

Democratic Party of Wisconsin 2010 Platform

Approved by Convention June 12, 2010

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 equal legal rights for all individuals in committed, loving relationships. 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. We shall work to eliminate those obstacles. We 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. Our goal is a government and an electoral process free of the corrupting influences of money and power.

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 publicly funded state and national elections. Every citizen is guaranteed the right to vote and equal access thereto, including non-incarcerated felons. 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.

We strongly oppose the decision of the US Supreme Court to allow unlimited campaign advertising by corporations. This decision gives away our sovereign rights to foreign citizens and corporations. A new Amendment to the Constitution must be adopted to deny Corporations the same status as People.

1 We expect the swift impeachment and removal from office of officials who commit high crimes and
2 misdemeanors.
3

4 Access to accurate information and a diversity of viewpoints are essential to citizen empowerment. The
5 broadcast spectrum belongs to all citizens. Therefore we will work to ensure diverse local ownership of
6 media outlets. We will provide strong support for public broadcasting and other community-owned media
7 outlets. We support free and equal access to news media for all candidates for public office.
8

9 We respect the religious liberties of all people and welcome them into the Democratic Party. It is vital that
10 we observe separation between government and religion. It is imperative to the survival of our Democratic
11 Republic that the rights of citizens to choose their own religious and philosophical beliefs remain intact.
12

13 We require a fair immigration policy providing a reasonable legal path to residency and citizenship. The
14 policy must include a fair opportunity for current undocumented residents to achieve legal status. All people
15 should be afforded the same basic principles of life, liberty, justice, and fair access to economic security.
16

17 It is important to care for all generations. We need affordable, quality, licensed daycare centers and
18 government support to pay for childcare. We cannot neglect our nation's future. We need health education
19 and disease prevention programs concerning smoking, alcohol, and sexually transmitted infections.
20

21 It is essential that we preserve Social Security programs for our elderly, disabled, and eligible children.
22 Privatizing Social Security threatens the financial security of the most vulnerable. We must enhance
23 programs for the aging and disabled, including subsidized long-term in-home or nursing home care.
24

25 We believe access to affordable health care is a right and that the best solution to our national health care
26 crisis is a single-payer system. Such a system must provide universal access for individuals of all ages,
27 promote preventive measures, provide medications, therapy and cover all physical and mental illnesses
28 equally. Until that system is available, we support broader coverage and increased funding for the current
29 health care programs on local, state and national levels, including BadgerCare, Medicaid and Healthy
30 Wisconsin.
31

32 Personal moral, religious and medical decisions should be left up to the competent individual. We believe in
33 freedom of reproductive choice, as well as the individual's right to choose death with dignity. Everyone has
34 the right to timely obtain medications, properly and legally prescribed by their health care provider, from any
35 licensed pharmacy. Funding for stem-cell research should not be influenced by religious beliefs. This
36 research, which would benefit all people, should be supported on its scientific merits.
37

38 Considering Wisconsin's high rate of incarceration, associated correctional costs, and long-lasting effects of
39 incarceration, we support responsible alternatives to prison.
40

41 We oppose the death penalty as an inhumane and ineffective means of punishment. We believe in equitable
42 sentencing standards and increasing the authority of judges to modify sentences.
43

44 The war on drugs is a colossal failure. We must discourage dangerous drug use without criminalizing the user
45 and provide rehabilitative treatment to addicted persons. We encourage non-penal sanctions for initial
46 minor drug violations.
47

48 We support reasonable firearms regulations to ensure the safety of citizens and law enforcement officials.
49 We support the right to hunt and bear arms. We support Wisconsin's concealed carry ban.

1 **Education, Labor, and Economics**

2
3 Quality public education for all is critical to a healthy democracy and economy. Public funding for private
4 schools diverts resources from and adversely impacts public schools. Increased governmental funding and
5 financial aid is essential for all levels of public education. Nobody should be denied a quality education
6 because of a personal lack of financial resources.

7
8 A strong Wisconsin public education system builds a strong Wisconsin. We believe that students have the
9 right to receive their education in a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment, free from harassment or
10 discrimination by teachers, staff, parents, or other students. We support fair and equitable funding for all
11 elements of the curriculum, including art, music and physical education.

12
13 Wisconsin's current educational funding system has failed. Teacher and support staff compensation must
14 keep pace with costs of benefits and inflation.

15
16 Revenue caps on school districts and other local governments must be eliminated. State or federal
17 governments must fully fund their mandates.

18
19 Public investment in arts and humanities promotes healthy communities and a healthy economy. We
20 support increased local, state, and federal funding of arts and humanities.

21
22 A strong and secure nation depends on sound economic policy that promotes and sustains full, meaningful
23 employment. Business, labor and the public must work together to re-establish American jobs on American
24 soil. We support small business as a means of economic growth. We must resist outsourcing, thus
25 reinvigorating domestic industries.

26
27 The Federal government should fund a safety net of transitional jobs for all individuals who cannot find work
28 and have no unemployment compensation.

29
30 Workers have rights to safe and equitable workplaces, living wages, pay equity for women, and secure
31 benefits. Workers' rights to organize, bargain collectively and strike without fear of reprisal must continue
32 and be strengthened. Election by card check is supported to reduce employer intimidation of employees'
33 choice of representation. Employees that benefit from union contracts should pay fair-share dues. We
34 support public employees' rights to speedy mediation and binding arbitration of labor disputes. Businesses
35 must be held accountable for contracts with their employees. Right-to-work legislation and the hiring of
36 strikebreakers are anathema to a strong, justly-compensated workforce. Pension and other retirement funds
37 must be strictly safeguarded and responsibly managed through regulation. In the event of bankruptcy,
38 workers' unpaid wages must be the first claim on remaining assets.

39
40 We support a tax system that is based on ability to pay. It is immoral to overtax those less able to pay while
41 the wealthy are taxed too little as a percentage of income. The Federal budget must reflect responsible
42 spending and fair taxation. We call on the State Legislature to make corporate taxes on par with the national
43 average.

44
45 Financial markets should be more effectively regulated to prevent fraud, excessive speculation, inappropriate
46 compensation, predatory lending, and the need for taxpayer bailouts of mismanaged firms. The needs of
47 Main Street should supercede the needs of Wall Street.

48
49 America must invest in a healthy economy by supporting worker training, affordable tuition at our state-
50 supported universities and technical colleges and ample funding for research.

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

5
6 Products sold by vendors at DPW functions must be made in America, union made, or certified fair-trade.

7
8 Our wealth should be measured not only by the GDP but also by broad measures of well-being, such as the
9 United Nations Human Development Index, that incorporate factors like health, education, literacy,
10 employment and wages and environmental quality.

11 12 **Agriculture and Environment**

13
14 We must preserve family farming by creating market systems that assure a fair return to both farmers and
15 processors. True Cooperatives and family farm subsidies are essential to the economic viability and quality of
16 life in rural areas. In addition we support value-added agriculture which includes farming endeavors outside
17 traditional forms of agriculture. Price supports for non-owner operated farms should be eliminated and
18 regulations controlling environmental pollution strengthened.

19
20 We support farming systems that are humane to animals, preserve our soil, water and forest resources, and
21 produce wholesome, safe food for consumers. We support agricultural sustainability through growth in “buy
22 fresh buy local” practices which insure markets for local farmers and save fuel by eliminating costly transport.
23 We also support truth in labeling of conventional, organic, and genetically modified food.

24
25 We oppose practices by genetically modified seed producers which attempt to monopolize the seed business
26 by requiring that all seed be purchased from them.

27
28 Protecting the ecological systems of our planet is essential to the economic and social welfare of our state
29 and nation and to the future of humanity. Our legislators and leaders must pay heed to soil, water, and
30 atmospheric pollution; scientific evidence of global warming; all invasive species; and decreasing biodiversity
31 while enacting appropriate legislation to safeguard our environment. We must maintain the integrity of the
32 vast fresh water supply in the Great Lakes.

33
34 We must reduce greenhouse gases by developing alternative and sustainable fuels and energy sources;
35 increase production of fuel-efficient vehicles; reduce urban sprawl onto prime agricultural soils; improve and
36 expand local, regional and national mass transportation systems; and increase recycling and waste
37 management, all while maintaining biodiversity. We support responsible environmental regulations affecting
38 open space, wilderness areas, soil conservation, forest management, toxic and hazardous waste disposal and
39 cleanup and watershed protection. We call for the use of advanced technology and environmentally-friendly
40 practices to be implemented in industrial settings and mining natural resources and the enforcement and
41 strengthening of safety regulations. To ensure the protection of our state's valuable natural resources, we
42 support the re-establishment of a Public Intervener's Office and an independent Department of Natural
43 Resources.

44 45 **Foreign Affairs**

46
47 We stand for human rights, social and economic justice, the rule of law, and popularly adopted democratic
48 government worldwide. Our leaders must honor international law and honor and promote international
49 agreements that provide groundwork for a just, prosperous, environmentally healthy, and peaceful world.
50 Our United Nations dues must be fully paid.

1 We call on our government to be a cooperative and effective leader, a partner in the pursuit of global accords
2 to improve the human condition and protect the environment. We encourage international efforts to
3 combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, discrimination, genocide, torture, genital mutilation, human
4 slavery and trafficking, capital punishment, pollution, and global warming. We support expansion of the
5 Peace Corps.
6

7 We oppose unfair trade and immigration policies that undermine our economy, harm working people in our
8 country and elsewhere, and harm the environment.
9

10 We oppose unfettered international arms trade, nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, land mines,
11 radioactive materials in conventional munitions, ballistic missile defense systems, cluster bombs,
12 militarization of space, American-run or funded internment camps and torture.
13

14 We support a strong military as essential to our national security and providing amply for the health and well-
15 being of members of the military during and after their service. We also support efforts to eliminate the use
16 of National Guard troops in undeclared wars.
17

18 Our military budget is disproportionately large compared to all other nations. With only 5% of the world's
19 population we make ~50% of the world's total military expenditures. Our military budget should be reduced
20 with greater emphasis placed on economic development and diplomacy to achieve global security and curtail
21 the undue influence of the "Military Industrial Complex."
22

23 War must always be a last resort. We must address the grievances that foster terrorism rather than fight
24 wars that perpetuate them. All in our Government and military must abide by the Geneva Conventions.
25

26 Preemptive war without direct threat to our country is fraudulent, illegal, and disastrous. We support
27 current administrative efforts to shift away from occupation of Iraq. The occupation diverts our attention
28 from defeating terrorists. It kills and maims our service men and women as well as millions of innocent
29 civilians. It contributes to devastation of our economy, encourages terrorism, and undermines our credibility
30 and standing in the world. Congressional action to stop funding for pre-emptive wars is long overdue.
31

32 We call upon Congress to pass laws displaying visions and values that uphold our Constitution, reverse the
33 failures and illegalities of past administrations, and maintain the global community's respect and admiration
34 of our country.
35

36 **Conclusion**

37

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