

PLATFORM OF THE SKAGIT COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

As adopted by the Skagit County Democratic Convention
May 1, 2016

Our Vision

The Skagit County Democratic Party sees a bright future with broad participation of diverse groups working together to create a healthy, sustainable, equitable society incorporating government of the people, by the people, for the people including recognition of the rights of all people present in this country.

Our Mission

The Skagit County Democratic Party is an inclusive political organization that seeks to elect Democrats committed to the core values of our constituents and the Platform of the Washington State Democratic Party.

Preamble

*Excerpts from President Franklin D. Roosevelt's
State of the Union message to Congress, January 11, 1944*

"This Republic had its beginning, and grew to its present strength, under the protection of certain inalienable political rights - among them the right of free speech, free press, free worship, trial by jury, freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures. They were our rights to life and liberty.

As our nation has grown in size and stature, however, - as our industrial economy expanded - these political rights proved inadequate to assure us equality in the pursuit of happiness. We cannot be content, no matter how high the general standard of living may be, if some fraction of our people - whether it be one-third or one-fifth or one-tenth - is ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed, and insecure.

We have come to a clear realization that true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence. People who are hungry and out of a job are the stuff of which dictatorships are made.

In our day, these economic truths have become accepted as self-evident. We have accepted, so to speak, a second Bill of Rights under which a new basis of security and prosperity can be established for all - regardless of station, race, or creed. Among these are:

- The right to a useful and remunerative job in the industries or shops or farms or mines of the nation;
- The right to earn enough to provide adequate food and clothing and recreation;
- The right of every farmer to raise and sell his products at a return which will give him and his family a decent living;
- The right of every businessman, large and small, to trade in an atmosphere of freedom from unfair competition by monopolies at home or abroad;

- The right of every family to a decent home;
- The right to adequate medical care and the opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health;
- The right to adequate protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident, and unemployment; The right to a good education.

America's own rightful place in the world depends in large part upon how fully these and similar rights have been carried into practice for our people."

Our Platform

As Democrats we respect the rights guaranteed by our Constitution that support:

- Economic Opportunity;
- Social and Civil Justice;
- Personal Freedom;
- Security;
- Privacy.

We are dedicated to achieving peace, prosperity, opportunity and a government based on responsible optimism.

- Our platform rests on the principles that there should be:
- Security for all citizens;
- Education, jobs and economic opportunity for all;
- Accessible and affordable healthcare for all Americans;
- Rebuilding of our reputation in the world as a cooperative and just country;
- Reversal of the erosion of civil liberties in our country;
- Recognition that diversity strengthens our nation;
- Recognition that we are responsible for our ethical, economic, environmental and educational legacy.

Skagit County Democrats adopt this platform to ensure that voters and candidates for public office understand and support our goals.

Agriculture

We believe that agriculture is the number one industry in Washington State, and we support programs to insure the availability of high-quality food, and preserve family farms to maintain the viability of the land.

We support:

- Policies that promote and encourage small, safe, and clean local food production;
- The production of food in close proximity to consumers in Washington State;
- The use of household gardens for food production;
- Food production and small farm classes in Washington State schools;
- Industrial hemp as a source of jobs in the growing, processing, manufacture and export of industrial hemp and hemp based products.
- Legislation requiring the clear labeling of foods containing GMOs.
- Legislation that bans the use of pesticides, glyphosate (Roundup) and Neonicotinoid (believed to be the central cause of bee hive collapse) in Washington State.

We oppose:

- Food production and distribution that depends on large, energy inefficient machinery;
- The production, processing and transportation of food by large anonymous corporations that rob the consumer of knowledge about food products and stifle the local economy;
- The use of prime agricultural lands for non-agricultural uses such as wetland mitigation banks or residential or commercial development.

Economic Development, Corporate Power, & Media Reform

We believe that corporate influence on the political process should end.

We support legislation that:

- Protects people from malfeasance and evils committed by corporations by holding corporations liable for their actions;
- Holds subject to criminal prosecution corporate executives who make decisions that cause great suffering or death;
- Requires corporations to compensate victims of corporate malfeasance.
- Ensure the wealthiest Americans pay a fair share of taxation over and above the middle class
- Creates a bill establishing a state bank known as the Washington State Trust.
- Says corporations are not people.
- That banks that pose a threat to our economic system be nationalized and broken up.
- Legislation that subjects the Federal Reserve Bank of the United States to a complete audit.

We believe that the free flow of information is fundamental to democracy.

We call on Congress and the Federal Communications Commission to:

- Hold hearings in order to truly understand how consolidation has adversely impacted communities across the country;

- Take steps to increase access to minority ownership of media outlets;
- Strengthen media ownership regulations to limit the number of newspapers and media outlets one corporation may own;
 - Demand divestiture of media consolidation, private and corporate, to a pre-1995 status.
- Make promotion of local, public control of the airwaves.
- Make presidential debates, run by a non-partisan commission, open to all candidates who meet a defined threshold of support
- Provide adequate funding for Public Broadcasting
- Assure transparency of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Education

We believe that all children have a right to a quality education.

We recommend multiple measures for high-stakes decisions in public education besides standardized testing in light of the following:

- There is a local and national tendency to rush toward standardized testing for high stakes decisions in public education, in spite of mounting evidence that standardized tests penalize students who are second-language speakers and from lower socioeconomic groups.
- The funds being spent to support these high-stakes standardized tests could more effectively go toward proven methods of effective learning, such as smaller class size.

We support:

- Establishing facilities and programs that advance vocational and technical education.
- Legislation for fully funding pre-school through grade 12 and technical education.
- Legislation that substantially funds public colleges, universities, and technical schools.
- Legislation that lowers the interest rate on student loans and finds ways to relieve the financial stress of college students and graduates burdened with huge student debt.
- Legislation that will finance the McLeary Obligation to Washington State schools and fully fund basic education.

Environment & Energy

We believe it is imperative that every citizen of the United States practices energy conservation measures as we pursue alternative sources of energy to relieve our dependence on foreign oil.

We further believe that protection of the environment is essential to maintaining a strong economy for the long term.

We support:

- Continued research into the cost, efficiency and environmental impacts of proposed alternative fuels;
- Alternative forms of energy and fuel demonstrated to be clean, safe, renewable, sustainable, and cost effective;
- Programs that protect air and water quality;

- Programs that support the preservation and restoration of wild salmon runs and habitat;
- Water conservation measures and restoration of adequate in-stream flows for fish and wildlife;
- Transfer of technologies to developing nations to promote their use of renewable energy.

We support legislation designed to:

- Reduce our nation's reliance on fossil fuels;
- Acknowledge the seriousness and urgency of global warming;
- Promote subsidies for energy conservation, efficiency measures and renewable energy including solar, wind, tidal, micro-hydro and non-GMO bio-mass fuels;
- Reduce carbon emission in the United States by 5% per year by implementing conservation and efficiency measures and by building a renewable energy infrastructure;
- Promote rapid and decisive action to reduce greenhouse gas emission to 80% of 1990 levels by 2050;
- Help fossil fuel dependent countries to implement renewable energy technologies;
- Create economic incentives for companies that produce, install, and service renewable technologies;
- Impose mandatory carbon caps and allow 100% auction of pollution permits;
- Require most packaging to be recyclable and giving industry a time table for completion of research to produce recyclable packaging materials
- Preserve and grow environmentally clean jobs in Washington State to grow that sector of the economy.
- Conduct programmatic environmental impact statements to measure the cumulative impacts of construction of all coal terminals proposed now or in the future.
- Evaluate all societal, economic, and environmental costs exporting coal from Washington State taking into consideration the entire coal export chain from mining to combustion in Asian power plants.
- Conduct a programmatic environmental statement that measures the impacts of construction and operation of coal terminal to the communities and natural settings through which coal and all fossil fuels would pass by rail and water going vessels.
- Permit coal terminals in Washington State only if it's determined after a rigorous study that there will be no net negative impact to the state.
- Include a comprehensive Health Impact Assessment and Economic Impact Assessment conducted under the State or National Environmental Policy Acts.
- Increase the royalties on coal mined on Federal lands, when mined for industrial use.
- Legislation that preserves our National Parks and Wildlife Preservation areas.
- Legislation that will enhance the development and construction of new infrastructure that will remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and not just reduce the amount of carbon dioxide being emitted into the air.

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We support legislation requiring all motor vehicle manufacturer and dealer advertising for all new motor vehicles manufactured after 2008 to include the following information developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy:

- EPA miles per gallon of fuel estimates;

- Estimated annual tons of carbon dioxide emitted (carbon footprint);
- A global warming pollution score;
- The number of barrels of oil required annually for average use;
- A clearly visible link to the joint U.S. EPA and DOE websites on fuel efficiency.

We oppose:

- Development of nuclear energy, new coal-fired power plants, liquid coal, and types of biofuels the production of which harms the environment;
- Any other form of alternative energy or fuel that current scientific knowledge or further research demonstrates to be inefficient, harmful to human health, welfare, or the environment.

We believe that we are stewards of our waters, forests, lands and other natural resources.

We support:

- The preservation of the Chuckanut Mountain Range of Skagit and Whatcom Counties;
- The protection, restoration, and sustainable use and enjoyment of the current roadless areas, wildlife corridors, trail corridors, scenic viewing areas, old growth forest and habitat for species of concern on Blanchard Mountain;
- The inclusion of permanent protected-area status for the sensitive public lands in the Chuckanut Mountains range;
- All Federal, State and Local agencies in their cooperative efforts to solve the flood control problems in Skagit County.
- The earliest possible timeline for the creation of a permanent, statewide standing committee on Sustainability and the Environment within the state party apparatus conforming to all rules and bylaws of other such standing committees.

We oppose:

- Selling or trading of undeveloped or pristine public land for more commercially profitable land.

Foreign Policy

We believe the United States must work cooperatively with other nations to restore our good name in the community of nations and to promote a sustainable, nonviolent world.

We believe that the United States of America should:

- Suspend military aid to Israel while Israel is in violation of international law;
- Create a Middle East Peace Conference to bring all parties to dialogue seeking conflict resolution and cessation of violence;
- Work with other governments and the United Nations to secure fissile material to a high standard and abolish nuclear weapons worldwide;
- Lift sanctions and establish normal trade relations with Venezuela and Cuba.
- Suspend all Military Aid to any Foreign Country that violates International Law.

We support:

- Legislation that sends foreign aid to address social needs, increased employment and economic opportunities for the poor and middle class in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.
- Reducing appropriations for overseas defense spending and investing those funds into domestic infrastructure projects.

Government & Political Reform

We believe that fair and free elections are fundamental to democracy.

We support laws *and conditions* to protect the integrity of our votes that include the following provisions:

- Voting processes should be owned and operated in the public domain;
- There must be a voter verified paper ballot for every vote cast which will be the legal ballot of record;
- Additional uniform nationwide standards should be determined by a non-partisan, nationally recognized commission;
- Election Day should be made a national holiday;
- All votes must be counted publicly and locally in the presence of citizen witnesses and credentialed members of the media;
- All computer voting systems must use open source software;
- Spot check audits shall be conducted on 5% of all voting machines; these audits shall compare machine results with results obtained by human eyes.
- Preference voting and proportional representation in Presidential elections should replace the winner-take-all system in the Electoral College;
- Instant Runoff Voting in Washington State for all state and local elections;
- Making voter suppression illegal.
- Restoring the election of our President and Vice President to a popular vote of the people.
- Calling on the Washington State Democratic Party to study changing from a caucus format to a primary delegate selection process.
- More presidential candidate visits to Washington State.
- Legislation that draws voting districts according to plat maps of existing communities.

We support the American Correctional Association in its call to end the practice of withholding voting rights from parolees and people who have completed their prison terms.

We call on the Washington State Super Delegation to:

- Apportion themselves between the candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination in numbers that accurately reflect the presidential preferences of delegates at the precinct caucuses;

- Call on Super Delegates from other states to likewise apportion themselves based upon the percentages of presidential preferences of the 4,765 delegates selected by the caucus and primary system.

We believe that campaign contributions by special interests corrupt the electoral process.

We support Public Financing for all candidates running for state and national legislative and executive offices.

We believe that taxpayer funded scientific research should strive to produce the best available science to inform policy decisions affecting our health, safety, and environment.

We support:

- Scientific openness within all federal agencies that will promote the free exchange of information consistent with the scientific process;
- Open and transparent science-based decision-making within all federal agencies;
- Public access to government studies and findings of scientific advisory boards;
- Scientists appointed to scientific advisory committees who meet high professional standards;
- Ensuring that appointees to scientific advisory committees do not have conflicts of interest;
- Investigating and taking action to expose and enforce against abuses of science for partisan political ends;
- Ensuring that federal agency scientists who speak out against the suppression or distortion of scientific findings will not face retribution.

We oppose:

- Censorship of scientific studies and reports;
- Explicit or covert questioning of nominees to scientific advisory committees to determine their political loyalty;
- Altering underlying scientific facts and distorting and censoring scientific findings to serve political purposes and reach predetermined political decisions;
- Appointment to scientific panels unqualified individuals who have financial ties or regulated industry affiliation that could represent a conflict of interest;
- The disbanding of important scientific advisory panels;
- The suppression, manipulation, and distortion of scientific research and findings for political ends.

We Support:

- Creating a Department of Peace and Nonviolence.
- Calling for a Constitutional Amendment to overturn the United States Supreme Court decisions Citizens United vs F.E.C and Buckley vs Valeo which construed the spending of money by individuals, corporations and special interests in elections as protected free speech under the Constitution
- Lifting the income ceiling for Social Security withholdings.

We believe that elected officials should adhere to the party platform at least 80% of the time.

We support and encourage discussions in the Democratic family about establishing reasonable and effective term limits for our elected officials.

Patriot Act

We support and encourage Congress to fully educate itself about the Patriot Act. If called to vote, Congress will act in the best interests of the public to protect the freedoms guaranteed in the U. S. Constitution.

Healthcare

We believe that healthcare is a basic human right, and our government should recognize its responsibility to assure accessible, affordable healthcare for all.

We call on all Members of Congress to support and enact single payer health care.

We support:

- Funding for general availability of Plan B, a medication which prevents implantation of the egg after unprotected sex;
- Free distribution of contraceptives;
- A woman's right to control her own body, including the termination of an unplanned pregnancy;
- Appropriate funding and curriculum for comprehensive, medically accurate sex education for the children that shall cover, but not be limited to matters of sexually transmitted diseases, family planning, the cost of raising a child, and the responsibilities and obligations of being a parent;
- Family planning services as a priority in Washington State;
- A plan to address overpopulation in the United States and the world;
- A streamlined process to approve medically-sound and effective birth control methods developed in other countries so that access to them will be available to U.S. residents.
- Fully funding for women's health care including family planning.
- The defense and adequate funding of Medicare and Medicaid.
- U.S. health care plans for all equal to those of federally elected officials.
- Advocating for the enactment of State single Payer healthcare in Washington State and the entire country.
- Legislation that makes it possible to separate healthcare coverage from employment benefits.
- Legislation to create a separate tax to finance "Single Payer" healthcare in the United States.
- Legislation that provides research into the treatment of all drug addictions.
- Ending "the war on drugs" and instead provide help to cure drug addictions and provide education and awareness on the effects of drug addiction.
- Fully funding the diagnosis, treatment and housing costs of our mentally ill citizens.

Human & Civil Rights

We believe that all Washington Cities and County Governments should pass resolutions in support of our Bill of Rights to affirm Democratic support of the Constitution.

We call on Senators Murray and Cantwell as well as other leaders to condemn domestic spying by agencies of the United States Government.

We urge the Washington Congressional delegation to sponsor legislation to repeal the Patriot Act.

We oppose:

- The recording, filing or sharing of intelligence information thru library lending records, library research records, book and video store rentals, rental records, medical records, financial records, student records and other personal data, even if authorized by the USA Patriot Act;
- Eavesdropping on confidential communications between lawyers and their clients.

We believe that marriage is a human right and should not be restricted by sexual orientation or gender identity.

We urge the general public to refuse to sign any initiative and/or to vote against any referendum intended to take away the rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender individuals.

We support:

- The removal of language in Washington State RCW 9A.44 that state the perpetrator of rape is “a person who is not married to the victim” and that the “victim is not married to the perpetrator” and “is not his or her spouse”.
- The prosecution of perpetrators of the crime of rape/sexual assault within marriages as defined by revised RCQ 9A.44.

We oppose any measure brought forth to interfere with the rulings by the Human Rights Commission as well as oppose any future measure brought forth that would threaten the safety, security and wellbeing of transgender citizens of Washington State.

Immigration

We believe that immigration reform must be approached in a comprehensive and realistic way.

- This would include, at a minimum, the following fundamental principles:
- A path to legalization, documentation, and citizenship;
- Programs offering immigrants instruction in English and preparation for citizenship;
- Support for local communities working to welcome newcomers and welcome them into the community;
- Basic civil liberties and human rights for all;
- Due process rights for everyone;
- Immigrants’ right to a drivers’ license providing the license issued would indicate citizenship and voter status;

- Work permits, travel permission, and access to educational opportunities for undocumented immigrants who have undergone background and security checks;
- A system that targets and criminalizes employers who recruit undocumented workers from abroad for economic gain;
- Mechanisms to meet legitimate needs for new workers without compromising the rights and opportunities of workers already here;
- A worker visa program that adequately protects wages and working conditions of U.S. and immigrant workers
- The right of immigrant workers to join or form a union;
- The right of immigrant workers to change jobs;
- Programs that protect law-abiding employers from unscrupulous competitors and the interests of small family farms.
- Clearing the family backlogs to reunite family members who have filed legal applications
- Enacting the Dream Act allowing undocumented immigrant children to attend college and create a more prepared work force.
- Condemnation of Arizona's, Alabama's, and Georgia's anti-immigrant legislation.
- Supporting comprehensive Immigration reform
- Providing due process and fairness by enforcing labor rights for all workers
- "Dreamers" path to legal citizenship that does not include penalties.

Labor & Economic Justice

We believe that all citizens of the United States should be assured that public monies are administered in a fair and effective manner and that programs and activities deliver services fairly to all children and their families.

We call on Congress to:

- Take all necessary steps to help the victims of natural disasters rebuild their lives and their homes through FEMA;
- Make an accounting of all disaster relief funds and expenditures;
- Support the National Housing and Trust Fund Act and support low interest loans to first time home buyers;
- Immediately raise the Federal minimum wage to a living wage;
- Mandate a return to the tax laws to the 2000 level;
- Enact legislation that protects workers under all state and federal labor laws and workers excluded from the rights to organize with labor unions or associations.
- Enact legislation to substantially increase royalties on coal mined on federal land for export with exceptions for coal slated for use within United States boundaries.

We oppose:

- Legislation that would lead to a decline in benefits or lead to a lessening of procedural protections for injured workers and their families.
- Membership in Trans-Pacific Free Trade Agreement.
- The Trans Pacific Partnership and other like trading schemes.

We support laws that prohibit the exploitation of foreign and domestic workers in accordance with the following policy:

- Companies and nations doing business in or with the U.S. shall be required to adhere to the International Labor Organization (ILO) Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work including, but not limited to, the right to organize into unions and the right to collectively bargain;
- Abolition of child labor;
- Elimination of forced or compulsory labor;
- Protection of the environment;
- Elimination of discrimination;
- Elimination of tax breaks for corporations that violate ILO Principles and Rights or that lay-off U.S. workers and move their jobs offshore;
- Prohibition on our government from moving our jobs offshore.

Law & Justice

We oppose:

- The indefinite incarceration of political prisoners;
- Laws that allow torture while a detainee is in military custody.
- The death penalty in Washington State.
- The inclusion of Robbery 2 and parts of Assault 2 that don't qualify as the most dangerous in the Three Strikes Law

We believe that the War on Drugs has been an abysmal failure.

Current illicit intoxicating addictive substances should be treated in the same manner as legal intoxicating addictive substances such as alcohol and tobacco. We support the growth and sales of marijuana for medical, recreational and industrial use.

We believe in the Second Amendment right of private citizens to keep and bear arms.

We support;

- Making available a means for unlicensed gun sellers to do mental health and background checks, the cost of which to be borne by the buyer.
- The passing of "Extreme Risk" protection orders that legally remove guns from the dangerous hands of anyone who is in psychological crisis for demonstrating violent behavior that will harm themselves or others.

Military & War

We believe that the current and recent wars have hurt the good name of the United States in the community of nations.

We support:

- Legislation that would return all national security functions to our national armed forces, dropping all contracts with private sector armies;

- An open and fair bidding process for all national security contracts awarded by the United States;
- A policy assuring that all American military activities must be performed for fair wages by American service personnel;
- Accountability for all national security contracts awarded by the United States;
- Development of adequate measures and standards for all contract performance and outcomes;
- The automatic increase of funding for the Veterans Administration to offset the increase pressure resulting from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan;

We believe that members of the United States Armed Services including National Guard and those in the Reserve deserve our admiration, our gratitude, and most of all our support.

We support legislation that assures the following for veterans and service members:

- Any troops returned to the United States be provided the most convenient transportation to their home at the expense of the military;
- Educational benefits for use in technical training, college, and other training that supports career development;
- Complete, highest quality, and life-long healthcare benefits including psychological care, psychiatric care, and treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome;
- Realistic disability payment to veterans with disabilities;
- Payment by the military for housing and transportation when veterans require medical treatment available only away from home;
- Payment by the military for all costs for transporting the remains of the deceased individual soldier to the destination determined by the families of the deceased;

We oppose:

- Denying medical expenses to veterans due to claims of pre-existing conditions.

Transportation

We believe that a healthy infrastructure, including our highways, bridges, and rail and ferry systems are essential to the economic wellbeing of our state.

We urge immediately identifying and prioritizing transportation problems in Washington State and establishing a viable funding plan to resolve them.