PLATEFORM OF THE SKAGIT COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

As presented to and approved by
the Skagit County Democratic Convention
March 24, 2018

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

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

Preamble

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

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

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

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

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

- The right to a useful and remunerative job in the industries or shops or farms or mines of the nation;
- The right to earn enough to provide adequate food and clothing and recreation;
- The right of every farmer to raise and sell his products at a return which will give him and his family a decent living;
- The right of every businessman, large and small, to trade in an atmosphere of freedom from unfair competition by monopolies at home or abroad;
- The right of every family to a decent home;
- The right to adequate medical care and the opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health;
- The right to adequate protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident, and unemployment;
- The right to a good education.
America's own rightful place in the world depends in large part upon how fully these and similar rights have been carried into practice for our people."

Our Platform

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

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

We are dedicated to achieving peace, prosperity, and opportunity.

Our platform rests on the principles that there should be:

- Security for all;
- Education, jobs and economic opportunity for all;
- Accessible and affordable healthcare for all;
- Rebuilding of our reputation in the world as a cooperative and just country;
- Reversal of the erosion of civil liberties in our country;
- Recognition that diversity strengthens our nation
- Economic and social policies that protect the environment.

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

Agriculture is an important industry in Washington State, and we support programs to insure the availability of high-quality food, and to preserve family farms to maintain the viability of the land.

We support:

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

We oppose:

- Food production and distribution that depends on energy inefficient machinery;
- The production, processing and transportation of food by large unaccountable corporations that rob the consumer of knowledge about food products and stifle the local economy;
- The use of prime agricultural lands for non-agricultural uses.

Economic Development, Corporate Power, & Media Reform

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

We support legislation that:

- Protects people from malfeasance committed by corporations by holding corporations accountable for their actions;
- Holds subject to criminal prosecution corporate executives who make decisions that cause great suffering or death;
- Requires corporations to compensate victims of corporate malfeasance;
- Ensures the wealthiest Americans pay a fair share of taxes;
- Creates a bill establishing a state bank known as the Washington State Trust;
- Says corporations are not people;
- Reinstates Dodd-Frank and Glass-Steagell laws.

We believe Americans have the right to rent or own safe, affordable housing within their means.

We support:

- Rescinding RCW 35.21.830 and 36.01.130, allowing local authorities to regulate rent, while respecting the right of landlords to earn a profit and maintain their properties;
- Washington, as a progressive state, leading the nation in establishing public policy that provides all residents the opportunity for safe, healthy, affordable homes in thriving communities.

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

We call on Congress and the Federal Communications Commission to:
• Strengthen media ownership regulations to limit the number of newspapers and media outlets one corporation may own;
• Make presidential debates, run by a non-partisan commission, open to all candidates who meet a defined threshold of support;
• Provide adequate funding for Public Broadcasting, including small rural stations.

**We believe net neutrality is a high priority for Washington State and the country and oppose any federal efforts to rescind or block it.**

**We support:**

• The Skagit County Democratic Party respectfully urging the Washington State Legislature to continue to protect net neutrality, open Internet access, the federal Lifeline program’s discounted telephone service for qualifying low-income consumers, and the E-rate program’s discounted telecommunication and Internet access services for schools and libraries by passing House Bill 2282;
• The Skagit County Democrat Party respectfully urging the Congress of the United States to pass similar legislation to be applied nationwide.

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**Education**

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

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

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

**We support:**

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

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**Environment & Energy**

**A. Energy:** We believe it is imperative that every citizen of the United States practices energy conservation measures as we pursue alternative sources of energy to relieve our dependence on fossil fuels.

**We support:**

• Continued research into the cost, efficiency and environmental impacts of proposed alternative energy production methods;

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• A just transition to alternative forms of energy and fuel demonstrated to be clean, safe, renewable, sustainable, and cost effective;

• Transfer of technologies to developing nations to promote their use of renewable energy;

• Acknowledging the seriousness and urgency of climate change;

• Promoting subsidies for energy conservation, efficiency measures and alternative renewable energy sources;

• Creating economic incentives for companies that produce, install, and service renewable technologies;

•Disallowing coal terminal construction in the state unless the facility can satisfy a review of economic, social, and environmental costs including state and National Environmental Policy Act review, Environmental Impact Statement, Health Impact Assessment, and Economic Impact Assessment of both the facility and any changes to be made in the state’s infrastructure due to the facility;

• Increasing fees and royalties on coal mining and mineral extraction on Federal lands to an equitable rate.

We believe that it is unacceptable that the United States has withdrawn from the Paris Climate Accord without a reasonable alternative for mitigating climate change.

We support:

• The Democratic Party calling for re-adherence to the Paris Climate Accord.

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

We support:

• Programs that protect air and water quality;

• Programs that support the preservation and restoration of wild salmon runs and habitat;

• Water conservation measures;

• Restoration and maintenance of adequate in-stream flows for fish and wildlife with due consideration to the rights of private residential and agricultural property owners.

We support legislation designed to:

• Require most packaging to be recyclable. Preserve and grow environmentally clean jobs in Washington State.;

• Preserve our National Parks and Wildlife Preservation Areas;

• Encourage the development and construction of new infrastructure that will remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as well as reducing the amount of carbon dioxide being emitted.

We support legislation requiring all motor vehicle manufacturer and dealer advertising for all new motor vehicles manufactured after 2020 to include the following information developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy:

• EPA miles per gallon of fuel estimates;

• Estimated annual tons of carbon dioxide emitted (carbon footprint);

• The number of barrels of oil required annually for average use.

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

We support:

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

Foreign Policy

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

We believe that the United States of America should:

• Support a peaceful solution to conflict in the Middle East;
• Work with other governments and the United Nations to secure fissile material to a high standard and abolish nuclear weapons worldwide;
• Avoid sanctions that cause hardship to civilians;
• Suspend all military aid to any nation that violates international law;
• Lift sanctions and restore normal trade relations with Cuba.

We support:

• Legislation that sends foreign aid to address social needs, increased employment and economic opportunities for the poor;
• Eliminating wasteful military spending that robs the federal treasury of money to adequately fund social welfare services and job-creating programs geared to improving our deteriorating infrastructure.

We believe that space is not claimed, nor can it be claimed, to be solely the property of any individual, business, or government, as space is a commons.

We support:

• That space should not be commercialized or militarized, and all property in space shall be held by the governments of the world for the benefit of the people of the world.

Government & Political Reform

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

We support measures to protect the integrity of our votes that include the following provisions:

• Voting processes should be owned and operated in the public domain;
• There must be a voter-verified paper ballot for every vote cast which will be the legal ballot of record;
• Additional uniform nationwide standards should be determined by a non-partisan, nationally recognized commission;

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• Election Day should be made a national holiday;
• All votes must be counted publicly and locally in the presence of citizen witnesses and credentialed members of the media;
• Spot check audits conducted on 5% of all voting machines; these audits shall compare machine results with results obtained by human eyes;
• Making voter suppression illegal;
• Establishing the election of our President and Vice President to be a popular vote of the people;
• Calling on the Washington State Democratic Party to study changing from a caucus format to a primary delegate selection process.
• We support the American Correctional Association in its call to end the practice of withholding voting rights from parolees and people who have completed their prison terms.

We call on the Washington State Super Delegation to:
• Apportion themselves between the candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination in numbers that accurately reflect the presidential preferences of voters.

In order to reduce the number of Resolutions that are not supported by data concerning their impact to the economy, the environment, or society,
We support:
• Inclusion of verifiable data on economic, environmental, or societal impacts in any Resolution presented for inclusion in local, district, and state platforms.

We believe that campaign contributions by special interests corrupt the electoral process.
We support public financing for all candidates running for state and national legislative and executive offices.
We believe that taxpayer funded scientific research should strive to produce the best available science to inform policy decisions affecting our health, safety, and environment.
We support:
• Scientific openness within all federal agencies that will promote the free exchange of information consistent with the scientific process;
• Open and transparent science-based decision-making within all federal agencies;
• Public access to government studies and findings of scientific advisory boards;
• Scientists appointed to scientific advisory committees who meet high professional standards;
• Ensuring that appointees to scientific advisory committees do not have conflicts of interest;
• Investigating and acting against abuses of science for partisan political ends;
• Ensuring that federal agency scientists who speak out against the suppression or distortion of scientific findings will not face retribution.

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

We support:

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

*We believe that the state is woefully under-prepared for earthquakes and other seismic events that can damage vulnerable infrastructure, including schools, public buildings, transportation, and dams.*

We support:

• Implementing the 2012 “Resilient Washington State” plan, and funding appropriated additional earthquake preparations as indicated by analysis of the 2016 “Cascadia Rising” exercise.

*We believe that elected officials should adhere to the party platform.*

**Healthcare**

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

We call on all Members of Congress to support and enact a single payer system that provides all medically necessary care and ancillary services to treat illnesses, injuries, needed restorations, and other legal medical procedures, except for elective cosmetic care.

We call on lawmakers to withhold Medicare, Medicaid and other federal or state funding from hospitals and providers who refuse patients treatment for any legal and necessary medical procedures.

We support:

• Reproductive care, to include:
  • Funding for general availability of Plan B;
  • Free distribution of contraceptives;
  • A woman’s right to control her own body, including the right to terminate pregnancy, to be sterilized, and to use the contraception method deemed best between her and her healthcare provider;
  • Family planning services geographically accessible to all Washington residents.
• Appropriate funding and curriculum for comprehensive, medically accurate sex education for children that shall cover, but not be limited to matters of sexually transmitted diseases, family planning, the cost of raising a child, and the responsibilities and obligations of being a parent;
• A plan to address overpopulation in the United States and the world;
• The defense and adequate funding of Medicare and Medicaid;
• Advocating for the enactment of State Single Payer healthcare in Washington State, if not in the entire country;
• Implementation of community health engagement locations as a harm reduction strategy for communities affected by the current opioid epidemic;
• Legislation that provides funding for the treatment of all drug and alcohol addictions and for education intended to raise the awareness of the effects of addiction;

• Fully funding the diagnosis, treatment and housing costs of our mentally ill citizens.

• Calling on the Democratic National Committee to publish credible, accurate, thorough and easily read reports detailing the facts about a Single Payer Healthcare System, this to include reports on HR676 “National Healthcare Act” and S1804 “Medicare for All Act of 2017”, to be published no later than June 2019.

Human & Civil Rights

We support the human and civil rights enumerated in the Bill of Rights and the Constitution.

We call on elected officials as well as other leaders to condemn domestic spying by agencies of the United States Government.

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

We oppose:

• The recording, filing or sharing of intelligence information thru library lending records, library research records, book and video store rentals, rental records, medical records, financial records, student records and other personal data, even if authorized by the USA Patriot Act;

• Eavesdropping on confidential communications between lawyers and their clients.

We believe that marriage and domestic partnerships are human rights and should not be restricted by sexual orientation or gender identity.

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

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

We support:

• The removal of language in Washington State RCW that states the perpetrator of rape is a person who is not married to the victim and that the victim is not married to the perpetrator and is not his or her spouse;

• The prosecution of perpetrators of the crime of rape/sexual assault within marriages as defined by revised RCW.

We believe White Supremacy and hate groups have grown in the Northwest, with hate and bias incidents increasing by nearly 40% in the last two years.

We support:

Denouncing the views and actions of White Supremacy and hate groups as incompatible with and a direct threat to the values of the Skagit County Democrats.

Immigration

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

This would include, at a minimum, the following fundamental principles:

• A path to legalization, documentation, and citizenship;
• Enacting the Dream Act allowing undocumented immigrant children to attend college and create a more prepared workforce, with an eventual path to citizenship;
• Programs offering immigrants instruction in English and preparation for citizenship;
• Support for local communities working to welcome newcomers and welcome them into the community;
• Basic civil liberties and human rights for all;
• Due process rights for everyone;
• Immigrants’ right to a driver’s license;
• Work permits, travel permission, and access to educational opportunities for undocumented immigrants who have undergone background and security checks;
• A system that targets and criminalizes employers who recruit undocumented workers from abroad for economic gain;
• Mechanisms to meet legitimate needs for new workers without compromising the rights and opportunities of workers already here;
• A workers visa program that adequately protects wages and working conditions of U.S. and immigrant workers;
• The right of immigrant workers to join or form a union;
• The right of immigrant workers to change jobs;
• Clearing the family backlogs to reunite family members who have filed legal applications;
• Condemnation of anti-immigrant legislation.
• Opposing the construction of a wall of shame on any of our borders.

Labor & Economic Justice

We believe that all residents of the United States should be assured that public monies are administered in a fair and effective manner to deliver services equitably to all.

We call on lawmakers to:

• Take all necessary steps to help the victims of natural disasters rebuild their lives and their homes through FEMA;
• Make an accounting of all disaster relief funds and expenditures;
• Support the National Housing and Trust Fund Act and support low interest loans to first-time home buyers;
• Immediately raise the Federal minimum wage to a living wage;
• Enact and enforce legislation that protects workers under all state and federal labor laws, including the right to organize;
• Require enforcement of job safety regulations.

We oppose:

• Legislation that would lead to a decline in benefits or lead to a lessening of protections for injured workers and their families;
• The Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement and other similar free trade treaties.

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

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

We believe that the conflict between protection of the environment and protection of industry related to extraction or that cause pressure on the environment has often led to the loss of jobs, which is not in the interest of the Skagit Democratic Party or Skagit County residents.

Therefore, We support:
• Development of funding for a just transition of workers to new jobs, through paid training;
• Workers and environmentalists joining to initiate a nationwide Just Transition Superfund for Congress to enact.

Law & Justice

We oppose:
• The death penalty as expensive, unfairly applied, and sometimes applied to innocents. Lifetime incarceration is the appropriate penalty for serious crimes;
• The use of three strikes laws in cases that are not serious and dangerous crimes;
• Mandatory minimum sentences. A judge should determine whether certain circumstances should be applied to vary sentences;
• The privatization of prisons. Inmates are not commodities. The government should also focus on education and reform of inmates so that they reintegrate into society when released;
• The incarceration of political prisoners without due process;
• Racial profiling by law enforcement.
• Laws that allow torture while a detainee is in military custody.

We believe that privatization of prisons, including those used by ICE to detain immigrants, is unwisely injecting profit motives into our correctional system.

We Support:
• Opposing the Washington State Department of Corrections engaging in any contracts with private prison companies, and the use of private prisons as well as City, County, or State jails to house ICE detainees.
• Replacing the discriminatory cash bail system with proven risk-assessment techniques, such as objective rating systems, electronic monitoring, and regular supervision, that offer alternatives to expensive and counterproductive pre-trial detention.
• Accountability for law enforcement with effective civilian review.

We support:
• Drug laws that are fairly applied and are primarily focused upon rehabilitation. Addiction is a medical problem, not a criminal matter;
• In those cases where drugs are used to harm others, criminal penalties need to be applied.

We believe in the Second Amendment right of private citizens to keep and bear arms, but do not believe this right extends to firearms whose only logical purpose is to maximize death and injury in a short period of time.

We support:

• Closing the gun-show loophole;
• Gun registration;
• Prohibiting certain individuals from gun ownership including certain mentally ill individuals, those convicted of a violent crime, and people with restraining orders for domestic violence or other matters;
• Mandating gun locks and limited access for children;
• Regulating certain types of high capacity guns and ammunition;
• Making mandatory a means for unlicensed gun sellers to do mental health and background checks, the cost of which to be borne by the buyer;
• The passing of “Extreme Risk” protection orders that legally remove guns from the dangerous hands of anyone who is in psychological crisis or has a history of violent behavior that will harm themselves or others.
• Requiring that all gun owners purchase firearms liability insurance, to be developed by the state to cover all damages from irregular and unwarranted firearm use.

Foreign interference in our electoral process is hostile action by a foreign power.

We support:

• The current independent investigation of Russian interference with our electoral process. The investigations should continue unfettered by politics or the president's whim;
• Investigative bodies should be independent, populated by both parties in equal proportion;
• The investigation by special counsel Mueller should be unfettered and supported and any action by the president to hinder the investigation or prosecution should be met by immediate impeachment hearings.

Military & War

We believe that the militaristic posture of our government has hurt the good name of the United States in the community of nations.

We support:

• Legislation that would return all direct combat functions to our national armed forces, dropping all contracts with private sector armies;
• An open and fair bidding process for all national security contracts awarded by the United States;
• A policy assuring that all American military activities must be performed for fair wages by American service personnel;
• Accountability for all national security contracts awarded by the United States;
• Implementation of standard accounting practices at the Department of Defense, such that can be audited by independent entities on a regular basis.
• The United States shall adopt a policy of no first strike with nuclear weapons on any country.

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

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

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

We oppose:

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

Transportation

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

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

Skagit Democrats call on the Washington State Department of Transportation and the State Legislature to end discriminatory toll roads, lanes, and bridges.

We support:

• Calling on the State Legislature to end discriminatory toll roads, lanes and bridges;
• Calling on the State Legislature to end the hundreds of tax breaks totaling $6 billion that benefit wealthy domestic and foreign stockholders:
• And instead using the resultant revenue stream to offset State budgetary needs.