining peace in natural or economic disasters.
 3. Maintains a strong defense force that is equipped and organized to handle legitimate foreign threats and is supported by a reliable intelligence service; works to reduce arms worldwide and ultimately to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction; opposes new arms races; never launches undeclared or pre-emptive wars and limits the use of private contractors in combat zones.
 4. Resolves the Iraq conflict by pursuing diplomatic solutions, handing real control of the country to the Iraqi people, bringing our troops and contractors out of Iraq in the quickest and most responsible manner possible, supporting an international stabilization force which supports the Iraqi people and their aspirations for self-determination, cooperating with the U.N. to finance and organize reconstruction and renouncing any design on permanent bases or control of Iraqi oil and other resources.
 5. Works for an active American involvement in an international peace process allowing Israelis and Palestinians to co-exist with mutually recognized borders.
 6. Brings an end to the war in Iraq by initiating the safe and secure withdrawal of all U.S. combat forces and private military security contractors, leaving no permanent military bases behind.
 7. Conducts a robust diplomatic surge in the Middle East and beyond, as recommended by the Iraq Study Group, that includes negotiations with the Iranian Government.
 8. Brings an end to the use of torture and the closure of our prison at Guantanamo Bay.
 9. Promotes human dignity and national and international security by dramatically increasing support for humanitarian assistance, international development, and the elimination of poverty.
 10. Leads in shaping a global economy that supports a fairer distribution of growth and development among all peoples, preserves indigenous trades, strengthens democracy, and protects the environment, labor rights, public health, and the public good.

11. Ensures that current and future trade agreements support and strengthen, not undermine, domestic jobs, businesses, and farms by assisting their integration into the global economy; eliminates all forms of government assistance for outsourcing of jobs and businesses; reforms WTO, NAFTA and other U.S. trade agreements so they include enforceable protections for workers human rights, consumers and sustainable environmental quality.

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