

MAINE DEMOCRATIC PARTY PLATFORM

as amended by the 2014 Maine Democratic Convention

Preamble

Since its founding, the Democratic Party has led the struggle to strengthen democracy in our government. Democrats believe that the foundation of a strong democracy is an informed and educated electorate, and all members of this electorate have a right to control the political agenda and to debate those issues important to them.

Building on that foundation, Maine Democrats will work actively with federal, state, and local governments to ensure that all people in Maine have:

- *Economic and social fairness, security, opportunity, and justice*
- *Universal access to quality healthcare and education*
- *Ethical, transparent, and accountable government*
- *Freedom to make personal choices*
- *Safety and national security*
- *Guarantees of all human and civil rights*
- *Environmental protection and sustainability*
- *The benefits of global peace*
- *A fair, progressive system of taxes.*

We have long fought and will continue to fight for these policies and principles.

We adopt this platform as an expression of what Democrats in Maine support and as a guideline for elected officials in their political work.

A. Economic Security, Economic Opportunity, and Economic Justice

We support a democratic government that:

- Maintains the Democratic Party's strong record of fiscal responsibility in its historical stand in support of a new economic deal for all Americans and all Mainers.
- Upholds the right of all people to participate fairly in our economy and earn equitable rewards for their contributions.
- Reverses the 30-year trend of increasing economic inequality.
- Recomits itself to reconstructing the social safety net.

Economic Security in Maine means:

1. Jobs with livable wages for all who can work; a minimum wage high enough to raise workers out of poverty.
2. Safe, sanitary, affordable housing.
3. A health care system that protects all Mainers against the economic consequences of illness and injury.

4. Strong, public Social Security and MePERS programs with realistic COLAs; unemployment compensation; rigorous regulation of all pensions; and protection of workers' pension funds.
5. Public services provided without profit motive.
6. Protection from the repercussions of natural disaster including those induced by climate change.

Economic Opportunity in Maine means:

7. Thriving Maine-owned and operated businesses in all economic sectors and support for Maine entrepreneurs through innovation centers and business incubators.
8. Assurance that small businesses are not unfairly disadvantaged by public policies designed for large businesses.
9. Economic growth based on Maine's strengths and unique qualities via responsible sustainable practices that enhance Maine's brand, reputation and vitality.
10. Build out of statewide broadband technology along with active recruiting of high technology and biotechnology research laboratories and cutting edge manufacturing facilities.
11. Fair workplaces with all workers guaranteed the opportunity to organize unions, bargain collectively, and strike without replacement or reprisal. We oppose so-called "Right to Work" laws.

Economic Justice in Maine means:

12. Workplaces free from health and safety hazards, discrimination, and harassment; respect for employees' family obligations, health, and other needs; and effective monitoring and enforcement of laws protecting workers.
13. Reinstatement of strong consumer protection, including protection from predatory practices in financial markets.
14. An economy free from discrimination.
15. Support for those suffering hardship, including strong measures to fight root causes of poverty and homelessness.
16. Elimination of the income cap on Social Security taxes.
17. Repeal of the Social Security Windfall Elimination provision.

B. Health Care

We support a democratic government that:

1. Affirms health care as a fundamental human right and takes action to improve the health and wellness of all people and ensures them access to quality and affordable health care. We believe that full implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) is an important step toward this goal. We also believe this goal is best achieved through the adoption of a universal, single-payer and non-profit health care system for Maine and the nation. Maine should establish its own state-based exchange to better serve the health care needs of the people.
2. Ensures adequate access to health resources for low-income individuals and families by using available Federal Medicaid program funding through the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to finance expansion of MaineCare eligibility.
3. Protects women's right of reproductive choice and full access to reproductive health services.
4. Provides access to quality health care, including mental health, vision and dental care, especially in underserved areas.
5. Provides health care and community support that enables people with disabilities to live independently and work productively.
6. Ensures a safe, secure, nutritious food supply, including comprehensive truth-in-labeling requirements, which include GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms), pesticides, and country of origin.
7. Plans for the impending crisis in elder care.
8. Supports the right to informed individual choice in end of life care.

C. Education:

We support a democratic government that:

1. Guarantees an equitable, universal, high quality public education system that spans early childhood through college and workforce training.
2. Strengthens the development and capacities of all children with high quality pre-school and childcare programs.
3. Ensures that all students can choose from multiple educational pathways that meet their individual learning needs, and can graduate from high school prepared for college, career, and citizenship.

4. Ensures that all students have teachers who are well trained, equipped, and supported, and that parents have opportunities to engage in their children's education.
5. Promotes expansion of middle class job opportunities in Maine and supports coordinated efforts to provide students and workers with the necessary skills to match current and future private and public employer needs through strategic investments in community colleges, public universities, apprenticeship, and other workforce training programs.
6. Addresses the high cost of higher education, with policies that promote cost-effective operations and better need-based financial aid, and promotes and expands the Educational Opportunity Tax Credit program, which seeks to keep the best and brightest college graduates in Maine. Believes the state has a primary role in subsidizing the cost of higher education and should not diminish that responsibility with budget cuts that could lead to lower quality education and higher tuition costs.
7. Holds our education system accountable for efficiently and effectively developing citizens who are well educated, well rounded, and capable of participating successfully in our economy and democracy.

D. Ethical Government and Democracy

We support a democratic government that:

1. Maintains the integrity of the U.S. and Maine Constitutions by strengthening separation of powers and requiring executive, legislative, and judicial accountability.
2. Promotes electoral reforms that result in officials elected by the majority of the voters and legislative bodies being truly representative of their constituencies.
3. Understands that a well-informed electorate is necessary for a truly representative democracy and promotes the free exchange of ideas and information without control or censorship.
4. Opposes the legal concept of corporate personhood as it is applied to participation in the political process.
5. Calls for the constitutional or legislative steps to establish that for political campaigns money is not speech.
6. Restores the integrity of the Maine Clean Elections Act by crafting a robust re-qualifying option that ensures publicly funded candidates remain competitive.
7. Promotes reforms to reduce the influence of professional lobbyists and increase the public's ability to influence laws and rules.

8. Opposes contracting the jobs of public employees to private entities or profit-making agencies.
9. Places a priority on negotiation, mediation, arbitration, reconciliation, and restitution; and enables prevention, management, and peaceful resolution of conflict.
10. Supports an emphasis on rehabilitation and reform in the criminal justice system and the development of alternatives to incarceration.
11. Makes needed public investments in and actively works with the Federal Government to develop Maine's transportation, energy and communication infrastructure.
12. Limits land taking by eminent domain to government entities, exclusively for projects directly benefiting the public and not for private gain.
13. Supports government regulation to protect citizens and consumers.
14. Supports fair compensation for state legislators and provides the tools and resources they need to perform their work.
15. Supports a strong, clearly defined, transparently enforced code of ethics that holds legislators, the governor, and constitutional officers to a high standard of behavior while in office.
16. Supports an increase in the allowable number of terms for state legislators.
17. Supports the legalization of marijuana for adults 21 years and older while protecting minors from its use.

E. Freedom, Safety, and National Security

We support a democratic government that:

1. Cherishes our Constitutional and individual liberties and respects international law.
2. Protects the full enjoyment of the Constitution, especially its guarantees of free speech, free exercise of religion, separation of church and state, and freedom from all forms of discrimination.
3. Endorses the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including rights to food, water, shelter, health, and education.
4. Does not conduct, aid, or condone torture.
5. Guarantees citizens' rights to privacy, rejects the unauthorized collection of personal data by private or public entities, and rejects spying on citizens without individual warrants.

6. Upholds habeas corpus for all people, rejects secret or indefinite detention, and provides detainee's access to adequate and competent counsel and loved ones.
7. Endorses the statewide and national expansion of broadband and the protection of an open internet with net neutrality.

F. Civil Rights

We support a democratic government that:

1. Promotes full participation of all persons in all of society's activities by, for example, enforcing the Americans with Disabilities Act and bringing all public accommodations into full compliance, including state and federal facilities.
2. Promotes and enforces laws including Affirmative Action and hate crimes laws, that protect civil rights; prohibits racial, ethnic, and religious profiling; guarantees equal access to education, employment, and housing; and prohibits discrimination based on race, color, gender, age, physical and mental disability, religion, ancestry, national origin, or sexual orientation.
3. Respects the dignity of all immigrants, ensures their human rights, and offers a path to legal residence for long-term and otherwise law-abiding undocumented immigrants.
4. Extends to gay, lesbian, bisexual, intersex and transgender people, and their partner's all the same legal and social rights heterosexual couples receive, including civil marriage, and opposes legislation to deny these rights to any family.
5. Implements a transparent, equitable voting system where every vote counts, including write-ins, opposes policies that would suppress voter turnout and enforces laws against intimidating and coercing voters or restricting voter rights.
6. Protects employees against unfair and arbitrary dismissal by, at a minimum, creating a right to administrative due process.
7. Fairly and uniformly protects injured workers.
8. Opposes 'tort reform' that makes it more difficult for injured people to file a lawsuit and/or obtain a jury trial, and places limits on the amount of money that can be received in a lawsuit.
9. Recognizes that it is a Civil Right to be protected from predatory economic speculation and predatory lending practices.
10. Supports responsible gun ownership in accordance with the 2nd amendment of the U.S. Constitution and works to strengthen background checks for every firearm sale or transfer within the State of Maine.

G. Environmental Protection

We support a democratic government that:

1. Recognizes our obligation to actively protect earth's environment for the sustainable use of future generations.
2. Confronts the causes of human-induced climate change through: reducing reliance on fossil fuels; supporting the development and utilization of renewable energy sources; lowering energy use through conservation, efficiency, and building standards; and decreasing transportation costs by supporting local producers.
3. Applies the precautionary principle that the responsibility of those developing, manufacturing or selling products and technologies, and of agencies approving them, is to prove their safety to the environment and all life.
4. Conserves our working landscape and natural heritage, quality of life and quality of place through responsible stewardship.
5. Makes comprehensive environmental and socioeconomic impact reports an integral part of decision-making for proposed projects that would affect Maine's communities and environment; and supports local control of development and fosters environmental stewardship.
6. Ensures access to clean, safe, public drinking and swimming waters, and protects surface waters and aquifers against economic exploitation.
7. Leads the region in fighting airborne pollution; defines, limits, and monitors out-of-state waste; eliminates harmful waste and prohibits improper chemical disposal; enforces the state's "Solid Waste Hierarchy"; and promotes redemption and recycling.
8. Limits and monitors sound and light pollution.
9. Protects the Gulf of Maine and its environs by support of the U.S. Gulf of Maine Habitat Restoration and Conservation Plan.
10. Opposes the Keystone XL pipeline and the pumping of tar sands oil through the Montreal-Portland pipeline.
11. Opposes the currently proposed private, Maine East-West Corridor.

H. Global Peace, Security, and Justice

We support a democratic government that:

1. Safeguards national security through peaceful solutions to international challenges; supports international law; works closely with allies; strengthens the United

Nations; opposes subversion of democratically elected governments; acts to prevent genocide; and cooperates with the International Criminal Court.

2. Reduces our international military footprint while maintaining a strong, effective defense force, that is equipped and organized to handle legitimate foreign threats and complemented by a reliable intelligence service; never launches undeclared or pre-emptive wars; minimizes use of private contractors; and works to prevent civilian casualties; reduces the world arms trade, and eliminates weapons of mass destruction.
3. Strengthens the role of the Department of State; expands citizen cultural and educational exchanges with all nations; and supports NGOs and universities in the developing world.
4. Prioritizes multilateral efforts to end the threat of terrorism and those situations of inequity and injustice that are the breeding grounds of terrorism.
5. Strives for a comprehensive approach to sustainable peace and stability in the greater Middle East through renewed emphasis on diplomacy, economic and social development, human rights, and reduction of military presence, notably:
 - a. In Afghanistan, ending US combat operations.
 - b. In Iran, by relying on nonviolent multilateral efforts and negotiations to prevent development of nuclear weapons.
 - c. In Israel and Palestine, by supporting a mutually agreed upon two-state solution.
6. Supports democratic reform and human rights, and avoids support for oppressive regimes throughout the world.
7. Increases support for humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, international development, and the elimination of poverty, while decreasing funds for military assistance across the board.
8. Leads in shaping a global economy that supports a fairer distribution of growth and development among all peoples; respects indigenous leadership, trades, and resources; and protects the environment, labor rights (including right to a living wage), public health, and the public good.
9. Strengthens international financial mechanisms and regulation of international transactions and prevents currency and commodities manipulation.
10. Opposes “fast track” and ensures that current and future trade agreements, such as the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement, support and strengthen domestic jobs, businesses, and farms; eliminates all forms of government assistance for corporations that outsource jobs and businesses; and reforms existing trade agreements to include enforceable protections for workers and consumers rights and a sustainable environment.

11. Acts deliberately to reduce the U.S. trade deficit.
12. Supports the International Violence against Women Act and the ratification of the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

I. Veterans

We support a democratic government that:

1. Honors veterans and current military personnel by promptly providing all necessary support services to them and their families.
2. Works to have the Bureau of Veteran Services actively coordinate federal, state, and local resources, both public and private, with the commitment to end homelessness for veterans in Maine.
3. Supports expanding veterans' eligibility to enroll in VA health care from five to 15 years after leaving the military and expanding local and state efforts to help veterans adapt to civilian life with a commitment to prevent suicides among veterans in Maine.

J. Budget and Taxes

We support a democratic government that:

1. Supports a fair, progressive tax system that pays for needed public services and focuses tax responsibilities on those most able to pay.
2. Commits to fiscal responsibility through a balanced budget as required by the Maine State Constitution.
3. Uses the state budget to promote Maine's sustainable economic growth, and job creation, and equity in Maine.
4. Commits to a budget that meets the legislative commitments to Maine communities by supporting 5% revenue sharing and 55% state support for education funding.
5. Opposes the exercising of the extra-constitutional veto of legislation through defunding programs in the budget, for example, the Clean Elections Act.
6. Works to reform the fiscal balance in Maine based on the following principles:
 - a. A greater portion of the tax base should be from income taxes, which are graduated and progressive.

- b. Government pensions, such as teacher and military pensions should be exempt from the state income tax in the same manner as Social Security income.
- c. State and local government pension incomes should be fully exempt from the state income tax in the same manner as Social Security income.
- d. A greater portion of the tax burden should be placed on tourists and non-residents.
- e. That sales taxes are regressive and should play a smaller role in the fiscal system in Maine and should be low, broadly based on most goods and services, with exemptions for food and inexpensive clothing items, transparent and easy-to-collect but with as few special exemptions as possible.
- f. That offers tax incentive programs that are carefully considered, limited in time to no more than five years, and only offered in exchange for clear commitments to job creation, with penalties for repayment for failure to meet commitments.
- g. That it is appropriate to impose higher taxes on products or activities that are associated with causing health and/or social costs such as alcohol, tobacco, carbonated and highly sweetened beverages, snacks high in sodium and carbohydrates, non-medical marijuana, and gambling.

7. State and local government pension incomes should be fully exempt from the state income tax in the same manner as Social Security income.

We, as Democrats of Maine, support these principles and pledge to work cooperatively with local governments, other states and nations, and all other parties for a better future for all Maine's people.