

Washington State Democratic Party 2004 Platform

As passed by the Washington State Democratic Convention
Tacoma, Washington, June 5, 2004

PREAMBLE

We hold that democratic principles are the foundation of a safe, stable, and prosperous future and that these principles must be woven into the fabric of our social, cultural, and economic lives. We declare our commitment to human rights, justice, and opportunity for all.

Our platform rests on the principles that there should be:

- security for all citizens;
- education, jobs and economic opportunity for all;
- accessible and affordable health care for all Americans;
- a rebuilding of our reputation in the world as a cooperative and just country;
- a reversal of the erosion of civil liberties in our country;
- a recognition that diversity strengthens our nation;
- a recognition that we are responsible for our ethical, economic, environmental and educational legacy.

We adopt this platform to ensure that voters and candidates for public office understand and support our goals.

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is the number one industry in Washington.

We believe:

- that any decisions about breaching, removing, compromising, or encroaching on waterways should be based on sound, credible economic and scientific information;
- U.S. dollars earmarked for agriculture subsidies should go to sustainable family farms and not to agribusiness;
- The Columbia and Snake Rivers, including the dams that were primarily constructed under Democratic leadership, support the economic health of the Pacific Northwest.

We support:

- programs that provide an economic stimulus for survival, protection, and improvement of rural communities, including development of affordable high-speed internet access and rural transportation services;
- governmental programs, particularly those of the U.S. Department of Agricultural, that assure the survival of family farms;
- funding for agricultural commodity programs to assure long-term, economic viability of agriculture, availability of high quality food, and economic security of the nation;
- conservation and environmental programs and economic incentives that help conserve agricultural land and natural resources such as soil, water, forests, and wildlife habitat;
- international programs that reduce global warming;

- development of domestic and international marketing opportunities for crop and animal products and international trade agreements that assure fair marketing and employment practices;
- antitrust laws should be enforced and applied to agribusiness;
- management of ocean fisheries to prevent dangerous depletion;
- substantial land grant college funding of research in sustainable, non-toxic farming techniques;
- strong organic farming standards;
- clear labeling of food including nation of origin, genetically modified organism status, irradiation, and organic status;
- requiring inspection of all animals AT RISK OF THIS DISEASE entering the food chain for processing for spongiform encephalopathy.

We recognize:

- the need for new and sustainable development in rural areas and encourage various approaches aimed at obtaining resources for such development.;
- the role of farmers as ‘stewards of the land’.

We strongly advocate adequate governmental support for agricultural research and extension programs to develop, improve, and protect crops and livestock and research the requisite projects to improve quality, marketability, and safety of agricultural products.

CORPORATE POWER & MEDIA REFORM

Corporate Power

We believe:

- corporations are vital to our economy and standard of living;
- business friendly laws can be beneficial;
- corporations should not exert an undue influence on our body politic or use our Constitution in the courts to thwart our democratically enacted laws.

We support:

- revoking the charters of corporations that repeatedly violate our laws;
- a government created by, of, and for the people, not corporations.

We oppose:

- the Supreme Court precedent that corporations are people, and further oppose corporation rights as persons under our constitution and their associated constitutional rights, including the First Amendment right to make political contributions in the corporate capacity;
- tax breaks to corporations and other corporate welfare, unless a verifiable public interest is served.

Media

We believe:

- the public owns the broadcast airwaves and the Internet, which should be managed to serve the public interest.

We support:

- using diversity of ownership as the centermost principle of broadcast licensing;
- strengthening media ownership regulations to avoid corporate domination of our airwaves;
- encouraging minority and community media ownership;
- ensuring that media license holders provide diverse programming;
- increased funding for public broadcasting including documentary films and non-commercial news programs;
- establishing a system for community-level, non-profit, and non-commercial radio and TV nationwide.

EDUCATION

“It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provisions for the education of all children.”
The Washington State Constitution - 1889

We believe public schools bring together people of diverse experience, ability and background for the purpose of learning.

We support:

- a stable funding source for all basic, gifted, special education state and federal programs and mandates such as “No child left behind”;
- reinstatement of I-728 that calls for reduction of class sizes;
- reinstatement of I-732, which allows cost-of-living increases for all public school employees;
- schools that are safe from violence, bullying, harassment and retribution;
- full inclusion of all students into the school environment regardless of race, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic status or disability;
- full-time counselors and school nurses in every school;
- state of the art school facilities that are adequately maintained and regularly certified as safe and healthy by public health authorities;
- fully funding Headstart and ECEAP (Early Childhood Education and Assisted Programs) and assuring that early childhood education is accessible to all;
- inclusion of Fine Arts education in the Basic Education Act of the State;
- providing facilities and programs that advance vocational and technology education;
- providing access to higher education, by all, through financial aid and work-study programs;
- using a simple majority to pass school levies and bonds;
- public education employees’ rights to organize, engage in collective bargaining, and strike without fear of reprisal or replacement;
- age-appropriate, research-based health and values education concerning issues of sexuality and alcohol/drug abuse for K-12;
- methods of funding educational capital projects other than logging public land;
- restraints on aggressive military recruiting in public high schools and equal opportunity for dissenting opinions.

We oppose:

- Charter Schools;
- voucher payments to private schools;
- the commercial exploitation of students in our schools (e.g. “junk food” and advertising).

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

Every individual has a fundamental right to clean air, pure water, safe food and a healthy natural environment. No government should make any law, regulation, treaty or agreement infringing upon these rights.

We support:

- conservation and development of clean, efficient, renewable, and natural sources of power;
- elimination of tax breaks to nonrenewable-energy companies, except for pollution control equipment;
- strong measures that reduce greenhouse gases;
- federal government restoration and cleanup of all contaminated lands and water, public or private;
- long-term policies that give priority to the preservation of biodiversity, protection of ecosystems and watersheds, and restoration of wild salmon and other endangered species;
- efforts to reduce the use of pesticides, herbicides, and other persistent toxic chemicals;
- increasing governmental support for organic farming and preservation of agricultural land;
- programs to reduce polluted urban and agricultural run-off into waterways and aquifers;
- full disclosure by companies and by the government of the health and environmental effects of all potentially harmful chemicals and substances that they produce, store or release;
- higher Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards and extending their application to SUVs;
- current state law, which requires voter approval of large public energy projects before bonds are issued;
- strong public policy that restores full funding for the National Park Service and preserves wilderness, old-growth, road free areas, wildlife corridors, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive areas;
- efforts to reduce waste and to promote the reuse and recycling of materials;
- making polluters pay for cleanup by reinstating the federal tax on toxic waste under the Superfund Program;
- strengthening the Growth Management Act, and supporting neighborhood and community planners in their efforts to protect our quality of life;
- upgrading our outdated electrical grids so that power can be distributed efficiently and reliably;
- revising the 1872 Mining Act to provide fair market compensation to the public and limiting exploration and extraction in environmentally sensitive public lands;
- utilizing biomass conversion to process American farm products and byproducts into renewable energy, including biodiesel and ethanol.

We oppose:

- trading of energy and pollution credits;
- tying funding of school construction to destroying old-growth forests or non-sustainable resource exploitation;
- any expansion of nuclear power until environmentally safe long-term waste storage can be guaranteed;
- waste disposal and oil exploration in any wildlife refuge, wilderness area, or other environmentally sensitive area;

- importing new nuclear waste to the Hanford Nuclear Reservation;
- exemption of military bases from environmental regulation.

FOREIGN POLICY

The U.S.A should seek to uphold human welfare and the environment for all people worldwide.

To promote democratic ideals abroad, it is imperative that we:

- support nonviolent conflict resolution;
- support a multilateral approach to foreign policy;
- support the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- proclaim the executive and legislative branches of government shall abandon the doctrine of pre-emptive warfare and shall make nonviolence the primary organizing principle of foreign policy.

We support:

- International Criminal Court;
- U. N. Land Mine Treaty;
- Biological & Chemical Warfare Conventions;
- ABM Treaty;
- Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty;
- Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty;
- Space Preservation Treaty;
- Child Soldier Treaty;
- U.S. foreign policy must empower and support the right of all people to self governance and self determination;
- CEDAW (7th Convention to End Discrimination Against Women);
- The Kyoto Protocol on Global Climate Change.

We believe:

- multinational corporations are not legal persons entitled to equal protection under the 14th Amendment to the U.S. constitution;
- U.S. companies abroad must be prohibited from engaging in practices that would be prohibited at home;
- multinational corporations, their affiliates, subsidiaries and/or franchises may not operate above the international rule of law;
- WTO and NAFTA, as now written, undermine constitutional power of Federal and State government and fail to promote human rights, labor rights, environmental protection worldwide, and therefore the U.S. should re-negotiate said treaties or exercise its right to withdraw.

We support and affirm:

- developing and implementing an equitable and rapid exit strategy from Iraq and Afghanistan;
- nonviolent initiatives aimed at rebuilding civil society and encouraging democracy in Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan;
- encouraging strict health, safety, and environmental standards worldwide;
- the end of military support to countries that violate human and civil rights;
- honoring and upholding the rights, welfare, and healthy environment of all indigenous people;
- increasing federal funding to combat world hunger and the HIV/AIDS epidemic worldwide;

- consistently working cooperatively with all countries through the United Nations, upholding the Geneva Convention, paying its financial obligations to the U.N, and ratifying pending human rights conventions;
- a call for all governments and corporations to immediately stop production, stockpiling, testing, and use of uranium, depleted uranium, or other radiological weapons;
- closing the School of the Americas, aka The Western Hemispheric Institute for Security Cooperation;
- practice fair trade based on sound environmental quality principles, worker rights, and welfare;
- creating a cabinet-level Department of Peace to establish non-violence as an organizing principle in both domestic and international affairs, strengthen international institutions and cooperative diplomacy to prevent acts of terrorism and resolve international conflicts;
- the elimination of excessive, unnecessary, and redundant programs and weapons, such as Star Wars and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Shield, from the military budget, and investing the savings in pressing domestic needs;
- that the United States should commit to vigorous, serious and persistent even-handed engagement towards a peaceful resolution of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, promoting negotiations that lead to a viable resolution and ensure security and a good quality of life for the Israeli and Palestinian peoples;
- the United States' ratification of CEDAW (7th Convention to End Discrimination Against Women).

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL REFORM

Government embodies the people and must reflect our values as citizens. Our government must be fiscally sound, operate ethically, refrain from establishing or supporting religion, be open, transparent and accountable to the people. Our faith in our government and in our political system can only be restored through constructive reform.

Citizen participation is a right and duty of citizenship, and free, open and verifiable elections are key to our democratic process. Only substantial election reform can restore faith in the election system.

We believe:

- taxes are the price of civilization; we want our taxes to be levied fairly and spent frugally;
- all regulatory agencies should be fully funded.

We support:

- making Election Day a national holiday;
- immediate restoration of voting rights of felons who have completed their sentences;
- public financing of all election campaigns.
- laws requiring all broadcast license holders to provide adequate free airtime to political candidates as a condition of their FCC license;
- fair, voter-verifiable, fully transparent and auditable voting systems;
- encourage colleges and universities to register students to vote and to open campus polling places;
- full Congressional representation for residents of the District of Columbia;
- inclusive campaign and debate process that does not exclude credible third party candidates;
- enforcement of sunshine laws and transparency in sessions that discuss and make policy;
- aggressive congressional investigation of improper connections between government and industry;
- universal voter registration of all U.S. citizens who are eligible voters.

We oppose:

- any practice that reveals election results while the polling places are still open;
- privatizing, outsourcing or off-shoring of governmental public services.

HEALTHCARE

We believe access to quality health care is a basic human right for all people, essential to national safety and well-being.

We support:

- creation of a universal, publicly funded, single-payer, not-for-profit, comprehensive health system preserving consumer choice;
- parity of mental and physical health coverage;
- amending the Medicare prescription drug benefit to permit access to generic and other cost effective drugs;
- eliminating discrimination against low income patients in the delivery of equal health care;
- a strong Patient Bill of Rights;
- improved long-term care of the consumer's choice (including home care and hospice), and ensuring living wages and training for caregivers;
- regulation and inspection of institutional and residential health care systems;
- Federal regulation and inspection of the medical insurance industry;
- increased funding for prevention programs (such as nutritional education, prenatal care, reproductive health education, and suicide prevention) and disease research and control (including stem cell research);
- dedicating tobacco settlement monies only to tobacco-related health care programs and tobacco use prevention;
- privacy protection of jointly-owned (patient/facility) medical and mental health records, prohibiting the sale or disclosure of personal medical or pharmaceutical records;
- protection of a woman's right to private consultation regarding reproductive decisions. Physicians will be allowed to perform reproductive procedures without fear of retaliation, even in the event of legislative changes;
- a reasonable medical malpractice rate structure, preserving a right to a jury trial and ensuring fair awards for preventable medical errors. Insurance company stockholders, rather than healthcare providers, will bear the burden of investment losses;
- the repeal of the Global Gag Rule that cuts \$34M to UN and international family planning agencies;
- the legalization of marijuana for medical purposes;
- preservation of existing VA hospitals and clinics, and increased funding for the long-term care of veterans. we have a moral obligation to care for our veterans.

HUMAN RIGHTS & CIVIL RIGHTS

We believe:

- that the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all human beings are the foundations of freedom, justice, and peace in the world;
- food, shelter, medical care, education and jobs are basic human rights;
- each person has a right to live free from fear of personal injury;

- the Patriot Act was created out of an irrational reaction to the terrorist acts of 2001, and therefore, the Act should be evaluated to remove components that are unconstitutional and affect liberty including, but not limited to:
 - free speech zones ;
 - indefinite detention;
 - no fly list;
 - enemy combatants status;
 - denial of access to counsel;
 - suspension of the writ of habeas corpus.

We insist that the Geneva Conventions be applied to all detainees, foreign or domestic, no matter where they are held.

We support:

- the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1990;
- affirmative action; we believe those who suffer the burdens of discrimination must be afforded legal means and economic opportunities to overcome such injustice;
- the rights of senior citizens and individuals with disabilities to direct their own lives in housing, education and all other life choices, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990;
- the separation of church and state, and we oppose organized prayer in publicly funded schools;
- the right for medically assisted death with dignity with suitable safeguards for terminally ill patients;
- a woman's right to choose as protected by Roe vs. Wade and the Washington State Reproductive Freedom Act;
- the right to confidentiality of medical records and genetic information.

We affirm:

- the right to sovereignty over our own bodies. We support family planning and women's reproductive rights, regardless of age or ability to pay;
- that the state should not interfere with couples who choose to marry and share fully and equally in the rights, responsibilities, and commitment of civil marriage, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

We oppose:

- discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodation, military service, insurance, licensing, or education based on race, religion, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, size, political affiliation, or national origin.

We abhor harassment, intimidation, and domestic or sexual violence, and support strong legislation, treatment programs, and education designed to reduce these ills.

IMMIGRATION

We Support:

- challenging any legislation that:
 - declares English as the official language of the United States;
 - disregards cultural pluralism;
 - deprives those in need of education, social services, and employment access to these resources.

We Oppose:

- any immigration policy that denies civil and/or human rights or educational opportunities for immigrants and their children regardless of their immigration status.

We Affirm:

- that migrant workers deserve safe and adequate housing, medical care, education, and sanitary facilities.

INDIAN TRIBES AND TREATIES

Treaties made between sovereign Indian nations and the United States government must be upheld and preserved.

LABOR & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Economic justice for working families is essential for the realization of a democratic society.

We support:

- Fair Taxation
 - progressive tax system at both the federal and state level;
 - incentives, including targeted tax credits, to businesses that provide family wage jobs with adequate healthcare and pension benefits, and special programs such as on-site daycare;
 - fair system of paying for growth with impact fees; we oppose the cost-shifting of these expenses onto the general public.
- Fair Pay
 - minimum wage that is a living wage;
 - equal pay for equal work;
 - maintenance of state and federal prevailing wage laws;
 - reducing the wage gap between rural and urban areas of the state, including ensuring adequate housing, wages and health care for farm workers;
 - protection of overtime pay.
- Fair Economic and Trade Policies
 - only multilateral trade agreements which are conditioned on environmental standards, human rights and workers rights, and which support democratic transparent processes;
 - economic policies conducive to the growth of small business and a strong independent farm system;
 - strict enforcement of all contracting laws, holding violators responsible for payment of all taxes and penalties.
- Worker Rights
 - the rights of workers to a safe and healthy workplace, free from harassment;
 - the rights of all workers to organize and use mediation, arbitration, and the right to strike without fear of reprisal or replacement;
 - a workers' Bill of Rights that includes rights of assembly, association and free speech, due process, freedom from discrimination, and democracy within unions;
 - the right of new bargaining units to request mandatory arbitration on the first contract;

- the repeal of the anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act, which has tilted labor law in favor of employers;
 - the automatic recognition of a union, based on signatures of a majority of those represented (card-check);
 - full funding for enforcement of employment standards, child labor laws, and worker safety laws;
 - protection of whistleblowers, (including Federal employees);
 - responsible and responsive bidder language in all public-financed works that includes contractor responsibilities on fair wages, health insurance, retirement and training;
 - the 15% set-asides for using state certified apprentices on public works projects.
- Social Security
 - a separate and dedicated Social Security Trust Fund;
 - maintenance of disabled and dependent survivor Social Security benefits.
 - Support for Economically Disadvantaged
 - welfare reform that will reduce poverty, not just the welfare rolls;
 - funding childcare for citizens transitioning off welfare;
 - public assistance safeguarding the vulnerable poor who cannot reasonably provide for themselves;
 - increased affordable and low-income housing, with emphasis on home ownership;
 - unemployment and retraining benefits for workers laid off or locked out by their employers;

We oppose:

- tip-credit minimum wage;
- efforts to eliminate restrictions on the working hours of teenagers;
- U.S. corporations going offshore in order to evade U.S. laws and taxes;
- the privatization or out-sourcing of public services;
- profiteering, misuse of private data and predatory lending by financial institutions;
- right-to-work laws;
- use of permanent replacement workers during strikes;
- supplanting public employees with low-wage, low benefit contract employees or prison labor;
- privatization of Social Security.

LAW & JUSTICE

We recognize that civil order is necessary to the survival of a free and democratic state. Civil order can occur only when Justice treats the least among us the same as the greatest in all legal matters. We also recognize that in the pursuit of civil order, we cannot abandon the legal principles upon which a free and democratic society relies. We affirm Liberty and Justice for everyone residing in the US according to the Constitution and believe that criminal justice and human rights are linked.

We believe:

- prevention of crime is as important as reaction to crime;
- violence should not become an accepted fact in our communities;
- authorities and communities must work together, assume responsibility for safety and prevention of crime, and make neighborhoods livable;
- government must help alleviate the social conditions which contribute to crime;
- comprehensive crime prevention must include youth programs;

- property forfeiture should be permitted only after criminal conviction, not on arrest or by seizure;
- corporate officers and board members should be held responsible for the actions of their companies.

We support:

- a new approach to drug addiction focused on treatment and education as opposed to incarceration;
- the stringent enforcement and maintenance of current state and federal laws regulating the ownership of firearms, while respecting the rights of responsible gun owners;
- abolishing capital punishment;
- adequate state funding for indigent defendants in all criminal cases;
- DNA testing to free the innocent and convict the guilty in criminal prosecutions;
- review of mandatory sentencing guidelines and “three-strikes” sentencing, especially for non-violent offenses;
- drug courts;
- elimination of all forms of racial profiling by government or law enforcement;
- eliminating the conditions closely linked to crime and violence by investing in nonviolent conflict resolution, education, health care, social services, and living wage jobs;
- diversion for adult misdemeanors and juvenile offenders, when possible, to alternative victim/offender restorative mediation under the oversight of prosecuting attorney offices.

MILITARY

Democrats have always answered their country’s call to duty and are proud of our military contributions to the nation. We believe that our military men and women - the best our nation has to offer - should always have leadership worthy of them.

We Support:

- all our military members serving at home and overseas, and a safe speedy return for those in combat areas;
- abolition of the military’s “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy and legislation to ensure homosexuals serving their country have equal status with all other service members;
- repeal of the Survivor’s Benefit Plan (SBP) Social Security offset when a widowed military spouse reaches age 62, and elimination of the VA disability offset from military retired pay;
- restoration of full, no-cost treatment at military medical facilities for retirees, just as they were promised when they joined;
- complete funding of all VA hospitals and medical treatment facilities for disabled veterans and increased funding for long term care;
- compensation for Guard and Reserve members activated for more than 14 days in combat operations; the government should pay the difference between their non-military and military pay;
- increased instruction of all American personnel in their rights and responsibilities under the Geneva Convention;
- the rights of all persons serving in the military to serve free of sexual harassment and sexual assault and support the prosecution of offenders.

We affirm:

- the right and responsibility of each woman in the military to make her own reproductive decisions and her right to follow through on those decisions at non-military medical facilities

- and at her own expense. If needed, the Uniform Code of Military Justice should be revised to guarantee this right;
- that Veteran's programs be regarded as entitlement programs.

We oppose:

- using our precious military resources in international affairs as a first resort rather than a last resort, and we urge the abolishment of the pre-emptive war doctrine.

TRANSPORTATION

We believe that transportation systems (be they commercial, personal or mass transit) that are efficient, flexible and visionary are key to a healthy economy and environment.

We support:

- making investments in public infrastructure that broaden both rural and urban transportation choices and reduce dependence on the automobile;
- improved facilities for non-motorized movement of people such as pedestrian paths, bicyclists, and people in wheelchairs;
- provide equity and parity in state support among all forms of transportation (i.e. buses, ferries, light rail, heavy rail, monorail, etc.);
- public involvement at all levels in developing transportation plans and systems;
- multiple funding sources including fuel taxes, excise taxes and user fees, which are as progressive as possible, as appropriate for funding essential transportation projects;
- having multiple airports in major urban areas;
- elimination of all tax subsidies which benefit motor vehicles not meeting gas mileage guidelines or that are not being used for their original intent;
- tax credits given to those vehicles that exceed gas mileage guidelines or use alternative fuels;
- inclusion of ferry routes as major collector roads for planning and funding purposes;
- vigorously encourage revising safety standards for tires based on real world safety performance for new and retread passenger tires, medium and heavy vehicles;
- safer intersections for vehicles and pedestrians through better design, improved traffic control measures, and where warranted, revision of existing practices for traffic control devices to permit longer phasing to pedestrian signals to enable safer crossing at high-volume roadways;
- the use of alternative fuels, neighborhood electric and hybrid vehicles through targeted tax incentives;
- recognition that aviation, both private and commercial, is a key form of transportation in our state.

We oppose:

- tariffs paid solely by ferry riders that exceed the subsidies for operating other components of the state highway system;
- major airport expansion without public input, review and vote.

Passed by the Convention, June 5, 2004
(4,589 words)