

1 **2017-2019 Platform of the Young Democrats of America**

2 *As Passed by the Young Democrats of America in Convention Assembled*
3 *on the 12th day of August, 2017, in Dallas, Texas.*

4
5 Jessica Stram (CT), Platform Chair

6
7 **PARTY STRUCTURE AND CORE VALUES**

8 We Believe:

9 America’s strength derives from people coming together and working for the common good.
10 Acceptance of diverse viewpoints is fundamental to a well-functioning democracy and an
11 inclusive society where we stand up for antiracist, feminist, and workers’ legislation. We are
12 proud of our values, especially in the face of opposition. There is no campaign we cannot win,
13 and there is no issue we must sacrifice in the fight for our nation's future.

14
15 We the Young Democrats of America Will:

16 1. Support implementation of a nationwide campaign approach, leaving no Democrat, no voter
17 and no young person behind. As there are Young Democrats in every state in the Union, we will
18 never concede their political futures to Republican domination but will instead proudly carry our
19 shared message of hope and progress into every state and territory.

20 2. Support recruitment of Democratic candidates for all 535 voting seats and the 6 non-voting
21 seats in and the recruitment of Democratic candidates for congressional representation of U.S.
22 Territories.

23 3. Support Young Democratic candidates who are running in local and state office races, so that
24 no election goes uncontested and no chance to build young leaders is missed. To do this, we
25 must recruit, fund, and train those candidates, while helping local chapters find races in which
26 to run young candidates.

27 4. Increase peer-to-peer communication by speaking with progressive and democratically allied
28 issue groups, by locating new voters in our local communities, by speaking out to our friends
29 and family members, and by taking our message for the future to the people.

30 5. Support the building of strong, lasting relationships among local Democratic clubs, labor
31 unions, and other progressive organizations; accept and encourage the role of progressive and
32 grassroots organizations with common goals in guiding our party, and welcome their
33 involvement in both primary and general elections.

34 6. Demand inclusion at all levels of the Democratic Party, including state and local executive
35 committees and as party delegates, allowing the voice of the future leaders of the Democratic
36 Party to be heard and listened to.

37 7. Help recruit and support Democratic candidates who reflect the very best of their local
38 character and values.

39 8. Ensure Democratic organizations, including labor unions, national, state and county
40 committees, political campaigns and other allied organizations actively recruiting and hiring
41 individuals from underrepresented populations who reflect the communities they serve.

42 GOVERNMENT AND ELECTORAL REFORM

43 We Believe:

44 Free and Fair elections are fundamental to democracy in our country. Young people often find
45 themselves disenfranchised due to residency laws, lack of education, and the transitory nature
46 of youth. The federal government should encourage young people to participate in the
47 democratic process. We further believe the federal government should set realistic and reliable
48 standards for election administration to ensure fair, accurate, and accessible vote casting and
49 counting, coupled with federal grants to state and local governments to assist with compliance.
50 We reject collusion with foreign entities and oppose any foreign interference in the fair
51 administration of our elections, as fair elections are at the very core of our democracy.

52 We Support:

- 53 1. Fair and free elections.
- 54 2. Early voting, same day registration, no-fault absentee voting, and vote by mail.
- 55 3. Voting systems that ensure accuracy, fairness, and transparency while safeguarding privacy
56 and accessibility.
- 57 4. The formation of independent, non-partisan commissions to draw district lines that are an
58 accurate representation of a diverse electorate.
- 59 5. Campaign finance laws that ensure that ideas, not money are the deciding factor in elections.
- 60 6. Expanded implementation of the National Voter Registration Act, which requires federal
61 agencies to provide voter registration opportunities.
- 62 7. Efforts by states to restore voting rights to citizens that have been convicted of crimes and
63 who have served their sentence.
- 64 8. Passage of the DC Voting Rights Act as a necessary but insufficient step toward full
65 representation and the eventual statehood of the District of Columbia; and the abolishment of
66 the tyrannical practice of taxation without representation wherever it exists.
- 67 9. Strict penalties for people who impede access to polling places, buy votes, intimidate voters,
68 and purposefully distribute false information about voting procedures.
- 69 10. Reasonable efforts to ensure there are adequate, well-staffed polling locations serving all
70 areas where voting occurs and that these polling locations are accessible to all voting
71 populations including but not limited to college campuses, rural populations and Native
72 American reservations.
- 73 11. We believe Congress must act on the will of the people of Puerto Rico and approve an
74 enabling act with terms for Puerto Rico's admission as a state of the Union. The people of
75 Puerto Rico have exercised their right to self-determination, resulting in an overwhelming

76 support for Statehood. Thus, we support granting the full admission of Puerto Rico as a state of
77 our Union.

78 12. Barriers to fraudulent or deceptive third party voter registration.

79 13. Transparency in government and rigorous compliance with the Freedom of Information Act.

80 14. Extension of Section Four of the Voting Rights Act to cover all jurisdictions within the United
81 States, thus allowing Section Five to be fully used once again.

82 15. The creation of a federal holiday to allow an equal opportunity to vote.

83 16. Automatic voter registration of eligible voters and allowing opportunity to opt out.

84 17. The reunification of Democratic caucuses and factions within state legislatures and localities
85 in the United States to prevent rogue factions from denying Democrats the majority in these
86 legislative bodies and preventing progressive legislation from being passed by these bodies.

87 We Oppose:

88 1. Voting impediments, voter intimidation, and voter fraud.

89 2. Any law that would require identification to vote or register to vote.

90 3. Any politically-motivated attempt to purge voter rolls.

91 4. Corruption, to include taking bribes, kickbacks, nepotism, or any other uses of public office for
92 personal gain.

93 5. The Supreme Court's *Citizen's United* ruling, and reject the idea corporations are living
94 breathing human beings and the idea that money is free speech.

95

96 **ECONOMIC POLICY**

97 Trade

98 We Believe:

99 Free and fair trade offers a course for sustainable growth throughout the global economy to the
100 benefit of the United States, our allies, and the impoverished nations of the world.

101 We Support:

102 1. Including rigorous labor and environmental standards in all trade agreements to improve the
103 living and working conditions throughout the world.

104 2. Investing in the creativity of American workers and businesses to maximize the
105 competitiveness of the United States in the global economy.

- 106 3. Retraining American workers who are displaced by trade liberalization so that they can
107 quickly return to the workforce, by focusing on future technologies such as manufacturing and
108 clean energy jobs.
- 109 4. New trade agreements and existing deals that open agricultural markets to American farmers.
110
- 111 We Oppose:
- 112 1. The abuse by multi-national corporations of worker's rights, labor policies, and the
113 environment.
- 114 2. Oppose the efforts of all nations to manipulate currency and dump cheap goods into the
115 market.
- 116
- 117 **LABOR**
- 118 We Believe:
- 119 In expanding collective bargaining throughout our modern, service-based economy to maintain
120 economic flexibility and to build economic opportunity, while vigorously defending a century's
121 worth of hard-fought progress and protections won by the American worker united in purpose
122 and organized in action.
- 123 We Support:
- 124 1. The right of workers to organize unions without employer intimidation or interference,
125 including a ban on coerced "captive audience" meetings.
- 126 2. Pro-worker legislation such as the Employee Free Choice Act that strengthens the rights of
127 workers in the US.
- 128 3. Raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2021, and indexing wage to inflation.
- 129 4. Legislation designed to protect the employment and legal rights of corporate and
130 governmental whistle blowers, to ensure that those who expose malfeasance have an open and
131 safe forum to do so.
- 132 5. Any effort to allow greater access to unemployment and worker's compensation benefits.
- 133 6. The expansion of federal employment programs for veterans, the homeless, the formerly
134 incarcerated and the disabled.
- 135 7. Efforts to eliminate gender inequalities in pay and benefits for equal work.
- 136 8. The vital role of the American Labor Movement in maintaining America's middle class.
- 137 9. Efforts to revitalize American manufacturing as a cornerstone of our economy and the
138 creation of middle class jobs.
- 139 10. OSHA and other federal efforts to secure safe workplaces for all Americans.

- 140 11. Broad application of Davis-Bacon worker protections to all federal projects, and little Davis-
141 Bacon prevailing wage requirements to state and local projects.
- 142 12. Any effort to protect workers, documented and undocumented, from suffering the injustices
143 of wage theft
- 144 13. The enactment of Buy America provisions for publicly funded infrastructure projects in this
145 country
- 146 14. Policies to protect the pensions of workers
- 147 15. Ensuring that workers have the ability to accrue Paid Sick Time at a reasonable rate so a
148 worker will never have to choose between their livelihood and their family's health.
149
- 150 16. Implementing fair workweek scheduling legislation so workers will have advance warning of
151 their schedule and will not be penalized or terminated if the schedule is not workable.
152
- 153 17. Encouraging and incentivizing employee-owned, democratically-managed businesses
154 through worker cooperatives to retain and create jobs, strengthen communities, expand
155 economic growth, guarantee safe workplaces, and increase wealth for a broad sector of
156 workers.
157
- 158 18. The Davis Bacon Act which guarantees a prevailing wage in federal construction work.
159
- 160 We Oppose:
- 161 1. Any effort to silence labor's voice through "paycheck protection" legislation.
- 162 2. Any effort to restrict the right of workers to organize through "right to work" legislation.
- 163 3. Any effort to restrict, diminish, or eliminate in any way the rights of public or private sector
164 employees to bargain collectively.
- 165 4. The block grant-ing of any current or future federal program that is meant to provide social
166 welfare to the public
- 167 5. The expansion and the existence of right to work laws in states
- 168 6. Efforts to eliminate federal rules that increase the federal wage threshold to qualify for
169 overtime
- 170 7. Efforts to eliminate the federal program to help private workers without IRAs or 401ks save
171 with federal retirement savings accounts
- 172 8. Business decisions made to avoid honoring union agreements by creating 1099 workers and
173 under the table employees
- 174
- 175
- 176

177 **SOCIAL SECURITY**

178 We Believe:

179 Social Security has been the most successful and visionary social program in American history.
180 We are proud to claim its legacy and its compact with the American people as our own, and we
181 will fight to ensure that Americans enjoy the benefits of this program for generations to come,
182 defending it from all efforts to weaken the social safety net and to render the system any less
183 secure.

184 We Support:

185 1. A Social Security system that protects the funding, benefits, and long-term viability that
186 Social Security provides for all Americans.

187 2. The elimination of the income cap on the payroll tax, to ensure fiscal stability and maintain
188 the system's progressive character.

189 We Oppose:

190 1. The privatization of Social Security.

191 2. Any reduction of Social Security benefits that would break the trust and expectations of the
192 American worker.

193 3. Reducing benefits to beneficiaries during national economic distress.

194

195 **THE FEDERAL BUDGET**

196 We Believe:

197 Leadership requires responsible stewardship of public resources on behalf of our nation's future
198 that restrains growth in government spending while protecting the adequacy and sustainability
199 of government revenue. We believe that an individual's tax burden should be tied directly to his
200 or her ability to pay, progressive in character and in spirit with reasonable checks within the
201 system to avoid fraud and abuse.

202 We Support:

203 1. Continued and increased Federal investment in our country's aging infrastructure and in
204 alternative energy.

205 2. Refraining from the passage of tax cuts benefiting only the wealthy.

206 3. Enacting long-term budget plans that are designed to balance the Federal budget over the
207 course of the business cycle, offsetting deficits during economic slowdowns with surpluses
208 during periods of growth.

209 4. Allowing the Bush tax cuts to expire for individuals earning over \$250,000 per year.

- 210 5. A broad-based, progressive tax system that fully funds all of the functions of the Federal
211 Government.
- 212 6. A restoration of the estate tax, which is vital both to restoring balance to the federal budget
213 as well as ensuring that wealth does not become concentrated in too few hands.
- 214 7. A Carbon Tax to provide the revenue necessary to fund research into alternative energy
215 sources and provide incentives for sustainable growth.
- 216 8. Transparent and accountable government budgeting.
- 217 9. Detailed disclosure of congressional office expenditures in the federal budget.
- 218 10. A closure of loopholes in corporate tax codes and off-shore tax havens, ensuring hidden
219 profits made by hedge funds and private equity managers are accounted for, requiring
220 government contractors pay their full taxes, and the creation of a more efficient and fair tax
221 code.
- 222 11. Implementation of a federal financial transaction tax, which would place a small fee on all
223 transactions occurring within a domestic financial market.
- 224 12. Tax cuts for middle and lower income individuals in order to create a vibrant middle class in
225 which we all prosper
- 226 We Oppose:
- 227 1. Using off-budget spending and undisclosed earmarks to circumvent proper channels and to
228 avoid accountability and oversight.
- 229 2. The use of accounting gimmicks to conceal the true costs of policies and programs.

230

231 **POVERTY**

232 We Believe:

233 Government is a valuable tool in addressing and ultimately eliminating the worst forms of
234 economic hardship in modern society. We believe government has an indispensable role in
235 empowering individuals with the tools to take responsibility for bettering themselves.
236 Moreover, through investment in education, community building, and targeted efforts to
237 expand economic opportunities for children from impoverished backgrounds, we believe
238 government can be a powerful force in alleviating the destructive cycle of poverty that traps so
239 many in hopelessness and despair from too young an age.

240 We Support:

- 241 1. Increasing the minimum wage, and passage of federal, state, and local living wage legislation
242 to help Americans rise out of poverty.
- 243 2. Section 8 housing programs, which provide alternatives to traditional public housing projects.

- 244 3. Vocational training, financial education and adult education to provide opportunities for the
245 disadvantaged to better their lot in life.
- 246 4. The promotion and implementation of micro lending practices aimed at high poverty areas.
- 247 5. The recognition of housing as basic human right and a necessity for families and individuals to
248 move forward in life; therefore, we support housing subsidies based on need relative to the cost
249 of living in their community.
- 250 6. Food stamps, WIC and TANF which provides financial assistance to Americans who require it.
- 251 7. Welfare reform as long as this reform provides comprehensive job training, child care, and
252 significant federal support in the transition from welfare to work.
- 253 8. Programs that provide communities the resources to fight food deserts through the
254 development of farmers markets, urban farms, and public-private partnerships for grocery
255 stores and grocery delivery.
- 256 We Oppose:
- 257 1. Predatory lending practices, especially those that feed upon lower-and middle-income
258 families.
- 259 2. Redlining, which prevents financial mobility of low to moderate income communities.
- 260 3. Any HUD or Government Assistance Policy that negatively impacts people based on basis of
261 race, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, familial status, age, religion, sexual
262 orientation, ethnic background, national origin or disability.

263

264 **INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND NATIONAL SECURITY**

265 We Believe:

266 The U.S. foreign policy should promote liberty, democracy and opportunity throughout the
267 world in a truly collaborative fashion with our allies, shunning unilateralism and living up to our
268 responsibility to the international community as its last remaining superpower. We believe in
269 the power of diplomacy as the surest means of advancing our strategic goals and our national
270 interests, while placing enormous hope for a more peaceful global existence by leading and by
271 working faithfully within such international institutions as the United Nations.

272 We Support:

- 273 1. Supporting NGOs and IGOs sponsoring microloans to the developing world.
- 274 2. Efforts to achieve long-term peace in the Middle East by encouraging reconciliation efforts
275 between Israelis and Palestinians.
- 276 3. Policies that support U.S. trade relations with and the provision of aid to nations that uphold
277 democratic values.

- 278 4. Encouraging our trading partners to uphold safe and fair working conditions, workers' rights,
279 and a living wage.
- 280 5. Increased U.S. support for programs promoting the equal access to opportunities for women
281 throughout the world.
- 282 6. Increased international efforts to address the broad health, social, economic, and political
283 effects of all known and future pandemics, including making generic medicines available to
284 underdeveloped nations.
- 285 7. Giving underdeveloped nations the tools they need to confront the challenges faced by
286 poverty, hunger, starvation and disease.
- 287 8. A strong commitment to the concerns of human rights, labor, religious freedom,
288 environmental, and health issues in the negotiations and implementations of all international
289 agreements.
- 290 9. Continued efforts of the United Nations and other inter-government organizations to further
291 diplomacy, peace and justice in the global community.
- 292 10. Restricting the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and securing
293 poorly guarded nuclear, chemical and biological materials.
- 294 11. Increasing soldier pay and veterans' benefits out of respect for the vital sacrifice that
295 members of the military willingly undertake on behalf of all Americans.
- 296 12. Strengthening our cooperation with allies to prevent terror attacks at home and abroad.
- 297 13. The right of a sovereign people to national self-determination.
- 298 14. The continued withdrawal of US forces from Iraq.
- 299 15. Engagement with China on matters of mutual interest, while maintaining pressure in such
300 areas as human rights, the environment, and Tibet.
- 301 16. Stronger sanctions on Russia, due to their involvement in cyber attacks on the United States
302 and our democratic process.
- 303 17. Protecting and continuing the positive diplomatic changes in the relationship between the
304 U.S. and Cuba.
- 305 18. Enhancing our economic, political and social cooperation with established and emerging
306 democracies.
- 307 19. The strengthening of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Darfur to end the conflict that has taken
308 hundreds of thousands of lives.
- 309 20. Strong federal and state policies that welcome refugees from war torn nations, especially
310 Syria and other nations currently facing conflict.
- 311 21. Israel's right to exist as a Jewish Democratic state and an independent sovereign Palestinian
312 state with mutually agreed upon borders.

- 313 22. Unrestricted, universal access to contraceptives and information about family planning
314 methods in order to reduce the spread of sexually transmitted infections such as HIV/AIDS,
315 improve worldwide health, and raise the standard of quality of life.
- 316 23. A One China policy, the Taiwan Relations Act, and the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait
317 issues that is consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan.
- 318 24. Policies that, through global cooperation, aim to curb sea level rise.
- 319 25. The concept of the President of the United States coming to the US Congress to seek
320 approval on new Authorizations for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) in the conflicts with ISIS
321 and other enemies that are not directly related to the 2001 AUMF on Terror (Al-Qaeda).
- 322 26. Efforts to ensure that the South China Sea is a free and open region in the world for
323 international economic purposes.
- 324 27. Strong and punitive sanctions or other retributive actions against the Russian Federation for
325 their cyber attacks against the United States during the 2016 election, and against any other
326 nation, group, or individual that carries out, participates in, or assists any past or future cyber
327 attack against our nation and our democratic process.
- 328
- 329 We oppose:
- 330 1. The efforts of rogue regimes to acquire weapons of mass destruction, and their proliferation
331 in general.
- 332 2. The suppression of peaceful protests and the undermining of popular will in Iran and all other
333 nations similarly situated.
- 334 3. The continued Chinese occupation of Tibet.
- 335 4. The allocation of money to support outdated and unnecessary weapons systems.
- 336 5. Continued violations of UN resolutions or any member of the UN.
- 337 6. The interference of the United States of America in the elections of sovereign nations.

338

339 **IMMIGRATION**

340 We Believe:

341 That the United States must continue to stand as a beacon of hope for those yearning for
342 freedom and opportunity around the world. We are proud of America's history and tradition as
343 a nation of immigrants and believe it essential to our vitality and character that we maintain our
344 openness and our welcoming spirit to those from every walk of life who come seeking the
345 promise for which our country stands. Discrimination has no place in the laws of our country,
346 especially in determining who is permitted to immigrate. Nevertheless, we believe secure
347 borders and enforcement of labor laws are absolutely essential if the United States is ever again
348 to have a functional immigration system. Liberal immigration policies bring benefits both

349 economic and cultural, but we believe these benefits will not be enjoyed to their fullest without
350 immigration policies that are more reliable, fairer, and more secure than in their present form.

351 We Support:

352 1. Humanizing and dignifying immigration laws so that they reunite families and allow
353 immigrants to seek work, a better life for their families, and a commitment to the United States.

354 2. Immigration laws that are not discriminatory, including equal human rights for immigrants
355 and an earned path to citizenship.

356 3. Temporary legal status for undocumented higher education students through direct support
357 of the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act.

358 4. The rights of undocumented immigrants to remain united with their families.

359 5. Increasing immigration quotas to bring them more in line with reality.

360 6. A path to citizenship through service in the United States military and demand the immediate
361 apology and the automatic granting of citizenship to those fellow veterans that have been
362 deported from the United States of America solely based on their legal status of residency.

363 7. Common sense immigration reform that includes provisions for foreign guest workers and an
364 opportunity to bring the 11 million undocumented immigrants out of the shadows and into
365 society and immediate overhaul of our immigration system to not only provide a pathway
366 toward citizenship by granting amnesty of the unauthorized entry or stay, but access to
367 government programs and resources.

368 8. The rights of individuals to report crimes without facing criminal retribution for
369 undocumented status.

370 9. Any and all efforts of state and local officials to develop and create programs for immigrants
371 who currently live within their communities to achieve citizenship through local government-
372 sponsored programs that will help them meet the requirements to be a U.S. citizen with
373 complete anonymity.

374 10. The de-privatization of immigration detention centers and the eventual eradication of such
375 centers, such that these dehumanizing and demoralizing institutions cease to exist.

376 11. The right for municipalities and states to declare “sanctuary” status without the fear of
377 federal and state reprimands.

378 We Oppose:

379 1. Human Trafficking in all of its forms.

380 2. Immigration laws directed at penalizing children.

381 3. States and municipalities unconstitutionally enacting their own immigration policies
382 particularly the permission of officers to behave like federal immigration agents.

383 4. Abuse and exploitation of undocumented workers.

- 384 5. The hiring exploitation of undocumented immigrants in order to avoid paying market wages
385 and further burdening taxpayers with the cost of health care.
- 386 6. Penalizing victims of human trafficking for unwilling participation in prostitution.
- 387 7. The continued use of the obsolete federal E-Verify program, which will offshore jobs, hurt the
388 agricultural industry, and hurt American security

389

390 **HOMELAND SECURITY**

391 We Believe:

392 That the concept of homeland security extends beyond terrorism to include natural disasters,
393 maintaining and improving critical infrastructure, and citizen education. Our government must
394 fulfill its obligation to protect its citizens from foreign and domestic dangers while upholding the
395 freedoms and ideals on which this nation was founded and on which it still stands.

396 We Support:

- 397 1. Funding homeland security operations in states and localities in proportion to the risk that is
398 faced therein.
- 399 2. Policies that take affirmative steps to ensure the safety of America's public and infrastructure.
- 400 3. Raising the level and quality of inspections at all points of entry into the United States,
401 including commercial shipping ports.
- 402 4. Ensuring adequate funding of and preparation for evacuations of populous areas in the event
403 of an attack on the homeland or natural disaster.
- 404 5. Properly funding, training, and equipping first responders to deal with large scale
405 emergencies.
- 406 6. Full funding of the Army Corps of Engineers levee building programs to protect our citizens
407 from natural disasters.
- 408 7. Increasing investments in programs and systems that protect public and private entities from
409 threats to cyber security, foreign and domestic
- 410 8. The use of diplomacy over war, especially when nuclear arms may be used.
- 411 9. The Iran Nuclear Deal.

412

413

414

415

416 **LAW AND JUSTICE**

417 Criminal Justice

418 We Believe:

419 Laws are the foundation of an orderly society and that abiding by them is beneficial to all
420 Americans and essential to the functioning of a civil society. We also recognize that there are
421 currently more people incarcerated in the United States than in any other nation the world. We
422 strive to create a society where laws are followed, applied with consistency and equality, and
423 with rehabilitation, not incarceration, as the primary focus.

424 We believe in the importance of acknowledging the systemic and institutional racism beholden
425 since the foundation of this nation, and seek to remove such explicit and implicit racism;
426 inasmuch, we proclaim that black lives matter, and that actions of police brutality
427 disproportionately impact marginalized and underrepresented populations.

428 We Support:

429 1. Our safety and law enforcement professionals and recognize that their services are vital to a
430 safe and secure America.

431 2. Police forces that use the least intrusive methods of investigation necessary to uphold the
432 law.

433 3. Increased training of police and law enforcement officials, especially regarding mental
434 illnesses with an emphasis of conflict de-escalation techniques and disabilities that affect
435 communication.

436 4. The individual right of every law-abiding citizen to own and possess firearms, as established
437 by the Second Amendment and upheld by the Supreme Court.

438 5. Strict background checks prior to any firearm purchase, including purchases at gun shows and
439 mandatory waiting periods for all gun buyers.

440 6. Firearm safety training prior to the first firearm purchase.

441 7. Calling on the federal government to invest the necessary resources to accomplish instant
442 background checks.

443 8. The legalization, regulation, and taxation of marijuana, in a manner similar to that of tobacco
444 or alcohol.

445 9. The housing of juveniles convicted of criminal offenses separately from adults and the
446 establishment of juvenile justice commissions that ensure that juveniles are neither unfairly
447 prosecuted nor fall victim to corruption in the justice system.

448 10. Programs focusing on rehabilitation of juvenile offenders rather than mere incarceration.

449 11. Laws that insure that all incarceration facilities are safe and clean.

- 450 12. Treating enemy combatants held by the US Government in a manner consistent with the
451 international human rights standards.
- 452 13. Reforms in sentencing procedure that allow greater judicial flexibility regarding sentences,
453 alternative punishment, and community or victim redress, particularly for non-violent offenders.
- 454 14. The repeal of the portions of the Patriot Act that violate civil liberties and Fourth
455 Amendment protections.
- 456 15. Promoting interaction between communities and police forces so that communities
457 understand the operations of police and feel we are all equal and vital partners in homeland
458 defense.
- 459 16. The abolishment of capital punishment.
- 460 17. Reasonable restrictions on firearm ownership including a renewal of the assault weapons
461 ban, a ban on high-capacity magazines, gun free zones in schools, colleges, and government
462 buildings, and the right of property owners to refuse entry to armed patrons.
- 463 18. The retraining of police officers, using federal funds, to deescalate situations that they
464 respond to.
- 465 19. Efforts to diversify the headcount of the local police departments, both rank and file and
466 leadership, to ensure that they do more to reflect the communities that they serve.
- 467 20. Efforts to strengthen laws that relate to gun trafficking, to reduce gun violence.
- 468 21. Efforts to provide transparency, efficiency, and reduction in the civil asset forfeiture
469 programs administered by law enforcement agencies.
- 470 22. Efforts to reform and improve pre-trial discovery policies, to provide the defense with equal
471 opportunity to get information before trial.
- 472 23. The abolishment of the use of solitary confinement for all ages and all situations, as it has
473 been deemed a form of torture by the UN, and abuse is both well documented and rampant.
474
- 475 24. The decriminalization of marijuana at the federal level with the ultimate determination
476 made by the states. Additionally, we support fresh start legislation for one-time offenders of
477 current marijuana laws who have been so negatively impacted.
478
- 479 25. The de-privatization of Federal and state prisons.
480
- 481 We Oppose:
- 482 1. Any statute that criminalizes assisted suicide by a medical professional.
- 483 2. The use of secret evidence being used in connection with any criminal proceedings.
- 484 3. Police brutality and corruption, and we support programs that prevent and punish such
485 actions.

- 486 4. The use of national security to justify the widespread violation of constitutional rights in the
487 United States and abroad.
- 488 5. The predatory nature of “Stand Your Ground” laws anywhere they are practiced and consider
489 these laws to be a gross violation of human rights.
- 490 6. Policies that seek to circumvent gun control laws in the states that have more stringent rules
491 and regulations on carrying weapons
- 492 7. A repressive bail system that forces individuals to spend time in jail simply because they
493 cannot afford to pay bail.

494

495 **CIVIL JUSTICE**

496 We Believe:

497 That all Americans should have the opportunity to achieve the American Dream. We recognize,
498 however, that systematic discrimination continues to plague our country.

499 We Support:

500 1. Local, state, and federal laws which promote justice for oppressed or disadvantaged people
501 by prohibiting discrimination, based on race, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, age,
502 religion, sexual orientation, ethnic background, national origin, or disability.

503 2. Affirmative action programs which enable institutions to address system discrimination and
504 inequity.

505 3. The safety and protection of sex workers.

506 We Oppose:

507 1. Tort reform legislation that unduly burdens a citizen's right to redress in the judicial system.

508 2. The use and promotion of disparaging mascots, symbols, logos, or other imagery.

509

510 **CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

511 We Believe:

512 All Americans deserve equal rights and equal treatment under the law. We are a pluralistic
513 society where all people should be treated with respect and dignity.

514 We applaud the work of the Obama Administration and the United States Supreme Court in
515 working to recognize that basic human rights should be attributed to all individuals, regardless
516 of sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression. We also understand that those
517 protections do not go nearly far enough in protecting LGBTQ individuals.

518 We will fight for the continued development of legislation protecting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and
519 Transgender individuals in the areas of employment, housing, healthcare, education, marriage
520 and adoption, and will actively lobby our legislators to do the same.

521 We recognize the contributions of the Transgender Community to the gay rights movement, and
522 stand firmly behind transgender individuals. We will challenge people to respect all individuals,
523 regardless of gender identity and expression. We will stand up for the protection of Transgender
524 youth, both at home and in the classroom.

525

526 We Support:

527 1. Upholding the religious freedoms set forth in the First Amendment.

528 2. Passage of legislation that acknowledges the fundamental injustice of slavery and establishes
529 a commission to study slavery's effect on U.S. society and the residual effects of slavery.

530 3. Extension of official U.S. recognition of Native Hawaiian political rights similar to the status
531 held by Native American and Alaska Native groups.

532 4. Equal and compassionate treatment for those living with HIV/AIDS.

533 5. Protection of LGBTQ Americans from discrimination, including the rejection of so-called
534 "religious freedom" legislation; protection of marriage equality, as decided by the US Supreme
535 Court in *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

536 6. Local, state and federal employment non-discrimination laws that outlaw bias in hiring and
537 housing on the basis of race, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, familial status, age,
538 religion, sexual orientation, ethnic background, national origin, or disability.

539 7. Policies that promote gender equality in the fields of science, mathematics, technology,
540 government, trade professions, and other fields in which women are under-represented.

541 8. Increased funding for assistive technology and interpreters.

542 9. Adopting legislation to create programs promoting the smooth transitioning of young persons
543 with disabilities to higher education and career opportunities according to their interests and
544 goals.

545 10. Legislation to remedy the institutional bias in the Medicaid program affecting young people
546 with disabilities.

547 11. Increased support for programs and curricula that raise awareness about civil rights.

548 12. The enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

549 13. The sovereign rights of Native American Nations including the rights of self-determination,
550 freedom of worship, to engage in commerce, and to provide for their citizens, without undue
551 interference or intervention from the United States Government, and the recognition and
552 respect of all applicable treaties made between the United States government and the various
553 tribal nations.

- 554 14. The repatriation of cultural and sacred items back to Native American Tribes and lineal
555 descendants.
- 556 15. The removal from publicly owned spaces of confederate monuments and memorials, which
557 are antiquated and painful reminders of a dark chapter of America's history.
- 558 16. The implementation of policies that allow trans individuals access to public accommodations
559 that conform to their gender expression, as trans inclusivity is at the forefront of modern civil
560 rights and society is judged by its treatment of its most vulnerable citizens. Also, whereas trans
561 military personnel have been on the front lines of America's fight against terrorism, we support
562 trans individuals' right to serve honorably in our nation's armed forces.

563
564 We Oppose:

- 565 1. All efforts to align public policy around the tenets of any specific religion or to discriminate
566 against elements of our citizenry based on religious doctrine.
- 567 2. All efforts to undermine the separation of church and state as it is essential to defending
568 religious freedom for all Americans.
- 569 3. The use and promotion of disparaging mascots, symbols, logos, or other imagery.

570

571 **FAMILY**

572 We Believe:

573 Our society and government should treat all families equally, whether traditional or non-
574 traditional, and support them to build stronger communities.

575 We Support:

- 576 1. Quality childcare and preschool for every American child.
- 577 2. Adoption and foster parenting laws that do not discriminate based on the attributes of sexual
578 orientation, gender identity, or marital status.
- 579 3. Day care programs for federal employees, and encourage all employers to create such
580 programs for their employees.
- 581 4. Strict sentencing for convicted domestic violence offenders.
- 582 5. Parental involvement in children's education and development of life and social skills.
- 583 6. Creating a culture that values balancing family time with work.
- 584 7. The value of faith as a driving principle behind our nation's highest ideals such as kindness,
585 family values, grace, self-sacrifice, and community service.
- 586 8. Family values that also include moral principles that are guided by choices of fairness and
587 tolerance.

588 9. Reform of the Family and Medical Leave act to include expanded length, paid maternal and
589 paternal leave, stronger job security, and coverage for same-sex and adoptive families.

590 We Oppose:

591 1. Any favor given in child custody cases when they are based upon a parent's/guardian's gender
592 or sexual orientation.

593

594 **HEALTH AND SOCIAL ISSUES**

595 We Believe:

596 That securing a health care system that values people before profits is vital to the general
597 welfare of our nation. We believe in universal access to affordable, quality health care,
598 reflecting patient preferences and sensitivities, and the fierce protection of the gains made in
599 this area under President Obama.

600 YDA supports Planned Parenthood and their efforts to provide high-quality, affordable
601 reproductive healthcare through its health centers. With millions of individuals across the
602 country receiving services it is important to continue and expand federal and state funding for
603 their efforts. No person facing one of the hardest decisions of their life should be without safe
604 access to legal abortion services. All people deserve the right to access birth control,
605 reproductive health care, other preventive care, sex education, methods to prevent sexual
606 assault, and reliable and accurate information.
607

608 We Support:

609 1. An increased focus on preventative and clinical care.

610 2. An individual mandate for health insurance, with subsidies for those who have difficulty
611 affording insurance.

612 3. A government health plan to compete with private insurers and provide Americans with a low
613 cost option that increases competition in the markets producing better products and lower
614 costs, and that covers areas where private insurers have withdrawn from markets.

615 4. Medicare

616 5. Medicaid

617 6. The State Children's Health Insurance Program.

618 7. Continued funding for comprehensive scientific-based HIV/AIDS treatment, education,
619 prevention, and research.

620 8. Expansion of state and federally funded embryonic stem cell research.

621 9. Parity in coverage by health insurers, and efforts to de-stigmatize mental illness.

- 622 10. Embryonic stem cell research.
- 623 11. Proper funding by the local, state and federal government of the medical establishment,
624 emergency personnel- first responders, EMT's, firefighters, and police - in order to be able to
625 respond to crisis situations.
- 626 12. The recognition of drug addiction as a health issue, and treatment for drug offenders.
- 627 13. Funding for home health, hospice care, and Medicaid buy-in options.
- 628 14. Policies that foster the creation and protection of programs to assist small businesses in the
629 provision of health insurance.
- 630 15. Funding for research focused on finding the cause of the autism epidemic.
- 631 16. Regulation of pharmaceutical benefit managers.
- 632 17. Comprehensive, science-based public education focused on family planning - a vital
633 component of universal health care - which includes factual information on biology, birth
634 control, sexually transmitted diseases, abortion, reproductive choices, and abstinence education
635 for all people, regardless of sexual orientation or socio-economic status.
- 636 18. The use of secure digital medical records, established with the assistance of government
637 funding to increase the efficiency, reduce costs, and lead to better collaboration between health
638 professionals and a higher quality of care.
- 639 19. Access to a full range of options, including education, contraception and abortion when
640 necessary, regardless of socioeconomic status.
- 641 20. Access for all women to emergency contraception without a prescription. We further believe
642 that all contraceptive methods should be included in medical coverage with no co-pay required.
643 We believe that reforms are necessary to protect the individual while ensuring that skilled
644 medical professionals may continue to practice and maintain affordable malpractice insurance.
- 645 21. The Constitutional right of a woman to safe, legal and accessible abortion. We believe that
646 decisions regarding reproduction, contraception, and abortion are private decisions between a
647 woman and her doctor.
- 648 22. The creation of a single payer healthcare system that provides for adequately funded,
649 universal, affordable, competitive, quality healthcare for all Americans.
- 650 23. Reform of Native American health services which improves quality and access to health for
651 all Native Americans.
- 652 24. We support the participation of people with disabilities in healthcare reform, especially in
653 the need for accessible diagnostic equipment. Additionally, we support cultural competency in
654 medical and nursing schools.
- 655 25. The aid and benefits given to veterans and current members of the military who suffer from
656 PTSD.
- 657 26. Treatment for drug offenders and the support of clean needle exchange programs.

- 658 27. Repeal of the blood donation ban on LGBT individuals.
- 659 28. The full expansion of Medicaid as outlined in the Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act.
- 660 29. Allowing Medicare to use its purchasing power to negotiate drug prices for recipients, like
661 Medicaid can.
- 662 30. The importation of drugs from Canada to lower prescription drug costs for the American
663 people
- 664 31. A commitment work with state legislatures and members of the United States Congress, to
665 prohibit licensed mental health practitioners from subjecting minors to harmful "conversion
666 therapy" practices.
- 667 32. Real commitments to combating substance addiction such as establishing more treatment
668 centers, encouraging treatment first, opening a dialogue about seeking help, supporting clean
669 needle exchange programs, de-stigmatizing the idea of professional help, and increasing funding
670 for grants that allow law enforcement to supply naloxone.
- 671 We Oppose:
- 672 1. Discrimination against any persons with HIV/AIDS for health care coverage, or medical care,
673 especially in the use of waiting lists for the Ryan White safety-net program.
- 674 2. The application of the "global gag rule" to funds allocated for HIV/AIDS prevention and
675 treatment programs in at-risk countries.
- 676 3. Any attempts to weaken provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act
677 regarding rescission of insurance, discrimination due to preexisting conditions, or lowering the
678 age under which a dependent may remain under a parent's insurance plan.
- 679 4. The practice of pharmacists to denying provision of a prescription written by a doctor.
- 680 5. Abstinence only sex education, which excludes information on the effectiveness of
681 contraception and condoms.
- 682 6. Laws that require unnecessary medical procedures, including ultrasounds, exams, and/or
683 counseling, as a precursor to obtaining legal medical procedures.
- 684 7. The passage of laws that would restrict the ability of women to access healthcare services,
685 either through structural, regulatory, or financial means.
- 686 8. Any legislation that allows healthcare professionals to withhold services against anyone based
687 off of basis of race, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, familial status, age, religion,
688 sexual orientation, ethnic background, national origin or disability.
- 689
- 690
- 691

692 **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

693 We Believe:

694 Scientific progress has fundamentally changed and will continue to improve the quality of
695 human life. We advocate the continued responsible use and advancement of technology as a
696 force for good in the world. We reject those who refuse to consider scientific consensus in the
697 creation of public policy.

698 We Support:

- 699 1. A manned space program that will take us beyond the Earth's orbit.
- 700 2. Continued governmental support of space exploration, the use of space travel experience to
701 improve many aspects of society, and efforts to protect and respect the environment of space.
- 702 3. Increased federal funding in areas of cutting edge research including nanotechnology,
703 alternative energy, genetics and biotechnology, and aerospace.
- 704 4. The extension of the right of privacy and free speech to encompass all activities in the digital
705 world.
- 706 5. The preservation of the right to fair use of intellectual property, while maintaining
707 appropriate protection for copyright holders and content owners.
- 708 6. The extension of free speech protections to the open release of modern encryption and
709 security advances, to enable continued research in technology security.
- 710 7. Limitations on patent rights where restrictions on new technology put lives in danger, with
711 special emphasis on pharmaceutical products.
- 712 8. The principles of net neutrality that all Internet traffic be handled and prioritized on an equal
713 basis.
- 714 9. The expansion of broadband technology into every American home.¹⁰
- 715 10. The development of increased efficiency and reduction of harmful emissions from fossil fuel-
716 burning industries.
- 717 11. The end of the use of lead in aircraft fuels.
- 718 12. Collaborative efforts of the Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Railroad Administration
719 and the Federal Highway Administration to develop and deploy a full scale, cooperative
720 transportation plan for the 21st century, which incorporates one site airport-rail stations and
721 regulates commercial airlines to best promote efficient and effective service to all metropolitan
722 areas.
- 723 13. The review and modernization of the patent process.

724 We Oppose:

- 725 1. Actions that would contribute to an escalating international space arms race.

726 2. Companies and Corporations using Intellectual Properties researched by the United States to
727 participate in anti-competitive practices in their Industries.

728

729 **ENVIRONMENT**

730 We Believe:

731 That climate change is real, and poses a pressing, and dangerous threat to our planet and future
732 generations. That safeguarding the environment is a fundamental human responsibility, and
733 that protecting the integrity of the world we live in is critical to the health, safety, and richness
734 of life of present and future generations of Americans and inhabitants of all nations. We further
735 believe that increased environmental protections can be achieved in ways that create jobs and
736 benefit all levels of the economy.

737 We Support:

738 1. Policies that promote energy independence and aggressively protect our natural resources,
739 including our air, water, soil, forests, biodiversity, wetlands and open spaces.

740 2. Policies designed to promote environmentally responsible business practices, such as tax
741 incentives for "green" businesses, as well as aggressive enforcement of existing environmental
742 statutes.

743 3. Reform of environmental statutes to make penalties for violation more costly than the
744 expense of compliance.

745 4. Efforts to promote environmental justice, including increased federal funding of Superfund
746 programs and revitalization of brownfields.

747 5. Incentives to encourage environmentally sustainable farming practices including water
748 conservation, methane capture, and land use that balances food and energy needs.

749 6. Policies that encourage domestic carbon sequestration through the establishment of strong
750 carbon caps, detailed standards for verification of sequestration, and economic policies that
751 reduce atmospheric carbon at a net economic benefit to the country. Sequestration efforts
752 should be monitored and should provide for long-term storage.

753 7. The development of policies and procedures to provide the highest standards of safety and
754 security of our nation's nuclear and chemical facilities.

755 8. The personal responsibility of executives in all industries to certify that their companies are in
756 compliance with all environmental laws, and personal legal and financial consequences for those
757 executives who fail to uphold this responsibility.

758 9. The further inclusion of scientists and highly trained or educated individuals in the decision
759 making process of all government agencies and committees charged with making environmental
760 policy decisions; all such decisions should be based on scientifically sound, peer-reviewed
761 research.

- 762 10. Policies that reward corporations that pursue environmentally sound business models and
763 hold accountable corporations whose activities have an adverse impact on the environment;
764 because protecting the environment is an investment in our collective future, environmental
765 concerns must become as integral to the considerations of corporate America as fiscal matters
766 currently are.
- 767 11. The U.S. government in taking the lead in an international effort to clean up the Great Pacific
768 Garbage Patch.
- 769 12. Funding and support of low-cost, high-impact conservation techniques, such as recycling,
770 white roofs, and the adoption of energy-efficient devices.
- 771 13. We support full funding for the EPA and other environmental watchdog organizations.
- 772 14. Local agriculture and U.S. grown and manufactured goods because of their ability to lower
773 greenhouse gas and other hazardous emissions.
- 774 15. Policies to address, mitigate, and reverse sea level rise in low-lying coastal areas
- 775 We Oppose:
- 776 1. Policies that allow for the transportation of nuclear waste and highly toxic chemicals through
777 large population centers.
- 778 2. Federal policies that pre-empt environmental protection measures taken at the state and
779 local level that exceed standards set by those policies.

780

781 **NATURAL RESOURCES**

782 We Believe:

783 Our national parks, seacoasts, coastlines, and waterways are among our greatest assets. The
784 government has a responsibility to maintain and to protect these national treasures, and to
785 encourage long-term sustainability.

786 We Support:

- 787 1. Reinstatement of the "road-less rule" in national forests and other public lands.
- 788 2. Aggressive efforts to protect water resources and ecosystems of the nation, as well as efforts
789 to conserve water resources and restore waterways damaged by overuse, pollution, or
790 development.
- 791 3. The management of public lands according to the principles of multiple use and responsible
792 stewardship, including preservation of open spaces, in recognition of the fact that our public
793 lands are vital to the social and economic lives of all Americans.
- 794 4. The preservation and restoration of coastal marshland to mitigate the destructive potential of
795 hurricanes, such as Hurricane Katrina.

- 796 5. The federal government taking a leading role in clean-up and restorative efforts to improve
797 the health of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.
- 798 6. Preservation of coastal areas and waterways from oil and resource extraction.
- 799 We Oppose:
- 800 1. Any initiative that irreparably damages our nation's natural habitat, including lifting moratoria
801 on offshore drilling.
- 802 2. Any policies that systematically subject public lands to use by destructive industries and
803 interests to the exclusion of other Americans.
- 804 3. Any attempt to weaken the Endangered Species Act through legislation or lax enforcement of
805 existing regulations. Americans have expressed a desire to preserve biodiversity by protecting
806 the health and welfare of endangered species; we therefore call for ample funding and
807 aggressive enforcement of all related statutes.
- 808 4. We oppose all oil exploration and mineral extraction in areas with fragile ecosystems,
809 particularly the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge.
- 810 5. Any action by government or private enterprise to repeal, relax or bypass safety standards
811 and regulations in the underground and surface mining industry.

812

813 **ENERGY**

814 We Believe:

815 That our future lies with clean energy, which will reduce pollution, diversify our national energy
816 sources, promote national security, create jobs and investment, and provide Americans with
817 huge cost savings. Thus, we urge a strong national commitment to a clean energy future.

818 We Support:

- 819 1. The consensus of the scientific community that climate change is real, partly caused by
820 human activities, and is affecting the world today.
- 821 2. Ratification of the Kyoto protocol, participation in the Paris Climate Accord, and active
822 participation by the United States in future climate related protocols, which are important steps
823 towards global reduction of greenhouse gas pollution, in recognition of the fact that
824 environmental decisions have transnational effects.
- 825 3. Aggressive efforts to reduce energy use through increased efficiency throughout all sectors of
826 the economy.
- 827 4. Efforts to reduce and eliminate greenhouse gases, including aggressive promotion of and
828 investment in public transportation and renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, biomass,
829 natural gas, fuel cells, and tidal energy. Such new energy sources benefit, not only the
830 environment, but also American farmers, workers, employers, educators, families, and
831 industries for which such new technologies represent untapped markets.

- 832 5. Efforts to reduce mercury pollution.
- 833 6. The elimination of the "grandfather" provisions of the Clean Air Act that exempt certain
834 legacy coal-fired power plants from complying with current emissions standards.
- 835 7. The use of emissions-free nuclear power based on current technology to supplement clean,
836 renewable energy sources in order to reduce carbon emissions. We urge vigilance to ensure the
837 safety of existing nuclear plants, storage and disposal sites, and other facilities.
- 838 8. The long-term efforts to conserve energy and reduce pollution by complementing our clogged
839 interstate highway system with efficient regional and national high-speed rail and mass transit
840 systems.
- 841 9. Efforts to conserve energy spent extracting, transporting, and delivering water.
- 842 10. Job-training programs that educate or retrain American workers to create the green-collar
843 workforce necessary for a clean energy future.
- 844 11. Legislation that encourages the purchase of energy and fuel-efficient vehicles and
845 equipment.
- 846 12. Increasing CAFÉ standards to 45 mpg by 2020.
- 847 13. Adopting a federal zero-emissions mandate requiring that 20% of all passenger vehicles sold
848 by 2020 will be in compliance.
- 849 14. The development and deployment of smart grid technology.
- 850 15. The development of marketable vehicles and the technology that will allow advances in that
851 area.
- 852 16. Policies that say natural gas drilling should not take place within 2,500 feet of a primary
853 public source of water.
- 854 17. An investigation into the safety and costs of hydraulic fracturing and a moratorium on
855 hydraulic fracturing as it may impact drinking water reservoirs or fragile ecosystems.
- 856 18. The expansion of public infrastructure projects relating to hydroelectric and tidal power
- 857 19. Efforts by state and local governments to meet or exceed internationally-recognized
858 greenhouse gas emission goals within their own jurisdictions.
- 859 20. Transitioning as rapidly as possible to renewable sources of energy and away from the
860 extraction and use of carbon polluting sources of energy.
- 861 We Oppose:
- 862 1. The building of such projects as the Dakota Access Pipeline and the Keystone XL Pipeline in
863 the United States of America.
- 864 2. Any efforts to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

865 3. Methods of extraction including but not exclusive to fracking, offshore drilling, and any other
866 initiatives that irreparably damage our nation’s natural habitat, and recommend halting these
867 procedures in areas where they have already experienced especially damaging effects.
868

869 **RURAL ISSUES**

870 We Believe:

871 That as the party of opportunity for all Americans, we must work to build strong rural
872 communities that are vibrant places to live, work and play.

873 We Support:

874 1. Efforts to encourage the development of small businesses that are positioned to serve the
875 needs of rural communities.

876 2. Measures to protect the unique character of rural communities, including smart growth
877 policies that preserve farmland and open space while expanding economic opportunity for
878 community residents.

879 3. Measures to encourage community involvement in the development process to ensure it
880 benefits the community in the best way possible.

881 4. The development of confidential medical services, including mental health, and urgent care in
882 rural areas so needed medical care is available as quickly as possible and to make reproductive
883 medical care as well as drug and alcohol treatment in establishing clinics.

884 5. The right of every law-abiding citizen to own guns for hunting and sport.

885 6. Expanding broadband Internet access that does not interfere with licensed users of the radio
886 spectrum, to bridge the digital divide, attracting young professionals to raise families, and
887 business investment to create more economic opportunity.

888 7. Efforts to encourage the development of arts and culture programs in rural communities.

889 8. Expand public transportation opportunities to rural communities.

890 9. Increase funding for advance warning systems for natural disasters.

891 10. Increase access to VA facilities inclusive of mental health in rural areas.

892 11. Educational tools for all students in rural communities.

893 12. Federal funding to allow rural areas to sustain current emergency facilities, and to allow
894 communities to expand access to care for residents for the purpose of safety and overall health

895

896

897

898 **URBAN ISSUES**

899 We Believe:

900 Urban areas and communities are economic, cultural, and social epicenters, which are vital to
901 our country's wellbeing. Urban centers have the highest population density and they contain the
902 highest percentage of poverty. These areas are rich in history and diverse, and we support their
903 continued preservation.

904 We Support:

905 1. Downtown and neighborhood revitalization efforts through public and private partnerships,
906 bringing community activists, business leaders, and government officials together to rebuild and
907 reinvest in urban communities.

908 2. Funding and implementation of public transportation systems to reduce congestion and
909 improve air quality.

910 3. Smart growth policies to promote urban renewal while keeping racial and ethnic concerns in
911 mind and attempting to preserve the character of a community.

912 4. The continued development and improved quality of government sponsored low-income
913 housing.

914 5. The government sponsorship of urban mental health and substance abuse clinics to support
915 urban residents in under-served communities.

916 6. More vigorous enforcement of the Fair Housing Act to prevent discriminatory practices.

917 7. The use of inclusionary zoning to ensure that urban neighborhoods reflect the full
918 socioeconomic diversity of their cities.

919 8. Government policy that promotes the use of inclusive design principles in housing projects
920 receiving federal funds, since the Americans with Disabilities Act has not sufficiently addressed
921 the lack of accessible housing for persons with disabilities.

922 9. Legislation that addresses the disparate economic challenges of urban dwellers such as
923 insurance redlining, predatory lending, and abusive subprime lending.

924 10. Funding programs and education, which reduce public school drop-out and illiteracy rates in
925 urban centers.

926 11. Ensuring the availability of quality of health care and healthcare facilities in urban centers.

927 12. Active employment programs from local, state, and federal governments that help low and
928 moderate income, unemployed and underemployed Americans in our urban areas to find long-
929 term and sustainable work at a living wage.

930 13. Efforts to decriminalize and eliminate homelessness.

931 14. Policies that eliminate law enforcement brutality and racial profiling.

- 932 15. Cities in maintaining sidewalks that are safe and accessible for everyone.
- 933 16. Efforts to promote healthy eating in urban areas including adequate food resources.
- 934 17. Affordable housing policies that make this vital resource available to all age groups and
- 935 family sizes.
- 936 We Oppose:
- 937 1. The use of eminent domain to take private property unless such taking is for traditionally
- 938 public use such as the building of public facilities or roads.
- 939 2. Cities that zone out supervised living homes for the disabled by trying to create a quasi-
- 940 restrictive covenant.

941

942 **EDUCATION**

943 We Believe:

944 High quality education is fundamental to a vigilant democracy and a strong economy. Further,
 945 public schools bring together families of diverse experience, ability, and backgrounds for the
 946 common purpose of learning. Public education should be the ultimate equalizer. As Democrats it
 947 is our top priority to mobilize all communities to eliminate the socio-economic achievement gap
 948 apparent in America today.

949 We Support:

- 950 1. The encouragement of new and innovative approaches to address educational challenges and
- 951 needs.
- 952 2. Mechanisms that help students, parents, educators, and the community to have a significant
- 953 voice in the education process.
- 954 3. Financial policy that ensures consistent education funding regardless of economic cycles.
- 955 4. Adequately funding public education on the state and federal level.
- 956 5. Fully funding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act on the national level.
- 957 6. Increased funding for need-based grants, and changes to federal financial aid programs to
- 958 ensure that taxpayers' investments are used efficiently to maximize benefits for all students.
- 959 Financial obstacles should not interfere with any American's right to higher education.
- 960 7. Comprehensive, fact-based, age appropriate sex education that includes abstinence,
- 961 contraceptives, HIV/AIDS and other STI prevention programs.
- 962 8. Enabling every child to attend pre-K, full day Kindergarten, and Head Start programs.
- 963 9. Bilingual and multi-cultural education programs for everyone starting at an early age.

- 964 10. A fair wage and benefits for teachers and annual cost of living increases for all levels of
965 education.
- 966 11. Smaller class sizes, which in turn improve the quality of education.
- 967 12. Increasing the high school dropout age to 18.
- 968 13. A comprehensive financial literacy education, including responsible use of credit, basic
969 knowledge of investments, and the importance of savings.
- 970 14. A renewed effort to improve schools and quality of education
- 971 15. Efforts to keep rural schools open and locally autonomous.
- 972 16. Drastic reforms to No Child Left Behind that encourage high standards for students and
973 teachers without relying on destructive punitive measures that further undermine our public
974 schools and their mission.
- 975 17. The provision and adequate funding for the fine and performing arts, physical education,
976 health and sports sciences, and vocational and career and technical education programs in the
977 curriculum of public schools.
- 978 18. In-state tuition to undocumented students who graduated from a state's high school and
979 filed an admission application to that state's post-secondary institution.
- 980 19. Expanding English as a Second Language (ESL) programs in areas with immigrant populations
981 and non-English speaking persons.
- 982 20. Policies that expand the community college system.
- 983 21. Mainstreaming of students with disabilities whenever possible.
- 984 22. School health clinics that serve the basic needs of students including the distribution of and
985 advice on methods of contraception. We further support voluntary counseling on different
986 issues concerning sexuality.
- 987 23. Profiting from loans offered to students through programs underwritten by the federal
988 government as morally wrong and reprehensible.
- 989 24. Expanding opportunities by funding vocational education and alternative to college
990 programs.
- 991 25. The elimination of the burden caused by college tuition and fees, and the overhaul of our
992 student loan system that would result in the cutting of interest rates and creation of other
993 protections for students at public colleges and universities. The opportunity to attain higher
994 education should be a right for all, not a privilege for few.
- 995 26. Increasing the maximum dollar amount provided through Pell Grants and indexing automatic
996 increases to inflation so it matches the needs of students today, as intended.
997
- 998 27. The complete access to public education regardless of status of residency.
999

1000 28. Ensuring curricula for students includes nonpartisan basic civics, including but not limited to:
1001 the role of government, how a bill becomes law, and the importance of voting in all elections, in
1002 order to break down barriers between government and our generation.

1003 We Oppose:

- 1004 1. Any funding or voucher program that would withdraw funding from public schools and
1005 redirect it to private and/or parochial institutions.
- 1006 2. The imposition of unfunded mandates on our public schools by state and federal government.
- 1007 3. The use of standardized testing as the primary basis for funding decisions and as a limiting
1008 qualification for promotion within and graduation from the public school system.
- 1009 4. Primary and secondary school policies that weaken curriculum promoting cultural diversity
1010 and awareness.
- 1011 5. Exempting public schools, including charter schools, from their obligation to provide meals
1012 and transportation to students from low-income families.
- 1013 6. The permitting of guns on the campuses of all public and private educational institutions, with
1014 the exception of law-enforcement.
- 1015 7. Profiting from loans offered to students through programs underwritten by the federal
1016 government as morally wrong and reprehensible.
- 1017 8. Firearms in schools.

1018 **AGRICULTURE**

1019 We Believe:

1020 Agriculture is a vital part of the lives of all Americans and directly impacts the health and
1021 security of the nation. It is a fundamental piece of the United States economy and an important
1022 cultural asset.

1023 We Support:

- 1024 1. A Farm Bill that provides a well-funded safety net for rural families, preserves family farms,
1025 and provides for those who need it most.
- 1026 2. A realignment of farm subsidies to support small, medium, and organic farms.
- 1027 3. Protecting family farms and their ability to make a living off the land and successfully compete
1028 on a fair playing field with large agribusiness corporations.
- 1029 4. Providing resources to farmers in the struggle against the effects of climate change.

1030 We Oppose:

- 1031 1. The prosecution and criminalization of farmers whose crops have been contaminated by GMO
1032 products as patent infringers.