

Democratic Party of Wisconsin 2021 Platform

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Preamble

The Democratic Party of Wisconsin strives to build an open, just, and strong society where all people have equal rights and equal opportunities to live meaningful, secure lives. We work actively for open, honest, and responsive government accountable to the needs and will of the people.

Justice, Human Concerns, and Democracy

One of the primary duties of government is to ensure that everyone can lead dignified, healthy, and fulfilling lives. We value love, commitment, stability, and the nurturing of all family members. We believe we are all equal regardless of race, color, class, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, occupation, national origin, disabilities, appearance, and political beliefs. We support marriage equality for all couples. We will work to ensure that basic civil liberties are forever preserved.

It is vital government respect, support, and protect freedom of expression. We hold sacrosanct our civil liberties, including but not limited to freedom of speech, the right to privacy, the presumption of innocence, the principle of *habeas corpus*, and due process under law. Nothing less than humane treatment of our fellow human beings is acceptable.

We are the party of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are a diverse people, and we celebrate our differences. Those differences are a source of our strength. Everyone must have an equal opportunity to succeed, an equal voice in government, and fair and equal treatment under the law. We respect the religious liberties of all people and welcome everyone. It is vital that the right to choose beliefs and philosophies remain intact. We must observe the separation between government and religion.

We believe that Black lives matter.

Marginalized groups often face formidable challenges, including oppression, voter suppression, and other discriminatory practices. They also suffer inadequate access to nutritious food, healthcare, education, employment, and housing. We shall work to eliminate these forms of discrimination.

We shall pursue legislation and cultural changes that end racial and ethnic profiling, respecting the Indigenous Nations' sovereignty and ensuring equality among all genders. We shall work for qualified representation at all levels of government that reflects the diversity of our nation.

Empowering people in all civic affairs strengthens our nation. Government must be an open institution that people trust, is compliant with open meeting and public record laws, is elected through transparent, publicly funded state and national elections. We support a fair, non-partisan redistricting process and oversight of elections.

Every citizen is guaranteed the right to vote and equal access thereto. We support same-day registration, multiple avenues of registration, early voting, vote by mail, automatic voter registration, and making election days official holidays. We oppose voter ID requirements. We have the right and

1 duty to inspect and count all votes and to have a voter-verifiable paper ballot that guarantees accurate
2 vote counting. The Presidential election should be determined by popular vote.

3
4 Our goal is a government and an electoral process free of the corrupting influence of money. We
5 support limiting out-of-state campaign contributions and oppose unlimited political spending. The U.S.
6 Constitution must be amended to make clear that corporations are not people and that money is not
7 speech. Wisconsin must rescind its call for an open-ended Constitutional Convention.

8
9 Access to accurate information and a diversity of viewpoints are essential to empowerment. The
10 broadcast spectrum belongs to all citizens. We will work to ensure diverse local ownership of media
11 outlets. We support public broadcasting and community-owned media outlets. We support free and
12 equal access to news media for all candidates for public office.

13
14 We advocate for comprehensive immigration reform legislation providing a reasonable legal path to
15 residency and citizenship. The legislation must include a fair opportunity for current undocumented
16 residents to achieve legal status.

17
18 It is important to care for all generations. We need affordable, quality, licensed daycare centers and
19 government support to pay for childcare. We need health education and disease prevention and mental
20 health programs addressing substance abuse, sexual health, and firearm safety.

21
22 It is essential that we expand Social Security programs for the elderly, disabled, and eligible dependents.
23 We oppose privatizing Social Security as it threatens the financial security of all recipients and the
24 stability of our economy. We must enhance programs for the aging and disabled, including subsidized
25 long-term in-home or nursing home care.

26
27 Access to affordable, quality healthcare is a right. The best solution to our national health care crisis is a
28 single-payer system. Such a system must provide universal access for individuals of all ages, promote
29 preventive measures, provide medications and therapy, and cover all physical and mental illnesses
30 equally. Until that system is available, we support broader coverage and increased funding for the
31 current healthcare programs on local, state and national levels, including BadgerCare, Medicare,
32 Medicaid, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Affordable Care Act.

33
34 Personal moral, religious, and medical decisions should be left up to the competent individual. We
35 believe in freedom of reproductive choice, family planning, and the individual's right to choose death
36 with dignity including physician-assisted end-of-life. Everyone has the right to obtain properly and
37 legally prescribed medications from any licensed pharmacy on a timely basis. Funding for stem-cell
38 research should be supported on its scientific merits.

39
40 We must reimagine policing and criminal justice. Police brutality stains our nation's soul and destroys
41 lives. Our budgeting, training, rules, and systems of oversight for law enforcement must fight racism,
42 build trust, and foster safety and justice for all.

43
44 Wisconsin has a high rate of imprisonment that not only is costly compared to neighboring states but
45 also racially discriminatory, with no evidence it makes residents safer. We support reducing prison
46 populations through increased use of probation, parole, and specialized courts to divert those suffering
47 from substance addiction and mental health issues from prison to treatment.

1
2 We oppose the death penalty. It is inhumane and does not deter crime. We believe in equitable
3 sentencing standards and increasing the authority of judges to modify sentences.
4

5 The 'war on drugs' is a colossal failure. We must discourage dangerous drug use without criminalizing
6 the user and provide rehabilitative treatment to addicted persons. We encourage non-penal sanctions
7 for minor, first-time drug violations. Marijuana should be legal, regulated, and taxed like tobacco and
8 alcohol.
9

10 We support the Constitutional right to bear arms and their legitimate and ethical use for hunting, sport,
11 and protection. We believe reasonable control measures must be enacted, including: a concealed carry
12 ban, universal background checks, a ban on the sale or possession of military weapons and ammunition,
13 a 48-hour waiting period for all gun dealer sales, a red flag law with due process, and limiting the legal
14 capacity of magazines.
15

16 **Education, Labor, and Economics**

17

18 We affirm the Wisconsin Idea. The UW System is a key driver of a strong Wisconsin economy and
19 should be funded as an investment.
20

21 Quality public education for all is critical to a healthy democracy and economy. Public funding for
22 private schools, including voucher programs, diverts resources from and adversely impacts public
23 schools. We advocate for free K-12 public education. Increased governmental funding is essential for all
24 levels of public education.
25

26 America must support worker training, affordable tuition at state-supported post-secondary institutions,
27 expanded access to grants and scholarships, and ample funding for research.
28

29 We must end the student debt crisis.
30

31 Students have the right to receive their education in a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment, free
32 from harassment or discrimination. We support funding all elements of the curriculum, including the
33 arts and physical education. Teacher and support staff compensation, including benefits, must keep
34 pace with inflation.
35

36 Revenue caps on school districts and other local governments must be eliminated. State and federal
37 governments must fully fund their mandates.
38

39 Public investment in the arts and humanities promotes healthy communities and healthy economies.
40 We support increased local, state, and federal funding of arts and humanities.
41

42 Equitable and affordable access to public transportation and high-speed internet must be provided in
43 rural and urban areas.
44

45 A strong and secure state and nation depends on sound economic policy promoting and sustaining full,
46 meaningful employment. Business, labor, and the public must work together to re-establish American
47 jobs on American soil. We support small business as a means of economic growth. We must resist

1 outsourcing by eliminating tax breaks to employers who ship jobs overseas and creating incentives to
2 bring jobs back to the U.S.

3
4 We support development and implementation of a strategic reindustrialization plan that identifies and
5 supports domestic industrial capacity in key technologies.

6
7 The Federal Government should provide transitional jobs for all individuals who cannot find work and
8 have no unemployment compensation.

9
10 Public and private workers have a right to at least \$15 per hour, gender pay equity, safe and equitable
11 workplaces, and secure benefits. Workers' rights to organize, bargain collectively, and strike without
12 fear of reprisal must be restored and strengthened. Election by card check reduces employer
13 intimidation of employees' choice of representation. Employees who benefit from union contracts
14 should pay fair-share dues. We support public employees' rights to speedy mediation and binding
15 arbitration of labor disputes. We support sectoral bargaining.

16
17 Businesses must be held accountable for contracts with their employees. "Right-to-work" legislation
18 and the hiring of strikebreakers are anathema to a strong, justly compensated workforce. Pension and
19 other retirement funds must be strictly safeguarded and responsibly managed through regulation. In
20 the event of bankruptcy, workers' unpaid wages must be the first claim on remaining assets.

21
22 We support a tax system based on ability to pay. It is immoral to overtax those less able to pay while
23 the wealthy are under-taxed. The Federal Budget must reflect responsible spending and fair taxation.
24 The State Legislature must tax corporations on par with the national average. Local jurisdictions must
25 have authority to modernize their taxation systems.

26
27 Financial markets should be more effectively regulated to prevent fraud, excessive speculation,
28 inappropriate compensation, predatory lending, and the need for taxpayer bailouts of mismanaged
29 firms. We must put the needs of Main Street before the needs of Wall Street.

30
31 Mining authorizations should provide adequate tax revenue to support the affected communities in
32 perpetuity.

33
34 American companies should be established here at home, follow our labor and environmental laws, and
35 pay taxes for the good of the commons. We must protect our industries from competition by enforcing
36 tariffs against nations that tolerate unfair worker conditions and environmental degradation.

37
38 America's wealth should be measured not only by GDP and the Market but also by broad measures of
39 well-being that incorporate factors like health, education, literacy, employment and wages, and
40 environmental quality.

41 42 **Agriculture and Environment**

43
44 We must preserve responsible family farming by creating market systems that assure a fair return to
45 both farmers and processors. True cooperatives and family-farm subsidies are essential to the economic
46 viability and quality of life in rural areas. We support value-added agriculture which includes farming
47 endeavors outside traditional forms of agriculture. Regulations controlling environmental pollution
48 from agriculture, especially CAFOs, should be strengthened.

1
2 We support farming systems that are humane to animals, preserve our soil, water and forest resources,
3 and produce wholesome, safe food for consumers. We support agricultural sustainability through
4 growth in “buy fresh buy local” practices which ensure markets for local farmers and save fuel by
5 eliminating costly transport. We also support truth in labeling of conventional, organic, and genetically
6 modified food.

7
8 We oppose seed producer patent enforcement that bars seed harvesting by farmers.
9

10 Climate change poses an existential threat to life on Earth. We support aggressive action to decarbonize
11 our economy by the year 2035 to meet the global heating goals of the 2015 Paris climate agreement.
12 Historically marginalized communities, such as low income, indigenous communities, and communities
13 of color face the worst consequences of climate change. Our leaders must pay heed to the scientific
14 evidence of climate change while understanding we are facing a climate crisis with many inequities that
15 cannot be ignored.

16
17 We support responsible environmental regulations affecting open space, wilderness areas, soil
18 conservation, forest management, industry, and toxic and hazardous waste disposal and cleanup. We
19 must maintain the integrity of our vast surface and subsurface fresh water supply, especially the Great
20 Lakes and the Lake Wisconsin aquifer. We support retaining and expanding publicly owned recreational
21 lands and wilderness. We oppose the transportation of shale and tar sands oil through Wisconsin.
22

23 We must develop clean, renewable, and sustainable energy sources without relaxing regulation of
24 nuclear energy; encourage the use of fuel-efficient and alternate-fuel vehicles; reduce urban sprawl on
25 prime agricultural land; improve and expand local, regional, and national mass transportation systems;
26 and increase recycling and waste management while maintaining biodiversity.
27

28 We must prioritize public health, environmental protection, and the land and water treaty rights of
29 native communities in the planning and implementation of all mining projects, including frac sand
30 extraction. We support public, local control of municipal water and sewage systems. To ensure the
31 protection of our state's valuable natural resources, we support re-establishment of a Public
32 Intervenor's Office and an independent Department of Natural Resources.
33

34 **Foreign Affairs**

35
36 We stand for human rights, social and economic justice, the rule of law, and popularly adopted
37 democratic government worldwide. Our leaders and policies must honor international law and honor
38 and promote international agreements that provide groundwork for a just, prosperous, environmentally
39 healthy, and peaceful world. Our United Nations dues must be fully paid.
40

41 We call on our government to be a cooperative and effective leader, a partner in the pursuit of global
42 accords to improve the human condition and protect the environment. We encourage international
43 efforts to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, discrimination, war, genocide, torture, genital
44 mutilation, human slavery and trafficking, capital punishment, pollution, and climate change.
45

46 We oppose trade and immigration policies that undermine our economy, harm working people in our
47 country and elsewhere, and harm the environment.
48

1 We oppose unfettered international arms trade, nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, land mines,
2 radioactive materials in conventional munitions, ballistic missile defense systems, cluster bombs,
3 militarization of space, and American-run or funded internment camps.
4

5 We support a military sufficiently strong to safeguard national security. We must provide for the health
6 and well-being of members of the military during and after their service. We support efforts to
7 eliminate the use of National Guard troops in undeclared wars.
8

9 Our military budget is disproportionately large compared to other nations. It should be reduced. We
10 should curtail the influence of the "Military Industrial Complex." Greater emphasis should be placed on
11 economic development and diplomacy to achieve global security.
12

13 War is always a last resort. We must address grievances that foster terrorism, not fight wars that
14 perpetuate them. We must abide by the Geneva Conventions.
15

16 We oppose preemptive war, including the use of drone strikes, without verified direct threat to our
17 country.
18

19 We support refugees. We support the rights of people to seek a better life in America. Those rights
20 extend to those fleeing the effects of climate change.
21

22 We support restoring America's commitment to the global community.
23

24 **Conclusion**

25

26 The membership of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin has crafted and adopted this platform. Our state
27 and country will become stronger and better by following the principles herein. We expect all
28 candidates supported by the Democratic Party to support this platform and to work to implement it.