

UTAH DEMOCRATIC PARTY PROPOSED PLATFORM

PREAMBLE

As Democrats, we believe that our country's greatest strength is its people, and we are committed to the values of inclusion, equality and justice for all. We are a "big tent" party that embraces diversity and is open to everyone. We recognize that each person brings their own experience, perspective, and priorities to the Party and the platform is organized alphabetically, rather than by importance, in recognition of that diversity.

ANIMAL RIGHTS

Utah is one of the worst states in protections for animals, and we can and must do better. Our treatment of animals reflects on the morality of our society, and we call for immediate improvements to the welfare of animals used in agriculture and research, as well as those kept as companions. We call for stronger shelter requirements for animals left outdoors in Utah's harsh winters and summers, and we categorically oppose Utah's unconstitutional, non-content-neutral "ag-gag" statute. The state must provide more resources to humanely reduce and end Utah's homeless pet problem, including outreach beyond the state borders and transport support. We further recognize that without a vigorous spay/neuter policy, including no or low cost option, that problem will continue. We support the passage of the Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture (PACT) Act and further legislation to strengthen the federal and state Animal Welfare Acts.

ARTS

Utah Democrats believe that art is vital. It represents the best of us and is an embodiment and spirit of our hopes, dreams, and creativity. Art serves to strengthen communities and is one of the best ways for cultural and historical connection. We strongly support funding, encouraging, and advancing the arts and arts education.

CHILDREN

Utah Democrats believe that public investments in our children is paramount to the survival of our nation. Every child deserves to be cared for, educated, and protected; therefore, we oppose deportations that separate families. We strongly support those actions and incentives which:

- Ensure a strong emphasis on education fundamentals
- Emphasize learning how to think critically
- Keep them safe while they learn and grow
- Provide the necessary nutritional basis to ensure growth into healthy, functional adults

Accordingly, we advocate an integrated public education for children, including universal preschool/childcare and strong early childhood education, including after school and summer learning programs. These programs are vital to balanced development while providing safe,

nurturing environments, as well as reducing future expenditures to address social dysfunction. We stand for equal funding per student, regardless of ZIP code.

CIVIL RIGHTS

Utah Democrats strongly affirm that civil rights are about people and equality for all and uphold those freedoms established by the United States Constitution. We further resist pervasive and disgraceful attacks upon them. Accordingly, we:

- Understand that the right to privacy is intrinsic to the Fourth Amendment and oppose mass collection of data and metadata
- Oppose government spying on U.S. citizens
- Recognize that the separation of church and state is enshrined in the Constitution and paramount to the success of the United States
- Reject that religious freedom grants any license to discriminate in government, public life, employment, or housing
- Support the right to petition
- Oppose “free speech zones,” including those that corral protesters

CLIMATE CHANGE

Utah Democrats stand for responsible stewardship of the environment. We strongly affirm the overwhelming consensus of climate scientists that human-caused climate change is an urgent crisis threatening our future. We support efforts to lessen and reverse the current climate trend by ambitious and immediate efforts to substantially cut emission of greenhouse gasses and develop clean energy incentives to wean Utah off of fossil fuels in favor of clean alternatives, such as wind or solar.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Utah Democrats oppose the privatization of prisons and affirm that the primary goals of incarceration should be successful rehabilitation and return to society. Therefore, we support:

- Expanding job training and education opportunities for the incarcerated
- Funding and expanding substance abuse treatment in jails and prisons
- Reducing recidivism
- Development of programs aimed at deferring youths from juvenile incarceration and ending the school-to-prison pipeline
- Decriminalization of addiction
- Legislation to “ban the box” requiring disclosure of prior felony convictions on job applications

CYBERSECURITY

Utah Democrats strongly believe that cyber-security is one of the largest issues facing the world today and will only continue to grow in the future. We support:

- Initiatives, incentives and programs to educate citizens on how to protect themselves from cyber-attacks
- The implementation of software and hardware solutions that will protect federal and state governments from criminal and foreign state actors
- A balanced approach to legislation that maintains the right to privacy while allowing for the prosecution of cyber criminals
- The protection of citizens from government collection of digital communications and searches of electronic devices

DISABILITY

Utah Democrats are dedicated to ensuring that people with disabilities are enabled to participate in all aspects of society. We understand while many disabilities are visible, many more are invisible including neurodiversity and mental health issues. All people within the full spectrum of disabilities deserve full access, inclusion, and equality. We support bipartisan partnerships to meet these goals. Therefore, Utah Democrats support:

- Full promise and enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Fair Housing Act, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and all other Federal, State, and local legislation
- Improving gainful employment opportunities for people with disabilities, including the payment of fair wages for fair work, and stronger protections for, and reducing the number of, disabled workers making less than minimum wage.
- Ensuring that all Utah Democratic Party political facilities and events are accessible to people with disabilities, and encouraging candidates, PACs, and other community organizations make accessibility information for their events available to invitees.
- Protecting and expanding the right of Americans with disabilities to get accommodations and support their need to live in integrated community settings.
- To provide tax relief, respite services, and other support to families caring for multiple generations, especially those with special medical needs.

ECONOMY

We believe that every Utahn should have an equal opportunity to achieve success and prosperity. To fully realize this goal, the Utah Democratic Party is committed to:

- Public investment policies to encourage business innovation that will create more living wage jobs
- Eliminating gender, racial, and other discriminatory practices to achieve pay equity
- Access to affordable, quality childcare
- Supporting a progressive state income tax that decreases the tax burdens on low and moderate income workers
- The right to collective bargaining
- Protection from predatory business practices like payday lenders
- Oppose any increase to sales tax on food

EDUCATION

Utah Democrats believe a well-educated society will benefit all members of our community. We believe that education is a life-long process that should prepare both children and adults to have the skills and flexibility needed to live productive, successful lives. We believe providing adequate financial resources for education is an investment in our future. Therefore, improving our education system is one of our highest priorities. To fully realize this goal, we are committed to:

- Finding long-term funding solutions for public education in Utah that ensure quality and affordable education for all Utahns from pre-school to post-secondary education
- Advocating for competitive educator salaries to recruit and retain the best teachers
- Committing greater resources for disadvantaged students and Title I schools
- Protecting and encouraging the stability and success of all public schools
- Opposing the evaluation of teachers and school capability by using standardized test scores
- Supporting the rights of parents to opt-out of standardized testing for their children
- Utilizing the expertise of educators by consulting with them to develop education policies
- Creating and expanding student debt relief programs
- Eliminating government funding and accreditation for predatory for-profit schools
- Advocate for apprenticeship programs to help fill the growing need in our skilled trades

ELECTION REFORM

Utah Democrats strongly affirm actions that enable more citizens to vote and to become a part of the election process. We vehemently oppose any actions that serve to curtail these rights. Therefore, we support the following:

- The establishment of an independent, nonpartisan Commission to designate Congressional and State District boundaries to eliminate gerrymandering
- Elimination of electronic voting machines that do not record a hard copy paper trail
- The creation of a State Holiday on Election Day
- Automatic voter registration of eligible voters with the issuance of State ID or Driver's License
- Prevention of restrictive voter ID requirements
- Expanding vote by mail to the entire state while maintaining adequate physical voting locations in all districts
- Full funding by the State for Presidential Primaries
- Same day registration and voting
- Ensuring adequate and accessible physical voting locations on all tribal lands
- Increasing the availability of ballots and voting materials in constituents' native language
- A public financing option for elections
- Full public disclosure of campaign contributions, including 501(c)(4) nonprofit corporations that participate in the political process and oppose the Citizens United decision
- Continuation of open primaries

ENERGY

Utah Democrats believe that a comprehensive energy policy that emphasizes renewable energy sources is imperative. The environmental impact of using fossil fuels to provide the energy for our people and our industry is an immediate threat to our health and a long-term threat to our climate. As we transition from outdated sources, Utah has an opportunity to grow our economy with clean renewable energy technologies that will create sustainable jobs for generations yet to come.

ENVIRONMENT

The world's natural resources and environment are precious and irreplaceable and that protecting them is a moral imperative. Utah Democrats believe that clean air and water are a basic right. We also believe our communities deserve more: blue skies, thriving wildlife, clean bodies of water, and access to nature and the wilderness. By focusing on sustainable environmental practices, such as subsidized recycling, wise water use, reduced emissions, and penalties for air, water, and other polluters, we can work towards a cleaner and more enjoyable future for all Utahns.

FAMILIES

Utah Democrats heartily endorse the ideal that the family unit is the most important of all. We recognize that families may be composed of all kinds of different membership and support embracing them, particularly a healthy foster care system that enables both guardians and children to enjoy the warmth of the family unit. We further reject any policies that seek to undermine the security of the family unit, particularly those that would separate children from parents across country boundaries. We believe in universal child care for working families and that employers should provide paid family leave.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH & ASSEMBLY

Utah Democrats strongly affirm the first right granted by the US Constitution protecting freedom of individual speech, of the media, and to peaceably assemble. We will vigorously resist any attempt to dilute or otherwise diminish those guarantees. Additionally, Utah needs stronger anti-SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation) protections to prevent frivolous and vexatious lawsuits intended to limit and penalize lawful speech.

HEALTHCARE

Utah Democrats consider healthcare a universal right. The private and public sectors have a combined responsibility for ensuring Utahns access to quality, affordable healthcare. This includes freedom of choice in medical care, including the use of medical cannabis. We support:

- Coverage regardless of preexisting conditions
- The Children's Healthcare Insurance Program
- Community rating of insurance premiums
- Young adult coverage
- Negotiating pharmaceutical prices

- Expanding Medicaid and working toward guaranteed healthcare for all
- Maintaining mental health benefits
- Other policies necessary to ensure access and equity in care

HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Utah Democrats believe that for communities to function, residents must have access to affordable and quality housing near employment, schools, shopping, transportation, and other community features. Housing should be available for seniors, families, students, people with special needs or disabilities, those experiencing homelessness, and other crucial members of our communities so that they can remain in their homes and communities during different stages of life. We support expanding Section 8 affordable housing programs, as well as policies that enable the construction of market rate housing.

Creating, maintaining, and updating systems to provide electricity, internet, clean water, wastewater, flood control, and storm drains are critical to support Utah's economy and the health, safety, and welfare of our families.

IMMIGRATION

The United States was founded as, and continues to be, a nation of immigrants. Immigration is a defining aspect of our character as a nation which encourages and celebrates diversity. To that end, we advocate for a clear and accessible path to citizenship, the safe harbor of refugees, and refusing to break up families. We reaffirm our support of the Utah Compact—Utah's non-partisan answer to vitriolic discussions surrounding immigration.

LABOR

Utah Democrats believe that our state's economy is only as strong as its workforce. We believe that workers have the right to be fairly compensated for the work that they do; and that they have the right to be protected from unsafe working conditions, unfair labor practices, and job displacement due to changing technological and economic conditions. To support Utah's workers, the Utah Democratic Party is committed to:

- Paid family leave, sick leave, and reasonable vacation time
- Compensation for employer-canceled shifts and elimination of part-time hours requiring full-time availability
- Advocating for education and job retraining for those whose livelihoods are eliminated by technology or long-term shifts in demand
- Supporting the rights of workers to organize and join labor unions, the backbone of Utah's middle class.
- The right to collectively bargain for better wages, improved working conditions, and other benefits and compensation.
- Supporting the federal Davis-Bacon Act, which supports fair compensation for public works projects in our communities.

- Creating a state prevailing wage to ensure that our tax dollars are going to responsible contractors who ensure safety and quality for work done for the citizens of Utah.

LEADERSHIP

Utah Democrats believe leadership isn't solely for achieving goals, but equally responsible for inspiring the next generation of leaders. We strongly support fostering leadership opportunities for all Utahns through community and workplace mentorship, and training programs. It is vital for the development of our state to provide leadership opportunities to people of all backgrounds. We affirm that Utah can and should be a national leader in scientific literacy and critical thinking, enabling us to lead by example as a national role model.

LGBTQ

Utah Democrats are committed to fighting alongside the LGBTQ community for equal rights under the law. We promote policies that ensure their safety and protection and provide for hate crime prosecutions where applicable. We declare that marriage equality is settled law. We oppose any legislation whose aim is to marginalize the LGBTQ community. We seek inclusivity through representation. We support educational measures whose aim is the acceptance of the LGBTQ community.

PUBLIC LANDS

Utah Democrats view public lands as national treasures, for everyone to enjoy now and in the future. Public lands benefit the Utah economy through recreation and tourism, and through well-regulated grazing, mineral extraction, and timber harvesting. Recreation and tourism in Utah is growing every year and adding billions of dollars to our economy. To this end, Utah Democrats support continued Federal stewardship of Federally owned land and oppose any and all reduction to lands designated as National Monuments in the State of Utah.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Utah Democrats recognize that law enforcement officers and emergency responders put their lives at risk protecting the public. We affirm that first responders deserve strong public backing and call for adequate funding of support programs, training, and tools. To engender trust and resolve misunderstandings, we support regular community conversations between officers and the public they serve. We advocate conflict de-escalation training and consider the use of deadly force a last resort. We support the use of recording devices to document incidents and assist required investigations.

Utah Democrats recognize the constitutional right of citizens to possess firearms for self-defense and sporting purposes. We advocate common-sense measures to reduce gun violence, enhance public safety, and enforce existing gun laws.

RACISM

Utah Democrats acknowledge that institutional racism has been, and continues to be, an unacceptable barrier to equal access, participation, and responsibility in America. We advocate

for policies that break down racism within our civic, political, and educational institutions. Diversity has always strengthened our country and it will continue to do so. We strongly support policies that contribute to fulfilling the American promise of equality for all, regardless of race, ethnicity, or national origin.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Utah Democrats fully support religious freedom, an ideal deeply rooted in the foundation of our great nation. Religious freedom protects everyone from the establishment of state religion and from religious persecution in all its forms. This freedom is fundamental to a pluralistic society and we recognize and affirm that our varied belief systems contribute to our rich and diverse national tapestry.

SENIORS

Utah Democrats believe seniors are a treasured source of history, education, and experience. They should be valued rather than be cast aside. We support Social Security, without which half of Americans would be living in poverty. We support the rights of workers to collect their defined benefits and make sure workers get priority when pension plans are in distress. We support the Older Americans Act which funds critical programs to help seniors remain independent in their own homes and communities. We are committed to fight the problems of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

TRANSPARENCY & ETHICS IN GOVERNMENT

Utah Democrats strongly believe in government by the people and for the people. The only way to assure true representation of the people's interest is the ability to review the official actions and workings of government. We believe elected representatives should conduct themselves with high ethical standards. We support the creation of a recall process in Utah. We support Utah's open records and meeting laws, the Government Records and Management Act, and the Open and Public Meetings Act and we condemn any lack of transparency in government.

TRANSPORTATION

Utah Democrats consider a comprehensive and balanced transportation system a vital element in support of our rapid population growth. This system should incorporate both traditional and hybrid/electric fuel options, and provide self-driven and commercial options so that residents may readily access employment, education, and required services such as improved road maintenance. This integrated system will vigorously promote the minimal use of personal motor vehicle travel, and encourage increased use of public transportation, bicycles, and pedestrian traffic. Such a system will both increase the financial security for Utah residents, and reduce air pollution, enhancing public health. We support the premise that UTA and other public transportation services should be non-profit and subsidized as necessary.

TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY

Utah Democrats officially recognize and honor the tribal sovereignty of all federally recognized tribes. Tribal sovereignty is intrinsic to tribes, and acknowledged through treaties, acts of

congress, and executive orders since the creation of the United States. We stand behind the rights of tribal governments to engage the United States government as autonomous entities.

VETERANS

Utah Democrats consider maintenance of a strong military a national priority and vital to national security. Those that serve deserve to be treated fairly by their government and to this end we encourage the Federal Government to support full spectrum care for veterans, to include:

- Lifetime medical care for service-connected illness or disability
- Full funding of G.I. Bill/Apprentice Training
- Home-buying assistance programs for veterans
- Required readjustment support on return to civilian life
- Granting citizenship to foreign nationals who successfully complete service in the United States armed forces

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Utah Democrats affirm the holding in Roe v. Wade that women make their own decisions about their body. We believe women should have thorough access to safe health care services in making decisions about their reproductive care. We further affirm that pro-choice is equally capable of meaning the choice to have a child, and requires that society care for the resulting needs of a woman and her child. We strongly advocate equality in pay for women, and protection from discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace. Greater protections need particular emphasis on higher education campuses. A greater urgency must be placed on the apprehension and prosecution of offenders, as well as counseling and support for the survivors of heinous actions such as hate crimes, sexual assault, and other violence against women.