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**CALIFORNIA DEMOCRATIC PARTY**

SENATOR JOHN BURTON (RET.), CHAIRMAN

# 2010 PLATFORM

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Adopted At The Democratic Party State Convention  
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# 2009 – 2010 PLATFORM COMMITTEE

Thank you to the CDP Platform Committee Members for all their hard work and efforts in putting together the 2010 California Democratic Party Platform.

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## **California Democrats Present Our Blueprint for the Golden State**

America's strength derives from people coming together and working for the common good. We believe in a strong economy that increases political, social, and cultural opportunity. We believe in inclusion and equality so that all can reach their fullest human potential. We are committed to upholding our federal and state constitutions, protecting and defending our civil liberties and ourselves, and ensuring justice, freedom, and equal opportunity. We believe that if we stand firm and acting positively on these values, America can reclaim her vision and lead the world as a beacon of optimism and unity.

The people of California deserve a government that supports their hard work and shares their hopes for the future. Our Platform represents the Democratic vision for our state, embracing and implementing the dreams of Californians. We firmly defend these American beliefs, values, and traditions and will work with elected officials and activists to achieve our vision in government and in our communities.

*The California Democratic Party will:*

- Promote peace, real security, the rule of law, and human rights both at home and abroad;
- Promote guaranteed support for first responders, military servicemembers, and veterans;
- Fight to restore the constitutional balance among the branches of the federal government;
- Create a 21st century economy built on a diverse workforce educated by quality public schools and with the right to organize;
- Support civil rights, the Americans with Disabilities Act and equality in employment, educational, and economic opportunities;
- Ensure universal, comprehensive, and affordable health care for all Californians;
- Protect a woman's right to choose how to use her mind, her body and her time;
- Secure a dignified retirement for our seniors, including Social Security and Medicare for future generations;
- Make California the most energy-independent state, build new industries in the effort to fight global warming and pollution, and protect our natural resources;
- Build smart, sustainable, safe, environmentally sound, and caring communities;
- Support the arts, especially in our public schools; and
- Insist upon fiscal common sense, responsibility, and accountability in California and Washington.

## **Business and Economy**

The Obama administration began with the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. The Democratic Party, with no minority party support, gave our country the greatest economic stimulus package in history, which has created and saved millions of jobs.

California Democrats are dedicated to a robust economy and business climate that creates jobs and economic opportunity for all as well as the tax base for the programs and policies we champion.

*To grow jobs and assure a prosperous future for all Californians, California Democrats will:*

- Support the research, development and implementation of green electrical generation and transportation technologies with some combination of tax credits, low-interest loans/loan guarantees and grants;
- Promote and guarantee low-interest small business loans to provide the seed capital to launch and expand job-creating small businesses and provide for the growth of already successful businesses;
- Support the expansion of existing community bank and credit union programs for state and local funds;

- Facilitate improved banking services for small businesses and consumers by supporting legislation that offers community banks and credit unions incentives for implementing new technologies;
- Defend consumer banking free choice by supporting legislation eliminating out of network ATM fees charged by large financial institutions that have accepted taxpayer funding through the Troubled Asset Relief Program;
- Support a legislative initiative to freeze for up to six months those foreclosures where homeowners had the ability to pay their mortgage before the adjustable rate started climbing by deferring past due payments and increases created by the Adjustable Rate Mortgage (ARM) to the end of the loan and/or wrapped up in a refinance at affordable fixed rates. The state will assist in locating private and/or institutional lenders willing to enter into such a program. In addition the state needs to investigate and fund prosecutions, where appropriate, into private lender and/or mortgage broker abuses, including but not limited to redlining and the unauthorized bait and switch tactic of replacing fixed rate financing with ARMs;
- Support the right of all employees to organize, select a bargaining representative of their choice, work in a safe environment and be free from intimidation and retaliation tactics intended to chill their rights through the use of card check certification;
- Oppose privatization of essential government services and the outsourcing of public sector jobs;
- Reward employers that, instead of moving out of state, choose to remain in California and can show a reasonable likelihood of significant sales and job growth, by giving the California Treasurer/Board of Equalization the right to negotiate a competitive package of discounted state-based fees and/or taxes to offset some of the employer's anticipated cost savings from moving the business out of California;
- Support the adoption of a Universal Health Care plan for all Californians so that California employers will not have to bear the cost burden of being the principal providers of health care and medical care to injured workers through the workers compensation policies they purchase;
- Continue to support and fund job retraining and/or vocational rehabilitation programs to meet the manpower needs of California's changing economy; and
- Oppose new and unfair trade agreements and renegotiate existing agreements.

## **Children, Young Adults and Their Families**

California Democrats believe that children and young people deserve the chance to become thriving and productive members of society. To do so, we will work to provide them with a healthy start, a solid education, and a safe community in which to thrive.

*To help children and young adults reach their full potential, California Democrats will lead the charge to:*

- Expand pre-natal, peri-natal and well-baby care, as well as immunization efforts;
- Enhance childhood education and development with enriching experiences, educational television and other electronic programming and curricula for children;
- Provide quality education at all levels, including vocational counseling, job training and apprenticeships;
- Promote in-school efforts for educational development, access to reasonably priced childcare, and early development centers;
- Lift at-risk families and working poor families out of poverty so that they can become independent and lead self-sufficient lives;
- Expand parks, recreation and mentoring centers for children and young people;
- Prosecute those who commit crimes against children, particularly sex crimes against minors, and strictly enforce the penalties for such crimes;
- Ensure that child abuse and neglect court proceedings are accessible and swift for all, and aggressively enforce child-support payment rulings;

- Support the removal of toxic substances from all toys sold in California;
- Promote, support and expand school and community-sponsored after-school programs; and
- Support the passage and implementation of nutritionally healthy school lunch and breakfast programs.

## **Criminal Justice**

Strong families and safe communities are the highest goals of our society. Crime prevention and rehabilitation are essential to our families, our communities, and our state's budget. Prosecution represents a failure on behalf of the individual and of society.

In recognition of current law enforcement-supported research, demonstrating that a 10 percentage-point increase in graduation rates has historically reduced murder and assault rates by approximately 20 percent, we support reducing crime rates by increasing high school graduation rates through evidence-based methods that include structured pre-school for all, anti-truancy measures, and after-school programs.

We are determined to put an end to family violence and gang activity, drug and alcohol addiction, unemployment, poverty and racism. We are dedicated to ensuring that our criminal justice system provides fair and equitable treatment for all. We believe in the human rights of all citizens. "Smart on crime" must include evidence-based criminal justice prevention programs as the best use of taxpayer funds.

*To promote safe communities, California Democrats will:*

- Provide state-of-the-art equipment and training in the latest crime fighting techniques;
- Enhance victim-witness advocacy that respects the rights of crime victims and provides them with therapeutic assistance and financial compensation, and support comprehensive services for the victims of crime;
- Strictly enforce fair penalties for all violent crimes, especially those committed against women, children, the elderly and disabled;
- Support the establishment of a non-partisan sentencing commission to review inequitable sentencing laws;
- Reduce prison overcrowding and the drain on our economy by decreasing penalties for minor drug offenses and other victimless crimes, thus making the punishments fit the crimes;
- Implement community-based policing to break down barriers between law enforcement officers and the people they serve, and require greater accountability from law enforcement organizations to the communities they serve;
- Promote responsible gun ownership and reasonable gun safety and work with gun owners and sporting associations to promote gun safety education;
- Strengthen the efforts to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals;
- Continue to support the common sense ban on deadly assault weapons;
- Prosecute white-collar criminals and improve methods for recovering financial losses;
- Protect consumers against identity theft and violations of privacy and ensure they know what personal information is collected by businesses and government (such as social security numbers, financial data, phone numbers, street and email addresses) and how that information is used;
- Employ DNA testing when appropriate to ensure that innocent people are not convicted and, conversely, that guilty people are not set free;
- Prohibit the use of so-called "secret evidence" in courts and tribunals;
- Challenge the practice of profiling, from detainment through charging and sentencing;
- Promote strong families and communities by making rehabilitation, education and job readiness top priorities within our state prison system;

- Promote dialog that examines the inequity between public school funding and prison expansion in California, and support efforts to address high school dropout rates;
- Oppose privatization of prisons;
- Promote prison reform policies so that no person incarcerated in any jail, prison, or other places of criminal detention and within the jurisdiction of any level of government, state, local or federal, shall suffer physical violence inflicted by other inmates or by guards, other than what the latter must do to subdue someone they are legally entitled to subdue;
- Oppose sentencing juveniles to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole (LWOP);
- Replace the death penalty with a term of permanent incarceration, which will serve to protect the public, provide swift and certain justice for victims' families, and save the state an estimated \$1 billion over the next five years; and
- Reform the "Three Strikes"/Proposition 184 law to provide judges with more sentencing discretion, eliminate non-violent, non-serious crimes from the application of this law, and make the change apply retroactively.

## **Culture and the Arts**

In the spirit of President Lyndon B. Johnson, who remarked in 1965, "Art is a nation's most precious heritage," California Democrats believe in freedom of expression without compromise, public support of the arts, and the principles promoted by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). We further commit to involve artists and cultural organization workers in the planning and implementation processes of artistic endeavors.

*In support of the arts, California Democrats will:*

- Celebrate the cultural diversity of our citizens, past and present, including California Indians, Native Americans and indigenous peoples, and encourage improved public knowledge about, and an honest portrayal of, their culture and history;
- Restore arts and humanities efforts at all educational levels;
- Promote multi-media public broadcasting, including community-based public radio and public access television;
- Expand the funding base for the arts by encouraging individual and corporate private sector grants to augment public monies; and
- Promote greater financial inclusion for all artists in the Internet use of their intellectual property.

## **Death with Dignity (New Plank)**

The California Democratic Party respects the concept of individual autonomy and desires to see the legal system reflect a wide range of choices for all people with respect to the integrity of their body and their very lives.

We thus support the right of any competent adult, suffering intractable pain as a consequence of a fatal illness, who has been medically diagnosed as having not more than six months to live, to obtain the assistance of medical doctors in painlessly ending her or his own life.

We are also aware that such a process may be open to potential abuses and urge that safeguards be taken so that this right of patient self-determination will not be misused by either family members or health care personnel to precipitate the demise of any disabled person who desires to continue living.

## **Disabilities**

People with disabilities have an inalienable right to dignity, the pursuit of happiness and self-sufficiency. The California Democratic Party supports and upholds the enforcement and funding of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), as well as federal and state disability and access laws and regulations. Democrats must fight cuts to Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Efforts, Federal Social Security Disability Income and oppose judicial nominees whose philosophies suggest they would dismantle the ADA and other civil rights laws. Democrats desire that all persons with disabilities be

able to have a sustainable quality of life in the least restrictive environment possible and in accessible community settings, as this is not only a basic civil right, but also what is the most economical for the state of California.

*To ensure equality for people with disabilities, California Democrats will:*

- Strongly encourage elected officials to have one person in their office well-versed in disability civil rights issues;
- Lead by example by ensuring participation of qualified persons with disabilities in all levels of the Party, including interns and campaign staff;
- Ensure that all clubs, county committees and organizations have all the support and training necessary to include person with disabilities in their organization and also know how to reach out to voters with disabilities;
- Ensure that all political headquarters are fully accessible and that an honest attempt is made to have staff and volunteers in proportion to the population in the district;
- Improve accessibility to, and full participation in, academia and government;
- Encourage more balanced participation of people with disabilities on state commissions, municipal boards and at all levels of political and civic action;
- Enact a Sovereign Immunity Waiver for California, and fight all challenges by any person, government agency, organization or business, which would impede the progress of enactment of a Sovereign Immunity Waiver in the state of California;
- Promote early diagnosis and access to treatment as well as adequate homecare support for children, veterans and others with disabilities;
- Work with unions to promote alternative forms of employment for persons with disabilities who cannot work standard 8-hour work days or 5-day work weeks due to disability limitations or insufficient transportation;
- Eliminate marriage penalties imposed on SSI recipients, including income parameters;
- End discriminatory policies and practices in health care based upon pre-existing conditions and abolish Medicare's "Homebound" rules;
- Guarantee palliative care; support and enforce improvements to the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan by amending prohibitive costs; strongly oppose detrimental budget cuts in Medicare/Medicaid; support and enforce the principle of informed choice;
- Improve respite care and in-home support services, and support higher pay and better training programs for home care workers;
- Promote and broaden financial aid or loan assistance for accessible housing, vehicles and durable medical equipment, which would give much-needed monetary assistance for individuals to pay for improvements to their equipment beyond the Medicare/Medical rate;
- Eliminate housing discrimination that penalizes or denies persons with disabilities the right to interdependence through shared housing with a spouse or significant other;
- Enforce laws and regulations pertaining to para-transit, public transit and taxis; promote legislation to require para-transit to provide services that cross county lines; and penalize companies that deny services to persons using mobility devices;
- Promote a universal health care plan to provide fiscally sound, affordable health care to all Californians that will provide every Californian the right to choose his or her own physician;
- Provide for the mental and physical health of all returning veterans;

- Promote parity of services for mental health and substance related disorder benefits, medical and dental health for persons with developmental and other disabilities under all public and private health care and delivery plans; and
- Provide assistance for the middle-class at a level commensurate with those who currently qualify for all forms of assistance including medical, dental, mental health services.

## Education

California's education system was once the envy of America. Our K-12 schools were among the best funded in the country, and under the leadership of Governor Pat Brown the California Master Plan for Higher Education made our community colleges, our California State Universities and our University of California institutional systems to emulate throughout the world. In recent years, our continual disinvestment from education threatens our ability to offer our youth the education they require to usher our state into the future. At the K-12 level California ranks 47th out of 50 states in educational funding and we are the only state in the nation to spend more on prison funding than on higher education, despite a projected shortage of more than one million college graduates by 2025.

California's students must have access to a free, fully accessible and equitable world-class public education. Postsecondary education must be available and affordable to all interested students. Our elementary, secondary, and postsecondary institutions must be well resourced and they must provide a well-rounded, balanced curriculum that will prepare students for success in a globally interconnected world.

*To help educate California's young leaders for the 21st century, Democrats will fight to:*

- Provide an excellent and equitable education for all California's students, in which they have access to quality instruction in all content areas, including math, science, English, history, social studies, health, physical education, and foreign languages; are assessed through multiple means that are valid and reliable for all students; and have the resources they need to be prepared for postsecondary education, career technical education, and active citizenship in the 21st century; provide linguistically and culturally relevant educational opportunities so that our diverse students can draw upon their knowledge and experience as they acquire academic content knowledge and master essential skills;
- Ensure adequate preparation of students and affordable access to career technical education, community college, or university-level educational opportunities of the highest caliber at minimal personal expense, including opportunities for lifetime learning and career retraining to enable all Californians to succeed in the global economy;
- Target reforms and resources to close the achievement gap, with specific emphasis on promising practices that support English learners, students coming from generational poverty, and special populations;
- Support multiple means of evaluating efficacy of administrators, teachers, schools, and districts;
- Support comprehensive, age-appropriate sex education designed to help stem the spread of sexually transmitted diseases;
- Ensure that teachers are well compensated, have opportunities for professional growth, and are able to work in safe learning environments within modern facilities with access to up to date curricular materials and technology for their students;
- Ensure that accountability measures for both traditional and charter schools are held to the same standards; and
- Invest in per student funding at above the national average to improve California's long-term economic viability and competitiveness in the 21st century.

## Energy, Environment and Agriculture

All Californians, urban, suburban and rural, hold a shared interest in preserving and protecting the environment that sustains us. California Democrats have led the way toward effective bi-partisan solutions to problems arising from our industrial society - resource extraction, waste disposal and pollution - and their disparate impact on our forests, family farms, the poor, ethnic minorities and indigenous people.

We will work to reverse the real and imminent threat of global warming and to protect public health and our planet.

*To safeguard our cherished environment, California Democrats will:*

### **Energy**

- Urge Congress to pass a comprehensive energy security and climate protection law that includes national requirements for renewable electricity generation, a reduced reliance on dirty forms of energy such as coal, and a rigorous greenhouse gas emissions cap for the nation that meets or exceeds sound scientific standards; and
- Support minimum price guarantees as a method of promoting domestic and entrepreneurial renewable energy production and to increase the percentage of renewable energy in California's power mix.

### **Environment**

- Create green collar jobs by providing incentives for the development, production, deployment and purchase of environmentally friendly products, renewable energy systems, energy efficient goods and services, and recycled materials through public/private partnerships;
- Oppose any attempt to rollback or weaken the state's landmark Global Warming Solutions Act; by 2020, return to the state's 1990 greenhouse gas emissions levels; produce 40 percent of California's electricity from renewable and sustainable energy sources; and reduce electricity and natural gas use by 20 percent; by 2030, produce 40 percent of the state's transportation fuels from non-petroleum sources; and support Low Carbon Fuel Standards that take into account long-term sustainability;
- Reject any attempt for new offshore oil or gas development, preserve coastal access, protect the mandates of the California Coastal Act, and support the recovery and preservation of our ocean ecosystems;
- Restore the clarity of Lake Tahoe and preserve California's inland lakes by preventing the intrusion of new aquatic invasive species, and by protecting watersheds and surrounding forest ecosystems;
- Oppose any attempt to weaken the federal Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, or the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA);
- Support a comprehensive statewide water resource management plan that includes the upper watershed areas and preserves the health of the Delta by bringing the Delta levee system to 200-year flood protection levels;
- Promote sustainable utilization and conservation of natural resources and public lands through appropriate taxation for extraction of non-renewable natural resources and thoughtful land use planning to combat suburban sprawl; reject any sale of public forestry and park lands; support dedicated funding for state parks; and safeguard California's forests through sustained yield best practices forestry, the elimination of clear cutting (and subsidies for roads to enable clear cutting) to preserve natural habitat diversity and connectivity, soil conservation measures, the preservation of heritage trees, and carbon sequestration techniques;
- Support light and heavy duty vehicle regulations to help provide healthier air for all Californians, support strong and workable low-emission and zero-emission vehicle standards that will continue to be a model for the country, and support Clean Vehicle Incentive programs; and
- Encourage the goal of "Net Zero Energy Emissions" in new home construction by 2020, and Net Zero Energy Emissions in new commercial construction by 2030, and encourage the use of fire resistant, termite-proof and energy efficient building materials in all new residential and light commercial construction.

### **Agriculture and Food Safety**

- Provide innovative incentives that will encourage agricultural water conservation and the retention of lands for agricultural production and encourage low impact/sustainable agricultural practices;
- Curtail and phase out pesticides that pose threats to farm workers and consumers; and
- Promote food safety, appropriate food labeling and the humane treatment of animals in food production.

### **Equality of Opportunity**

The California Democratic Party believes that all persons deserve the opportunity to participate fully in the economic, cultural, political and social facets of society. We take pride in and celebrate our diversity and work to foster the

common values and commitments that unite all people regardless of their age, cultural heritage, national origin, disability, socio-economic status, gender, race, sexual orientation or views on religion.

*To fight for all people to live with dignity and equality, California Democrats will:*

- Speak out in a unified voice against hatred, racism and violence directed against any minority group;
- Encourage, support and defend voluntary and mandatory affirmative action measures to enhance access and equity in employment, education and business opportunities;
- Affirm that the decision to accept or reject any religious belief, to bind oneself to any religious creed, or to hold no religious belief at all is a private matter and should always remain a matter of individual conscience, and we oppose giving any government funding to organizations that discriminate;
- Protect the constitutional rights of Native Americans and the sovereign rights of Indian nations as well as the tribal sovereignty and well-established rights and jurisdictions of California Native/Indian nations;
- Support nondiscrimination and equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender people in all aspects of their lives; and
- We support the LGBT Community in its quest for the right to legal marriage as well as the clergy's complete religious freedom to solemnize marriages in accordance with their beliefs.

## **Health Care**

California Democrats believe that health care is a human right not a privilege. The CDP recognizes that the health and well-being of Californians cannot continue to be based on arbitrary private and public financial decisions, and therefore advocates legislation to create and implement a publicly funded (single-payer), privately delivered, fiscally tractable, affordable, comprehensive, secure, high-quality, efficient, and sustainable health care for all Californians.

*To build a healthy future for all Californians, Democrats will:*

- Support and implement universal comprehensive health care for all Californians that includes medical and dental care, full reproductive health services that respects a woman's right to choose, preventive services, prescription drugs, and mental health and substance abuse counseling and treatment;
- Lead the nation in providing comprehensive quality health care to all our people by enacting SCHIP (State Children's Health Insurance Program) coverage for all children in California;
- Work to strengthen Medi-Cal and Medicare and oppose efforts to privatize such safety net programs;
- Support a requirement that all HMOs and health insurers obtain prior approval from the state before rates can be increased and when such time as all Californians are covered by publicly funded health care, support an independent panel free of health care industry conflict to oversee rate increases, cost-effectiveness, and quality of care;
- Ensure that loss of employment does not cause a loss of health care;
- Fight to eliminate ostensible denial of coverage because excessive rating based on pre-existing conditions;
- Fight the practice of undue rescission;
- Expand and strengthen respite care and in-home support services including adequate background checks prior to licensure, and promote an in-home support services system;
- Ensure economic and physical access to multilingual health care services;
- Support addressing health care disparities and promote the goals of the Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health;
- Support the full funding of community clinics and health centers that serve low-income and homeless populations;

- Protect funding for health care services as mandated by voters from being transferred or redirected for any other purpose [e.g., Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63)];
- Enforce the Patient's Bill of Rights;
- Affirm that medical decisions must be made with respect for patients' rights to privacy and freedom to have control over their lives with fully informed consent;
- Invest in education, incentives, and other means to prevent disease and promote healthy living; and
- Lead the fight against diseases by supporting and expanding stem cell and other groundbreaking research.

## Immigration

California is the most diverse state in the nation; its vibrant diversity reflects the foundation of America's strength. It emphasizes the fundamental principles of inclusion and national unity that respect the rules of law and human dignity. California Democrats believe that the American immigration system should be inclusive, fair, and just. Immigration must be consistent with American values of freedom, opportunity, compassion, and respect for human rights.

*As citizens of a state built upon the successes of immigrants, California Democrats will:*

- Affirm that we can make America stronger at our borders and uphold our values by honoring the tradition of providing a safe place for immigrants seeking a life of freedom and opportunity;
- Ensure that the fundamental rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution are applied to every person within U.S. borders;
- Support efforts to safeguard America's security while respecting the principles of the American Dream;
- Support comprehensive, bipartisan immigration reform that addresses fairness; family reunification; family unity, including giving full faith and credit to families of same sex marriages and same sex couples; and a path to earned legal residency for undocumented immigrants in our communities;
- Encourage increased and expedited processing of applications for family reunification and naturalization while supporting reasonable and fair application fees;
- Support our elected officials in seeking timely information with regard to status of immigration paperwork for constituents, particularly for those constituents who have suffered hardship from backlogs and undue delays;
- Support efforts to improve the naturalization process and make citizenship more accessible and affordable by increasing transparency on application fees, providing uniform administration of the naturalization exam, and assisting immigrants prepare for citizenship;
- Support efforts providing undocumented immigrants with a transitional path to earned legalized residency and citizenship, including methods to pay back taxes; learn English; register with the federal government for work permits; contribute to the U.S. through education, work, military service, or other community service; complete criminal and security background checks; and acquire driver licenses and insurance coverage;
- Support efforts to provide assistance in English learning and educational opportunities for cultural immersion;
- Support efforts that maximize educational opportunities for all immigrant students, including access to public education and financial assistance as an investment for our common future;
- Affirm efforts to provide equal access to housing to all immigrants and condemn any xenophobic or racist conduct that denies equal housing to all, including a landlord's inquiry into the citizenship or immigration status of a tenant or a prospective tenant;
- Support efforts to provide health care and access to insurance for all immigrants to ensure the well-being of our communities;
- Support efforts to promote available government services to immigrant communities;

- Support outreach efforts that promote civic engagement and participation in the political process among naturalized citizens that reflect the diversity of our communities, such as voter registration and voter education, and support effective legal safeguards and protections for access to voting and voting materials in letters, spirit, and practice;
- Oppose scapegoating, racial profiling, bigotry, vigilantism, exploitation, and any xenophobic conduct that polarize communities and denounce actions, by government or otherwise, that keep undocumented immigrants in the shadows of our society;
- Ensure intervention for abuse, discrimination and crime among or against immigrants and removing the fear of arrest and deportation for reporting such abuse;
- Encourage the cooperation of local law enforcement with immigrant communities in the interest of public safety for all;
- Oppose efforts by law enforcement agencies in abusing discretion by unfairly targeting, threatening, intimidating, or otherwise harassing immigrants because of their immigration statuses; and
- Denounce the use of local law enforcement agencies as federal immigration law enforcement.

### **Internet, Free Speech and Communications**

California Democrats, in order to promote vigorous free speech, a vibrant business community, and unfettered access to all information on the Internet, support policies to preserve an open, neutral and interconnected Internet. California Democrats strongly agree with recent rulings by the Federal Election Commission that political communications, including blogging, which take place independent of a political party, committee or candidate, receive a media exemption from campaign finance regulations. California Democrats further reaffirm their support of the right to free speech as expressed in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and corresponding provisions in the California Constitution, including the right to critique any elected official or comment on any and all public policy, whether during war or peace, without fear of reprisal.

*To promote and support the Internet, Free Speech and Communications California Democrats will:*

- Support protections against any degradation or blocking of access to any websites or content on the Internet to which access is legal and constitutionally guaranteed;
- Ensure that consumers have the right to free email and that any and all communications will be protected from warrantless search and seizure as constitutionally guaranteed;
- Encourage build-out of high speed networks to all homes and businesses so that everyone, especially rural and underserved areas, can access content of their choice and upload or download what they want on the Internet as a public utility maintained by union workers;
- Establish and secure ownership limits on private sector mass media to encourage and provide more cultural diversity, while protecting the openness, accessibility and integrity of the Internet as a public media resource for all Americans, regardless of income; and
- Protect free expression by insulating those who engage in it from criminal or civil liability, if the content of that expression is constitutionally protected. To this end we must also prohibit the enforcement in California of any judgment or other determination by any court or tribunal of any other jurisdiction, if the expressive conduct of the defendant, that is the basis for the judgment in question, would have been protected as a right of free expression, if the lawsuit had been brought in this state.

### **Labor, Economic Justice and Poverty Elimination**

California Democrats continue to be close partners with labor and strong supporters of workers' rights. The 'glass ceiling' for people of color and women must be shattered and there must be equal pay for equal or comparable work. Our strong workforce, coupled with a work ethic second to none, is what made California among our nation's most valuable resources.

As we pull ourselves out of this devastating economy, California's future prosperity will depend upon jobs that ensure a minimum standard of living for all its residents. Food, shelter, clothing, health care and education are among the basic human rights of all individuals. We are determined in our commitment to safeguard these basic human rights and to

strongly support public services designed to eliminate poverty, hunger and homelessness among the poor, the elderly, the blind and disabled in order to strengthen all California communities.

*To meet the basic economic needs of all Californians, Democrats will:*

- Support a living wage, especially in areas where the increasingly high cost of living, furloughs, pay cuts and rising inflation renders it impossible to afford the basic necessities of life;
- Support creating and maintaining public and private sector jobs that permanently lift the working poor out of poverty and achieve self-sufficiency;
- Fight for public assistance programs that allow individuals to support themselves and their families;
- Guarantee Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) for CalWorks and Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Program (SSI/SSP) recipients in state and federal budgets;
- Support the full funding of food stamp programs to relieve hunger;
- Promote expansion of emergency food networks, senior and school meal programs to end starvation;
- Encourage business and preference for firms that employ California workers whenever public funds finance bridges, highways and other public works construction;
- Pay prevailing wages to protect the economic base of the communities where government-funded projects are undertaken, thereby ensuring that government is not lowering the standard of living;
- Support the 8-hour workday and daily overtime and fight any efforts to repeal the 40-hour workweek;
- Enhance the strong workers' safety programs with adequate and appropriate penalties for injurious and unsafe working conditions;
- Boycott employers who have permanently replaced strikers and protect the collective bargaining rights of workers in both the public and private sectors; and
- Fight anti-worker initiatives that seek to undermine the ability of union leaders to carry out the will of their members and engage in political activities.

## **National Security**

California Democrats support a strong national defense that includes considerations for all aspects of defense, not just the Armed Forces. We are committed to a foreign policy that holds the use of military forces as the last defense option, only when all else fails. We support the consolidation of all aspects of the national defense budget, now spread among Defense, State, Energy, Homeland Security and other cabinet departments, into a single, consolidated budget line item, so that redundancies can be eliminated and, more importantly, no aspect of total national defense goes under-served.

*To protect and defend California and our Constitution, Democrats will:*

- Rebalance the security portfolio in the context of a consolidated defense budget to place more emphasis on nonmilitary security tools such as diplomacy and foreign aid, by shifting as much as 10 percent of the current security funding from Defense to State and Homeland Security;
- Reduce the defense development and procurement programs to those items deemed essential for defense against real and not imagined threats;
- Increase the security of ports by greatly increasing the inspection routine at all air and seaports and by further limiting points of access and increasing the inspection routine on all land borders;
- Integrate anti-terrorist information and actions by rapidly establishing the free exchange of threat information among the anti-terrorist operating agencies;
- Increase foreign non-military aid for improved anti-terrorist police training, investigation, information exchange, and international cooperation;

- Reaffirm posse comitatus and forbid the use of American troops on American soil, except in the event of invasion or in an assistance role to the states in the event of a natural disaster, and then only at their request;
- Increase federal funding to states and communities for equipping, training and expanding the force of first-responders;
- Rebuild and strengthen the National Guard as the states' principal means of providing internal security under the command of the various governors; and
- Further, California Democrats recognize the supremacy of the United States Constitution in all matters, and enjoin our representatives in Congress to reaffirm the civil and personal rights in that document and not trade them off against invasive and intrusive security legislation against imagined threats. "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance" – the price must not be our constitutional rights.

## **Political Reform**

California Democrats believe that a healthy democracy is based on clean, fair elections whose integrity and accuracy merit the full confidence of the voters. We will work for public financing of political campaigns at all levels of government, campaign-spending limits, fair and impartial redistricting, and fair access to media. We will insist that officeholders respond honestly and effectively to constituent needs through transparent and open public service. We will fight the culture of corruption, cronyism, and incompetence in politics that has inflicted a great cost upon the American people. We demand open and fraud-free elections and incontrovertible government accountability to the electorate. We support public ownership of all election processes, software and equipment. We will ensure that all eligible voters can vote, that every voter can verify their vote, and that every vote is counted as cast, exactly as the voter intended.

*To promote honest leadership and open and effective government, California Democrats will:*

- Support changes to the California Constitution to enable all legislative actions on revenue and budget to be determined by a simple majority vote;
- Support a reform of California Proposition 13 to allow for split rolls and ensure that businesses contribute a fair share;
- Support the repeal of California Proposition 8;
- Support changes to the California Constitution in order to reform the ballot initiative process and discourage ballot box budgeting;
- Support a relaxation of term limit laws in order to improve the effectiveness of the State Senate and Assembly with more experienced legislators;
- Enhance the democratic process by ensuring that we have an educated citizenry, equal opportunity for influence, honest public debate, competitive elections and robust civic participation;
- Support and implement public financing of elections at the local, state and federal levels, to eliminate the corrupting influence of commercial motive and corporate cash from the electoral process;
- Uphold the Voting Rights Act and its implementation in letter, spirit and practice, and improve voter outreach and education efforts, especially for youth and underserved communities;
- Increase voter participation by advocating extended voting hours, scheduling elections on weekends, or by declaring Election Day a holiday;
- Request that the issuance or renewal of California driver licenses to U.S. citizens triggers their automatic addition or update to voter registration records, unless they specifically opt out;
- Investigate and prosecute any and all forms of voter intimidation, including improper solicitation of documentation;
- Demand public verification of all electoral results by insisting on voter-marked, voter-verified paper ballots as the ballot of record. Promote voting system transparency at every stage of the electoral process by counting the

votes securely in each local precinct on Election Day, and by advocating public ownership of all voting systems and software, and the exclusive use of open source software, if software is used at all. Call for mandatory federal certification of any computerized voting system, tested to national-security standards for accuracy, reliability, and security, with mandatory public disclosure of certification testing results. Demand a ban on any and all forms of Internet voting, and prohibition of any connection between the Internet and any component of any election, vote-counting, or tabulating system. Insist on robust, mandatory auditing procedures, inclusive of absentee ballots. Require updated and thorough recount procedures;

- Support candidates who pledge full accountability to the electorate, and hold them to that pledge; request regular reports, in person, to the members of the California Democratic Party and their constituents in their home districts;
- Promote, where feasible, instant run-off elections, or other form of preferential voting, especially in primaries; and
- Recommend as a pledge of candidacy, adherence to a Democratic Party policy that no election be conceded by any Party candidate unless and until all ballots cast are counted.

## Seniors

California Democrats recognize the importance of our seniors, the fastest growing age group in the nation, and believe they enrich our everyday experiences, connect us with our past and forecast our collective future. We affirm and embrace the continuing contributions of our seniors and we continue to be committed to fostering the strong bond between the young, those in the middle, and our elders. Our seniors deserve the highest standard of care from the health care industry and a prescription drug program that helps them get the medicine they need. We are committed to protecting homeownership and hard-earned pensions as well as the support services and assistance that collectively help seniors maintain independence and quality of life. We strongly believe that seniors be offered the opportunity to remain in jobs that they have so successfully performed in for many years.

Pre-seniors, ages 55 to 62, have been among those hardest hit by the current economic downturn. Many in this baby boomer generation have lost the ability to regain financial footing, yet they don't qualify for the same benefits as their elders, such as low-income housing and Medicare. Forced retirement for those 55 and older costs needed income, which results in loss or reduction of benefits and brings additional financial burden to Social Security and Medicare.

*To honor California seniors, Democrats will:*

- Oppose mandatory retirement;
- Work for additional retraining for the boomer generation to remain in the workforce; extend unemployment, housing and health care benefits to individuals 55 and older and their immediate family;
- Strengthen Social Security and preserve hard-earned pensions as the bedrocks of a dignified retirement;
- Continue Medicare as the Defined Benefit Plan;
- Work toward universal, comprehensive health care; until that is achieved, reform Medicare Part D to make it clear, affordable and easily accessible to people of all incomes levels, specifically addressing the numerous eligibility problems encountered by pharmacists and the confusing number of private drug plans from which millions of retirees have been forced to choose;
- Affirm the right of all seniors to manage their attendant care so they may live with dignity in their own homes and communities;
- Support increased, stable funding, and expansion of service hours for In Home Supportive Services (IHSS);
- Investigate and prosecute crimes against seniors, including white-collar and financial schemes as well as elder abuse, and strictly enforce all existing penalties for crimes against seniors;
- Increase counseling, emergency, and permanent low to moderate income, affordable senior housing, and the number of senior centers that provide services, including day care efforts, help for seniors with Alzheimer's, as well as support for their families, and more food banks for the growing number of seniors who lack basic, adequate nutrition;

- Fight to preserve and protect programs that serve low-income seniors such as: Adult Protective Services, Senior Community Employment, Multipurpose Senior Service Programs, Alzheimer's Care Resource Centers, Home Delivered Meals, Long-Term Care Ombudsman, California Senior Legal Hotline, renter's assistance, homeowner property tax discount assistance programs and property tax postponement; and
- Expand public transportation and other transit services to support seniors on limited incomes, with or without health concerns, to travel freely and enjoy a quality lifestyle.

## **Sustainable Communities**

California Democrats seek to build healthy, livable and sustainable communities that conserve natural resources, promote smart growth, are economically prosperous, and socially equitable. Unsustainable consumption reduces our energy independence, exacerbates both global warming and urban/suburban sprawl, while it increases our trade deficit. We are committed to environmental justice, a sustainable lifestyle, and a healthy economy over both the short and the long term.

*To promote sustainable communities, California Democrats will:*

- Reward local governments and regions for completing voluntary, sub-regional comprehensive planning processes that stem the tide of urban and suburban sprawl and that reduce dependence upon the automobile as a primary means of transportation, and enhance infrastructure for public transportation, bicycles and pedestrians;
- Provide support for alternatives to driving, from bicycle education to high-speed rail;
- Work for equitable and environmentally sound road and parking use;
- Create greenbelts around our urban areas, thereby reducing traffic gridlock, wildfires and erosion, and promoting efficient land use;
- Promote regional tax revenue sharing in order to decrease local governments' dependence upon sales tax revenue and minimize sprawl;
- Increase the construction of affordable housing to alleviate and prevent homelessness, and develop supportive housing with continuum of care services to help homeless people re-establish themselves as self-sufficient contributors to society;
- Protect and promote affordable housing to alleviate and prevent homelessness;
- Protect existing homeowners' property rights by limiting eminent domain to reasonable public uses, and oppose the practice of abusing eminent domain to take homes without the consent of the owner and convey property from one private person to another or to any corporation merely to increase its tax revenue;
- Encourage incentives to reclaim and redevelop old abandoned buildings and brownfields;
- Provide a homestead floor with absolute minimum protection for homeowners when they are forced into bankruptcy due to unanticipated health care costs or predatory lending schemes; and
- Oppose utility monopoly referendums that change state community choice laws allowing local governments to contract freely for electric power.

## **Veterans**

All veterans from all components of military service should receive equal treatment, including those veterans of operations-other-than-war undertaken by the United States, and should be provided all the entitlements given to veterans of earlier service, including education and training benefits, health benefits, home loans and other financial assistance. We support the G.I. Bill of Rights for the 21st Century and believe that earned benefits should be readily available to all service members, eligible veterans and their families on a timely basis within their own communities.

*Through the shared sacrifice of all Californians to leave no veteran behind, Democrats will work to:*

- Demand truth in recruiting and open enlistment for all;

- Provide support services for active duty military personnel and their families without cost to the service member;
- Provide our troops with the latest in protective equipment and weaponry and provide total training prior to deployment;
- Provide the same benefits as those given to the regular armed forces for all National Guard and Reserve members activated for federal service;
- Support enforcement of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) ensuring that activated reservists and National Guard can resume their jobs upon return, without exception, with the state being the employer of last resort when necessary;
- Insist that the federal Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) fulfill its legal obligation to veterans by reducing the backlog of claims both through accelerated claims processing and by assumption of service connection;
- Provide payment from the state for veterans and military benefits earned if the federal government is unwilling to pay, and hold the veteran safe from recovery of such payments if the claim is later denied by the federal government, except in the case of fraud;
- Provide monetary support and services to families who bear the burden as caregivers for disabled veterans;
- Waive all tuition and fees in state colleges and universities for all veterans of the Middle East wars (2 August 1990 – future date not determined); and
- Grant citizenship for non-citizen veterans who have served honorably in the military of the United States.

## **Women**

California is the proud home of pioneering women who have blazed new trails in business, entrepreneurship, culture and politics. We proudly and vigorously support a woman's right to choose how to use her mind, her body and her time. Democrats respect women as full partners in family and society.

*To demonstrate this respect, California Democrats will:*

- Promote and support equal access for women of all ages to training, jobs and promotions, and equal pay for equal work, capital, equity and contracts;
- Promote and support affirmative action, the rights accorded to women in Title IX, the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, and ratification of the ERA;
- Preserve confidential, unrestricted access to affordable, high quality, culturally sensitive health care services, including the full range of reproductive services, contraception and abortion, without requiring guardian, judicial, parental, or spousal consent or notification;
- Support the programs of the Violence against Women Act (VAWA), including educational and preventive initiatives, especially those that serve women at risk of sexual and domestic violence;
- Promote and support universally available health screening and treatment programs for all women in California, including regular gynecological screening and early breast cancer detection, treatment and supportive services;
- Promote age-appropriate sex education in every public and private school curriculum in California;
- Promote and support available, high quality pre-natal and peri-natal services for all women and children in California;
- Promote health insurance and medical coverage of the full range of mental health services and treatment for women, including early screening and intervention for postpartum depression, and of supportive care, including substance abuse treatment, for women who are pregnant;
- Increase both parenting and job skills for women through available, comprehensive education and training for single mothers and women who were formerly incarcerated;

- Expand workplace rights for women including flex time, compensatory time and pregnancy and family leave in all employment contracts;
- Stand against human trafficking and sexual exploitation of minors both domestically and internationally; and
- Promote and support the engagement of young women in our political process in order to develop a pipeline for new leadership.

## **World Peace and International Relations**

The new administration has made a dramatic impact on the world. America now stands for international cooperation first, working with our allies, forging new relationships and providing principled leadership. Remarkable presidential addresses around the world have helped America regain its rightful place as a light to the world, a beacon for hope, freedom, democracy and the pursuit of human rights.

As the conscience of the world we must restore the capability of multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and NATO, and use our economic leadership to leverage the capacity of foreign aid institutions to foster International peace and decrease poverty. We must change our domestic policies to ensure that our need for energy supplies and our current substantial debt dependence do not drive our foreign policy.

Terrorism is a plague, but the wars abroad have clearly demonstrated that even for the most powerful nation on earth, it is impossible to eradicate terrorism through war and brute force. Foreign intelligence, an effective foreign aid program and domestic policing are much more effective and less costly means of fighting terrorism.

The Obama administration has begun the process of concluding two wars that were inherited in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our Party vigorously supports these efforts as well as an end to the use of mercenary contractors. We must turn Iraq over to the Iraqis and Afghanistan to the Afghans. We reiterate our support for a timetable for the withdrawal of all combat forces from Afghanistan.

We honor our troops best by returning them home to their loved ones. We honor the valor of those who sacrificed their lives by bringing their comrades safely home to their families, and we honor the men and women of our military when we only place them in harm's way against real and immediate threats against our beloved country they so nobly serve. We must also properly provide for this new generation of veterans upon their return.

The United States and the state of California suffer from an ongoing economic crisis, and while both wars continue to cost billions each month, we must face the truth: current and foreseeable domestic needs cannot be met given the demands of wars, which are paid for with borrowed money and not supported by a majority of California Democrats. Further cutting social programs while an open-ended military policy is being implemented is not consistent with the true needs of our country.

Finally we must have the courage of our convictions and trust in the belief that the American people will support truth over the fear-mongering of our political adversaries. It is the only moral path to take as we strive for world peace.

*California Democrats support an international policy that will:*

- Support a timetable for the withdrawal of our military personnel from Afghanistan;
- Support multi-party talks aimed at ensuring a democratic and legitimate representation of the people of Afghanistan and Iraq;
- Support the President's efforts to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, using diplomacy and economic sanctions;
- Proactively seek a durable peace treaty in the Middle East;
- Cooperate with other nations to eliminate terrorism, increase literacy and child survival rates, combat poverty disease and malnutrition, bolster existing and new democracies and developing nations and reduce the support and demand for narcotics;
- Combat external threats through increased participation in and cooperation with international agencies, greater participation in peacekeeping operations, and through international collaboration in reestablishing sound government in failed and failing states;

- Sign, ratify and abide by the terms of the key international treaties that advance the causes of peace and human rights, such as: the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention, the Mine Ban Treaty, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the Convention on Discrimination Against Women, the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- Follow the Geneva and Hague Conventions. No torture. No extraordinary renditions. No exceptions;
- Commit our best efforts to the achievement of the UN Millennium Goals and enhance the capabilities of the UN and regional organizations;
- Set as an official long term, objective policy of the United States the elimination of all nuclear weapons around the world. Reallocate nuclear and other defense expenditures in a manner commensurate with actual threats. Enhance efforts to deprive terrorists of weapons of mass destruction by moving multilaterally to diminish stockpiles of such weapons;
- Affirm the mission of the State Department as the promotion of world peace and disarmament through diplomacy;
- Condition our own policies and actions and our aid to other governments upon respect for human rights;
- Tailor our own foreign policy to eliminate the worst pockets of poverty by targeting an additional one percent of our federal budget to aid and development;
- Promote population-planning worldwide through education and support for family planning organizations;
- Reduce our nation's huge trade deficit and restore America's global economic leadership by designing policies that maximize the benefits and minimize the negative consequences of globalization; and
- Structure fair trade agreements requiring countries to adopt and enforce key internationally recognized labor standards such as the right to associate and bargain collectively, and the prohibitions of child labor, forced labor and discrimination in employment.

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