

# **The Delaware Democratic Party**

## **2021 Resolutions Recommendations**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Committee met in a public Zoom meeting on 6/8/2021 to consider and adopt the proposed resolutions submitted to it by members of the State Democratic Party. Committee Chair Leslie Ledogar committed to compiling the resolutions as adopted into a draft document that will be reviewed by the Committee before the resolutions are presented to the Convention.

Committee members present: *Matthew Powell, Aja Ajavon, Jordyn Pusey, Everett Anderson, Tammy Browning-Smith, Heidi Corbin, John Johnson, Shanika Perry, David Sytsma-Sherman, JJ Francis, Harry Sewell, James Reed, Marcus Wright, Tony Codella, Kerry Thalheim, Leslie Ledogar*

Members not in attendance: *Kerri Evelyn Harris, Michael Humphrey, Terri McIvor, Tracey Miller,*

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Committee Chair Leslie W. Ledogar, Esq.*

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### **I. RESOLUTION HONORING JOSEPH ROBINETTE BIDEN, JR. FOR HIS SERVICE AND DEDICATION TO THE STATE OF DELAWARE**

WHEREAS, Joseph R. Biden Jr. was born on November 20, 1942 in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and moved to Delaware in 1953, where he attended and graduated from Archmere Academy in 1961 and the University of Delaware in 1965; and

WHEREAS, Joseph R. Biden Jr. began his public service career in the State of Delaware as a member of the New Castle County Council, on which he served from 1970 to 1972 and demonstrated true care for and commitment to the residents and businesses of his adopted home state; and

WHEREAS, With his strong desire to serve, coupled with exemplary leadership skills, Joseph R. Biden Jr. was elected to the United States Senate in 1972 at age 29, becoming the sixth-youngest

senator in American history upon taking office, and representing the people of Delaware from 1973 to 2009; and

WHEREAS, With Delaware in his heart, Biden made near daily trips between Washington D.C. and Wilmington, traveling from the Amtrak train station that now bears his name, so that he could spend as much time as possible with his beloved family, and regularly attend services at his home parish, Saint Joseph on the Brandywine church in Greenville; and

WHEREAS, In the course of his tireless work in the Senate, he served as Ranking Member and Chair of both the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate Judiciary Committee championing peace and human rights, defending America's allies, , and advocating for criminal justice reform and civil liberties; and

WHEREAS, After representing Delaware in the Senate for 36 years, Biden was elected the 47th Vice President of the United States, serving in the historic administration of President Barack Obama from 2009 to 2017; and

WHEREAS, Biden has earned the respect of many and has always shared his remarkable wit, humor, knowledge, empathy, and lived experiences with the people of Delaware; and

WHEREAS, Delaware has reciprocated that love and admiration with such honors as the establishment of the Biden Institute at the University of Delaware, the Joseph R. Biden Jr. Aquatic Center, and the Biden Welcome Center on Interstate-95, all of which illustrate the love and respect Delaware has for its hometown hero; and

WHEREAS, Joseph R. Biden Jr. has endured great family tragedies during his public life, grieving openly and sharing his loss with Delaware in a way that has demonstrated how tightly the Biden family is woven into the fabric of the state; and

WHEREAS, Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s election as the 46th President of the United States is an example of resilience and triumph, as Americans look forward to him leading the country to a better place, fostering unity, and advancing justice and equality for all; and

WHEREAS, The people of Delaware will continue to benefit from Biden's leadership, passion, and progress for years to come.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Delaware Democratic Party, in recognition of the significant and positive impact, during some of the most challenging circumstances, professionally and personally, we congratulate Joseph Robinette Biden Jr. on his election as 46th President of the United States of America.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Delaware Democratic Party presents this resolution to President Biden with the most sincere thanks, appreciation, and support in his future endeavors on behalf of all Delawareans.

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## **II. RESOLUTION CONCERNING SUPPORTING THE DE EARNS Bill**

WHEREAS, the Democratic National Committee Platform states its support for guaranteeing a secure and dignified retirement; and

WHEREAS, the Democratic National Committee Platform further states that the Party "will support approaches to retirement saving that enable workers and retirees to prepare for and prosper in retirement, including reforms that will allow states and municipalities to create public individual and pooled retirement account options that are easy for workers to access and understand; and

WHEREAS, workplace retirement saving plans provide millions of U.S. workers with an effective and convenient way to save for retirement, yet one third of U.S. workers lack access to such plans; and

WHEREAS, according to research from the National Institute on Retirement Security, 75% of U.S. residents agree that the country is facing a retirement crisis; and

WHEREAS, an increasing number of states are offering or planning to offer workers whose employers do not sponsor a retirement plan an option to be automatically enrolled in private-sector payroll deduction IRAs, and many other states are considering such programs; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Compensation and Benefits Survey, which surveyed Delaware workplaces and their employees, 54% of employers within the State do not offer retirement plans; and

WHEREAS, according to research from the Georgetown University Center for Retirement Initiatives, approximately 38% of the State's workforce – more than 145,000 workers, many of whom are lower- to moderate-income women and minority workers – do not have access to employer-sponsored retirement plans; and

WHEREAS, despite the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, state-sponsored retirement plans that support small business employees have remained resilient

with employee contributions holding steady, withdrawals under control, and employer registrations increasing; and

WHEREAS, in the three states with the longest-running state-sponsored retirement programs, employee contributions held steady or increased during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, according to a March 2020 survey by MoneyRates, 36% of employees who are within 20 years of retirement expect the COVID-19 pandemic to delay their retirement; and

WHEREAS, according to an April 2021 Congressional Research Service report, the number of citizens over the age of 65 living in poverty in the State is projected to increase substantially over the next 20 years, with a commensurate increase in demand for public assistance benefits; and

WHEREAS, the Delaware General Assembly, in coordination with the Office of the State Treasurer, has introduced House Bill 205 to address the retirement crisis; and

WHEREAS, this legislation establishes the Delaware Expanding Access for Retirement and Necessary Saving (“EARNNS”) program to serve as a vehicle through which eligible employees may, on a voluntary basis, provide for additional retirement security through a State-facilitated retirement savings program in a convenient, cost effective, and portable manner; and

WHEREAS, the EARNNS program will be designed to serve small businesses who are unable to offer retirement plans to employees due to the cost and administrative burden; and

WHEREAS, because there are documented wealth gaps in Delaware, disproportionately impacting women and people of color, a state-facilitated savings plan aims to alleviate barriers small employers face in offering options, close the wealth gap among low to modest wage earners and keep Delaware competitive with neighboring states by attracting talented workers to Delaware; and

WHEREAS, the Delaware EARNNS Program will provide a convenient, low-cost, portable, and tax-favored means of saving for workers whose employers do not offer a private-sector 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Delaware Democratic Party reaffirms its commitment to support Delawareans in their right to a secure and dignified retirement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Delaware Democratic Party stands firm in the belief that retirement saving should enable workers and retirees to prepare for and prosper in retirement, including reforms that will allow states and municipalities to create public individual and pooled retirement account options that are easy for workers to access and understand; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, House Bill 205, also known as the Delaware EARNS Act, appropriately addresses the growing retirement insecurity crisis facing Delawareans, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, House Bill 205 is in direct alignment with the virtues and principles of the Delaware Democratic Party and should be fully supported and endorsed by the Platform Committee for purposes of adding the legislation to the official State Party platform; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Delaware Democratic Party shall send a copy of this resolution to all Democratic office holders and candidates.

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### **III. RESOLUTION CONCERNING ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO SAFE, ACCESSIBLE AND LOCAL ABORTION CARE**

WHEREAS Roe v. Wade is under extreme threat from both Republican state legislatures, the Delaware GOP and a conservative Supreme Court.

WHEREAS 1 out of 3 women in the United States will access abortion services at some point in their lifetime and over half of Delawareans believe that a woman should be able to privately access legal abortion services.

WHEREAS Delaware's own President Biden has led the movement for greater abortion access on a federal level, removing the Hyde Amendment from the proposed budget

WHEREAS Planned Parenthood of Delaware, Christiana Care and other abortion providers in Delaware continue to provide excellent service for those seeking abortion care within Delaware

WHEREAS Delaware Democrats have voted to eliminate criminal penalties for abortion services Therefore it be resolved that the Delaware Democratic Party will work with stakeholders to eliminate barriers to safe, accessible and local abortion care.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Delaware Democratic Party calls upon all members of Delaware's Congressional Delegation to vote against the inclusion of the Hyde and Helms Amendments in the federal budget

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Delaware Democratic Party calls upon all members of the Delaware State Legislature who are members of the Democratic Party of Delaware to vote against any bills which would reduce the fundamental right to abortion access, non judgmental,

non directive pregnancy options counselling and to vote for more measures which continue to make abortion more financially accessible.

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#### **IV. RESOLUTION CONCERNING GUN CONTROL LEGISLATION AND EDUCATION ON EXTENT OF SECOND AMENDMENT RIGHTS**

WHEREAS the Delaware Democratic Party should work to help pass strong, meaningful gun control legislation;

Whereas efforts should be made to communicate a better understanding of how Second Amendment rights do not actually apply the way pro-gun proponents have interpreted them;

WHEREAS the gun manufacturers and gun lobbies have had the upper hand far to long;

Now therefore, be it resolved that the Delaware Democratic Party will in 2021 and 2022, first assist in passing meaningful gun control legislation aimed at reducing opportunity for purchase of assault-style weapons, high capacity magazines and "ghost guns;" and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Delaware Democratic Party will work to build and communicate a clearer understanding of Second Amendment rights in regard to personal ownership of guns.

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#### **V. RESOLUTION CONCERNING VOTER PROTECTIONS**

WHEREAS, across the country, state Republican officials have brought bills intended to disenfranchise voters, specifically Black, Latinx and indigenous voters. These often include strict and specific voter ID requirements, limiting access to dropboxes for mail ballots and restricting early voting hours;

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court has not adequately protected access to suffrage, striking down essential provisions of the Voting Rights Act in the case of Shelby v. Holder and ruling that partisan gerrymandering a non-justiciable issue for redress in federal courts in Rucho v. Common Cause;

WHEREAS, voter fraud is virtually nonexistent as a problem in the state of Delaware;

WHEREAS, the Delaware Republican Party is attempting to introduce bills which would limit access to absentee ballots and require strict voter identification;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, all members of the Delaware Democratic Party seek to eliminate voter suppression in Delaware and throughout the United States;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Delaware Democratic Party maintains a vigorous Voter Protection program to ensure that all voters can access support and education regarding voting;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Delaware Democratic Party engages with stakeholder organizations such as the Delaware Voting Rights Coalition members to advocate for increased voter access within Delaware, including expanding access to voter registration opportunities and no-excuse early and mail voting;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Delaware Democratic Party calls upon all members of the Delaware State Legislature who are members of the Democratic Party to vote for legislation which would increase access to suffrage and vote against bills intended to disenfranchise young and minority voters; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Delaware Democratic Party wholeheartedly supports the efforts of the members of the Delaware Congressional Delegation in voting for HR1 - the For the People Act and in voting for HR4 - the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, both of which ensure that all Americans are able to freely and fairly access elections.

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## **VI. RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE DELAWARE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS BILL OF RIGHTS**

WHEREAS, the public does not currently have access to police discipline records;

WHEREAS, there is a strong need for the creation of community review board with the power to investigate misconduct and hold hearings;

WHEREAS, it is essential to Amend the Delaware Law Enforcement Officers Bill of Rights (LEOBOR) to allow for public access to police discipline records and to allow for the creation of community review board with the power to investigate misconduct and hold hearings;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, LEOBOR be amended to:

Give the public, prosecutors, and criminal defense counsel access to all law-enforcement misconduct records, created before, on, or after the bill is enacted into law. The law would ensure that the only materials that would be released relate to disciplinary issues and won't include personal information; and

Allow for the creation of community review boards at the state, county, and local level that have the power to 1) hold hearings on law-enforcement disciplinary matters; 2) gather data concerning allegations of misconduct by officers; 3) make recommendations to police departments chiefs and to the Council on Police Training concerning law-enforcement policy and trainings; and issue subpoenas for witnesses and evidence.

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## **VII. RESOLUTION CONCERNING ADDITIONAL MEASURES NEEDED TO ADDRESS PERIOD EQUITY**

WHEREAS, Thirteen percent of Delaware children are living in poverty and government assistance such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Support for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) do not provide assistance to purchase menstrual hygiene products;

WHEREAS, One in five girls miss school due to their shame and embarrassment about menstruation and their lack of access to sanitary products;

WHEREAS, the Democratic members of the Delaware state legislature made major gains for period equity by passing a law requiring public and charter schools to provide sanitary supplies for students in grades 6 through 12;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Delaware Democratic Party calls on members to promote menstrual equality within the Delaware Democratic Party, within the State of Delaware and within the broader United States;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, members of the Democratic Party who are also municipal leaders seek to make sanitary products available in public restrooms in order to reach those who struggle to access menstrual hygiene;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, members of our Congressional Delegation who are also members of the Democratic Party to seek to include sanitary products in food and health assistance programs at a national level;



BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Delaware Democratic Party works with stakeholders such as the Junior League of Wilmington in order to ensure period equity throughout Delaware.

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**VIII. RESOLUTION CONCERNING SUPPORT IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 24 (2021-2022) TO MODERNIZE DELAWARE'S EDUCATION FUNDING SYSTEM**

WHEREAS, Opportunity Funding is critical for the support of our low income students, and our students who need mental health support and English learning support in our school districts;

WHEREAS, there is ample evidence that the Covid-19 pandemic has adversely affected the emotional wellbeing of many of our students;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Delaware Democratic Party supports House Concurrent Resolution 24 — which vocalizes support for Senate Bill 56 (2021-2022) and encourages the Governor to sign the legislation to modernize Delaware's Education Funding System in order to address education gaps and inequities in the current system.

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**IX. RESOLUTION CONCERNING ADDRESSING AGE DISCRIMINATION IN HIRING**

WHEREAS, there is a prevalent need to enforce or strengthen existing laws preventing age discrimination in hiring;

WHEREAS, well-qualified job candidates in their forties and above feel they are not being hired simply because of their age, but it's difficult to prove when it happens;

WHEREAS, employing qualified job candidates in their forties and above helps older adults stay employed, build their retirement savings, limit their need for public assistance, maintain and improve their mental health, and boosts tax revenue;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Delaware Democratic Party and its elected representatives do to everything in their power to fight age discrimination in employment hiring by enforcing and strengthening existing laws, and create new anti-age discrimination laws where needed.

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## **X. RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE MINIMUM WAGE**

WHEREAS, advocating for a living minimum wage will include creating tax credits, rebates, or other financial incentives for employers that meet or exceed these wage targets;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Delaware Democratic Party and all its elected representatives at the Federal, State, County and local levels will actively promote income justice and fight poverty by advocating, legislating, and voting at every opportunity for a minimum of a \$15 per hour minimum wage effective in 2021 and automatically indexed to the cost of living thereafter.

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## **XI. RESOLUTION CONCERNING ALTERNATIVE MEASUREMENTS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH THAT INCORPORATE DISPARATE EFFECTS ON VARIOUS DELAWARE POPULATIONS**

WHEREAS, economic growth is generally favored by Delawareans;

WHEREAS, the assumption that general economic growth benefits everyone has not been borne out so that it is now necessary to dedicate, monitor, and manage stimulus programs by how well they specifically advance the common good with significant household income increases across all sectors of the community;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, how much poverty and food shortage or food anxiety levels are reduced should also be factors that must be included in the measurement of economic growth.

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## **XII. RESOLUTION CONCERNING FOCUSED SUPPORT FOR NON-CRIMINAL POLICE ACTIVITY**

WHEREAS, there is insufficient funding to support local police and prison forces in the areas of policing non-criminal and minor criminal activity;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Delaware Democratic officials support our local police forces to include funding for: 1) more extensive and comprehensive police training, and 2) creating and adequately deploying specialized non-police response teams for non-criminal emergencies, such as disability or mental health crises.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the minimum standard for police certification should be at least one year of training, with two years preferable. Special crisis management teams will work in conjunction with police but such teams will take the lead in defusing and de-escalating such crises.