
Benton County Democratic Central Committee

2014 Platform

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01 – Preamble

No part of our Democratic heritage of beliefs and accomplishments is cherished more than our belief in the rights, worth, and liberty of each individual. We embrace these core values and human rights. We believe it is incumbent upon all citizens to be active participants in their government.

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

- Employment, with a living wage
- Food, clothing and leisure
- Farmers' rights to a fair income
- Freedom from unfair competition and monopolies
- Decent housing
- Medical care
- Social security
- Education

To promote these ends, the Benton County Democratic Party will continue to foster traditional Democratic social goals and policies including: a sound, vibrant and sustainable economy, environmental protections, free and independent information media, affordable childcare, public education, tax fairness, speedy justice, clean elections, protection of civil and property rights, decent and affordable housing, universal affordable health care with fiscally sound Medicaid and Medicare programs, and a fiscally sound Social Security system.

Young persons both native and immigrant have always been the source of our national greatness. We welcome young people to participate in the Democratic Party at all levels and to help lead us to be a greater society. Our commitment to all minorities’ equal rights and protection under the law will not be compromised.

We deplore the undermining of our privacy and our most basic civil liberties, the shrinking of our wages and pensions, skyrocketing medical and pharmaceutical prices, unabated pollution of our air and water, corporate corruption, compromised elections, and over-reaching and intrusive government, which are denigrating our human rights and damaging all our citizens. Our position on these issues must be clear and steadfast.

To Democrats, the good of the community is viewed as harmonious with the freedom and well-being of the individual. The role of government is to protect and promote the civil liberties, rights, property, health, and well-being of all citizens through appropriate legislation, education, taxation, regulation, and management of public property for the common good.

02 – Agriculture

The success of Washington farmers should not be taken for granted. Washington-produced food from both land and sea enriches the diet of people all over the nation and throughout much of the world. Likewise, Washington timber resources will remain a vast renewable natural resource if they are conserved through sustainable land use and timber harvesting policies.

We believe:

In the interests of food security, the food supply, fertilizer supply, water supply, land ownership, and seed supply must not be controlled by a few monopolies.

Farming and fishing should be practiced in a manner sustainable over the long term with emphasis on conservation of both surface and ground water, protection of topsoil, using tillage methods and crops appropriate for the soils and climate, and maintaining diversity of crops, with sustainable balance of food crops, fuel crops, and cash crops.

We call for:

The protection of productive farm land, range land, wet lands, and watersheds from residential, commercial and industrial development (e. g., urban sprawl, clear-cutting and industrial agriculture).

Enforcement of policies to require conservation of water in agricultural development through dry land farming, drip irrigation, root irrigation and other methods to conserve resources and enable more economic production. Conservation of domestic-use water must be incentivized through metered use, zoning restrictions on planting, promotion of xeriscaping, and allowing the use of gray water for landscaping.

Enforcement of antitrust laws that apply to agribusiness, and ratification of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, a.k.a. the “International Seed Treaty to preserve food crop diversity.

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

A guest worker program to provide legal workers for agriculture, ensuring a reliable labor source is available for the industry while extending application of minimum wage laws and legal protections to the workforce and employers.

Reduction of antibiotic use in livestock production to avoid development of bacterial immunities to antibiotics and resultant human and animal health degradation.

Review of and updates to farm subsidy programs to ensure they benefit family-size farms, and support of family-scale agriculture at least at the same levels as industrial-scale agriculture.

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

An agricultural policy that emphasizes nutrition and health through education, school lunches and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Robust investment in agricultural colleges and research which is essential to achieve these goals. We support the Benton/Franklin Cooperative Extension in their efforts to educate the public.

Regulation of genetically engineered seeds and foods with the intent of protecting farmers from deleterious effects of “outcrossing”, and protecting the environment from inadvertent or unintended consequences of farming with GM organisms.

We oppose:

Land bank and crop subsidy abuse by large corporate farms.

Use of edible products, other than waste, for the manufacture of bio-fuels (e. g., ethanol from maize).

03 - Human Rights and Civil Rights

We believe:

Privacy is a fundamental human right. Our private lives and personal information must be protected from warrantless intrusion by government or others.

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

We have the right to sovereignty over our own bodies, including a woman's right to choose to terminate a pregnancy regardless of age or ability to pay.

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

We call for:

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

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

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

The end of human trafficking for the sex trade or other forms of involuntary servitude.

Legal aid and due process available for all.

Honoring the rich diversity of society and implementing efforts to reflect that diversity in our party.

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

Strong legislation, treatment programs and education designed to reduce harassment, intimidation, and domestic or sexual violence.

We oppose

The use of torture or enhanced interrogation under any circumstances by our government or at the behest of the USA by other parties including foreign governments. Extraordinary rendition is illegal and must be stopped. We believe those who have sanctioned torture have committed crimes and should be brought to justice.

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

As we promote democracy and human rights abroad, it follows that we oppose the US provision of military aid to oppressive, authoritarian nations that do not support the human rights of all their citizens including women and minorities. We oppose slavery in all forms.

Private contractors running prisons, and we oppose hiring out prisoners for private gain to third parties, which is tantamount to slavery.

Unreasonable censorship, surveillance, and invasion of individual liberties.

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

Indiscriminate governmental and corporate spying on citizens and legal residents without legal warrants. Laws must be updated to deal with technological advances. We oppose systematic intentional breaching of personal internet privacy for profit.

04 - Corporate Power

“As we view the achievements of aggregated capital, we discover the existence of trusts, combinations, and monopolies, while the citizen is struggling far in the rear or is trampled to death beneath an iron heel. Corporations, which should be the carefully restrained creatures of the law and the servants of the people, are fast becoming the people’s masters.” - Grover Cleveland, 1888 State of the Union.

“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 one of the defining power structures of this century. But they are not “we the people”, they are not a product of nature, they are artificial entities which may and must be regulated for the benefit of society.

Corporations shall not be recognized as persons with rights reserved for humans. The decision to allow corporations and unions unlimited free speech, coupled with the decision that money is free speech, results in strong potential for large corporations, including foreign-owned corporations, to corrupt our democracy.

The notion of corporate personhood as a vehicle for corporations to own property, enter into contracts, and sue or be sued in court should be the extent of corporate personhood.

Promotion of corporate structures owned only by the corporate employees (a.k.a. Employee Stock Ownership Plan Companies – ESOPs) will lead to a more stable business environment where ownership of the means of production becomes widespread among citizens rather than increasingly concentrated in a few owners.

Governments hold natural resources such as land, water, minerals and timber, and the airwaves in trust for all their citizens. Such resources should not be sold off to corporations or individuals for short term or speculative profits.

We call for:

A constitutional amendment repealing corporate personhood and the expeditious legislative reversal of overturning of the Supreme Court's Citizens United vs. the FEC decision.

The 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 only be restored through strong regulations, transparent accounting practices and regulated risk.

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

Corporations must not be allowed to contaminate our water and land without severe consequences. After toxic spills, communities must be made whole again. If subsidiaries declare bankruptcy, parent corporations must be held accountable.

Empowering and fully funding the new Federal Financial Consumer Protection agency to regulate financial products, consumer banking, and credit cards, and to enforce full disclosure of financial instruments. We oppose attempts to weaken its powers to pursue fraudulent practices.

The derivatives markets must be transparent and regulated for the good of commerce and the country. Multiple non-interested parties should not be allowed to buy insurance on the same asset or event for the purpose of speculation, because this destabilizes the insurance markets.

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

The return of the windfalls profits tax.

Taking steps at the federal level to revise the laws for corporate charters and to reduce tax breaks and/or impose heavy taxes on the exorbitant salaries and benefits of Wall Street fund managers and corporate officers at the expense of tax payers, workers, shareholders, and consumers.

Strong restrictions on corporate spending on political campaigns.

We oppose:

The extension of 'human rights' such as 1st Amendment rights of free speech to corporations and the notion that money is equivalent to speech.

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

Foreign ownership and management of our ports, highways, bridges, pipelines, and other infrastructure assets which are crucial to our national safety and security.

05– Economic Justice and Development

We Support:

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

International trade policies that require US companies to pay their overseas workers a living wage consistent with their countries' economies, as well as uphold modern health and safety standards. Likewise, we support domestic labor policies which result in domestic workers receiving a living wage and receiving 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. Investment in maintenance as well as new and upgraded construction of highway, aviation, and marine transportation facilities, air and water quality facilities, power generation and transportation systems, telecommunications including broadband throughout the U.S.A.

Using Federal and State funds for research and development of next-generation infrastructure. The private sector alone does not have the resources nor the incentives to carry the next-generation infrastructure forward by itself.

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

Balanced State budgets, but balanced over several years so as to better deal with business cycles. Reasons for this approach are to avoid tying government revenues and spending to boom-and-bust business cycles, and to better assure stable funding for state programs such as education and transportation over the long term.

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

A more progressive income tax structure than the one we now have. Having many more tax brackets with much higher rates as incomes go up is more just. Extremely high individual wealth brings an unbalance of power that destroys democracy while more money in the hands of the less fortunate builds the middle class by generating the demand that is the genuine economic engine of a thriving economy, providing more jobs and economic opportunity for more people.

06—Education

“Education: a debt due from present to future generations.” - George Peabody

We Believe:

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

We call for:

Support of the educational goals that all students in Washington State, regardless of race, ethnicity, income or gender will attain high academic standards, and graduate prepared to succeed in college and other training, and their careers.

Full funding of public education to provide up-to-date materials, uncrowded safe facilities, and optimum student-teacher ratios.

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

State funding for ongoing maintenance of public schools and infrastructure, and for the purchase of equipment and technology in compliance with the Americans-With-Disabilities Act, and consistent with the Washington State Constitution.

Increased State and Federal funding to ensure affordable access to higher education, including vocational training for Washington State students.

Curricula that is up-to-date, rigorous, comprehensive, and historically and scientifically accurate, and selection of textbooks based on complete and accurate information only.

A better career track and higher pay for adjunct professors in Washington State.

Supporting teachers’ rights to unionize and to engage in collective bargaining, thereby ensuring due process, and development of educational quality standards.

Affirming the value of humanities, including literature, history, philosophy, and visual and performing arts in our schools.

We oppose:

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

Initiatives to destroy teachers' unions, especially their collective bargaining and due process rights.

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

07 – Energy and the Environment

We must strive to be responsible stewards of the environment, our communities, and our planet. All people, especially future generations, have the right to inherit and enjoy clean air, potable water, nutritious food, and a healthy natural environment.

We believe:

Our economic stability and the health of our environment depend on sound policy decisions which incorporate the best scientific evidence. Managing public resources as a public trust benefits us all.

Both sustainable energy production and strong environmental protections strengthen our economy and our country.

Public discussion and education should occur at all levels of community and government about how and why to manage resource and energy consumption.

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

Cost-benefit analyses must be performed as standard practice to minimize risks and avoid unwarranted damage to regional economies or to the environment.

Washington State is well positioned to lead, and should lead international efforts to reduce greenhouse gases and to mitigate effects of climate change.

Hydropower is a renewable resource and should be accepted as such in energy policy and planning.

We call for:

A national energy policy with realistic and comprehensive long term planning for peak oil and gas, moving away from coal, and increased reliance on renewable and carbon-free energy sources, including nuclear energy.

Development and implementation of Smart-Grid technologies to allow more efficient consumer and supplier measurement and management of power usage, and to expand the power distribution grid to promote better use of small distributed sources and expanded grid reach and interconnections.

Continued and adequate research funding to develop and implement next generation safe, clean alternative energy solutions and to encourage resource conservation.

Creative mechanisms and incentives for consumers and businesses to encourage energy conservation and use of renewable and environmentally responsible energy, including solar, wind, nuclear (including small modular reactors), geothermal, hydro and other technologies. An example is promoting development of a solar roof program to supply electricity to the power grid.

Permitting expansion of nuclear power with strong environmental protection. The U.S. Nuclear Waste Management Plan must be brought forward expeditiously to ensure public confidence in the ongoing development of new safer Phase 3 commercial reactors; and Federal loan guarantees for the first wave of this renaissance should be supported.

Honoring the Tri-Party Agreement and other efforts of Washington State to ensure that Hanford Site clean-up is completed, that all defense waste material is safely and securely stored, and the Columbia River's water quality is protected from contamination from the Hanford Site. We call for supporting Superfund site cleanup with adequate funding and appropriate oversight.

Planning and policies to prepare for the coming water shortages in the Pacific Northwest due to the coming global climate change resulting in reduction of snowpack and timing of the spring melt. This includes policies to require conservation of water in agricultural development through dry land farming, drip irrigation, root irrigation and other methods to enable more economic production. Conservation of domestic-use water must be incentivized through metered use, zoning restrictions on planting, promotion of xeriscaping, and allowing the use of gray water for landscaping.

Conserving resources and promoting sustainability through recycling and waste reduction efforts, along with limiting urban sprawl and preserving farmland.

Protecting our critical environmental areas, including wilderness areas, old growth forests, wildlife habitat, wetlands, streams, riparian areas, the Columbia River, Puget Sound, coastlines, and oceans, through vigilant monitoring and planned growth management.

Permitting natural resource recovery using sustainable extraction processes and requiring environmental remediation and restoration of resource extraction sites, along with protecting environmentally sensitive areas by prohibiting waste disposal, storage or treatment in such areas

Utilizing biomass conversion, including the implementation of new renewable energy technologies to convert bio-based materials, farm products and byproducts into biofuel, when there are clear economic and/or environmental benefits.

Strong regulatory management of both onshore and offshore well drilling for petroleum, with continued support of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in efforts to ensure that oil and natural gas extraction, including hydraulic fracturing or "fracking," is not practiced at the expense of public health, water quality, and the environment. Fracking regulations must require full compliance with the U.S. Air Quality and Water Quality Acts and full disclosure of fracking component fluid chemical constituents.

Managing coal and oil train numbers, traffic patterns and train speeds in urban areas to minimize traffic interference and to assure that federal and state clean air acts are met. Coal and oil suppliers should pay for the infrastructure improvements which support their profit-making activities.

We oppose:

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

Reduction of environmental monitoring such as volcano sensors and weather observation satellites in the name of austerity.

Removal of the Snake River dams, which are integral parts of the agricultural and flood control systems, and are important for recreation. The Snake River dams should be supplied with good fish ladders to promote restoration of salmon runs.

Policies, laws, and market incentives which result in privatization of profits and externalization or socialization of costs, e. g., corporations being allowed to damage the environment as a result of doing business without paying for remediation and clean-up.

08 - Foreign Policy

The United States can and should be true to our values and ideals while also protecting the American people. The United States is currently the pre-eminent political, military and economic actor in the world, and its foreign policy needs to strike the right balance between interventionist and isolationist policy. The United States is not the world's policeman, but needs to preserve its ability to act with authority when called for.

We consider terrorism as a criminal matter rather than as a military matter. Recognizing that our military is for national defense, we oppose any preemptive war with any other sovereign nation. We remain committed to maintaining a strong and effective military.

We appreciate that the State of Washington and Benton County are vital participants in international trade, being exporters of agricultural products and high-technology products.

We support:

The continuing participation of the USA in the United Nations as a means of dealing with global concerns. We urge that the United States continue to support the United Nations by paying its share of UN expenses. The USA does not compromise its sovereignty by working within the United Nations to secure just and peaceful solutions to conflicts between nations.

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and we expect our government and military to abide by the Geneva Convention. We support the US Senate ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, both of which the USA has already signed. In addition we support the signing and ratification of the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea, and the Ottawa Convention on Land Mines. We support the signing and ratification of reasonable agreements related to climate change.

Reducing the number of permanent American military bases worldwide and making them smaller. Although we understand the need to have some military bases in strategic locations worldwide for defensive purposes, we feel the current number of bases is excessive.

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

We support humanitarian aid to needy populations without regard to political positions of their governments.

Fair trade agreements that include provisions to protect the environment, encourage sustainable agriculture and manufacturing, and protect the democratic and economic rights of the work force and also indigenous peoples. We encourage the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to fund development projects in a manner compatible with local conditions and needs, not first world country or corporate development agendas.

Normalizing relations with Cuba, including lifting US trade and travel restrictions to Cuba.

Application of U.S. law to all U. S. territories. We consider all U. S. Territories including the Mariana Islands and Guantanamo Bay to be subject to U. S. law including U. S. labor laws, due process, habeas corpus, and laws against illegal detention.

We oppose:

Military and economic imperialism as a policy of the US government. We oppose military aid to repressive regimes regardless of past diplomatic relations with the United States. We oppose military action to support corporate interests.

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

Trading, buying and selling all products of slave labor and child labor. We consider such products as contraband which should be outlawed for sale in the United States, including products made under duress for commercial gain to third parties by inmates in American prisons. We are opposed to trade in exotic animals, especially animals threatened or endangered.

Trade treaties such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which supersede US law and have deleterious effects on the US economy, on the environment, and on human rights.

09 - Government and Political Reform

We expect every citizen to do his or her part in exercising the self-government that is part of the American tradition, and by contributing just and fair taxes.

We believe:

Federal elections should be publically funded to reduce the opportunity for special interests to “buy elections. Washington State should follow the lead of States such as Arizona and Maine in working toward publically funded elections.

Budgets should be roughly balanced over a time period of several years to avoid tying government spending and revenue to the business boom-and-bust cycle.

Church and state must remain separate. The wall of separation between church and State must be strengthened. Taxpayer funding for religious institutions or "faith-based" initiatives should not be condoned. Full freedom for all religions and personal belief systems must be protected. All citizens' rights to adopt their own belief systems must be protected from government interference.

A U. S. President, Vice-President, Senator, Congressperson or cabinet member, should have to wait at least five years after having left office, before becoming a lobbyist, or before starting or joining a lobbying firm. Lobbyists and lobbying firms must be prohibited from making campaign contributions either on behalf of their clients or themselves.

Habeas Corpus must be restored for citizens and non-citizens completely and without compromise.

We are opposed to wholesale destruction of the Post Office by requiring overfunding of the Post Office pension system. We call for passing the United States Postal Service Pension Obligation Recalculation and Restoration Act of 2011 to remedy the problem. We support upgrading the Post Office to meet modern conditions including internet mail.

The broadcast media should be required to give equal free air time to political candidates in return for the federal government giving the media bandwidth.

The Washington State initiative process should be reformed to guide state legislators in crafting laws rather than usurping their legislative role.

10 - Health Care

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

We support:

Preserving and improving the Medicare program. We support efforts to keep it fiscally sound while ensuring that it pays health care providers enough to allow them to afford to take Medicare patients. We support efforts to make Medicare more efficient and to reduce Medicare fraud, however uncommon. We must work with pharmacies to ensure they are adequately compensated and will not refuse Medicare prescriptions.

Washington State and the Federal government's using their bulk purchasing power to directly negotiate with pharmaceutical companies for reduced drug prices particularly for seniors, people with disabilities and the underinsured under Medicare and Medicaid.

Full funding of Medicaid to protect our most vulnerable populations.

Working towards a single-payer option in Washington State and nationally.

Robust funding for the preventive care provided by our public health programs as an investment in the general welfare as well as future cost savings. We support a strong public health program capable of dealing with pandemics and acts of bioterrorism.

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

Access to voluntary family planning, counseling, and information that discusses all options for reproductive choice.

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

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

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

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

11 – Human Services

Compassionate human services should be among the highest priorities of government. Governments must never abdicate their responsibilities to provide a publicly funded and managed “safety net” to help those in need. We believe that expenditures on human services should be raised to the level where basic human needs are met. Increasing poverty and the trend toward income disparity demand recognition as national emergencies.

We support:

Welfare reform that will reduce poverty, not just the welfare rolls.

Safe, decent, affordable housing for all.

Quality affordable childcare, education, training, and substance abuse treatment.

Maternity and paternity leave for a minimum of three (3) months.

A transitional plan for persons being released from state institutions.

Improved oversight of elder care.

Increased support for family caregivers.

We oppose:

Privatizing Social Security, reducing benefits, or raising the age for qualification.

Equating the acceptance of food stamps, welfare, housing vouchers, or unemployment insurance with any moral failure.

12 – Immigration

We recognize that an orderly, controlled border and an immigration system designed to meet our economic and social needs are important pillars of a healthy and robust economy. We recognize that most Americans came from somewhere else during the history of the United States, and that we do well to be a welcoming society for those who are willing to do the work to become good citizens, learn their new country’s primary language, and obey the laws.

We call for:

United States immigration policy to undergo comprehensive reform that protects the integrity of our borders while recognizing the basic human rights of immigrants, and ensuring due process in all proceedings and clear pathways to citizenship or other legal status.

Allowing undocumented immigrants brought to the US as children, having attained the age of majority to apply for US citizenship in their State of residence without being required to travel to their country of origin.

Ending discrimination in wages and working conditions for immigrant workers, and providing access to safe and adequate housing, safe working conditions, medical care and educational opportunities at levels consistent with US citizens.

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

Securing the borders of the United States to eliminate the violent and inhumane acts associated with illegal border crossings, drug trade, terrorism and human trafficking.

Streamlining procedures for granting asylum to those who are fleeing from war zones, genocide and political oppression, and to environmental refugees, subject to appropriate security concerns.

We call for appropriate entry of workers under the H-1B program, provided no Americans can be found to do the work. H-1B workers should be paid at the same scales as American workers.

We oppose:

State or local police being enlisted to perform enforcement work which properly should be performed by the federal immigration authorities.

Efforts to deputize, commission, finance, or otherwise encourage vigilante border militia groups in the United States.

Automatic detention and/or deportation of asylum-seekers without due process.

Legislative attempts to establish English as the sole official language of the United States.

13 - Labor

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

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

We believe or affirm:

All workers shall be paid a living wage, and be provided affordable health care and secure retirement. We define a living wage as the wage necessary for a person working forty hours a week, with no additional income, to afford decent housing, food, utilities, transportation, and health care.

The minimum wage must be indexed to inflation.

Farm workers are entitled to adequate housing and sanitation and an adequate number and quality of inspections for occupational health and safety standards, as well as inspections by the Food and Drug Administration necessary to ensure safe and sanitary living and working conditions.

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

All trade agreements must include domestic labor agreements and international fair trade agreements, as well as health, and environmental standards, and requiring that all workers receive a fair and livable wage worldwide.

We support:

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

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

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

Laws prohibiting the unilateral redefining of workers as independent contractors to reduce labor costs, rendering workers ineligible for benefits and other protections.

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

Government policies that minimize outsourcing of jobs and product procurement.

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

Enforcement of laws that protect pensions.

Enforcement of the principle of equal pay for equal work.

Consistent and even-handed enforcement of Labor and Industry (L&I) laws and regulations, including and especially those which protect workers.

Washington State's L&I will oversee workman's compensation claims at the Hanford Site. Hanford workers will be granted full access to their own medical records. We oppose allowing medical claims to be processed outside the state.

Government and private industry shall recover and make available to the workers medical and industrial hygiene records related to all workers so that they are paid just compensation for any injuries or illnesses incurred during their employment or as a result of their employment.

We oppose:

Any effort to restructure state and federal law related to overtime payment without the vigorous involvement and input from workers.

Outsourcing of jobs to foreign countries.

14 - Law and Justice

“You can only protect your liberties in this world by protecting the other man's freedom. You can only be free if I am free.” - Clarence Darrow

We Believe:

Terrorism is a criminal act that should be prosecuted through the criminal justice system. There is no need for extraordinary judicial process.

Habeas corpus is a Constitutionally protected right, and shall not be suspended.

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

Government spying on citizens without a warrant is a violation of the 4th Amendment against search and seizure and should be terminated immediately.

We support:

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

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

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

Investigation and prosecution of illegal actions of elected officials and corporate officers no matter how high their office. We insist on holding these officials and officers accountable to the citizens.

Repeal of the mandatory sentencing laws for drug offenses.

Establishment and maintenance of the fire, police, and emergency services protecting our families and properties in our local communities.

Revisiting and possibly repealing the Patriot Act.

We support our Senatorial delegation cosigning the bill to do away with mandatory federal sentences for those found guilty of non-violent offenses (current sponsors Dick Durban and Rand Paul, Patrick Leahy, and Mike Lee)

15 - Media Reform

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

We Believe:

Democracy relies upon an informed citizenry.

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

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

According to Ben Bagdikian’s book *The New Media Monopoly*, six corporations now control 90% of the US mass media. This results in the narrowing of information, underserving of marginalized populations, and de facto censorship when news stories conflict with corporate interests.

We call for:

The FCC to promote local ownership and diversity of viewpoints and reduce concentration of media.

Ample funding for public broadcasting to promote independence and discouraging the reliance on corporate sponsorships.

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

Enforcement of Title 47 U.S. Code § 315 - Candidates for Public Office (Equal opportunities requirement; censorship prohibition; allowance of station use; news appearances exception; public interest; public issues discussion opportunities) and extension to all publicly regulated media outlets.

Reinstatement of station ownership caps which were repealed in 1996.

Transparency in advertising: The FCC must enforce existing statutes that require disclosure of the “true identity” of sponsors of political advertising.

Bringing the US up to world internet standards by working toward affordable, high quality state-of-the-art internet access for everyone over all regions of the country.

We oppose:

Prosecution of legitimate whistle blowers.

Media monopolies which have the potential to suppress or deny diversity of opinion and representation.

False claims of “national security” to suppress investigative journalism.

Wholesale tracking of internet usage by government or corporation for exploitive purposes or for espionage on citizens without a warrant.

16 – Military

We are a grateful nation that honors, thanks and fully supports the magnificent military women and men who constantly toil to keep us safe, free and able to participate in the greatest experiment in democracy the world has ever known.

We are determined to keep our military the most effective, best educated, best trained, most ethical, best equipped, and most respected group of military professionals in the world.

We support our volunteer military, and we also recognize the benefits of a national draft, to be exercised in time of war, not only to staff the army and navy, but also in terms of its social benefits such as supporting social cohesion and the duties of citizenship applied to everybody.

We hold that basic human rights and U.S. Constitutional Law must be protected even in our vital and urgent needs to provide protection from terrorist attacks. Continued enforcement of the Geneva Convention must be honored in the treatment of all prisoners of war. Torture is against our way of life and our traditions and its use is never acceptable.

We hold that Congress has a Constitutional duty to deliberate on proposals to go to war, undeclared “police actions”, and fund or not fund war-like initiatives. Only the U.S. Congress has the authority to declare war. Congress should not abdicate its Constitutional duty to the Executive Branch.

Military interventions must always be used only as a last resort.

We support or call for:

Establishment of a new system of universal public service requiring every citizen on reaching 18 years of age or completing 12 years of public school to be employed in two years of full time public service. Options for service should include military, national guard, Peace Corps or other international service, VISTA or AmeriCorps, etc., as needed and as selected by each person.

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

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

Full funding of all veterans programs and benefits meant to rehabilitate and care for our veterans. Retraining of disabled veterans is essential. We cannot ‘throw away’ our soldiers after their service.

We oppose:

Privatization of traditional military functions. This practice is debilitating to morale, provides windfall profits to contractors, and creates national security concerns.

17 – Transportation

We believe that an efficient, well-planned, multimodal transportation system promotes a healthy economy, environment and community. Washington needs to continue to build a 21st Century transportation system to fulfill its leading role in global trade.

We call for:

Significant public input and oversight into major transportation public works.

Policies and public funding that make travel as safe and efficient as possible for all modes of transportation, motorized and non-motorized, including pedestrian and cycling lanes whenever feasible.

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

Increased investments in public infrastructure that broaden individuals' transportation choices.

Encouraging the development of alternative energy for transportation.

Instituting measures to reduce pollution and dependence on fossil fuels, including increased fuel efficiency standards for all vehicles.

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

An increased use of rail for shipment of agricultural products and other goods, and a high speed rail system to link major cities.

Providing current, complete, and unambiguous WA State highway signage.

Funding for transportation projects should be performance-based and measured as to its effectiveness in meeting State transportation policies and goals, and in moving people and goods in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible.

Local municipal and county governments' rights to allow or disallow long coal and oil trains through their regions of jurisdiction should be honored and enforced.

18 - Indian Tribes and Treaties

American Indian Tribal Governments make up a part of our national identity and community. We recognize them as self-determining, self-governing, and separate governments. Local, state, and federal governments must respect the decisions of the Native American Nations and tribal governments, affirm their rights derived from treaties and state compacts, and oppose attempts to diminish their sovereignty and cultures. We continue to honor and support treaties and tribal agreements.

We support:

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

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

Provisions to improve the social, economic, and health status of American Indian people and tribes on a level equivalent to that of other Americans.

Education of the American public about the inherent and treaty-based rights of Indian tribes.

Respectful and civil relations between Indian tribes and local communities, the state and the nation.