

1 **2013-2015 Platform of the Young Democrats of America**

2 *As Passed by the Young Democrats of America in Convention Assembled*
3 *on the 21st day of August, 2013, in Los Angeles, California*

4
5 Justin D. Meyers (CA), Platform Chair

6
7 **PARTY STRUCTURE AND CORE VALUES**

8 We Believe:

9 America’s strength derives from people coming together and working for the common good.
10 Acceptance of diverse viewpoints is fundamental to a well-functioning democracy and an inclusive
11 society. We are proud of our values, especially in the face of opposition. There is no campaign we
12 cannot win, and there is no issue we must sacrifice in the fight for our nation's future.

13 We the Young Democrats of America Will:

14 1. Support implementation of a nationwide campaign approach, leaving no Democrat, no voter and no
15 young person behind. As there are Young Democrats in every state in the Union, we will never concede
16 their political futures to Republican domination but will instead proudly carry our shared message of
17 hope and progress into every state and territory.

18 2. Support recruitment of Democratic candidates for all 535 seats in and the recruitment of Democratic
19 candidates for congressional representation of U.S. Territories.

20 3. Support Young Democratic candidates who are running in local and state office races, so that no
21 election goes uncontested and no chance to build young leaders is missed. To do this, we must recruit,
22 fund, and train those candidates, while helping local chapters find races in which to run young
23 candidates.

24 4. Increase peer-to-peer communication by speaking with progressive and democratically allied issue
25 groups, by locating new voters in our local communities, by speaking out to our friends and family
26 members, and by taking our message for the future to the people.

27 5. Support the building of strong, lasting relationships among local Democratic clubs, labor unions, and
28 other progressive organizations.

29 6. Demand inclusion at all levels of the Democratic Party, including state and local executive committees
30 and as party delegates, allowing the voice of the future leaders of the Democratic Party to be heard and
31 listened to.

32 7. Help recruit and support Democratic candidates who reflect the very best of their local character and
33 values.

34 8. Democratic organizations including labor unions, national, state and county committees, political
35 campaigns and other allied organizations actively recruiting and hiring individuals from
36 underrepresented populations who reflect the communities they serve.

37 **GOVERNMENT AND ELECTORAL REFORM**

38 We Believe:

39 Free and Fair elections are fundamental to democracy in our country. Young people often find
40 themselves disenfranchised due to residency laws, lack of education, and the transitory nature of youth.
41 The federal government should encourage young people to participate in the democratic process. We
42 further believe the federal government should set realistic and reliable standards for election
43 administration to ensure fair, accurate, and accessible vote casting and counting, coupled with federal
44 grants to state and local governments to assist with compliance.

45 We Support:

46 1. Fair and free elections.

47 2. Early voting, same day registration, no-fault absentee voting, and vote by mail.

48 3. Voting systems that ensure accuracy, fairness, and transparency while safeguarding privacy and
49 accessibility.

50 4. The formation of independent, non-partisan commissions to draw district lines that are an accurate
51 representation of a diverse electorate.

52 5. Campaign finance laws that ensure that ideas, not money are the deciding factor in elections.

53 6. Expanded implementation of the National Voter Registration Act, which requires federal agencies to
54 provide voter registration opportunities.

55 7. Efforts by states to restore voting rights to citizens that have been convicted of crimes and who have
56 served their sentence.

57 8. Passage of the DC Voting Rights Act as a necessary but insufficient step toward full representation and
58 the eventual statehood of the District of Columbia; and the abolishment of the tyrannical practice of
59 taxation without representation wherever it exists.

60 9. Strict penalties for people who impede access to polling places, buy votes, intimidate voters, and
61 purposefully distribute false information about voting procedures.

62 10. Reasonable efforts to ensure there are adequate, well-staffed polling locations serving all areas
63 where voting occurs and that these polling locations are accessible to all voting populations including
64 but not limited to college campuses, rural populations and Native American reservations.

65 11. Recognizing the will of the people of Puerto, as expressed in official referenda, to reject the current
66 territorial relationship to which the island has been subjected. We support the full admission of Puerto
67 Rico as a state of our union.

68 12. Barriers to fraudulent or deceptive third party voter registration.

69 13. Transparency in government and rigorous compliance with the Freedom of Information Act.

70 14. Extension of Section Four of the Voting Rights Act to cover all jurisdictions within the United States,
71 thus allowing Section Five to be fully used once again.

72 15. The creation of a federal holiday to allow an equal opportunity to vote.

73 16. Automatic voter registration of eligible voters and allowing opportunity to opt out.

74 We Oppose:

75 1. Voting impediments, voter intimidation, and voter fraud.

76 2. Any law that would require identification to vote or register to vote.

77 3. Any politically-motivated attempt to purge voter rolls.

78 4. Corruption, to include taking bribes, kickbacks, nepotism, or any other uses of public office for
79 personal gain.

80 5. The Supreme Court's *Citizen's United* ruling, and reject the idea corporations are living breathing
81 human beings and the idea that money is free speech.

82 **ECONOMIC POLICY**

83 **Trade**

84 We Believe:

85 Free and fair trade offers a course for sustainable growth throughout the global economy to the benefit
86 of the United States, our allies, and the impoverished nations of the world.

87 We Support:

88 1. Including rigorous labor and environmental standards in all trade agreements to improve the living
89 and working conditions throughout the world.

90 2. Investing in the creativity of American workers and businesses to maximize the competitiveness of the
91 United States in the global economy.

92 3. Retraining American workers who are displaced by trade liberalization so that they can quickly return
93 to the workforce.

94 We Oppose:

95 1. The abuse by multi-national corporations of worker's rights, labor policies, and the environment.

96 **Labor**

97 We Believe:

98 In expanding collective bargaining throughout our modern, service-based economy to maintain
99 economic flexibility and to build economic opportunity, while vigorously defending a century's worth of
100 hard-fought progress and protections won by the American worker united in purpose and organized in
101 action.

102 We Support:

103 1. The right of workers to organize unions without employer intimidation or interference, including a
104 ban on coerced "captive audience" meetings.

105 2. Pro-worker legislation such as the Employee Free Choice Act that strengthens the rights of workers in
106 the US.

107 3. Indexing the minimum wage to inflation.

108 4. Legislation designed to protect the employment and legal rights of corporate and governmental
109 whistle blowers, to ensure that those who expose malfeasance have an open and safe forum to do so.

110 5. Any effort to allow greater access to unemployment and worker's compensation benefits.

111 6. The expansion of federal employment programs for veterans, the homeless, the formerly incarcerated
112 and the disabled.

113 7. Efforts to eliminate gender inequalities in pay and benefits for equal work.

114 8. The vital role of the American Labor Movement in maintaining America's middle class.

115 9. Efforts to revitalize American manufacturing as a cornerstone of our economy and the creation of
116 middle class jobs.

117 10. OSHA and other federal efforts to secure safe workplaces for all Americans.

118 11. Broad application of Davis-Bacon worker protections to all federal projects, and little Davis-Bacon
119 prevailing wage requirements to state and local projects.

120 We Oppose:

121 1. Any effort to silence labor's voice through "paycheck protection" legislation.

122 2. Any effort to restrict the right of workers to organize through "right to work" legislation.

123 3. Any effort to restrict, diminish, or eliminate in way the rights of public sector employees to bargain
124 collectively.

125 **Social Security**

126 We Believe:

127 Social Security has been the most successful and visionary social program in American history. We are
128 proud to claim its legacy and its compact with the American people as our own, and we will fight to
129 ensure that Americans enjoy the benefits of this program for generations to come, defending it from all
130 efforts to weaken the social safety net and to render the system any less secure.

131 We Support:

132 1. A Social Security system that protects the funding, benefits, and long-term viability that Social
133 Security provides for all Americans.

134 2. The elimination of the income cap on the payroll tax, to ensure fiscal stability and maintain the
135 system's progressive character.

136 We Oppose:

137 1. The privatization of Social Security.

138 2. Any reduction of Social Security benefits that would break the trust and expectations of the American
139 worker.

140 3. Reducing benefits to beneficiaries during national economic distress.

141 **The Federal Budget**

142 We Believe:

143 Leadership requires responsible stewardship of public resources on behalf of our nation's future that
144 restrains growth in government spending while protecting the adequacy and sustainability of
145 government revenue. We believe that an individual's tax burden should be tied directly to his or her
146 ability to pay, progressive in character and in spirit with reasonable checks within the system to avoid
147 fraud and abuse.

148 We Support:

149 1. Continued and increased Federal investment in our country's aging infrastructure and in alternative
150 energy.

151 2. Refraining from the passage of tax cuts benefiting only the wealthy.

- 152 3. Enacting long-term budget plans that are designed to balance the Federal budget over the course of
153 the business cycle, offsetting deficits during economic slowdowns with surpluses during periods of
154 growth.
- 155 4. Allowing the Bush tax cuts to expire for individuals earning over \$250,000 per year.
- 156 5. A broad-based, progressive tax system that fully funds all of the functions of the Federal Government.
- 157 6. A restoration of the estate tax, which is vital both to restoring balance to the federal budget as well as
158 ensuring that wealth does not become concentrated in too few hands.
- 159 7. A Carbon Tax to provide the revenue necessary to fund research into alternative energy sources and
160 provide incentives for sustainable growth.
- 161 8. Transparent and accountable government budgeting.
- 162 9. Detailed disclosure of congressional office expenditures in the federal budget.
- 163 10. A closure of loopholes in corporate tax codes and off-shore tax havens, ensuring hidden profits made
164 by hedge funds and private equity managers are accounted for, requiring government contractors pay
165 their full taxes, and the creation of a more efficient and fair tax code.
- 166 11. Implementation of a federal financial transaction tax which would place a small fee on all
167 transactions occurring within a domestic financial market.

168 We Oppose:

- 169 1. Using off-budget spending and undisclosed earmarks to circumvent proper channels and to avoid
170 accountability and oversight.
- 171 2. The use of accounting gimmicks to conceal the true costs of policies and programs.

172 **Poverty**

173 We Believe:

174 Government is a valuable tool in addressing and ultimately eliminating the worst forms of economic
175 hardship in modern society. We believe government has an indispensable role in empowering
176 individuals with the tools to take responsibility for bettering themselves. Moreover, through investment
177 in education, community building, and targeted efforts to expand economic opportunities for children
178 from impoverished backgrounds, we believe government can be a powerful force in alleviating the
179 destructive cycle of poverty that traps so many in hopelessness and despair from too young an age.

180 We Support:

- 181 1. Increasing the minimum wage, and passage of federal, state, and local living wage legislation to help
182 Americans rise out of poverty.

- 183 2. Section 8 housing programs, which provide alternatives to traditional public housing projects.
- 184 3. Vocational training, financial education and adult education to provide opportunities for the
185 disadvantaged to better their lot in life.
- 186 4. The promotion and implementation of micro lending practices aimed at high poverty areas.
- 187 5. The recognition of housing as basic human right and a necessity for families and individuals to move
188 forward in life; therefore, we support housing subsidies based on need relative to the cost of living in
189 their community.
- 190 6. Food stamps, WIC and TANF which provides financial assistance to Americans who require it.
- 191 7. Welfare reform as long as this reform provides comprehensive job training, child care, and significant
192 federal support in the transition from welfare to work.

193 We Oppose:

- 194 1. Predatory lending practices, especially those that feed upon lower-and middle-income families.
- 195 2. Redlining which prevents financial mobility of low to moderate income communities.

196 **INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND NATIONAL SECURITY**

197 We Believe:

198 The U.S. foreign policy should promote liberty, democracy and opportunity throughout the world in a
199 truly collaborative fashion with our allies, shunning unilateralism and living up to our responsibility to
200 the international community as its last remaining superpower. We believe in the power of diplomacy as
201 the surest means of advancing our strategic goals and our national interests, while placing enormous
202 hope for a more peaceful global existence by leading and by working faithfully within such international
203 institutions as the United Nations.

204 We Support:

- 205 1. Supporting NGOs and IGOs sponsoring microloans to the developing world.
- 206 2. Efforts to achieve long-term peace in the Middle East by encouraging reconciliation efforts between
207 Israelis and Palestinians.
- 208 3. Policies that support U.S. trade relations with and the provision of aid to nations that uphold
209 democratic values.
- 210 4. Encouraging our trading partners to uphold safe and fair working conditions, worker's rights, and a
211 living wage.
- 212 5. Increased U.S. support for programs promoting the equal access to opportunities for women
213 throughout the world.

- 214 6. Increased international efforts to address the broad health, social, economic, and political effects of
215 all known and future pandemics, including making generic medicines available to underdeveloped
216 nations.
- 217 7. Giving underdeveloped nations the tools they need to confront the challenges faced by poverty,
218 hunger, starvation and disease.
- 219 8. A strong commitment to the concerns of human rights, labor, religious freedom, environmental, and
220 health issues in the negotiations and implementations of all international agreements.
- 221 9. Continued efforts of the United Nations and other inter-government organizations to further
222 diplomacy, peace and justice in the global community.
- 223 10. Restricting the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and securing poorly
224 guarded nuclear, chemical and biological materials.
- 225 11. Increasing soldier pay and veterans' benefits out of respect for the vital sacrifice that members of
226 the military willingly undertake on behalf of all Americans.
- 227 12. Strengthening our cooperation with allies to prevent terror attacks at home and abroad.
- 228 13. The right of a sovereign people to national self-determination.
- 229 14. The continued withdrawal of US forces from Iraq.
- 230 15. Expanding and improving diplomatic relations with Russia.
- 231 16. Engagement with China on matters of mutual interest, while maintaining pressure in such areas as
232 human rights, the environment, and Tibet.
- 233 17. The lifting of all sanctions and restrictions on and restoring full diplomatic relations with Cuba.
- 234 18. Enhancing our economic, political and social cooperation with established and emerging
235 democracies.
- 236 19. The strengthening of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Darfur to end the conflict that has taken
237 hundreds of thousands of lives.
- 238 20. Increased funding to resettle refugees that have cooperated with the US military.
- 239 21. Israel's right to exist as a Jewish Democratic state and an independent sovereign Palestinian state
240 with mutually agreed upon borders.
- 241 22. Unrestricted, universal access to contraceptives and information about family planning methods in
242 order to reduce the spread of sexually transmitted infections such as HIV/AIDS, improve worldwide
243 health, and raise the standard of quality of life.

244 23. A One China policy, the Taiwan Relations Act, and the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues that
245 is consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan.

246 24. Policies that, through global cooperation, aim to curb sea level rise.

247 25. The continued normalization of diplomatic relations with Cuba.

248 We oppose:

249 1. The efforts of rogue regimes to acquire weapons of mass destruction, and their proliferation in
250 general.

251 2. The suppression of peaceful protests and the undermining of popular will in Iran and all other nations
252 similarly situated.

253 3. The continued Chinese occupation of Tibet.

254 4. The allocation of money to support outdated and unnecessary weapons systems.

255 5. Continued violations of UN resolutions or any member of the UN.

256 **IMMIGRATION**

257 We Believe:

258 That the United States must continue to stand as a beacon of hope for those yearning for freedom and
259 opportunity around the world. We are proud of America's history and tradition as a nation of
260 immigrants and believe it essential to our vitality and character that we maintain our openness and our
261 welcoming spirit to those from every walk of life who come seeking the promise for which our country
262 stands.

263 Nevertheless, we believe secure borders and enforcement of labor laws are absolutely essential if the
264 United States is ever again to have a functional immigration system. Liberal immigration policies bring
265 benefits both economic and cultural, but we believe these benefits will not be enjoyed to their fullest
266 without immigration policies that are more reliable, fairer, and more secure than in their present form.

267 We Support:

268 1. Humanizing and dignifying immigration laws so that they reunite families and allow immigrants to
269 seek work, a better life for their families, and a commitment to the United States.

270 2. Immigration laws which are not discriminatory, including equal human rights for immigrants and an
271 earned path to citizenship.

272 3. Temporary legal status for undocumented higher education students through direct support of the
273 Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act.

274 4. The rights of undocumented immigrants to remain united with their families.

- 275 5. Increasing immigration quotas to bring them more in line with reality.
- 276 6. A path to citizenship through service in the United States military.
- 277 7. Common sense immigration reform that includes provisions for foreign guest workers and an
278 opportunity to bring the 11 million undocumented immigrants out of the shadows and into society.
- 279 8. The rights of individuals to report crimes without facing criminal retribution for undocumented status.
- 280 9. Any and all efforts of state and local officials to develop and create programs for immigrants who
281 currently live within their communities to achieve citizenship through local government-sponsored
282 programs that will help them meet the requirements to be a U.S. citizen with complete anonymity.

283 We Oppose:

- 284 1. Human Trafficking in all of its forms.
- 285 2. Immigration laws directed at penalizing children.
- 286 3. States and municipalities unconstitutionally enacting their own immigration policies.
- 287 4. Abuse and exploitation of undocumented workers.
- 288 5. The hiring of undocumented immigrants in order to avoid paying market wages and further burdening
289 taxpayers with the cost of health care.
- 290 6. Penalizing victims of human trafficking for unwilling participation in prostitution.

291 HOMELAND SECURITY

292 We Believe:

293 That the concept of homeland security extends beyond terrorism to include natural disasters,
294 maintaining and improving critical infrastructure, and citizen education. Our government must fulfill its
295 obligation to protect its citizens from foreign and domestic dangers while upholding the freedoms and
296 ideals on which this nation was founded and on which it still stands.

297 We Support:

- 298 1. Funding homeland security operations in states and localities in proportion to the risk that is faced
299 therein.
- 300 2. Policies that take affirmative steps to ensure the safety of America's public and infrastructure.
- 301 3. Raising the level and quality of inspections at all points of entry into the United States, including
302 commercial shipping ports.

303 4. Ensuring adequate funding of and preparation for evacuations of populous areas in the event of an
304 attack on the homeland or natural disaster.

305 5. Properly funding, training, and equipping first responders to deal with large scale emergencies.

306 6. Full funding of the Army Corps of Engineers levee building programs to protect our citizens from
307 natural disasters.

308 **LAW AND JUSTICE**

309 **Criminal Justice**

310 We Believe:

311 Laws are the foundation of an orderly society and that abiding by them is beneficial to all Americans and
312 essential to the functioning of a civil society. We also recognize that there are currently more people
313 incarcerated in the United States than in any other nation the world. We strive to create a society where
314 laws are followed, applied with consistency and equality, and with rehabilitation, not incarceration, as
315 the primary focus.

316 We Support:

317 1. Our safety and law enforcement professionals and recognize that their services are vital to a safe and
318 secure America.

319 2. Police forces that use the least intrusive methods of investigation necessary to uphold the law.

320 3. Increased training of police and law enforcement officials, especially regarding mental illnesses with
321 an emphasis of conflict de-escalation techniques and disabilities that affect communication.

322 4. The individual right of every law-abiding citizen to own and possess firearms, as established by the
323 Second Amendment and upheld by the Supreme Court.

324 5. Strict background checks prior to any firearm purchase, including purchases at gun shows and
325 mandatory waiting periods for all gun buyers.

326 6. Firearm safety training prior to the first firearm purchase.

327 7. Calling on the federal government to invest the necessary resources to accomplish instant background
328 checks.

329 8. The legalization, regulation, and taxation of marijuana, in a manner similar to that of tobacco or
330 alcohol.

331 9. The housing of juveniles convicted of criminal offenses separately from adults and the establishment
332 of juvenile justice commissions that ensure that juveniles are neither unfairly prosecuted nor fall victim
333 to corruption in the justice system.

- 334 10. Programs focusing on rehabilitation of juvenile offenders rather than mere incarceration.
- 335 11. Laws that insure that all incarceration facilities are safe and clean.
- 336 12. Treating enemy combatants held by the US Government in a manner consistent with the
337 international human rights standards.
- 338 13. Reforms in sentencing procedure that allow greater judicial flexibility regarding sentences,
339 alternative punishment, and community or victim redress, particularly for non-violent offenders.
- 340 14. The repeal of the portions of the Patriot Act that violate civil liberties and Fourth Amendment
341 protections.
- 342 15. Promoting interaction between communities and police forces so that communities understand the
343 operations of police and feel we are all equal and vital partners in homeland defense.
- 344 16. The abolishment of capital punishment.
- 345 17. Reasonable restrictions on firearm ownership including a renewal of the assault weapons ban, a ban
346 on high-capacity magazines, gun free zones in schools, colleges, and government buildings, and the right
347 of property owners to refuse entry to armed patrons.

348 We Oppose:

- 349 1. Any statute that criminalizes assisted suicide by a medical professional.
- 350 2. The use of secret evidence being used in connection with any criminal proceedings.
- 351 3. Police brutality and corruption, and we support programs that prevent and punish such actions.
- 352 4. The use of national security to justify the widespread violation of constitutional rights in the United
353 States and abroad.
- 354 5. The predatory nature of “Stand Your Ground” laws anywhere they are practiced and consider these
355 laws to be a gross violation of human rights.

356 **Civil Justice**

357 We Believe:

358 That all Americans should have the opportunity to achieve the American Dream. We recognize,
359 however, that systematic discrimination continues to plague our country.

360 We Support:

- 361 1. Local, state, and federal laws which promote justice for oppressed or disadvantaged people by
362 prohibiting discrimination, based on race, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, age, religion,
363 sexual orientation, ethnic background, national origin, or disability.

364 2. Affirmative action programs which enable institutions to address system discrimination and inequity.

365 3. The safety and protection of sex workers.

366 We Oppose:

367 1. Tort reform legislation that unduly burdens a citizen's right to redress in the judicial system.

368 2. The use and promotion of disparaging mascots, symbols, logos, or other imagery.

369 **Civil and Human Rights**

370 We Believe:

371 All Americans deserve equal rights and equal treatment under the law. We are a pluralistic society
372 where all people should be treated with respect and dignity.

373 We Support:

374 1. Upholding the religious freedoms set forth in the First Amendment.

375 2. Establishing a commission to study the residual effects of slavery on today's society and provide
376 tangible suggestions and solutions.

377 3. Passage of legislation that acknowledges the fundamental injustice of slavery and establishes a
378 commission to study slavery's effect on U.S. society and the residual effects of slavery.

379 4. Extension of official U.S. recognition of Native Hawaiian political rights similar to the status held by
380 Native American and Alaska Native groups.

381 5. Equal and compassionate treatment for those living with HIV/AIDS.

382 6. Full legal and social equality for LGBT Americans including support for efforts to establish civil
383 marriage equality for same sex and opposite sex couples who choose to marry and share fully and
384 equally in the rights, responsibilities and commitment of civil marriage.

385 7. Local, state and federal employment non-discrimination laws that outlaw bias in hiring and housing
386 on the basis of race, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, age, religion, sexual orientation,
387 ethnic background, national origin, or disability.

388 8. Policies that promote gender equality in the fields of science, mathematics, technology, government,
389 trade professions, and other fields in which women are under-represented.

390 9. Increased funding for assistive technology and interpreters.

391 10. Adopting legislation to create programs promoting the smooth transitioning of young persons with
392 disabilities to higher education and career opportunities according to their interests and goals.

- 393 11. Legislation to remedy the institutional bias in the Medicaid program affecting young people with
394 disabilities.
- 395 12. Increased support for programs and curricula that raise awareness about civil rights.
- 396 13. The enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- 397 14. The sovereign rights of Native American Nations including the rights of self-determination, freedom
398 of worship, to engage in commerce, and to provide for their citizens, without undue interference or
399 intervention from the United States Government, and the recognition and respect of all applicable
400 treaties made between the United States government and the various tribal nations.
- 401 15. The repatriation of cultural and sacred items back to Native American Tribes and lineal descendants.

402

403 We Oppose:

- 404 1. All efforts to align public policy around the tenets of any specific religion or to discriminate against
405 elements of our citizenry based on religious doctrine.
- 406 2. All efforts to undermine the separation of church and state as it is essential to defending religious
407 freedom for all Americans.
- 408 3. The use and promotion of disparaging mascots, symbols, logos, or other imagery.

409 **FAMILY**

410 We Believe:

411 Our society and government should treat all families equally, whether traditional or non-traditional, and
412 support them to build stronger communities.

413 We Support:

- 414 1. Quality childcare and preschool for every American child.
- 415 2. Adoption and foster parenting laws that do not discriminate based on the attributes of sexual
416 orientation, gender identity, or marital status.
- 417 3. Day care programs for federal employees, and encourage all employers to create such programs for
418 their employees.
- 419 4. Strict sentencing for convicted domestic violence offenders.
- 420 5. Parental involvement in children's education and development of life and social skills.
- 421 6. Creating a culture that values balancing family time with work.

- 422 7. The value of faith as a driving principle behind our nation's highest ideals such as kindness, family
423 values, grace, self-sacrifice, and community service.
- 424 8. Family values that also include moral principles that are guided by choices of fairness and tolerance.
- 425 9. Reform of the Family and Medical Leave act to include expanded length, paid maternal and paternal
426 leave, stronger job security, and coverage for same-sex and adoptive families.

427 We Oppose:

- 428 1. Any favor given in child custody cases when they are based upon a parent's/guardian's gender or
429 sexual orientation.

430 **HEALTH AND SOCIAL ISSUES**

431 We Believe:

432 That securing a health care system that values people before profits is vital to the general welfare of our
433 nation. We believe in universal access to affordable, quality health care, reflecting patient preferences
434 and sensitivities.

435 We Support:

- 436 1. An increased focus on preventative and clinical care.
- 437 2. An individual mandate for health insurance, with subsidies for those who have difficulty affording
438 insurance.
- 439 3. A government health plan to compete with private insurers and provide Americans with a low cost
440 option.
- 441 4. Medicare
- 442 5. Medicaid
- 443 6. The State Children's Health Insurance Program.
- 444 7. Continued funding for comprehensive scientific-based HIV/AIDS treatment, education, prevention,
445 and research.
- 446 8. Expansion of state and federally funded embryonic stem cell research.
- 447 9. Parity in coverage by health insurers, and efforts to de-stigmatize mental illness.
- 448 10. Embryonic stem cell research.

- 449 11. Proper funding by the local, state and federal government of the medical establishment, emergency
450 personnel- first responders, EMT's, firefighters, and police - in order to be able to respond to crisis
451 situations.
- 452 12. The recognition of drug addiction as a health issue, and treatment for drug offenders.
- 453 13. Funding for home health, hospice care, and Medicaid buy-in options.
- 454 14. Policies that foster the creation and protection of programs to assist small businesses in the
455 provision of health insurance.
- 456 15. Funding for research focused on finding the cause of the autism epidemic.
- 457 16. Regulation of pharmaceutical benefit managers.
- 458 17. Comprehensive, science-based public education focused on family planning - a vital component of
459 universal health care - which includes factual information on biology, birth control, sexually transmitted
460 diseases, abortion, reproductive choices, and abstinence education for all people, regardless of sexual
461 orientation or socio-economic status.
- 462 18. The use of secure digital medical records, established with the assistance of government funding to
463 increase the efficiency, reduce costs, and lead to better collaboration between health professionals and
464 a higher quality of care.
- 465 19. Access to a full range of options, including education, contraception and abortion when necessary,
466 regardless of socioeconomic status.
- 467 20. Access for all women to emergency contraception without a prescription. We further believe that all
468 contraceptive methods should be included in medical coverage with no co-pay required. We believe that
469 reforms are necessary to protect the individual while ensuring that skilled medical professionals may
470 continue to practice and maintain affordable malpractice insurance.
- 471 21. The Constitutional right of a woman to safe, legal and accessible abortion. We believe that decisions
472 regarding reproduction, contraception, and abortion are private decisions between a woman and her
473 doctor.
- 474 22. The creation of a single payer healthcare system that provides for adequately funded, universal,
475 affordable, competitive, quality care for all Americans.
- 476 23. Reform of Native American health services which improves quality and access to health for all Native
477 Americans.
- 478 24. We support the participation of people with disabilities in healthcare reform, especially in the need
479 for accessible diagnostic equipment. Additionally, we support cultural competency in medical and
480 nursing schools.
- 481 25. The aid and benefits given to veterans and current members of the military who suffer from PTSD.

- 482 26. Treatment for drug offenders and the support of clean needle exchange programs.
- 483 27. We support the repeal of the blood donation ban on LGBT individuals.
- 484 28. The full expansion of Medicaid as outlined in the Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act.
- 485 29. We support the legalization of medical cannabis.

486 We Oppose:

- 487 1. Discrimination against any persons with HIV/AIDS for health care coverage, or medical care, especially
488 in the use of waiting lists for the Ryan White safety-net program.
- 489 2. The application of the "global gag rule" to funds allocated for HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment
490 programs in at-risk countries.
- 491 3. Any attempts to weaken provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act regarding
492 rescission of insurance, discrimination due to preexisting conditions, or lowering the age under which a
493 dependent may remain under a parent's insurance plan.
- 494 4. The practice of pharmacists to denying provision of a prescription written by a doctor.
- 495 5. Abstinence only sex education which excludes information on the effectiveness of contraception and
496 condoms.
- 497 6. Laws that require unnecessary medical procedures, including ultrasounds, exams, and/or counseling,
498 as a precursor to obtaining legal medical procedures.
- 499 7. The passage of laws that would restrict the ability of women to access healthcare services, either
500 through structural, regulatory, or financial means.

501 **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

502 We Believe:

503 Scientific progress has fundamentally changed and will continue to improve the quality of human life.
504 We advocate the continued responsible use and advancement of technology as a force for good in the
505 world.

506 We Support:

- 507 1. A manned space program that will take us beyond the Earth's orbit.
- 508 2. Continued governmental support of space exploration, the use of space travel experience to improve
509 many aspects of society, and efforts to protect and respect the environment of space.
- 510 3. Increased federal funding in areas of cutting edge research including nanotechnology, alternative
511 energy, genetics and biotechnology, and aerospace.

- 512 4. The extension of the right of privacy and free speech to encompass all activities in the digital world.
- 513 5. The preservation of the right to fair use of intellectual property, while maintaining appropriate
514 protection for copyright holders and content owners.
- 515 6. The extension of free speech protections to the open release of modern encryption and security
516 advances, to enable continued research in technology security.
- 517 7. Limitations on patent rights where restrictions on new technology put lives in danger, with special
518 emphasis on pharmaceutical products.
- 519 8. The principles of net neutrality that all Internet traffic be handled and prioritized on an equal basis.
- 520 9. The expansion of broadband technology into every American home.10
- 521 10. The development of increased efficiency and reduction of harmful emissions from fossil fuel-burning
522 industries.
- 523 11. The end of the use of lead in aircraft fuels.
- 524 12. Collaborative efforts of the Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Railroad Administration and the
525 Federal Highway Administration to develop and deploy a full scale, cooperative transportation plan for
526 the 21st century, which incorporates one site airport-rail stations and regulates commercial airlines to
527 best promote efficient and effective service to all metropolitan areas.
- 528 13. The review and modernization of the patent process.
- 529 We Oppose:
- 530 1. Actions that would contribute to an escalating international space arms race.
- 531 2. Companies and Corporations using Intellectual Properties researched by the United States to
532 participate in anti-competitive practices in their Industries.

533 **ENVIRONMENT**

534 We Believe:

535 That safeguarding the environment is a fundamental human responsibility, and that protecting the
536 integrity of the world we live in is critical to the health, safety, and richness of life of present and future
537 generations of Americans and inhabitants of all nations. We further believe that increased
538 environmental protections can be achieved in ways that create jobs and benefit all levels of the
539 economy.

540 We Support:

541 1. Policies that promote energy independence and aggressively protect our natural resources, including
542 our air, water, soil, forests, biodiversity, wetlands and open spaces.

- 543 2. Policies designed to promote environmentally responsible business practices, such as tax incentives
544 for "green" businesses, as well as aggressive enforcement of existing environmental statutes.
- 545 3. Reform of environmental statutes to make penalties for violation more costly than the expense of
546 compliance.
- 547 4. Efforts to promote environmental justice, including increased federal funding of Superfund programs
548 and revitalization of brownfields.
- 549 5. Incentives to encourage environmentally sustainable farming practices including water conservation,
550 methane capture, and land use that balances food and energy needs.
- 551 6. Policies that encourage domestic carbon sequestration through the establishment of strong carbon
552 caps, detailed standards for verification of sequestration, and economic policies that reduce
553 atmospheric carbon at a net economic benefit to the country. Sequestration efforts should be
554 monitored and should provide for long-term storage.
- 555 7. The development of policies and procedures to provide the highest standards of safety and security of
556 our nation's nuclear and chemical facilities.
- 557 8. The personal responsibility of executives in all industries to certify that their companies are in
558 compliance with all environmental laws, and personal legal and financial consequences for those
559 executives who fail to uphold this responsibility.
- 560 9. The further inclusion of scientists and highly trained or educated individuals in the decision making
561 process of all government agencies and committees charged with making environmental policy
562 decisions; all such decisions should be based on scientifically sound, peer-reviewed research.
- 563 10. Policies that reward corporations that pursue environmentally sound business models and hold
564 accountable corporations whose activities have an adverse impact on the environment; because
565 protecting the environment is an investment in our collective future, environmental concerns must
566 become as integral to the considerations of corporate America as fiscal matters currently are.
- 567 11. The U.S. government in taking the lead in an international effort to clean up the Great Pacific
568 Garbage Patch.
- 569 12. Funding and support of low-cost, high-impact conservation techniques, such as recycling, white
570 roofs, and the adoption of energy-efficient devices.
- 571 13. We support full funding for the EPA and other environmental watchdog organizations.
- 572 14. Local agriculture and U.S. grown and manufactured goods because of their ability to lower
573 greenhouse gas and other hazardous emissions.
- 574 15. Policies to address, mitigate, and reverse sea level rise in low-lying coastal areas

575 We Oppose:

576 1. Policies that allow for the transportation of nuclear waste and highly toxic chemicals through large
577 population centers.

578 2. Federal policies that pre-empt environmental protection measures taken at the state and local level
579 that exceed standards set by those policies.

580 **NATURAL RESOURCES**

581 We Believe:

582 Our national parks, seacoasts, coastlines, and waterways are among our greatest assets. The
583 government has a responsibility to maintain and to protect these national treasures, and to encourage
584 long-term sustainability.

585 We Support:

586 1. Reinstatement of the "road-less rule" in national forests and other public lands.

587 2. Aggressive efforts to protect water resources and ecosystems of the nation, as well as efforts to
588 conserve water resources and restore waterways damaged by overuse, pollution, or development.

589 3. The management of public lands according to the principles of multiple use and responsible
590 stewardship, including preservation of open spaces, in recognition of the fact that our public lands are
591 vital to the social and economic lives of all Americans.

592 4. The preservation and restoration of coastal marshland to mitigate the destructive potential of
593 hurricanes, such as Hurricane Katrina.

594 5. The federal government taking a leading role in clean-up and restorative efforts to improve the health
595 of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

596 6. Preservation of coastal areas and waterways from oil and resource extraction.

597 We Oppose:

598 1. Any initiative that irreparably damages our nation's natural habitat, including lifting moratoria on
599 offshore drilling.

600 2. Any policies that systematically subject public lands to use by destructive industries and interests to
601 the exclusion of other Americans.

602 3. Any attempt to weaken the Endangered Species Act through legislation or lax enforcement of existing
603 regulations. Americans have expressed a desire to preserve biodiversity by protecting the health and
604 welfare of endangered species; we therefore call for ample funding and aggressive enforcement of all
605 related statutes.

606 4. We oppose all oil exploration and mineral extraction in areas with fragile ecosystems, particularly the
607 Alaska National Wildlife Refuge.

608 5. Any action by government or private enterprise to repeal, relax or bypass safety standards and
609 regulations in the underground and surface mining industry.

610 **ENERGY**

611 We Believe:

612 That our future lies with clean energy, which will reduce pollution, diversify our national energy sources,
613 promote national security, create jobs and investment, and provide Americans with huge cost savings.
614 Thus, we urge a strong national commitment to a clean energy future.

615 We Support:

616 1. The consensus of the scientific community that climate change is real, partly caused by human
617 activities, and is affecting the world today.

618 2. The ratification of the Kyoto protocol and active participation by the United States in future climate
619 related protocols, which are important steps towards global reduction of greenhouse gas pollution, in
620 recognition of the fact that environmental decisions have transnational effects.

621 3. Aggressive efforts to reduce energy use through increased efficiency throughout all sectors of the
622 economy.

623 4. Efforts to reduce and eliminate greenhouse gases, including aggressive promotion of and investment
624 in public transportation and alternative energy sources such as solar, wind, biomass, natural gas, fuel
625 cells, and tidal energy. Such new energy sources benefit not only the environment, but also American
626 farmers, workers, employers, educators, families, and industries for which such new technologies
627 represent untapped markets.

628 5. Efforts to reduce mercury pollution.

629 6. The elimination of the "grandfather" provisions of the Clean Air Act that exempt certain legacy coal-
630 fired power plants from complying with current emissions standards.

631 7. The use of emissions-free nuclear power based on current technology to supplement clean,
632 renewable energy sources in order to reduce carbon emissions. We urge vigilance to ensure the safety
633 of existing nuclear plants, storage and disposal sites, and other facilities.

634 8. The long-term efforts to conserve energy and reduce pollution by complementing our clogged
635 interstate highway system with efficient regional and national high-speed rail and mass transit systems.

636 9. Efforts to conserve energy spent extracting, transporting, and delivering water.

- 637 10. Job-training programs that educate or retrain American workers to create the green-collar workforce
638 necessary for a clean energy future.
- 639 11. Legislation that encourages the purchase of energy and fuel-efficient vehicles and equipment.
- 640 12. Increasing CAFÉ standards to 45 mpg by 2020.
- 641 13. Adopting a federal zero-emissions mandate requiring that 20% of all passenger vehicles sold by 2020
642 will be in compliance.
- 643 14. The development and deployment of smart grid technology.
- 644 15. The development of marketable vehicles and the technology that will allow advances in that area.
- 645 16. Policies that say natural gas drilling should not take place within 2,500 feet of a primary public
646 source of water.
- 647 17. An investigation into the safety and costs of hydraulic fracturing and a moratorium on hydraulic
648 fracturing as it may impact drinking water reservoirs or fragile ecosystems.

649 We Oppose:

- 650 1. The Keystone XL pipeline’s construction in the United States of America.

651 **RURAL ISSUES**

652 We Believe:

653 That as the party of opportunity for all Americans, we must work to build strong rural communities that
654 are vibrant places to live, work and play.

655 We Support:

- 656 1. Efforts to encourage the development of small businesses that are positioned to serve the needs of
657 rural communities.
- 658 2. Measures to protect the unique character of rural communities, including smart growth policies that
659 preserve farmland and open space while expanding economic opportunity for community residents.
- 660 3. Measures to encourage community involvement in the development process to ensure it benefits the
661 community in the best way possible.
- 662 4. The development of confidential medical services, including mental health, and urgent care in rural
663 areas so needed medical care is available as quickly as possible and to make reproductive medical care
664 as well as drug and alcohol treatment in establishing clinics.
- 665 5. The right of every law-abiding citizen to own guns for hunting and sport.

666 6. Expanding broadband Internet access that does not interfere with licensed users of the radio
667 spectrum, to bridge the digital divide, attracting young professionals to raise families, and business
668 investment to create more economic opportunity.

669 7. Efforts to encourage the development of arts and culture programs in rural communities.

670 8. Expand public transportation opportunities to rural communities.

671 9. Increase funding for advance warning systems for natural disasters.

672 10. Increase access to VA facilities inclusive of mental health in rural areas.

673 11. Educational tools for all students in rural communities.

674 **URBAN ISSUES**

675 We Believe:

676 Urban areas and communities are economic, cultural, and social epicenters which are vital to our
677 country's wellbeing. Urban centers have the highest population density and they contain the highest
678 percentage of poverty. These areas are rich in history and diverse, and we support their continued
679 preservation.

680 We Support:

681 1. Downtown and neighborhood revitalization efforts through public and private partnerships, bringing
682 community activists, business leaders, and government officials together to rebuild and reinvest in
683 urban communities.

684 2. Funding and implementation of public transportation systems to reduce congestion and improve air
685 quality.

686 3. Smart growth policies to promote urban renewal while keeping racial and ethnic concerns in mind
687 and attempting to preserve the character of a community.

688 4. The continued development and improved quality of government sponsored low-income housing.

689 5. The government sponsorship of urban mental health and substance abuse clinics to support urban
690 residents in under-served communities.

691 6. More vigorous enforcement of the Fair Housing Act to prevent discriminatory practices.

692 7. The use of inclusionary zoning to ensure that urban neighborhoods reflect the full socioeconomic
693 diversity of their cities.

694 8. Government policy that promotes the use of inclusive design principles in housing projects receiving
695 federal funds, since the Americans with Disabilities Act has not sufficiently addressed the lack of
696 accessible housing for persons with disabilities.

- 697 9. Legislation that addresses the disparate economic challenges of urban dwellers such as insurance
698 redlining, predatory lending, and abusive subprime lending.
- 699 10. Funding programs and education which reduce public school drop-out and illiteracy rates in urban
700 centers.
- 701 11. Ensuring the availability of quality of health care and healthcare facilities in urban centers.
- 702 12. Active employment programs from local, state, and federal governments that help low and
703 moderate income, unemployed and underemployed Americans in our urban areas to find long-term and
704 sustainable work at a living wage.
- 705 13. Efforts to decriminalize and eliminate homelessness.
- 706 14. Policies that eliminate law enforcement brutality and racial profiling.
- 707 15. Cities in maintaining sidewalks that are safe and accessible for everyone.
- 708 16. Efforts to promote healthy eating in urban areas including adequate food resources.
- 709 17. Affordable housing policies that make this vital resource available to all age groups and family sizes.

710 We Oppose:

- 711 1. The use of eminent domain to take private property unless such taking is for traditionally public use
712 such as the building of public facilities or roads.

713 **EDUCATION**

714 We Believe:

715 High quality education is fundamental to a vigilant democracy and a strong economy. Further, public
716 schools bring together families of diverse experience, ability, and backgrounds for the common purpose
717 of learning. Public education should be the ultimate equalizer. As Democrats it is our top priority to
718 mobilize all communities to eliminate the socio-economic achievement gap apparent in America today.

719 We Support:

- 720 1. The encouragement of new and innovative approaches to address educational challenges and needs.
- 721 2. Mechanisms that help students, parents, educators, and the community to have a significant voice in
722 the education process.
- 723 3. Financial policy that ensures consistent education funding regardless of economic cycles.
- 724 4. Adequately funding public education on the state and federal level.
- 725 5. Fully funding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act on the national level.

- 726 6. Increased funding for need-based grants, and changes to federal financial aid programs to ensure that
727 taxpayers' investments are used efficiently to maximize benefits for all students. Financial obstacles
728 should not interfere with any American's right to higher education.
- 729 7. Comprehensive, fact-based, age appropriate sex education that includes abstinence, contraceptives,
730 HIV/AIDS and other STI prevention programs.
- 731 8. Enabling every child to attend pre-K, full day Kindergarten, and Head Start programs.
- 732 9. Bilingual and multi-cultural education programs for everyone starting at an early age.
- 733 10. A fair wage and benefits for teachers and annual cost of living increases for all levels of education.
- 734 11. Smaller class sizes, which in turn improve the quality of education.
- 735 12. Increasing the high school drop-out age to 18.
- 736 13. A comprehensive financial literacy education, including responsible use of credit, basic knowledge of
737 investments, and the importance of savings.
- 738 14. A renewed effort to improve schools and quality of education
- 739 15. Efforts to keep rural schools open and locally autonomous.
- 740 16. Drastic reforms to No Child Left Behind that encourage high standards for students and teachers
741 without relying on destructive punitive measures that further undermine our public schools and their
742 mission.
- 743 17. The provision and adequate funding for the fine and performing arts, physical education, health and
744 sports sciences, and vocational and career and technical education programs in the curriculum of public
745 schools.
- 746 18. In-state tuition to undocumented students who graduated from a state's high school and filed an
747 admission application to that state's post-secondary institution.
- 748 19. Expanding English as a Second Language (ESL) programs in areas with immigrant populations and
749 non-English speaking persons.
- 750 20. Policies that expand the community college system.
- 751 21. Mainstreaming of students with disabilities whenever possible.
- 752 22. School health clinics that serve the basic needs of students including the distribution of and advice
753 on methods of contraception. We further support voluntary counseling on different issues concerning
754 sexuality.
- 755 23. Profiting from loans offered to students through programs underwritten by the federal government
756 as morally wrong and reprehensible.

757 We Oppose:

- 758 1. Any funding or voucher program that would withdraw funding from public schools and redirect it to
759 private and/or parochial institutions.
- 760 2. The imposition of unfunded mandates on our public schools by state and federal government.
- 761 3. The use of standardized testing as the primary basis for funding decisions and as a limiting
762 qualification for promotion within and graduation from the public school system.
- 763 4. Primary and secondary school policies that weaken curriculum promoting cultural diversity and
764 awareness.
- 765 5. Exempting public schools, including charter schools, from their obligation to provide meals and
766 transportation to students from low-income families.
- 767 6. The permitting of guns on the campuses of all public and private educational institutions, with the
768 exception of law-enforcement.
- 769 7. Profiting from loans offered to students through programs underwritten by the federal government
770 as morally wrong and reprehensible.

771 **AGRICULTURE**

772 We Believe:

773 Agriculture is a vital part of the lives of all Americans and directly impacts the health and security of the
774 nation. It is a fundamental piece of the United States economy and an important cultural asset.

775 We Support:

- 776 1. A Farm Bill that provides a well-funded safety net for rural families, preserves family farms, and
777 provides for those who need it most.
- 778 2. A realignment of farm subsidies to support small, medium, and organic farms.
- 779 3. Protecting family farms and their ability to make a living off the land and successfully compete on a
780 fair playing field with large agribusiness corporations.
- 781 4. Providing resources to farmers in the struggle against the effects of climate change.

782 We Oppose:

- 783 1. The prosecution and criminalization of farmers whose crops have been contaminated by GMO
784 products as patent infringers.