

Delaware Democratic Party Platform

The Delaware Democratic Party believes that it is government's responsibility, as custodians of the public health and welfare, to protect the air, land, and water of our state. We believe that government has a duty to invest in the future of our state by providing quality education for all of Delaware's youth and that it's our responsibility to promote healthy communities by ensuring access to affordable healthcare. We believe that economic opportunity is crucial to the wellbeing of every Delawarean, and that measures encouraging economic growth can be compatible with a safe and healthy environment.

We believe that government is accountable to all Delawareans, and that public funds are the people's money. We believe that government must exercise wise and prudent stewardship of revenue funds, and that taxes should be kept low for working class Delawareans, while protecting our most vulnerable citizens: our elderly and our youth population.

We believe in the innate dignity of all Americans, and that our rights as Americans apply to every Delaware citizen. We believe our citizens have the right to feel safe in their communities, and support measures to prevent crime, and protect Delawareans from those who would commit crimes, as well as from those who would abuse power.

We believe that inclusiveness is vital to our collective strength. We pledge to recruit and organize at all levels of government, because a government that utilizes this strength to guarantee rights and services is more influential and effective than individuals working alone. Further, we pledge to seek out and listen to fresh ideas from newly involved Democrats, to bring them into the process and ensure that they have a voice in our Party, and a place at the table.

We believe we are stronger when we have an economy that works for everyone—an economy that grows incomes for working people, creates good-paying jobs, backs the current working class, and puts a better life within reach for more Delawareans. We need an economy that prioritizes long-term investment over short-term profit-seeking, rewards the common interest over self-interest, and promotes innovation and entrepreneurship.

We, the Democratic Party of Delaware, dedicate ourselves to maintaining and improving our leadership in government. We encourage participation of all Delawareans - those in our Party, those seeking affiliation, and those who have a broad thirst for ensuring equality for all. We support candidates that promote personal freedom, economic and educational opportunity, efficient and effective government, and justice for all. We believe that cooperation is better than conflict, unity is better than division, empowerment is better than resentment, and bridges are better than walls. Through these principles, we can preserve and create a stable and thriving Delaware.

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1. **Working Class Economics:** Delaware Democrats are advocates of a strong working class. We believe that we are stronger when the economy works for everyone, and we strive to break down barriers holding Delawareans back.
 - a. *Working Families:* We strongly support equal pay for equal work and fair wages for all, which is why we support the initiative to implement a paid parental leave program at the federal level, and will work for a similar program at the state level. The Delaware Democratic Party understands the importance of providing paid family and medical leave, particularly for parents caring for a new child or for those addressing a personal or family member's serious health issue. We believe it is necessary to make quality childcare more affordable and to expand and strengthen the home health care workforce.
 - b. *Housing:* Homeownership is vital to building wealth for working and middle class families. In order to increase the number of homeowners in Delaware, we believe in growing the supply of affordable rental housing and encouraging homeownership, particularly for first-time homebuyers. We must dedicate resources to building new sustainable homes and updating existing homes to be more energy efficient.

2. **Good Paying Jobs:** Delaware Democrats support conditions that lead to good paying jobs with fair wages and comprehensive benefits to grow the working and middle class and provide opportunity for all workers. We are committed to building strong and sustained economic growth.
 - a. *Infrastructure:* Delaware Democrats are proponents of putting Delawareans to work updating and expanding our roadways, bridges, rails lines, and public transit, which will enhance Delaware's long term economic growth while making our roads safer. Beyond transportation-related projects, we believe in identifying, supporting, and advancing key projects, such as expanding the Port of Wilmington, upgrading Delaware's energy supply, and increasing high speed internet access across the state, as a means to attract and retain businesses.
 - b. *Wages:* No one who works full time should have to struggle to provide for their family. Delaware Democrats support our state's working families and strongly believe in a \$15 minimum wage, paid sick leave, and short-term disability insurance. We believe in fair business practices that treat workers with respect and dignity, such as increasing income and job security; providing more predictability, stability, autonomy, and adequate hours in work schedules; and allowing workers to meet their family and caregiving responsibilities without being penalized by employers. We also support the development of mass transit, particularly in the rural areas of our state, to allow all Delawareans to more easily reach their places of employment.

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- c. *Organized Labor*: Delaware Democrats firmly support the right of workers to organize, to form a union if the majority so choose, and collectively bargain, regardless of where they work. The rights of workers to bargain collectively for better wages and benefits have been under attack, and therefore we support preserving prevailing wage laws for publicly funded construction projects. Additionally, we oppose any anti-worker, statewide “right to work” legislation or policies, any “right to work” zones, “paycheck protection” legislation, or any other legislation or policy designed specifically to diminish or weaken unions in Delaware.
 - d. *Community Workforce Agreements*: The Delaware Democratic Party believes that taxpayer-funded community workforce agreements should include local hire provisions for area residents on all targeted projects, to promote inclusion and upward economic mobility.
 - e. *Clean Energy Jobs*: Delaware must invest in clean energy to become more competitive nationally and globally. Delaware Democrats promote energy independence and energy efficiency. These new technologies are already transforming our state’s economy, and harnessing these forces will create good paying jobs.
 - f. *Small Business*: The Delaware Democratic Party strongly supports small businesses and entrepreneurship, and we need to make it easier for them to succeed. Small businesses are engines of opportunity, particularly for minority communities. We should discard unreasonable regulations, target funding for small businesses in underserved communities, and provide tax relief and simplification in order to grow jobs faster in Delaware.
3. **Economic Fairness**: Delaware Democrats believe Delaware and America are strongest when the working class is thriving. Increasingly, economic gains are accruing disproportionately to the rich, which we believe is both corrosive to our democracy and detrimental to our economy. All means to ensure the economy works for everyone should be utilized, ranging from wage insurance to easily accessible job training programs.
- a. *Wall Street Reform*: Financial reform is necessary to rein in Wall Street excesses. We applaud the progress made by President Obama in this area and believe we need to build on those efforts, not reverse them. Wall Street should never again be allowed to wreck Main Street.
 - b. *Strengthening of Dodd-Frank*: We believe in a balance of a vigorous effort to reduce corporate concentration and helping small businesses expand. Steadily increasing corporate concentration distorts the market and results in higher costs and less choice for consumers. Democrats believe in a competitive marketplace, not one wherein consumers suffer due to unfair pricing exercised by monopolies and near monopolies.

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- c. *Tax Code Reform*: The wealthy should pay their fair share of taxes to promote economic equality. The Delaware Democratic Party believes in a tax code that rewards work, promotes prosperity, and removes tax breaks for the wealthy and corporations which intensify inequality in our society. We believe in tax relief for working families and changes to the tax code to help families get ahead, such as a refundable tax credit.
4. **Removing Barriers to Opportunity**: Delaware Democrats believe everyone regardless of gender, race, class, religion, ethnicity, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, and disability, deserves the same opportunities for success and we must lift up communities that have traditionally been left behind. We must encourage greater diversity in both elected office and other positions of power and influence in our local and state governments. Our state is stronger when we work together and when people are empowered to succeed.
 - a. *Addressing Racism*: The Delaware Democratic Party will fight to end systematic and institutional racism throughout the state and in all facets of Delawareans' lives. Our public policies need to promote racial justice through fair, just, equitable, and impactful practices that encourage righting past inequities.
 - b. *Confronting Sexism*: Sexism is real and pervasive in all institutions. The Delaware Democratic Party is committed to ending systemic and institutional sexism throughout Delaware.
 - c. *Criminal Justice Reform*: In Delaware, we are committed to true criminal justice reform and ending mass incarceration. We support abolition of the state's death penalty, which has been applied arbitrarily and unjustly and does not deter crime. We prioritize prevention and treatment over incarceration when tackling addiction and substance use disorder. As a party, Delaware Democrats will work tirelessly to rebuild bonds of trusts between law enforcement and the communities they serve. Delaware, home of the author of the Violence Against Women Act, must be committed to combating violence against women. We also believe in the eradication of all forms of human trafficking and modern slavery, including the commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor of men, women, and children. We need to ensure protections and services for survivors of violence and trafficking, and implement measures to ensure that we are not criminalizing the victim and that all victims receive the care they need to make a fresh start.
 - d. *Wealth Inequality*: Delaware Democrats stand for removing the wealth gap that exists in our state for all marginalized communities. Delaware Democrats believe we need to eliminate systemic barriers to wealth accumulation across different groups by improving opportunities for people of all backgrounds. This can be done through implementing policies that increase homeownership, increase access

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to high quality jobs, career education, and job training for the industries of the future.

- e. *Immigration Reform*: Our country was founded on the ideals of liberty and religious freedom, and our culture has been enriched by the arrival of immigrants drawn to those ideals. We believe that we must be unwavering in our aim for diversity and inclusivity. The Delaware Democratic Party believes in cultivating a safe, welcoming community for everyone to have access to a good-paying job, quality education, and affordable housing. We support smart immigration policies that promote legal immigration for those seeking a better life and those seeking refuge from violence and oppression. Delaware Democrats also believe in collaboration between local law enforcement agencies and Federal authorities in implementation of fair and just immigration policies.
 - f. *Empowering People with Disabilities*: The Delaware Democratic Party recognizes that people with disabilities face physical and systemic barriers that limit their access to opportunity and decrease their overall quality of life. These barriers include limited access to affordable housing, inadequate transportation, and extreme disparities in education, healthcare, and other social services. We stand for better employment opportunities for Delawareans with disabilities by advocating for better job skills training and a fair wage structure, as well as by eliminating disability discrimination in the workplace.
 - g. *Poverty*: Delaware Democrats advocate the elimination of persistent poverty throughout our state. We support fighting poverty by implementing policies that use targeted data to build empowerment zones, enacting anti-hunger campaigns, and supporting investment in small businesses, youth employment programs, reentry services, post-secondary education, and vocational and trade programs. We, as Democrats, need to stand up for support services with a strong voice for women, children, elderly, and people who are homeless or disabled, and not assume that poverty is just being unemployed.
 - h. *LGBTQ Equality*: Delaware Democrats believe in full equality for LGBTQ people in employment, housing, public accommodations, education, and throughout life. We will continue to build on Delaware's historic progress to guarantee protections and rights for the LGBTQ community. Delaware Democrats will fight to ensure that Delaware remains at the forefront of equality and continues to serve as a beacon of opportunity for LGBTQ people across the country.
- 5. Government Transparency, Voting Rights, and Campaign Finance Reform:** Delaware Democrats believe that a core principle of the Party is to maximize voter participation for all Delawareans. We will fight for real campaign finance reform to keep big money from drowning out the voices of everyday Delawareans, and we must have the necessary tools to fight back and safeguard our electoral and political integrity. We

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believe it is the government's responsibility to ensure the transparency of corporations seeking establishment in Delaware, as well as to keep Delawareans safe through strengthening our cybersecurity.

- a. *Responsible Government*: The Delaware Democratic Party believes that every Delawarean should be confident in the stewardship of government. We need to tackle fiscal waste, fraud, and abuse to ensure government dollars are spent wisely and efficiently. Government should be well managed, open, responsive, and accountable, with particular focus on transparency in campaign finance and public officials' compensation. Delaware Democrats believe in sound fiscal practices, with public access at all levels to government financial records.
 - b. *Voting Rights*: Ensuring and expanding the right to vote is a core value of the Democratic Party. We believe that we should make it easier to vote by expanding early voting and voting by mail, automatically registering citizens to vote, implementing same day voter registration, and ending partisan and racial gerrymandering. Democrats are dedicated to fighting against efforts to suppress minority turnout through discriminatory voter identification laws.
 - c. *Campaign Finance*: We support constitutional amendments to overturn Citizens' United and Buckley v. Valeo. We need to amplify the voices of the American people through a small donor matching public financing system. We need to overhaul and strengthen the Federal Election Commission so that there is real enforcement of campaign finance laws. And we need to fight to eliminate super PACs and outside spending abuses, including transparency of donors.
 - d. *Transparency of Corporate Entities & LLCs*: National security officials have warned against potential secret ownership of companies in critical areas such as energy production, electric grids, communications and transportation infrastructure. There is also major concern about the use of Limited Liability companies to secretly launder funds to be used by terrorist and other criminal groups. Delaware Democrats support revisions of State Corporate Law to require screening and identification of all persons and nations seeking to establish an LLC under Delaware statutes.
 - e. *Cybersecurity*: Delaware Democrats understand the need to strengthen our cybersecurity, and will seek to establish global norms in cyberspace and impose consequences on those who violate the rules. We will do this while protecting the privacy and civil liberties of the American people.
- 6. Climate Change and Environmental Justice**: Delaware Democrats share a deep commitment to protecting our environment and tackling climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions using clean energy and energy independence. Energy efficiency is good for the economy and good for our environment. We are committed to

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supporting energy efficient and sustainable public transportation, businesses, homes, and farms.

- a. *Clean Energy Development and Implementation*: The Delaware Democratic Party supports efforts to transition our energy supply to distributed and centralized renewable sources. We recognize the critical need for requiring existing generation facilities to meet environmental standards and to offer incentives to decrease transportation energy needs. We must make our existing infrastructure safer and cleaner, while also building the infrastructure necessary to power clean energy, including solar and wind energy.
 - b. *Environmental Justice*: Delaware Democrats believe in the right to clean air and water for all Americans. We understand that climate change and pollution disproportionately affect low-income communities and communities of color. We need to prioritize hiring and training workers to clean up the toxic brownfields that have polluted our state, and seek opportunities to return these sites to productive, economic use. The Delaware Democratic Party supports more cleanup requirements when any commercial property is proposed for residential development. We must expand clean energy, energy efficiency, and resilient infrastructure.
 - c. *Protection of Public Land and Water*: Delaware Democrats believe we must partner with our state's farmers to be effective in keeping our air and water clean, combating climate change, and ensuring the health and preservation of our agricultural lands. The conservation of Delaware's waterways and public lands are critical to ensuring the health and wellbeing of all Delawareans and the natural wildlife. We believe that we need policies and investments that will mitigate the effects of sea level rise, keep these areas clean and protected, as well as harness the immense social and economic potential of our public lands and waters.
7. **Provide Quality Affordable Education**: The Delaware Democratic Party firmly believes that quality and affordable early learning and debt-free college must be the birthright of every child.
- a. *Affordable Early Learning*: Democrats are dedicated to creating the best-educated population and workforce in the world. This requires making developmentally-appropriate early childhood education and universal preschool a priority, as verified by recent research that shows what impact early learning has on creating life-long success.
 - b. *Public School Systems*: The Delaware Democratic Party supports the premise that our state must meet its full funding obligation for K-12 education. We support preservation of after school programs, arts programs, and better funding for our public schools.

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- c. *Special Education*: We are committed to supporting children with special educational needs, and their parents, with fully-funded and science-based special education programming, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and other support systems as required. We recognize that children with disabilities are as valuable and as deserving of a top-quality education as any other children.
 - d. *Debt-free College*: Cost should not be a barrier in earning a degree or credential, and debt should not hold graduates back. Bold new investments by the federal government, coupled with states reinvesting in higher education and reducing student loan burdens, should ensure that Americans of all backgrounds will be prepared for the jobs and economy of the future. Delaware Democrats also support expansion of community college scholarship programs.
 - e. *Apprenticeship Programs*: Delaware Democrats believe that our state needs to offer and expand alternative educational opportunities for individuals not pursuing a college degree. Union apprenticeship programs provide a proven, systematic method of vocational and technical education, integrating on-the-job work experience with related instruction, typically offered in a classroom setting. Apprentices are paid while they learn their respective trade, are eligible for benefits, and have a pathway to a career.
 - f. *Equitable Funding*: We recognize that many Delaware schools have disproportionately high amounts of economically-disadvantaged students. Delaware Democrats are committed to ensuring that schools that educate children in poverty are treated fairly, and that weighted, needs-based formula funding is used based on the number of students living in poverty, students in special education, and ELL. High poverty schools require adequate funding to ensure all students achieve success and all teachers have necessary resources for their classrooms.
 - g. *Support Our Educators*: We need to ensure that teachers are incentivized to work in high-needs areas. Delaware Democrats support accountability that improves the many achievement gaps facing students from low-income communities. We support policies that motivate and reward rather than demoralize our educators.
8. **Health and Safety of Delawareans**: Delaware Democrats strongly believe in universal health care coverage. Healthcare is a right, not a privilege for the few who can afford it. We are proud of being the Party of Medicare, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program and the Affordable Care Act. We need to build on these achievements, not weaken or gut them, and move closer to universal health care while improving quality and reducing costs in the healthcare system. Delaware Democrats believe in reproductive rights and in promoting women's health. We support measures to reduce gun violence and to reduce substance abuse.

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- a. *Universal Healthcare:* We believe Delaware and America should continue on the road toward greater access to health care, not reverse the tide. Our goal of expanding access to care includes access to mental health services and access to care for disabled individuals. Delaware Democrats support efforts to preserve and improve the ACA, including Medicaid expansion, while ultimately moving toward a single-payer option or expansion of Medicare for all. We firmly believe an insurance company should not be allowed to deny coverage to an individual due to a pre-existing condition and in community rating to protect such individuals from higher costs. Delaware Democrats support federal passage of a public option to promote competition in health care markets and provide consumers with greater choice and more affordability. This includes reducing the cost of prescription drugs and sensible reforms to allow greater access to care.
- b. *Drug/Alcohol Addiction Services:* The plight of drug and alcohol abuse is ravaging many communities across the state, and we must enact safeguards for those affected by this public health crisis. Delaware Democrats believe in continuing and expanding efforts in Delaware to tackle these problems, including applying aggressive preventative education and early intervention measures, as well as expansion of addiction treatment programming and resources. Furthermore, we recognize that addiction is a mental health issue, not a criminal issue; we commit to working to pass laws to ensure that these individuals can get the help they need, rather than entering the criminal justice system.
- c. *Preventing Gun Violence:* Gun violence is taking far too many lives in Delaware. Delaware Democrats support common sense gun safety measures while respecting responsible gun ownership. We will build on successful efforts at the state level and proposed efforts at the federal level to get weapons of war away from criminals and off our streets, while preserving the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding gun owners.
- d. *Mental Health Care:* The Delaware Democratic Party recognizes that good mental health is critical to all people, including the homeless, and therefore we must treat mental health issues with the same care and seriousness that we treat physical health issues and work to eliminate the stigma surrounding mental health care. It is also imperative that we expand community-based treatment for mental health conditions and substance abuse disorders, and create awareness about suicide prevention.
- e. *Reproductive Rights:* We support a woman's right to make healthcare decisions for herself and in consultation with her healthcare provider, including decisions concerning contraception and abortion. Delaware Democrats also support the right of all women to access appropriate healthcare. We oppose efforts to limit access to healthcare services and to defund reproductive and women's health care providers, and recognize that affordable birth control should be expanded,

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especially in more rural areas of the state. The ACA prohibition on gender-based discrimination by health insurers must be preserved.

9. **Support Troops and Care for Veterans:** Delaware Democrats believe we have moral responsibility to keep faith with all of our veterans and wounded warriors. We are committed to helping our veterans achieve their educational goals, and support reducing barriers to veteran entrepreneurship. We also support measures to combat waste, corruption, and dysfunction in the federal Department of Veterans Affairs. We must take care of those who put their lives on the line to defend us.
 - a. *Expand Military Family Services:* Delaware Democrats honor the sacrifice of military families who serve alongside our service members. We will support military families with jobs, education, childcare, and health care. We will promote family-friendly policies and champion efforts to care for our military family members, especially for the spouses and children who have to rebuild their lives after the loss of a loved one or life-altering injury or disability. We must expand services and programs for veterans, specifically women, whose needs are often overlooked during and after their service.
 - b. *Care for Veterans:* Delaware Democrats will fight for every veteran to have timely access to high-quality health care and processing of claims and appeals. We are committed to taking veteran mental health seriously, including PTSD, addiction, and suicide, and providing resources to injured veterans, including those suffering from mental health injuries.
 - c. *Assistance Programs for Homeless Veterans:* Delaware Democrats believe we should provide resources to fight the chronic issues of homelessness for so many of our veterans.