
Benton County Democratic Central Committee

2016 Platform

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1 **01 – Preamble**

2
3 The Democratic Party is committed to honoring the rights, worth, and liberty of each individual as defined in
4 the United States (U.S.) Constitution and Bill of Rights. This commitment is a driving principle throughout
5 this document.

6
7 We believe that all citizens should be active participants in the governing process.

8
9 Our vision of human rights may be summed up in President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “Four Freedoms”:
10 freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, freedom from fear, and freedom from want. More specifically, we
11 agree that true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence. In his State of
12 the Union Speech in 1944, President Roosevelt proposed an “economic bill of rights” to include the following:

- 13 • Employment, with a living wage
14 • Food, clothing, and leisure
15 • Farmers' rights to a fair income
16 • Freedom from unfair competition and monopolies
17 • Decent housing
18 • Medical care
19 • Social Security
20 • Education

21
22 The Benton County Democratic Party will continue to promote and support traditional Democratic social
23 goals and policies, including a livable minimum wage, environmental protections, free and independent
24 information media, affordable childcare, public education, tax fairness, speedy justice, fair and honest
25 elections, protection of civil and property rights, decent and affordable housing, universal affordable health
26 care, and fiscally sound social support programs (i.e., Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid).

27 We will strive to bring younger persons and minority citizens into the Democratic Party at all levels.

28 We will work to alleviate ongoing assaults on rights of privacy and basic civil liberties, the shrinking of the
29 value of wages and pensions, skyrocketing medical and pharmaceutical prices, corporate corruption,
30 compromised elections, and partisan legislative and judicial actions that weaken rights defined in the
31 Constitution and Bill of Rights.

32

1 **02 – Agriculture**

2
3 Agricultural production is determined by the interdependence of the natural environment and the economy,
4 as well as by the culture and values of society. In the Columbia River Basin, abundant sunshine, rich soils, and
5 access to irrigation combine to produce eight of the top ten agricultural products in Washington State. We
6 honor and sustain the Columbia Basin’s rich agricultural heritage by being good stewards of the natural
7 environment and by adapting our agricultural products and systems to the changing climate and
8 concomitant changes in ecosystems.

9
10 **We believe:**

11
12 “Agriculture” includes cultivation, growing, harvesting and/or production of any horticultural, aquacultural,
13 floricultural, or vinicultural commodity; growing and harvesting forest products; raising livestock; and
14 farming or harvesting fish and/or shellfish. It also includes production of equipment and systems, as well as
15 the performance of operations incident to agriculture.

16
17 Farming as “a way of life” is an essential element of Western culture and must be preserved and nurtured.

18
19 Climate change has profound effects on agricultural production and has the potential to negatively impact
20 the way of life for rural communities.

21
22 Farming and fishing should be practiced in a manner sustainable over the long term with emphasis on
23 conservation of both surface and ground water, protection of topsoil, tillage methods and crops appropriate
24 for the soils and climate, and diversity of crops. Primary goals should include a sustainable balance of food
25 crops, fuel crops, and cash crops.

26
27 In-stream flow rules, as determined by the Washington State Department of Ecology, serve to protect fish,
28 wildlife, water quality, and the natural environment.

29
30 **We support:**

31
32 Protection of productive farm land, range land, wet lands, and watersheds from residential, commercial, and
33 industrial development.

34
35 Encouraging policies that promote conservation of water in agricultural practice, such as drip irrigation,
36 adaptive irrigation scheduling, rotational grazing, planting of cover crops, and conservation tillage.

37
38 Enforcement of antitrust laws that apply to agribusiness.

39
40 Ratification of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (i.e., the
41 “International Seed Treaty”) to preserve food-crop diversity.

42
43 Policies consistent with the Washington State Growth Management Act that preserve into the future
44 agricultural land and natural resources critical to the viability of future food, forest, and marine production.

45
46 A guest worker program to provide legal workers for agriculture, ensuring a reliable labor source, while
47 extending minimum wage laws and legal and environmental protections to the workforce and employers.

48
49 Reduction of antibiotic use in livestock production to avoid development of bacterial immunities to
50 antibiotics and resultant degradation of the health of both humans and animals.

1 Review of and updates to farm subsidy programs to ensure they benefit family-size farms and family-scale
2 agriculture at the same levels (as a minimum) as industrial-scale agriculture.

3
4 Robust funding to provide mandatory inspections of food-production facilities by the Food and Drug
5 Administration, including systematic testing of food animals for infectious disease, with full funding and
6 staffing of the food safety system.

7
8 An agricultural policy that emphasizes nutrition and health through education, school lunches, and the
9 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) with preference given to local agricultural resources.

10
11 Robust investments in agricultural colleges and research, which are essential to achieve these goals. We
12 support the Benton/Franklin Cooperative Extension in its efforts to educate the agricultural community and
13 the public.

14
15 Regulation of genetically engineered (GM) seeds and foods with the intent of protecting farmers from
16 deleterious effects of “outcrossing,” or introducing unrelated genetic material into a breeding line. Goals
17 should include protection of agricultural seed stocks and protection of the environment from inadvertent or
18 unintended consequences of farming with GM organisms.

19
20 “Buy local” food systems that help local farmers, reduce middleman and transportation costs, and reduce the
21 carbon footprint of agriculture.

22
23
24 **We oppose:**

25
26 Land bank and crop subsidy abuse by large corporate farms.

27
28 Selling off scarce prime farmland for quick profits, including urban development projects.

29
30 “Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations,” as defined by the EPA, including raising animals in cages and
31 feeding hormones and antibiotics to farm animals to promote faster growth.

32
33 Industrial agriculture or “factory farming” practices that degrade food safety, water quality, or soil nutrients
34 or that are unsustainable or inhumane to animals.

35
36 Use of edible products, other than waste, for the manufacture of bio-fuels.

03 – Human Rights and Civil Rights

“No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” – U.S. Constitution, 14th Amendment

We believe:

Every American, regardless of race, religion, age, physical or mental ability, or sexual preference, has a right to quality health care and a safe, secure, healthy environment.

Every American has a right to temporary financial and other assistance in times of need and access to public services that assist in ensuring their developmental growth and well-being.

Gun violence is a public health issue.

Health care for all individuals is a human right, not a privilege, nor a commodity to be bought and sold.

Private and personal information of individuals must be protected from warrantless intrusion by the government or others.

Torture by the U.S. government of citizens, prisoners of war, or any human being is illegal and immoral, and those responsible for committing such acts must be prosecuted.

Discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, insurance, licensing, or education based on race, religion, age, sex, marital status, military service, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, economic status, disability, size, political affiliation or national origin is both illegal and immoral. Those who face discrimination must be afforded the legal means and economic opportunities to overcome such injustice.

Male, female, and transgender persons have the right to sovereignty over their own bodies.

It is a person's right to choose whether or not to continue said person's pregnancy; this is a fundamental human right and reproductive freedom protected by the U.S. Constitution.

Marriage, as a legal union of consenting adults, should not be restricted by sexual orientation or gender identity.

The constitutional right of Americans under the Second Amendment to own guns must be balanced with personal responsibility and appropriate government regulation.

In the right of all citizens of the United States to vote and furthermore, in the duty and obligation of state and local governments to encourage, aid, and ensure that right under the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

We support:

Restoration of the Voting Rights Act, restoration of voting rights to citizens with past criminal convictions who have paid their debt to society, full voting rights in Washington D.C., and modernization of voter registration and of voting itself.

1 Full funding of prevention and intervention programs, including food, medical care, shelter, and education,
2 for children and youth who are neglected, delinquent, or in at-risk families.

3
4 Creation of a health care system that promotes public health and the general welfare through laws, policies,
5 and financing guided by human rights principles.

6
7 The Fourth Amendment of the Constitution, which prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures and sets
8 out requirements for search warrants based on probable cause, as determined by a neutral judge or
9 magistrate.

10
11 Strengthening and improving federal statutes to encourage state and local agencies to work together to
12 ensure the overall success and well-being of children in the child welfare system.

13
14 Respecting the right of all adults, including seniors and individuals with disabilities, to direct their own lives
15 in housing, education, and all other life choices to the extent of their abilities.

16
17 The end of human trafficking for sex or other forms of involuntary servitude.

18
19 Legal aid and due process available for all.

20
21 Abolition of the death penalty.

22
23 Honoring the rich diversity of society and further promoting efforts to reflect that diversity in the
24 Democratic Party.

25
26 Adding enforcement provisions to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended.

27
28 Strong legislation supporting, adequate funding of, and increased access to drug treatment and mental
29 health programs.

30
31 Support and funding for educational programs designed to reduce harassment, intimidation, domestic or
32 sexual violence, and suicide.

33
34 A nationwide system of universal background checks, strengthening and modernizing the National Instant
35 Criminal Background Check System (NICS).

36
37 Funding for research on gun violence and sensible policies concerned with reducing gun violence, including
38 support for initiatives such as the University of Washington's Harborview Injury Prevention and Research
39 Center.

40
41 **We oppose:**

42
43 The use of torture, or so-called "enhanced interrogation," as well as "extraordinary rendition," under any
44 circumstances by our government or at the behest of the U.S. by other parties or foreign governments.

45
46 Training of foreign military and police in the use of torture and terrorism by U.S. government institutions,
47 such as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security and Cooperation (formerly School of the Americas).

48
49 Provision by the U.S. of military aid to oppressive, authoritarian nations that do not support the human
50 rights of all their citizens, including women and minorities.

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Slavery in all forms, including hiring out prisoners for private gain to third parties.

Operation of jails and prisons by private contractors.

The practice of accruing interest on unpaid fines by indigent defendants. The failure of the homeless or mentally ill to pay fines should not be considered willful noncompliance. Uniform standards to determine ability to pay must be created.

The use of military tribunals to circumvent the constitutional rights of U.S. citizens.

Indiscriminate governmental and corporate spying on citizens and legal residents, including systematic, intentional breaching of personal Internet privacy by public or private organizations for any reason other than those permitted by law and subject to the protections thereof.

04 – Corporate Power

“The great corporations which we have grown to speak of rather loosely as trusts are the creatures of the State, and the State not only has the right to control them wherever need of such control is shown... The immediate necessity in dealing with trusts is to place them under the real, not the nominal, control of some sovereign to which, as its creatures, the trusts owe allegiance, and in whose courts the sovereign's orders may be enforced. In my opinion, this sovereign must be the National Government.” – Theodore Roosevelt , Dec. 3, 1901

“It might also be added that corporations have no consciences, no beliefs, no feelings, no thoughts, no desires. Corporations help structure and facilitate the activities of human beings, to be sure, and their ‘personhood’ often serves as a useful legal fiction. But they are not themselves members of ‘We the People’ by whom and for whom our Constitution was established.” – Justice John Paul Stevens, 2010 dissent to Citizens United vs. the FEC

We believe:

Corporations are not people and should be limited to owning property, entering into contracts, and filing lawsuits as plaintiff or defendant.

Promotion of corporate structures owned only by corporate employees (e.g., Employee Stock Ownership Plan Companies, or ESOPs) is conducive to a more stable capitalistic business environment where ownership of the means of production becomes widespread among citizens, rather than increasingly concentrated in a few owners.

The U.S. government should hold natural resources, such as land, water, minerals and timber, and the airwaves, in trust for all its citizens. Such resources should not be sold to corporations or individuals for short-term or speculative profits.

Ownership of U.S. Corporations by non-U.S. Citizens can lead to management actions that do not reflect U.S. values or Constitutional Law. Regulatory oversight of such ownership should be vigilant to prevent influence of foreign corporate ownership, especially in critical infrastructure or security related corporate actions.

Superpac contributions from U.S. and international corporations provide a channel through which non-U.S. stockholders can influence elections of U.S. and state legislative and executive candidates. All corporate contributions must be fully visible to regulators and the public to prevent such influences.

We support:

An expeditious constitutional amendment or legislative action to reverse the Supreme Court’s Citizens United vs. the FEC decision, and McCutcheon vs. the FEC decisions.

Reinstating and updating the Glass-Steagall Act, separating investment banks from commercial banks. A corporation or bank that is “too big to fail” is too big to exist. Consumer confidence will be restored only through strong regulations, transparent accounting practices, and regulated risk. Measures to amend or create laws prohibiting corporate inversions, deferment of taxes via offshore subsidiaries, artificially inflating or accelerating foreign tax credits, and other methods of tax evasion. Corporations should pay fair and effective tax rates.

1 Effective policing of corporate responsibility and prosecution of malefactors. We call for expeditious
2 criminal prosecution of those who defraud investors, taxpayers, and the government.

3
4 Severe consequences for corporations that contaminate the environment. After toxic spills and other
5 environmental disasters, communities must receive assistance for recovery and reimbursement for
6 harm. If subsidiaries declare bankruptcy, parent corporations must be held accountable.

7
8 Sufficient funding of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) in order to effectively
9 regulate financial products, consumer banking, and credit cards and to enforce full disclosure of
10 financial instruments.

11
12 Transparency and regulation of derivatives markets for the good of commerce and the country.
13 Multiple non-interested parties should not be allowed to buy insurance on the same asset or event
14 for the purpose of speculation, because this destabilizes the insurance markets. Naked credit default
15 swaps should be outlawed by reinstating the 1908 Anti-Bucket Shop Law.

16
17 Repeal of subsidies or tax reductions to U.S.-based firms that outsource jobs overseas. Multinational
18 companies must pay their fair share of U.S. taxes and may not use foreign tax havens. Their status as
19 U.S. corporations should be forfeited by these actions. We recommend revision of Controlled Foreign
20 Corporation laws to restrict these tax havens.

21
22 Reinstating the windfalls profits tax.

23
24 Federal legislation to reduce tax breaks and/or impose heavy taxes on exorbitant salaries and
25 benefits of Wall Street fund managers and corporate officers at the expense of tax payers, workers,
26 shareholders, and consumers.

27
28 Strong restrictions on corporate spending for political campaigns.

29
30 Transaction taxes on derivatives, subprime debt securitizations and high frequency/high speed
31 transactions. This will encourage long-term investing and provide revenue to retire national debt and
32 invest in infrastructure and post-secondary education.

33
34 **We oppose:**

35
36 Attempts to weaken the powers of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to allow banks, lending
37 institutions, and other financial entities to pursue fraudulent practices.

38
39 Extension of citizens' rights, such as the 1st Amendment right of free speech, to corporations and
40 acceptance of the notion that money is equivalent to speech.

41
42 The Citizens United vs. the FEC ruling, which has dramatically inflated the cost of elections and
43 promoted corruption in politics.

44
45 Foreign ownership and management of U.S. ports, highways, bridges, pipelines, waterworks, mines
46 and other infrastructure assets, which are crucial to national safety and security.

47
48 Use of corporate religious policies to impose restrictions on individuals, including employees and
49 customers, with respect to health care and reproductive rights.

05 – Economic Justice and Development

"It is impossible for the United States to seal its economy from the rest of the world, nor should it want to. But elected leaders can make sure that the competition among countries is fair and enact policies that mitigate inequality while giving workers who are hurt by trade the help they need." – NYT Editorial Board

We support:

The right of all workers to bargain collectively in their struggle for economic justice.

Increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2020 with continued increases to match inflation, as determined by the Consumer Price Index.

International trade policies that require U.S. companies to pay their overseas workers a living wage, consistent with their countries' economies, as well as to uphold modern health and safety standards. Likewise, we support domestic labor policies that result in domestic workers receiving a living wage and the protection of modern health and safety standards.

Using federal funds in partnership with the private sector to stimulate the economy and create jobs through direct support and investment in local and regional infrastructure projects.

Using federal and state funds for research and development of next-generation infrastructure. The private sector has neither the resources nor the incentives to promote and develop next-generation infrastructure improvements without government assistance.

Enforcement of laws requiring financial institutions that issue credit cards to citizens of the State of Washington to comply with Washington State usury laws and consumer protection legislation. We support laws and regulations restricting unfair penalties for consumers. We support regulations that would minimize predatory lending practices in all areas of lending, especially in real estate and so-called "payday loans."

State budgets that are balanced over several years so as to accommodate fluctuating business cycles and better ensure stable funding for state programs, including education and transportation.

Strong anti-trust laws as essential for protecting consumers, promoting entrepreneurship, and maintaining economic stability. The disproportionate power often accumulated by monopolies, trusts, and cartels is antithetical to democracy.

An income tax structure that is more progressive than the current one, including more tax brackets with higher rates for higher incomes. Extremely high individual wealth results in an imbalance of power that undermines democratic decision making. Increased income for individuals in the lowest economic categories builds the middle class by generating greater demand for goods and services; this, in turn, stimulates the economy, creating more jobs and economic opportunity.

Expanding Social Security by lifting the cap on taxable income above \$250,000 in order to keep the program solvent for future generations.

1 **06 – Education**

2
3 *“Education: a debt due from present to future generations.” – George Peabody*

4
5 As stated in the Washington State Constitution, *“It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample*
6 *provision for the education of all children residing within its borders, without distinction or preference*
7 *on account of race, color, caste, or sex.”*

8
9
10 **We support:**

11
12 Educational goals that all students in Washington State, regardless of race, ethnicity, income, or
13 gender, attain high academic standards and graduate prepared to succeed in college, job training,
14 and/or careers.

15
16 Full funding of public education to provide up-to-date materials, safe and un-crowded facilities, and
17 optimum student-teacher ratios.

18
19 Continued federal and state funding of Head Start, the Early Childhood Education and Assistance
20 Program (ECEAP), and Special Education programs.

21
22 State funding for ongoing maintenance of public schools and infrastructure, and for purchase of
23 equipment and technology in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the
24 Washington State Constitution.

25
26 Increased state and federal funding to ensure affordable access to higher education, including
27 vocational training, for Washington State students.

28
29 Up-to-date, rigorous, and comprehensive curricula and textbooks that are historically and
30 scientifically accurate.

31
32 Higher pay and career-enhancement opportunities for adjunct professors in Washington State.

33
34 Support for teachers’ rights to unionize and to engage in collective bargaining, thereby ensuring due
35 process and development of quality educational standards.

36
37 Affirming the value of humanities education in public schools, including literature, history, languages,
38 philosophy, and visual and performing arts.

39
40
41 **We oppose:**

42
43 The use of testing alone to measure the effectiveness of any given school.

44
45 Initiatives to destroy teachers’ unions, especially collective bargaining and due process rights.

46
47 Requirements to teach creationism, intelligent design, and mysticism in science classes in public
48 schools.

07 – Energy and the Environment

“When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.” – John Muir

“It’s all of our responsibility to leave this planet in better shape for the future generations than we found it.” – Mike Huckabee

We believe:

We must strive to be responsible stewards of the environment, our communities, and our planet.

The price of fossil energy must reflect its true social costs in terms of health, environmental impacts, and quality of life.

Human activities, primarily the use of fossil fuels, are driving climate change in the modern era, and this change poses a factually proven threat to human beings and the global environment. An urgent, substantial, and sustained global effort is required to reduce man-made greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the risk posed by this threat. The U.S. is a top greenhouse gas emitter and must be a leader in this effort.

The humanity that unites us all requires global-scale trans-boundary efforts and cooperation to ensure a livable planet for all members of the human family, now and in the future.

We must rapidly accelerate the pace of innovation to meet the challenge of limiting the global average temperature increase to two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Washington State is well positioned to lead in the development of renewable energy sources and in the development of innovative means of conserving and making more efficient the employment of energy from a variety of sources.

Environmental policies must promote biodiversity, ecosystem and watershed protection, and protection of wild salmon and other endangered species.

While we shift away from burning fossil fuels, advanced nuclear energy technology is currently America’s most promising emission-free means of generating the added base load electricity needed to balance our energy grids and sustain an industrial-scale economy.

We support:

A national energy policy providing realistic and comprehensive long-term planning for declining oil and gas reserves, decreasing reliance on coal, and increasing reliance on renewable and carbon-free energy sources, including nuclear energy.

Expanded research to develop and implement safe, clean, next-generation alternative energy solutions and to encourage resource and energy conservation.

Development and implementation of smart-grid technologies to allow energy usage from multiple sources, as well as more efficient measurement and management of power usage by consumers and

1 suppliers.

2
3 Expansion of the power-distribution grids to promote better use of small, distributed sources, as well
4 as expanded grid reach and interconnections.

5
6 Expansion of commercial nuclear power with newer reactor designs and strong environmental and
7 non-proliferation protections. This effort should include a viable, technologically robust spent-fuel
8 management plan.

9
10 Conformance with the Nuclear Waste Policy Act to provide long-term management and storage for
11 defense nuclear wastes and commercial spent-fuel wastes.

12
13 Creative pricing mechanisms and incentives for consumers and businesses to encourage use of
14 renewable and environmentally responsible energy sources, as well as conservation of energy.

15
16 The implementation of President Obama’s Clean Power Plan, which is an historic and important step
17 in reducing carbon pollution from power plants and takes real action against climate change.

18
19 Honoring the Tri-Party Agreement and other efforts of Washington State to ensure that Hanford Site
20 cleanup is completed, that all defense-related waste material is safely and securely stored, and that
21 Columbia River water quality continues to be protected from contamination from the Hanford Site.

22
23 Planning and policies to prepare for water shortages in the Pacific Northwest, including the Yakima
24 Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan.

25
26 Protection of critical environmental and environmentally sensitive areas, including wilderness areas,
27 old growth forests, wildlife habitats, wetlands, streams, riparian areas, the Columbia River, Puget
28 Sound, coastlines, and oceans, through vigilant monitoring and planned growth management.

29
30 Strong regulatory management of both onshore and offshore oil drilling.

31
32 Fracking regulations that require full compliance with the U.S. Air Quality and Water Quality Acts and
33 require full disclosure of chemical constituents in fracking fluids.

34

35

36 **We oppose:**

37

38 Unlimited and unregulated increases in the number of coal and oil trains in Washington State and
39 establishment of coal ports on Puget Sound and the Columbia River for short-term commercial profit.

40

41 Reduction of vital environmental monitoring, such as volcano sensors and weather observation
42 satellites, in the name of fiscal austerity.

43

44 Removal of Snake River dams, which are integral parts of Washington State’s “green” electricity
45 production, agricultural and flood-control systems, and recreational opportunities.

46

47 Policies, laws, and market incentives that allow corporations to damage the environment without
48 paying for remediation and clean-up.

49

50 Transfer of federal land ownership, including national parks and wildlife areas, to the states.

1 **08 – Foreign Policy**

2
3 **We believe:**

4
5 The U.S. and the American people are best served when American foreign policy promotes freedom,
6 democracy, and human rights around the world.

7
8 While protecting the American people, the U.S. can and should be true to American values and ideals
9 in all its engagements with the world. As the pre-eminent global political, military, and economic
10 actor, the U.S. should strive to ensure that its foreign policy achieves the right balance between active
11 engagement and restraint.

12
13 Bilateral diplomacy, multilateral engagement, foreign assistance and economic aid, economic
14 sanctions, peace-keeping, trade, and outreach are among the preferred tools for promulgating U.S.
15 foreign policy at its best. The United States is not the world’s police force but must preserve its ability
16 to act with authority when necessary.

17
18 Terrorism is a criminal matter rather than a military matter. Military action should be invoked only
19 as a last resort with rogue states and with non-state actors that practice terrorism as policy.

20
21 The U.S. can preserve its sovereignty and still work with the United Nations (UN) to secure just and
22 peaceful solutions to global problems and conflicts between nations.

23
24 The Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL), located in Benton County, is a unique and
25 important resource for supporting U.S. foreign policy efforts, especially in areas of global significance
26 such as climate science, nuclear safeguards and nonproliferation, chemistry, data analytics, and a
27 wide range of other science and technology areas. PNNL is a focus for international scientific
28 collaboration and an important resource for local business innovation and development.

29
30 That the federal government’s “collaboration with military and industrial leaders,” though necessary,
31 is vulnerable to abuse of power, as General Dwight D. Eisenhower said.

32
33 **We support:**

34
35 Continuing participation of the U.S. in the United Nations (UN) as a means of dealing with global
36 concerns. We urge that the U.S. continue to support the UN by paying its share of UN expenses.

37
38 The historic 2015 accord between the U.S. and five other countries with Iran to limit Iran’s nuclear
39 weapons capability in return for lifting international oil and financial sanctions. We support working
40 with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and helping to fund its efforts to monitor Iran’s
41 weapons capabilities and activities.

42
43 The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We expect the U.S. government and military to abide
44 by the requirements of the Geneva Convention. We support U.S. Senate ratification of the Rome
45 Statute of the International Criminal Court and of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, both
46 of which the U.S. has already signed. In addition, we support signing and ratification of the UN
47 Convention of the Law of the Sea, the Ottawa Convention on Land Mines, international agreements
48 related to climate change (including “COP21”), and other international conventions and treaties
49 related to solving global problems.

50

1 Reducing the number of permanent U.S. military bases worldwide consistent with actual defense
2 needs of our country and its allies.

3
4 Diplomatic and military efforts to protect the nation from military and terrorist attacks, but without
5 suppressing basic human rights or allowing war to preempt diplomacy or peace and justice options.

6
7 Humanitarian aid to needy populations, including refugees, without regard to political positions of
8 their governments.

9
10 Fair trade agreements that include provisions to protect the environment, encourage sustainable
11 agriculture and manufacturing, and protect the democratic and economic rights of both workers and
12 indigenous peoples. We encourage the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to fund
13 development projects in a manner compatible with local conditions and needs, not first world
14 corporate development agendas.

15
16 Reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank of the United States to help keep U.S. companies
17 competitive in the global economy.

18
19 Fully funding Benton County and Washington State offices that promote regional and international
20 trade, especially since Washington State is among the top five states in exports.

21
22 Normalizing relations with Cuba, including lifting U.S. trade and travel restrictions to Cuba.

23
24 Application of U.S. law to all U. S. territories. We consider all U. S. territories, including the Mariana
25 Islands and Guantanamo Bay, to be subject to U. S. labor law, and laws against illegal detention.

26
27
28 **We oppose:**

29
30 Military and economic imperialism as a policy of the U.S. government. Recognizing that the purpose
31 of the military is national defense, we oppose any preemptive war with any other sovereign nation.

32
33 Military aid to repressive regimes, regardless of past diplomatic relations with the U.S. , or military
34 action to support corporate interests.

35
36 Unilateralist approaches to foreign policy, which would be counter to our understanding that nations
37 often have to cooperate with each other.

38
39 Trade in all products of slave labor and child labor, including products made under duress by
40 inmates in American prisons for commercial gain to third parties. We consider such products to be
41 contraband, and their sale should be illegal in the United States.

42
43 Trade in exotic animals or animal parts, such as rhinoceros horns, especially when the animals in
44 question are threatened or endangered.

45
46 Trade treaties that supersede U.S. law and have deleterious effects on the U.S. economy, American
47 workers, American companies, the environment, and/or human rights.

1 **09 – Government and Political Reform**
2

3 **We support:**

4 Publicly financed elections with a transparent system of campaign financing that amplifies small
5 donations, similar to provisions of the proposed Fair Elections Now Act.

6 Complete transparency regarding funding of campaigns, including through disclosure of
7 contributions to outside spending groups.

8 Elimination of Super Political Action Committees (Super-Pacs).

9 Budgets balanced over several years to avoid tying government spending and revenue to the boom-
10 and-bust cycle of business.

11 Reinforcement of the wall of separation between church and State. Taxpayer funding for religious
12 institutions or "faith-based" initiatives should not be condoned. Full freedom for all religions and
13 personal belief systems must be protected. All citizens' rights to adopt their own belief systems
14 must be protected from government interference.

15 Requirements that U. S. officials, including the president, vice-president, senators, congressional
16 representatives, and cabinet members, be required to wait at least five years after leaving office
17 before starting or joining a lobbying firm or engaging in lobbying activities. Lobbyists and lobbying
18 firms must be prohibited from making campaign contributions, either on behalf of their clients or
19 themselves.

20
21 Restoration of the right of habeas corpus for citizens and non-citizens completely and without
22 compromise. Practices involving unlawful detention or indefinite imprisonment must be
23 eliminated.

24
25 Expunging records of conviction for simple possession of marijuana.

26
27 Passage of the United States Postal Service Pension Obligation Recalculation and Restoration Act of
28 2011 to restore financial viability of the U.S. Postal Service.

29
30 Upgrading the Post Office to meet modern conditions, including internet mail, and restoring postal
31 savings or banking.

32
33 Equal, free air time provided to political candidates by broadcast media in return for the federal
34 government's providing greater access to bandwidth.

35
36 Reforming the Washington State initiative process to guide state legislators in crafting laws rather
37 than usurping their legislative role.

38
39 Adequate funding of all regulatory agencies, which should be fully staffed and accountable for
40 meeting their various responsibilities.

1 **We oppose:**

2

3 Privatization, outsourcing, or off-shoring of any governmental public service.

4

5 Wholesale destruction of the United States Post Office (USPO) by requiring overfunding of the USPO
6 pension system.

1 **10 – Health Care**
2

3 We applaud the success of the Affordable Care Act in making health care accessible, portable, and
4 affordable for all citizens regardless of age, employment status, or pre-existing conditions.

5
6 **We support:**

7 Preserving and improving the Medicare program by
8

- 9 • keeping it adequately funded and fiscally sound
10 • paying health care providers enough to allow them to afford to take Medicare patients
11 • making Medicare more efficient and reducing Medicare fraud, however uncommon
12 • working with pharmacies to ensure they are adequately compensated and will not refuse
13 Medicare prescriptions.
14

15 Washington State and the federal government’s using bulk purchasing power to directly negotiate
16 with pharmaceutical companies for reduced drug prices, particularly for seniors, people with
17 disabilities, and the underinsured.

18 Full funding of Medicaid to protect our most vulnerable populations.

19 A single-payer option in Washington State and nationally.

20 Robust funding for preventive care provided by public health programs as an investment in the
21 general welfare, as well as future cost savings.

22 A strong public health program capable of dealing with pandemics and acts of bioterrorism.

23 Efforts to find a fair balance between malpractice tort reform and preservation of patients' rights
24 for compensation for acts of medical malpractice or negligence.

25 Full access to voluntary family planning, counseling, and information that discusses all options for
26 reproductive choice.

27 Full funding of veterans' health care and hospitalization, with an increased focus on mental health.

28 Requiring only a simple majority to pass emergency medical- and fire-service operating levies.

29 A national medical information system using modern information technology to manage and share
30 health records while honoring the privacy rights of patients.

31 A system of compensation for medical services based on the overall health outcomes of the served
32 population rather than fee-for-service. The most cost-effective health care practice is to prevent as
33 many as possible from getting sick in the first place, rather than paying for expensive procedures
34 and medications to care for them later.

35

1 We support federal and state programs to remove contaminants, such as lead, from public drinking
2 water systems, buildings, and homes.

3 **We oppose:**

4 Any efforts to privatize publically funded health-care systems, including Medicare and Medicaid.

5 Any efforts to impose religious policy to preclude access to healthcare and reproductive care by any
6 individual, organization, or institution.

11 – Human Services

“We cannot hold a torch to light another’s path without brightening our own.” – Ben Sweetland

*“I propose to take our countrymen’s claims of American exceptionalism seriously, which is to say I propose subjecting our country to an exceptional moral standard.” – Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me**

We believe:

That helping those in need through a broad array of human services is a fundamental responsibility of government and a moral responsibility of society.

Human Services must be applied compassionately, cost-effectively, and equitably. Provision of human services must never be predicated on ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexual preference, or any other discriminatory category but only on our common humanity.

Increasing poverty and the trend toward income and wealth disparity demand recognition as national emergencies.

We support:

Continued funding for social-safety programs, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP), housing assistance, Medicaid, and Pell Grants and student loans.

Equitable measures to ensure the long-term viability of Social Security and Medicare.

Increased funding and staffing for the overburdened U.S. public defenders system.

Paid family and medical leave on a par with other developed nations.

Ordinances such as Seattle’s Paid Sick and Safe Time.

Sufficient funding of mental health and chemical dependency services, as well as a transitional plan for those being released from state institutions.

Fully funding and expanding the Veterans Administration (VA) so that every veteran gets the care that he or she has earned and deserves, including:

- improving the processing of veterans’ claims for compensation
- expanding the VA’s Caregivers Program
- expanding mental health service for veterans
- making comprehensive dental care available at the VA to all veterans
- allowing VA doctors to give direct referrals to veterans for non-VA medical services, if local and timely services are not available through the VA, thereby removing the third-party approval requirement.

1 Enhanced services for aging and disabled persons, including:
2

- 3 • increased support for family caregivers
- 4 • better coordination of federal- and state-funded programs for seniors and people with
5 disabilities
- 6 • creation of a single point of access for seniors and people with disabilities and their
7 caregivers, regardless of Medicaid eligibility
- 8 • greater assistance to aging adults who wish to stay in their own homes
- 9 • a continuum of coordinated and integrated disability and long-term care resources
- 10 • improved oversight of elder care.

11
12 Reinstatement of postal savings services to provide depositors who do not have access to banks a
13 safe, convenient method of saving money.

14 Continued funding for the Benton-Franklin Head Start Program.

15
16 Non-governmental organizations in Benton County, staffed overwhelmingly by volunteers (such as
17 Second Harvest, Habitat for Humanity, Youth Suicide Prevention Program, and many others) that
18 serve the less fortunate, the disabled, the elderly, those with special needs, and others for whom
19 "human services" can be a helping hand up, or even a life-line.
20

21
22 **We oppose:**

23 Privatizing Social Security.

24
25 Taxpayer-funded social services that are conditional on faith-based requirements.

26
27 Equating the acceptance of SNAP benefits (food stamps), welfare, housing vouchers, or
28 unemployment insurance with a moral failure on the part of recipients.

1 **12 – Immigration**

2
3 **We believe:**

4
5 An orderly, controlled border and an immigration system designed to meet economic and social
6 needs are important pillars of a healthy and robust economy.

7
8 Given that most Americans or their ancestors immigrated to the U.S., we should welcome those who
9 are willing to be good citizens, learn English, and obey the laws.

10
11 **We support:**

12
13 Comprehensive immigration reform that protects the integrity of our borders while recognizing the
14 basic human rights of immigrants.

15
16 Ensuring due process in all proceedings, as well as clear pathways to citizenship or other legal
17 status.

18
19 Allowing undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children and having attained the age of
20 majority to apply for U.S. citizenship in their state of residence without being required to travel to
21 their parents’ country of origin.

22
23 Ending discrimination in wages and working conditions for immigrant workers and providing
24 access to safe and adequate housing, safe working conditions, medical care, and educational
25 opportunities at levels consistent with U.S. citizens.

26
27 Reintroduction and passage of the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM)
28 Act, to allow children of undocumented immigrants temporary residency so they can pursue higher
29 education and earn permanent residency.

30
31 Securing U.S. borders to eliminate violent and inhumane acts associated with illegal border
32 crossings, the drug trade, terrorism, and human trafficking.

33
34 Consistent with appropriate safety and security concerns, streamlining procedures for granting
35 asylum to those who are fleeing from war zones, genocide, and political oppression, as well as to
36 environmental refugees.

37
38 Appropriate entry of workers under the H-1B (“work visa”) program, provided no Americans can
39 be found to do the work. Workers with H-1B visas should be paid at the same rates as American
40 workers.

41
42
43 **We oppose:**

44
45 Use of state or local police for enforcement work that should be performed by federal immigration
46 authorities.

47
48 Efforts to deputize, commission, finance, or otherwise encourage vigilante militia groups to engage
49 in border-enforcement activities.

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- 1
- 2 Automatic detention and/or deportation of asylum-seekers without due process.
- 3
- 4 Legislative attempts to establish English as the sole official language of the U.S.

1 **13 – Labor**

2
3 *“Every advance in this half-century--Social Security, civil rights, Medicare, aid to education, one after*
4 *another--came with the support and leadership of American Labor.” - Jimmy Carter*

5
6 *“It is not only highly desirable but necessary that there should be legislation which shall carefully*
7 *shield the interests of wage-workers, and which shall discriminate in favor of the honest and humane*
8 *employer by removing the disadvantage under which he stands when compared with unscrupulous*
9 *competitors who have no conscience and will do right only under fear of punishment.” – Theodore*
10 *Roosevelt*

11
12
13 **We believe:**

14
15 All workers should be paid a living wage and provided affordable health care and a secure
16 retirement. We define a “living wage” as the amount necessary for a person working forty hours a
17 week, with no additional income, to afford decent housing, food, utilities, transportation, and health
18 care.

19
20 The minimum wage should be indexed to inflation.

21
22 Farm workers are entitled to adequate housing and sanitation, as well as an adequate number and
23 quality of inspections to ensure that their conditions meet occupational health and safety
24 standards.

25
26 Appropriate federal agencies, such as the Food and Drug Administration, the Occupational Safety
27 and Health Administration, and the Mine Safety and Health Administration, should take necessary
28 steps to guarantee safe and sanitary conditions for workers.

29
30 Workers’ rights to organize, join unions, enjoy due process, and bargain collectively, without any
31 interference, intimidation, or threats from employers or the government, shall not be abridged or
32 denied. We oppose so-called "right-to-work" laws as unconstitutional. We support "Card Check" as
33 a legitimate method for unionizing.

34
35 All trade agreements must include domestic labor agreements and international fair trade
36 agreements, as well as minimum health, occupational, and environmental standards, and require
37 that all workers worldwide receive a fair and livable wage consistent with their local economies.

38
39
40 **We support:**

41
42 Vigorous application of the Davis-Bacon Act as the criteria for wages paid on all federally funded
43 contracts.

44
45 Child labor standards limiting the hours youths are allowed to work during the school year.
46 Education must remain the highest priority for young adults.

47
48 Laws entitling workers to receive unemployment insurance benefits when employers use unfair or
49 illegal labor practices and lockouts during labor disputes.

1 Laws prohibiting employers from unilaterally redefining workers as “independent contractors,”
2 rendering them ineligible for benefits and other worker protections.

3
4 Implementation and enforcement of protective ergonomic standards through the Washington
5 Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA), which sets safety standards for the workplace.

6
7 Government policies that minimize outsourcing of jobs and product procurement.

8
9 Establishment and enforcement of healthy workplace laws, including and especially anti-bullying
10 and anti-harassment laws.

11
12 Enforcement of laws that protect pensions.

13
14 Enforcement of the principle of equal pay for equal work.

15
16 Consistent and even-handed enforcement of Washington State labor and industry (L&I) laws and
17 regulations, including and especially those which protect workers.

18
19 Use of Washington State's Department of Labor and Industry to oversee worker-compensation
20 claims at the Hanford Site. Hanford workers should be granted full access to their own medical
21 records. Government and private employers should recover and make available to all workers
22 medical and industrial hygiene records so that they can be paid just compensation for any injuries
23 or illnesses incurred during or as a result of their employment.

24
25
26 **We oppose:**

27
28 Allowing medical claims for Hanford workers to be processed outside the state of Washington.

29
30 Any effort to restructure state and federal law related to overtime payment without extensive
31 involvement of and input from workers.

32
33 Outsourcing of jobs to foreign countries.
34
35

1 **14 – Law and Justice**

2
3 *“You can only protect your liberties in this world by protecting the other man’s freedom. You can only*
4 *be free if I am free.” - Clarence Darrow*
5

6
7 **We believe:**

8
9 Terrorism is a criminal act that should be prosecuted through the criminal justice system. There is
10 no need for judicial processes outside the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights.

11
12 The right of habeas corpus, or protection from unlawful imprisonment, is a constitutionally
13 protected right and should not be suspended, as was done under the auspices of the “Patriot Act.”

14
15 The use of lethal force by law enforcers is not justified for non-violent or property crimes.

16
17 Laws should be enforced impartially, regardless of gender, race, class, or creed.

18
19 Spying on citizens by the government without a warrant is a violation of the 4th Amendment, which
20 protects against unlawful search and seizure, and should be terminated immediately.

21
22 Gun violence can only be effectively addressed by a national background check system that
23 precludes the “leakage” of guns acquired in one state into another.

24
25 **We support:**

26 Alternatives to incarceration within the criminal justice system at both the pre-conviction stage
27 (e. g., drug or mental health courts) and the post-conviction stage (e. g., community programs).

28
29 Research, legislation, and enforcement measures to acknowledge and redress the current racial
30 disparity between persons of color in prison and their proportion in the state population.

31
32 Rescinding completely the “3 Strikes” law in Washington State.

33
34 Investigation and prosecution of illegal actions of law enforcers, elected officials, and corporate
35 officers no matter how high or low their office; they must be held accountable to the citizens.

36
37 Repeal of the mandatory sentencing laws for drug offenses and non-violent crimes.

38
39 Legislative action to repeal the “Patriot Act.”

40
41 Criminal penalties for child endangerment due to unsafe storage of firearms.

42
43 Weapons-free zones in educational establishment.

44
45 **We oppose:**

46
47 “Stand your ground” laws, which encourage a “shoot first” mentality.

1 **15 – Media Reform**

2 *“We are determined to move forward with what we believe is essential reporting in the public interest*
3 *and with a commitment to the ideal that a truly free and independent press is a vital component of any*
4 *healthy democratic society. [...] We believe the prime value of journalism is that it imposes*
5 *transparency, and thus accountability, on those who wield the greatest governmental and corporate*
6 *power.” - Glenn Greenwald, Laura Poitras and Jeremy Scahill (10 February 2014)*

7
8
9 **We believe:**

10 Democracy relies upon an informed citizenry.

11
12 A free press is essential and valuable for democracy, for governance, and for human development.

13
14 The public airways and the internet must serve all Americans and must not be controlled by a few
15 corporations.

16
17 According to Ben Bagdikian’s book *The New Media Monopoly*, six corporations now control 90% of
18 the U.S. mass media. This results in the narrowing of information, under-serving of marginalized
19 populations, and de facto censorship when news stories conflict with corporate interests.

20
21
22 **We support:**

23 Efforts by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to promote local ownership and
24 diversity of viewpoints and reduce monopolization of media outlets.

25
26 Ample funding for public broadcasting to promote independence and discourage reliance on
27 corporate sponsorships.

28
29 Support for Internet neutrality laws and policies, so that a few media companies will not have
30 undue control over Internet search results and Internet content.

31
32 Reinstatement of station ownership caps, which were repealed in 1996, to limit the number of
33 television stations and new outlets one media conglomerate may own and operate.

34
35 The FCC should enforce existing statutes that require disclosure of the “true identity” of sponsors of
36 political advertising.

37
38 Efforts to bring the U.S. up to world standards by providing affordable, high-quality Internet access
39 for all in every region of the country.

40
41
42 **We oppose:**

43 Prosecution of legitimate “whistle blowers.”
44

- 1 Media monopolies that have the potential to suppress or deny diversity of opinion and
2 representation.
- 3
- 4 False claims of “national security” to suppress investigative journalism.
- 5
- 6 Wholesale tracking of Internet usage by government or corporations for exploitive purposes or for
7 espionage on citizens without warrants.
- 8

1 **16 – Military**

2
3 **We believe:**

4
5 The effectiveness of America’s military depends on how prepared it is to respond to the broad
6 spectrum of evolving threats it faces now and in the future, including outright aggression,
7 terrorism, humanitarian crises, and cyber warfare.

8
9 In keeping our military the most effective, best educated, best trained, best equipped, and most
10 respected group of military professionals in the world

11
12 Continued enforcement of the Geneva Convention must be honored in the treatment of all prisoners
13 of war. Torture is against our way of life and traditions, and its use is never acceptable.

14
15 Only the U.S. Congress has the authority to declare war. Congress should not abdicate its
16 constitutional duty to the Executive Branch.

17
18 In the benefits of a national draft, to be exercised as needed in time of war, not only to staff the
19 army and navy, but also in terms of its social benefits, such as supporting social cohesion and the
20 duties of citizenship

21
22
23 **We support:**

24 Empowering military women to serve combat roles on the front line.

25 Military members declaring themselves conscientious objectors being given due process and
26 allowed alternative non-military forms of service to our country.

27
28 Providing equal GI Bill benefits for all service men and women with no difference for National
29 Guard versus regular services.

30
31 Full funding of all veterans programs and benefits meant to rehabilitate and care for our veterans.
32 Improvement of Veterans access to health care and the retraining of disabled veterans is essential.

33
34
35 **We oppose:**

36 Privatization of traditional military functions, a practice that degrades morale, provides windfall
37 profits to contractors, and creates national security concerns.

38 Any consideration of closing the Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial Veterans Administration
39 Medical Center in Walla Walla, Washington.

1 **17 – Transportation**

2
3 We believe that an efficient, well-planned, multimodal transportation system promotes a healthy
4 economy, environment, and community. Washington State needs to continue to build a 21st
5 Century transportation system to maintain the state’s leading role in global trade.

6
7
8 **We support:**

9
10 More public input and oversight into major transportation public works.

11
12 Public funding, as needed to, make travel as safe and efficient as possible for all modes of
13 transportation, including pedestrian and cycling lanes whenever feasible.

14
15 Expanded funding for transportation infrastructure maintenance.

16
17 Accessible transportation for all, including safe, affordable, and efficient bus and rail services for
18 persons with disabilities.

19
20 Development of alternative energy sources for transportation.

21
22 Measures to reduce pollution and dependence on fossil fuels, including increased fuel efficiency
23 standards for all vehicles.

24
25 Land use planning that works toward the goal of decreasing the need for individuals to drive.

26
27 Increased use of rail for shipment of agricultural products and other goods, as well as a high-speed
28 rail system linking major cities.

29 Improved regulatory requirements to ensure safer transport by train of hazardous materials, such
30 as oil and coal.

31 Up-to-date, complete, and unambiguous highway signage throughout Washington State.

1 **18 – Indian Tribes and Treaties**

2
3 American Indian tribal governments make up a part of our national identity and community. Local,
4 state, and federal governments should respect the decisions of the Native American nations and
5 tribal governments, affirm their rights derived from treaties and state compacts, and oppose
6 attempts to diminish their sovereignty and cultures. We continue to honor and support such
7 treaties and tribal agreements.

8
9
10 **We support:**

11
12 Recognition of Native American tribal governments as sovereign, self-determining, self-governing,
13 and separate governments.

14
15 Continued efforts to maintain and restore salmon runs and other food sources associated with
16 traditional habitats and resources.

17
18 Preservation and protection of sites of historic, cultural, and religious significance.

19
20 Policies to improve the social, economic, and health status of Native American peoples and tribes.

21
22 Education of the American public about the inherent, legal, and treaty-based rights of Native
23 American peoples and tribes.

24
25 Policies that encourage respectful and civil relations between Native American tribes and local
26 communities, the state, and the nation.