

## Delaware Democratic Party Platform [DRAFT]

Our country is currently in a perilous moment, where we are watching our government being illegally dismantled, our Constitution ignored and undermined, our demands for ethics and accountability are being ignored. At this moment, Delaware Democrats declare that we support a robust democracy and reject any form of authoritarian or fascist governance. We support all actions targeted at protecting our democracy and way of life from authoritarians and their drive to dismantle our government so they can give the largest tax cuts in history to the billionaire class. Delaware's Democrats – our Federal delegation, our Governor, our Attorney General and our leaders in the legislature – have been vocal and clear in their commitment to protecting our Democracy in our state and in doing what they can to mitigate the effects of the destructive chaos in Washington. The Delaware Democratic Party supports our leaders at this moment and we commit to joining them in this fight to protect our Democracy and way of life in Delaware.

The Delaware Democratic Party believes that government must be accountable, inclusive, and bold in its duty to protect the health, rights, and welfare of all Delawareans. As custodians of our communities and environment, we are determined to protect what matters most—our people, our democracy, and our shared future. We believe that government has a duty to invest in the future of our state by providing equitable, high-quality public education for every Delawarean, and that it is our responsibility to build healthy, resilient communities by ensuring access to affordable healthcare and essential public services. We believe economic opportunity is vital to the well-being of every Delawarean, and we believe that economic growth can and must be compatible with environmental sustainability and social responsibility.

We continue to honor President Joe Biden—a proud son of Delaware—whose decades of service reflected the very values we continue to fight for: opportunity for working families, investment in the public good, and an unwavering commitment to democracy. His leadership reminded us that unity and decency are not just possible but essential.

We believe that government must be fully accountable to the people it serves, and that public funds are the people's money—not a tool for special interests. We support transparent, responsible budgeting that invests in communities, prioritizing public needs, ensuring fair taxation that protects working families, and providing for our most vulnerable, including seniors, children, and those in need.

We believe in the inherent dignity and equal rights of every person, and that those rights must be protected for all Delawareans—without exception. Every individual deserves to feel safe in their community, not only from crime, but also from the abuse of power. We support smart, just, and preventative public safety measures that uphold civil liberties and ensure that safety and justice are truly accessible to everyone.

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We believe that inclusiveness is a source of strength, and that a thriving democracy depends on the full participation of its people. We are committed to organizing and empowering Democrats at every level of government and in every corner of our state—urban, suburban, and rural alike. We will continue to seek out fresh voices, especially from historically underrepresented populations to ensure that every Democrat has a meaningful role in shaping our vision and has a place at the table.

We believe Delaware is stronger when our economy works for everyone—not just the wealthy and well-connected. We support policies that raise wages, expand opportunity, and restore economic fairness for working people and middle-class families. A better future means investing in long-term growth, not short-term profits. Further, we believe in an economy that values hard work, supports small businesses, and invests in communities that have too often been overlooked or left behind.

We, the Democratic Party of Delaware, recommit ourselves to principled leadership that protects our democratic institutions and strengthens public trust, standing united against extremism, inequality, and authoritarianism in all its forms. We encourage participation from all Delawareans—those in our Party, those seeking affiliation, and those who share a belief in justice, equity, and democratic values. We support candidates who champion personal freedom, inclusive economic and educational opportunity, transparent and accountable governance, and a steadfast commitment to civil rights and equal protection for all. We believe that cooperation is stronger than conflict, unity is essential to progress, and true empowerment means lifting every voice—including those too often ignored. Through these principles, we can build a more stable, inclusive, and thriving Delaware for generations to come.

### **Section 1:**

**An Economy That Works For Everyone:** Delaware Democrats believe every Delawarean deserves access to a good-paying job, the ability to support their family, and the opportunity to build a secure future. We are committed to creating a fair and inclusive economy that lifts up all workers—especially those in communities that have historically been neglected. Sustained economic growth is only possible through forward-looking policies that serve the common good.

**a. Infrastructure:** Delaware must prioritize investments that both strengthen our economy and make daily life safer and more accessible. That means repairing and expanding roads, bridges, rail lines, and public transit—but also going further. We support a comprehensive, statewide approach to expand transportation access that includes safe paths, sidewalks, crosswalks, and traffic calming measures, so that no one is forced to risk their life simply walking to essential destinations. Moreover, expanding high-speed internet in rural and underserved areas,

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modernizing energy infrastructure, and strengthening critical systems to withstand climate impacts are essential steps toward a more resilient and connected Delaware.

**b. Wages:** No one who works full-time should have to struggle to provide for their family. Delaware Democrats support raising the minimum wage to **\$20 an hour**, reflecting the reality of rising costs and inflation since 2021. We also support automatic increases tied to the cost of living to protect wages over time. We believe workers deserve more than a paycheck—they deserve job stability, predictable schedules, paid sick leave, and the flexibility to care for their families without penalty. We call for major investments in child care infrastructure, including affordable day care, universal preschool, and after-school programs. Every child in Delaware deserves safe, high-quality care from cradle to adulthood, and every parent deserves the ability to work knowing their child is safe and supported.

**c. Organized Labor:** Delaware Democrats recognize that strong unions are essential to a thriving middle class. Every worker should have the freedom to organize and form a union, with the power to negotiate for fair wages, safe working conditions, and respect—regardless of their industry or employer. Preserving collective bargaining rights and prevailing wage laws is critical to protecting worker power, especially in publicly funded projects. We oppose any effort to weaken unions through so-called “right to work” laws, “paycheck protection” schemes, or any other anti-worker legislation. Empowering workers to advocate for themselves strengthens not just the workforce, but our entire economy.

**d. Community Workforce Agreements:** Public investments should benefit the people who reside where the work is being done. Delaware Democrats support mandatory local hire provisions in taxpayer-funded projects. Community workforce agreements help promote economic mobility, create job opportunities in underserved areas, and ensure public dollars strengthen local communities first.

**e. Clean Energy Jobs:** Delaware must lead in the clean energy transition—not only to address climate change, but to grow our economy in ways that are sustainable and just. We support investments in solar, wind, and energy-efficient technologies that reduce emissions and create good-paying, union-protected jobs. We are committed to ensuring that clean energy growth includes job training and pathways for workers transitioning from fossil fuel industries, and that environmental and economic benefits reach historically marginalized communities first. Clean energy is not just about reducing carbon emissions—it’s about opportunity, equity, and a future that works for all.

**f. Small Business:** Small businesses are the heart of Delaware’s economy and serve as a key pathway to prosperity for families and communities alike. We support policies that eliminate barriers for small business owners—especially in underserved communities—by expanding

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access to capital, cutting unnecessary red tape, and increasing support for minority-owned enterprises. Delaware Democrats back public investment in business incubators, technical training, and grant programs that help entrepreneurs thrive and create local jobs. A fair economy is one where everyone has a real chance to start and grow a business.

### **Section 2:**

**Removing Barriers to Opportunity:** Delaware Democrats believe that every individual—regardless of race, gender, class, religion, ethnicity, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or age—deserves full and equal access to opportunity, safety, and dignity. We are committed to lifting up the communities that have historically been marginalized and dismantling the systemic barriers that continue to limit too many lives today. We recognize that real progress requires intentional action, not just ideals. That means fostering greater diversity in elected office and positions of leadership across Delaware, making sure that the people who shape our future reflect the full diversity of our state. It also means ensuring that every Delawarean—no matter their background—has a voice in shaping the policies that affect their lives. Our state is stronger when we work together and when people are empowered to succeed.

**a. Combating Racism and White Supremacy:** Racism remains deeply embedded in the foundations of our institutions and society, shaping outcomes in education, housing, healthcare, public safety, and economic opportunity. It is both systemic and generational, passed down through centuries of discriminatory laws, practices, and policies that have created lasting inequities. Delaware Democrats recognize that racism is not only a moral failure but also a public health crisis that demands comprehensive and sustained action. We are committed to ending systemic and institutional racism in every facet of Delawareans' lives and to confronting the rise of white supremacy. We are committed to ending systemic racism across Delaware and confronting the rise of white supremacy wherever it threatens our communities. Our efforts must move beyond acknowledgment, driving real and lasting change that strengthens justice in every part of public life. We support bold reforms that not only address the deep inequities in our economy, education, and healthcare systems, but also begin the work of repairing past harms through reparations and sustained investment in marginalized communities. Only through intentional and transformative change can we honor the dignity of every Delawarean and create a future rooted in justice.

**b. Confronting Sexism:** Sexism remains real and pervasive in every institution, continuing to deny equal opportunity, autonomy, and full participation to women and gender minorities across Delaware. Delaware Democrats are committed to dismantling systemic and institutional sexism in all areas of public and private life. We believe achieving full gender equality requires more than rhetoric—it demands bold action to address the deep inequalities embedded in our systems.

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We support the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the strengthening of gender equity protections at the state level. We are also committed to ensuring that all individuals, regardless of gender identity, have access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive, including affordable child care, strong family support systems, and protections against discrimination. Ending sexism means breaking down systemic barriers and building a Delaware where every person can live with equality, dignity, and the freedom to pursue their full potential.

**c. Reforming Our Criminal Justice System:** Delaware Democrats are committed to real criminal justice reform—reform that dismantles systemic racism, ends mass incarceration, and builds a system rooted in equity and rehabilitation. We support the abolition of the state’s death penalty, recognizing it has been applied unjustly and has failed to deter crime. We believe that addiction, substance use disorder, and mental health challenges should be treated through prevention, treatment, and community-based support, not incarceration. We will continue to fight for the legalization of marijuana for individuals over 21, the commutation of nonviolent marijuana-related convictions, and the expungement of records that have unfairly burdened thousands of Delawareans. Our system must stop criminalizing poverty by eliminating cash bail, reforming court fines and fees that trap people in debt, and ending outdated practices that punish individuals simply for being poor. We oppose the privatization of any function that uses government force—including arrest, detention, and incarceration—and are committed to creating an independent advocate within the Department of Corrections who reports directly to the commissioner to strengthen oversight and accountability. True justice requires systemic change that protects rights, promotes rehabilitation, and restores dignity for every Delawarean.

**d. Eliminating Income Inequality:** Delaware Democrats believe that every person deserves a real chance to achieve economic security and build a future of dignity and stability. Expanding homeownership opportunities, particularly through increased support for first-time buyers, must be central to any effort to close the racial and generational wealth gaps. We believe in preparing Delawareans for tomorrow’s economy by strengthening career education and job training, while ensuring that those historically excluded from opportunity—including returning citizens and unhoused individuals—have meaningful pathways to secure employment. Supporting small businesses and local entrepreneurship, especially in underserved communities, is critical to fostering sustainable economic growth that uplifts entire neighborhoods. Eliminating income inequality requires more than fragmented efforts; it demands a coordinated, long-term commitment to broadening opportunity, building wealth fairly, and investing in every Delawarean’s potential.

**e. Supporting Working Families:** We believe that building a stronger state begins with supporting the working families who drive our communities forward. Delaware Democrats reaffirm our commitment to equal pay for equal work, fair wages, and comprehensive paid family

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and medical leave that allows Delawareans to meet urgent health or caregiving needs without sacrificing financial security. Every worker must have access to at least 12 weeks of guaranteed paid family and medical leave, ensuring time to care for a new child, support a loved one in crisis, or navigate major life transitions with dignity and security. Child care deserves to be treated as a public good, not a private burden. Delaware families deserve access to safe, affordable, and high-quality early learning and care at every stage of childhood. Achieving this requires a lasting statewide commitment backed by meaningful investment. We also recognize the critical role of the home health care workforce and are committed to expanding access to high-quality, affordable care services for families who rely on them. Supporting working families means creating an economy that values caregiving, invests in dignity at work, and ensures that no Delawarean has to choose between earning a paycheck and caring for the people they love.

**f. Ensuring Housing:** Delaware Democrats believe that safe, stable, and affordable housing is a human right. No one should be forced into homelessness because of systemic failures, rising costs, or lack of opportunity. We support a Housing First model that ensures immediate shelter and wraparound services for unhoused Delawareans, including those facing mental health challenges or reentering society after incarceration. Expanding access to affordable rental housing statewide is essential, but so is building pathways to homeownership, particularly for first-time buyers, through down payment assistance, financial education, and innovative public-private partnerships. We also call for greater investment in sustainable, energy-efficient housing, to ensure that Delaware's growth is both affordable and environmentally resilient. Finally, we recognize that affordable housing requires more than units—it demands a comprehensive, well-funded, and long-term commitment to community well-being, including access to safe transportation, healthy food, and essential services for every Delaware neighborhood.

**g. Supporting Immigrants:** Delaware Democrats believe that immigrants strengthen the fabric of our communities and enrich every part of our shared future. We are committed to building a state that is safe, welcoming, and inclusive for all, where every immigrant can access opportunity, secure good-paying jobs, receive a quality education, and live free from exploitation or discrimination. While we recognize the need for fair and orderly immigration systems, we reject policies rooted in fear, cruelty, or division—and we oppose any efforts to detain, deport, or otherwise target immigrants without due process or respect for fundamental rights. Delaware must remain a place where the rule of law protects every individual's dignity. We call for comprehensive federal immigration reform that affirms human rights, keeps families together, and recognizes the profound contributions immigrants make to our country. True reform must include a real, achievable pathway to citizenship, rooted in the American ideals of liberty, equality, and justice for all.

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**h. Empowering People with Disabilities:** Delaware Democrats believe that every person with a disability deserves full dignity, opportunity, and inclusion in all aspects of life. Breaking down physical, systemic, and economic barriers is not optional—it is a moral obligation. We are committed to real public investment in high-quality, affordable home- and community-based services that prioritize self-determination over institutionalization. Individuals with physical, intellectual, developmental, or mental health disabilities must have the resources to live independently, fully participate in their communities, and access the healthcare and support services they need. We believe that public infrastructure must promote accessibility at every level. Every Delawarean should be able to navigate their community with dignity, supported by safe, reliable transportation, affordable and accessible housing, and digital access that meets the federal WCAG 2.2 standards for those who are blind or visually impaired. An inclusive education system must guarantee free, fully funded special education, along with wraparound supports that empower students with disabilities and their families. Every child deserves a public school system that lifts them up, not leaves them behind. Economic empowerment requires that people with disabilities have real access to meaningful employment at a living wage, with accommodations protected as a right—not an afterthought. For those who choose not to work, community engagement must be fully accessible and valued. This work cannot be addressed through fragmented efforts or unfunded promises. Delaware must invest boldly in its direct care workforce, accessible infrastructure, inclusive education, and community-based health services to ensure that no one is left isolated or unsupported. Delaware Democrats are committed to eliminating discrimination, dismantling systemic barriers, and building a state where every person with a disability can live independently, securely, and with dignity.

**i. Ending Poverty and Homelessness:** Delaware Democrats are committed to ending the persistent poverty that continues to harm families and communities across our state. Poverty is not just a matter of unemployment—it is a systemic failure that demands bold, comprehensive solutions. We support using data-driven strategies to build empowerment zones, expand access to post-secondary education, vocational and trade programs, and strengthen youth employment and reentry services. Fighting poverty also means addressing food insecurity as a public health issue by investing in anti-hunger campaigns and promoting healthy food access for all Delawareans. No individual should be left behind because of their age, ability, or circumstances. We call for real investment in equitable support services that lift up those most vulnerable and strengthen the fabric of our communities. Eradicating poverty demands leadership that removes systemic barriers, restores dignity, and ensures every Delawarean has the opportunity to thrive.

**j. Striving for LGBTQ+ Equality:** Delaware Democrats believe in the full protection, promotion, and permanent enshrinement of equal rights for every member of the LGBTQ+ community—especially transgender women of color and LGBTQ+ youth, whose rights are increasingly under attack. Equality must be protected in every aspect of life: employment,

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housing, education, healthcare, and the criminal justice system. We are committed to ensuring that gender-affirming healthcare is recognized as medically necessary, that transgender Delawareans can access accurate state identification without fear, and that individuals can live safely and authentically without interference or discrimination. We reject political extremism that seeks to undermine LGBTQ+ rights and affirm that the humanity and dignity of transgender people must be recognized and defended at every level of government. Delaware Democrats call for comprehensive protections to be strengthened through legislation—and ultimately, through amendments to our state constitution—to safeguard these rights against future political attacks. Building on Delaware’s historic progress, we will continue to fight for a state where LGBTQ+ people not only survive but thrive, and where the ideals of justice, equality, and human dignity are truly accessible to all.

### **Section 3:**

**3. Economic Accountability:** Delaware Democrats believe that the strength of both Delaware and America depends on a thriving working and middle class. Today, economic gains are increasingly concentrated among the wealthy few, undermining both our democracy and our long-term economic stability. We believe government must take an active role in ensuring the economy works for everyone—not just for those at the top. This requires bold reforms that expand opportunity, reward hard work, and curb abuses that fuel inequality. Building an economy that delivers dignity, security, and prosperity for all will take real investment, stronger protections for working families, and policies that reflect the urgency of today's cost-of-living pressures.

**a. Wall Street Reform:** Financial reform is necessary to rein in Wall Street excesses. We applaud the progress achieved under the Biden Administration and recognize the urgent need to defend and strengthen these reforms to ensure Wall Street remains accountable to the public good. The financial sector must never again be allowed to operate without strong oversight, accountability, and consequences. We support building on past reforms, strengthening financial regulations to protect consumers, curb abuses, and prevent another crisis fueled by greed and speculation. The markets must serve working families and small businesses, not the other way around. We advocate for policies that promote economic fairness, strengthen retirement security, and ensure that financial markets support sustainable, broad-based prosperity. Delaware Democrats are committed to ensuring that economic success is not hoarded by the few, but shared by all.

**b. Strengthening of Dodd-Frank:** Delaware Democrats believe that a healthy economy depends on competition—not domination by corporate giants. Rising corporate concentration distorts markets, drives up prices, weakens consumer choice, and undermines small businesses. We are committed to strengthening Dodd-Frank protections, restoring guardrails that prevent monopolistic abuses, and creating an environment where entrepreneurship, innovation, and fair



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pricing can thrive. Building an economy that works for everyone means pushing back against unchecked corporate power and ensuring a level playing field for consumers and small businesses alike.

**c. Tax Code Reform:** Delaware Democrats believe that tax policy must be a tool for fairness, not a driver of inequality. Our current system too often favors those at the very top, while placing greater burdens on working families. We are committed to reforms that ensure the wealthiest individuals and largest corporations contribute their fair share, while delivering real relief to middle- and low-income households. We support strengthening refundable tax credits that reward hard work and help families build stability. We also advocate for eliminating outdated penalties that reduce Social Security earnings for seniors before full retirement age. A strong economy depends on a tax code that supports shared prosperity, not the accumulation of wealth among the few.

### **Section 4:**

**4. Government Transparency, Voting Rights, and Campaign Finance Reform:** Delaware Democrats believe that democracy only thrives when government is open, accountable, and truly responsive to the people—not to wealthy elites or corporate interests. We are committed to protecting and strengthening our democratic institutions against the rising threats of concentrated wealth and political disenfranchisement. We believe that maximizing voter participation, ensuring fair elections, and exposing the influence of big money are essential to preserving freedom and opportunity for all. We reject the dangerous drift toward oligarchy, where unchecked power and private wealth threaten to hollow out our democratic system. Building a stronger democracy requires action at every level: protecting voting rights, reforming campaign finance, demanding transparency from powerful interests, and safeguarding civil liberties in an increasingly digital age. Delaware must be a leader in ensuring that government works for the people—and only the people.

**a. Responsible Government:** Delaware Democrats believe that every Delawarean deserves a government that is open, responsive, and fully accountable to the people it serves. Upholding public trust means confronting waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption wherever they arise—and ensuring that every tax dollar is spent wisely to strengthen our communities, not private interests. We are committed to building a government rooted in transparency, where campaign financing, public compensation, and fiscal management are open to public scrutiny at every level. Sound fiscal stewardship is not just good governance—it is essential to defending democracy itself against those who would exploit public power for personal gain. Delaware must lead by example, proving that government can be effective, ethical, and truly by and for the people.

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**b. Voting Rights:** Ensuring and expanding the right to vote is fundamental to preserving democracy itself. We are committed to building a political system where every voice is heard and every vote is counted—without barriers based on race, income, or background. Strengthening democracy means making voting more accessible through early voting, expanded vote-by-mail options, automatic and same-day voter registration, and the elimination of partisan and racial gerrymandering. We will fight tirelessly against any effort to suppress minority turnout or undermine trust in elections through discriminatory voter ID laws and other forms of voter suppression. Only by fostering greater civic engagement and participation can we defend against rising threats to democracy, authoritarianism, and the erosion of rights. Delaware Democrats reaffirm that voting is not merely a right but a safeguard for freedom, justice, and opportunity for all.

**c. Campaign Finance:** Democracy should be driven by the voices of the people, not the wallets of the wealthy few. We support constitutional amendments to overturn *Citizens United* and *Buckley v. Valeo*, because money is not speech and corporations are not people. Protecting democracy requires ending the dominance of big money in politics and restoring government accountability to everyday citizens. We advocate for a small-donor public financing system that amplifies grassroots voices, not corporate special interests. The Federal Election Commission must be strengthened to ensure real enforcement of campaign finance laws, not serve as a rubber stamp for abuse. We will fight to eliminate super PACs, dark money groups, and outside spending abuses by requiring full transparency of political donors. A democracy that can be bought is no democracy at all—and we are committed to restoring political power where it belongs: with the people.

**d. Transparency of Corporate Entities & LLCs:** Safeguarding democracy requires ensuring transparency not only in government, but in corporate activities that could threaten national security and public trust. National security experts have warned of the dangers posed by hidden ownership of companies in critical sectors like energy, communications, and infrastructure, as well as the use of shell corporations to launder illicit funds. Delaware must not become a haven for secrecy and abuse. We support revising State Corporate Law to require full screening and disclosure of all individuals and nations seeking to establish LLCs in Delaware. Strengthening transparency and oversight will protect our economy, uphold the rule of law, and prevent bad actors from undermining our democratic institutions.

**e. Cybersecurity:** Delaware Democrats recognize that strong cybersecurity is essential to protecting personal privacy and public trust. We are committed to strengthening protections for email communications, social media platforms, medical records, and private data against cyberattacks and exploitation. Delaware must lead in developing clear cybersecurity standards, defending critical infrastructure, and holding bad actors accountable. As we pursue global norms

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in cyberspace, we will ensure that efforts to secure our digital lives never come at the expense of civil liberties or democratic freedoms.

### **Section 5:**

**5. Climate Change and Environmental Justice:** Delaware Democrats believe that addressing climate change and protecting our environment are essential to safeguarding public health, social justice and strengthening our economy. We are committed to cutting greenhouse gas emissions, accelerating the transition to renewable energy, and reducing reliance on fossil fuels. Building a resilient future means strengthening energy independence and promoting environmental stewardship in every community. It also requires investing in innovative solutions—from clean transportation to urban 'greening' efforts—that create healthier, more sustainable neighborhoods. Climate leadership is a moral responsibility and an economic necessity, and Delaware must lead with bold action that benefits every resident.

**a. Clean Energy Development and Implementation:** Transitioning Delaware's energy system to renewable, resilient sources is essential to building a stronger future. We support moving both distributed and centralized energy production toward clean technologies like solar and wind, while requiring existing facilities to meet rigorous environmental standards. Reducing fossil fuel dependence—especially in transportation—must be incentivized through innovation and policy. Expanding clean energy infrastructure, modernizing our grid, and creating accessible apprenticeship and workforce development opportunities will ensure that Delawareans are prepared to lead and benefit from a thriving green economy.

**b. Environmental Justice:** Environmental justice is central to Delaware Democrats' vision for a fair and sustainable future. Clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment are not privileges—they are rights that must be protected for every community. We recognize that the burdens of pollution and climate change have fallen disproportionately on low-income communities and communities of color, and we are committed to reversing that legacy. Addressing this injustice requires direct investment: hiring and training workers to clean up toxic brownfields, revitalizing neglected neighborhoods, and creating pathways to economic opportunity through environmental restoration. Delaware must also move aggressively toward a zero-emissions future, with reforms to zoning, land use, and permitting that prioritize resilient, sustainable communities. Building an equitable clean energy economy means holding corporations accountable for pollution, strengthening cleanup requirements when commercial sites are redeveloped for residential use, and investing in resilient infrastructure that leaves no community behind. Urban "greening" initiatives, like expanding tree cover and restoring natural spaces, must be part of our climate strategy—not just for aesthetic improvement, but as vital investments in public health and community well-being. We believe a just environmental policy

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means ensuring that every Delawarean, regardless of income or background, has a real stake in our clean energy transition.

**c. Protection of Public Land and Water:** Safeguarding Delaware’s natural resources is essential to the health, prosperity, and future of our state. We believe strong partnerships—with farmers, conservationists, and local communities—are key to protecting our air, water, and agricultural lands. Conservation must strengthen both environmental sustainability and community resilience, not only by protecting our waterways and public lands but by ensuring they remain vibrant and accessible for future generations. Delaware Democrats are committed to proactive policies and investments that meet the growing threats of sea level rise and environmental degradation while expanding opportunities for communities to benefit from preserved natural spaces. Our public lands and waters are central to our economic vitality, our health, and our shared quality of life. Preserving these resources must balance ecological protection with the needs of all Delawareans.

### **Section 6:**

**6. Provide Quality Affordable Education:** Delaware Democrats believe a strong and equitable education system is essential to building a thriving Delaware and securing a better future for every generation. Every child deserves access to high-quality early learning, strong K-12 public schools, and affordable pathways to higher education. Learning is not just a personal benefit—it is a public good that drives economic opportunity, social mobility, and a healthy democracy. From birth through higher education, we are committed to building a system that lifts up every Delawarean, regardless of background or income.

**a. Affordable Early Learning:** Delaware Democrats believe that high-quality early care and education must be universally affordable and accessible from birth. Strong early learning is not just critical for individual success—it is a cornerstone of Delaware’s economic strength and social well-being. Research shows that investing in early childhood development improves educational outcomes, reduces future social service costs, and builds healthier communities. We are committed to ensuring every child, regardless of family income or ZIP code, has access to safe, developmentally appropriate child care, preschool, and after-care programs. Public investment must match the scale of the need, recognizing that early education is essential infrastructure for a strong, inclusive economy.

**b. Public School Systems:** Public education must be fully and fairly funded to give every Delaware student the opportunity to succeed. Delaware Democrats believe our state must meet its full obligation to K-12 education while ending the outdated system that ties school funding to local property wealth. A strong public school system means not only supporting core academics but also preserving vital programs like arts, after-school activities, and enrichment opportunities

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that foster the whole child. Every investment we make in public education strengthens the future of our state and ensures that success is not determined by a child's background or neighborhood.

**c. Special Education:** Children with disabilities deserve the same high-quality education and opportunities as any other child. Delaware Democrats 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, innovative method of vocational and technical education which integrates on-the-job work experience with related instruction. Apprentices are paid while they learn their respective trade, are eligible for benefits, and have a pathway to a career. New and innovative jobs in the environmental sector will also need apprenticeship opportunities to ensure a well-trained workforce.

**f. Equitable Funding:** We recognize that many Delaware schools have disproportionately high numbers of students who are economically-disadvantaged. Achieving educational excellence for all requires equitable, needs-based funding that directs resources where they are most urgently needed. Delaware Democrats are committed to a funding system that accounts for the realities facing students living in poverty, students receiving special education services, and English Language Learners. High-poverty schools must be supported with targeted, sustained investment—not only to ensure fair opportunity, but to drive year-over-year improvements in achievement and opportunity. Public education is a cornerstone of lifting up Delaware's families and building a stronger future for all.

**g. Support Our Educators:** Delaware's educators are at the heart of our state's future, and their success is essential to the success of our students. We must ensure that teachers are supported, respected, and incentivized to work in high-needs schools where their impact can be transformative. Delaware Democrats believe accountability systems must be designed to close achievement gaps without demoralizing educators or punishing students. We support policies that

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uplift and empower teachers, reward excellence, and recognize the critical role they play in building stronger, more equitable communities.

### **Section 7:**

**7. Keeping Delawareans Healthy Through a Comprehensive Approach:** Delaware Democrats believe that healthcare is a human right—not a privilege reserved for the wealthy or the fortunate. We are proud to be the Party that defends Medicare, Medicaid, the Children’s Health Insurance Program, and the Affordable Care Act. These historic achievements must be protected, strengthened, and expanded—not dismantled. True public health means creating conditions where every Delawarean can live with dignity and security—from access to nutritious food and clean environments to strong mental health care and safe communities. In the years since the COVID-19 pandemic, Delaware Democrats have strengthened our commitment to science-driven public health leadership, robust public health infrastructure, and a comprehensive strategy to prepare for and respond to future crises. Our vision for healthcare is a system where every person can live with dignity, receive the care they need, and thrive—no matter their background or circumstances.

**a. Universal Health Care:** Delaware Democrats believe health care is a fundamental human right, not a privilege. Yet today, Americans pay more for medical care than anyone else in the world, while life expectancy falls and health inequities grow wider. This unacceptable reality demands bold change. Every Delawarean deserves affordable, accessible, and equitable health care—regardless of their background, income, or identity. Our vision is a system built on dignity and fairness, where health care serves people—not profit.

**b. Drug/Alcohol Addiction Services:** Addiction is not a crime—it is a public health crisis that demands bold, compassionate action. Delaware Democrats are committed to treating substance use disorders as behavioral and mental health issues, not criminal offenses. We support expanding access to affordable, evidence-based prevention, early intervention, and treatment services across the state, recognizing that recovery is a lifelong journey that requires strong community support. Public investment must prioritize programs that keep people out of the criminal justice system and connect them to care, including greater funding for mental health responders and social services. Our approach treats addiction as preventable, manageable, and worthy of the same urgency and resources as any other public health issue.

**c. Mental Health Care:** Mental health is inseparable from overall health, and Delaware Democrats are committed to ensuring it is treated with the same urgency and compassion as physical health. Good mental health care must be accessible to everyone—including unhoused

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individuals, young people, and those facing addiction. Expanding community-based services and investing in early intervention are critical to building a mental health system that meets people where they are, supports resilience and recovery, and treats mental wellbeing as a fundamental right—not a privilege.

**d. Reproductive Rights:** Delaware Democrats affirm that reproductive freedom is a fundamental human right. Every individual must have the autonomy to make decisions about their own bodies, including access to contraception, abortion, and comprehensive reproductive healthcare, free from political interference. We oppose efforts to limit access to these essential services or to defund the clinics and providers that deliver them, particularly in rural and underserved communities. Protecting reproductive rights means not only safeguarding the Affordable Care Act's prohibition on gender-based discrimination, but also expanding access to affordable care across Delaware. We support enshrining the right to reproductive healthcare—including abortion—in our state's constitution to ensure that these rights cannot be stripped away by future political attacks.

### **Section 8:**

**Protecting LGBTQ+ Rights:** Delaware Democrats believe that the full protection and promotion of LGBTQ+ rights is fundamental to the pursuit of justice, equality, and human dignity. The fight for LGBTQ+ equality is inseparable from the fight for democracy itself: when any community's rights are threatened, the rights of all are at risk. We are committed to confronting and defeating the political extremism that seeks to roll back hard-won progress and undermine the humanity of LGBTQ+ people—especially transgender women of color, LGBTQ+ youth, and other vulnerable members of our community. Building a truly inclusive Delaware means affirming the dignity of every individual and ensuring that equal rights are not just protected by statute, but permanently enshrined in our state's Constitution. We must ensure that all LGBTQ+ Delawareans are free to live openly, authentically, and safely, with access to the full rights, opportunities, and services they deserve.

**a. LGBTQ+ Bill of Rights:** We believe every LGBTQ+ Delawarean must be guaranteed:

- The right to equal protection under the law in employment, housing, education, healthcare, and public accommodations.
- The right to gender-affirming healthcare, treated as medically necessary, without interference from insurance companies or political actors.
- The right for transgender and nonbinary individuals to obtain accurate state identification that reflects their gender identity.
- The right to access sex-designated spaces—such as bathrooms and locker rooms—that align with one's gender identity.

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- The right of LGBTQ+ youth, including transgender and nonbinary youth, to participate fully and fairly in athletics at the local and community level.
- The right to protection of personal records, such as name changes and gender marker updates, shielding individuals from harassment and misuse of their information.
- The right to protection from white supremacy, gender-based violence, and hate-fueled attacks.
- The right to live authentically, safely, and free from discrimination, regardless of political shifts or extremism.
- The right to have these rights permanently safeguarded through constitutional amendment, not subject to reversal by hostile political movements.

**9. Making Delaware a Safe Place for All Its Residents:** Delaware Democrats believe that real public safety is built on trust, fairness, and opportunity—not just enforcement. We recognize that a compassionate justice system, conscious of historic inequities, is essential to achieving lasting security for all communities. Rebuilding the bonds between law enforcement and the public requires meaningful partnership, transparency, and collaborative reform. We are committed to reducing gun violence, particularly in Delaware’s cities where it has had devastating effects, by advancing strong public health approaches and passing commonsense gun safety laws. Protecting vulnerable populations, including women and survivors of violence, remains central to our mission. We also reject profit-driven models of policing and incarceration, which undermine public trust and safety. A safer Delaware demands bold leadership, sustained investment in community well-being, and an unyielding commitment to justice for every resident.

**a. Treating Gun Violence as a Public Health Crisis:** Gun violence remains a public health crisis in Delaware, and demands a comprehensive public health—not merely public safety—solution. Delaware Democrats support bold, evidence-based gun safety measures that focus on preventing firearms from falling into dangerous hands while respecting the rights of responsible gun owners. We support strengthening background checks, regulating ghost guns, disarming domestic abusers, and ensuring safe firearm storage. We also call for the implementation of a permit-to-purchase system, backed by strong funding to ensure its success. We recognize that the safest states are those that combine strong laws with robust, community-led violence intervention efforts. Delaware Democrats are committed to investing in evidence-based street outreach, hospital-based intervention programs, and mental health services that address the root causes of violence, including poverty and lack of opportunity. We affirm that gun violence is preventable—not inevitable—and believe building safer communities requires a collective, grassroots approach rooted in prevention, public investment, and trust.

**b. Police Reform:** Delaware Democrats believe that real public safety requires transparency, accountability, and trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve. We support



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comprehensive reforms to ensure these values are upheld, including mandatory body cameras, the creation of Civilian Review Boards for independent oversight, and the public release of law enforcement disciplinary records. We are committed to ending practices that perpetuate racial profiling and to implementing a statewide use of force standard that ensures new technologies are deployed without racial or gender bias. Law enforcement agencies must collect and publish data on use of force incidents and be held to clear accountability measures tied to funding increases. We also call for the repeal of the Law Enforcement Officer Bill of Rights, a necessary step toward racial justice and repairing relationships between police and communities of color.

**c. Ending Violence Against Women:** Delaware, home of the original Violence Against Women Act, must continue leading the fight to end violence against women in all forms. Combating gender-based violence requires a justice system rooted in dignity, protection, and survivor-centered care. We are committed to ending human trafficking and modern slavery in all forms, recognizing that exploitation and forced labor violate the basic rights of every person. Survivors deserve more than rescue—they deserve access to lasting protections, compassionate services, and real opportunities to rebuild their lives with dignity. Delaware Democrats affirm that safeguarding the rights, safety, and autonomy of survivors must be a fundamental priority, and that public resources should be used to foster healing, not perpetuate cycles of punishment.

### **Section 10:**

**10. Support Troops and Care for Veterans:** Delaware Democrats believe we have moral responsibility to keep faith with all 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 must rebuild their lives after the loss of a loved one or life-altering injury or disability. We must expand services and programs for veterans, especially 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.

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**c. Assistance Programs for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness:** Delaware Democrats believe we should provide resources to fight the chronic issues of veterans homelessness and protect them from the dire circumstances that tend to follow and pervade such conditions.

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