

MAINE DEMOCRATIC PARTY 2010  
**PARTY PLATFORM**

**Preamble**

*Since the time of Jefferson and Jackson, the Democratic Party has led the struggle to strengthen democracy in our government. Democracy is the belief that the best repository of wisdom is an informed and educated electorate and that this electorate has a right to control the political agenda and debate those issues that are of importance to them.*

*In keeping with this philosophy, Maine Democrats believe in serving the people in Maine by promoting strong sustainable communities, fairness and opportunity for all, and investment in Maine's future. Economic opportunity and security, universal access to quality education and healthcare, good government, fair taxes, safety and national security, human rights, environmental protection, and international cooperation are the policies and principles for which we have long fought and will continue to fight.*

*We adopt this platform as an expression of what Democrats in Maine support and as a guideline for elected officials in their political work.*

**A. Economic Security, Opportunity, and Justice**

*We support a democratic government that:*

1. Builds strong communities by ensuring: jobs for all who can work; a livable wage; affordable housing, food, fuel, health care, and other essential commodities for all; and support for those suffering hardship.
2. Provides economic security through: a strong, non-privatized Social Security program, stricter regulation of public and private pensions, and guaranteed protection of workers' pension funds and the rights of their designated recipients.
3. Opposes reducing the Social Security benefits earned by workers who have also earned a benefit from public retirement plans; and works to repeal discriminatory laws that penalize some retired workers and their families while allowing others to receive full benefits.
4. Ensures a fair workplace by: guaranteeing the rights and the ability of all workers to form unions through the passage of the Employee Free Choice Act, bargain collectively, and strike without replacement or reprisal; keeping the workplace free from health and safety hazards, discrimination, and harassment; enacting rules that respect employees' family obligations, health, and other needs; and monitoring and penalizing offenders of labor laws.
5. Encourages a sustainable economy by promoting: private and public Maine-owned and operated businesses; tourism (including ecotourism); cultural diversity; working waterfronts; high-value woodland management; active and potential farming; the total fishing industry; the manufacture and export of value-added products; and Maine food and fiber products.
6. Creates economic opportunity by promoting investments in: ports, public and commercial transportation, renewable energy, environmentally responsible construction, small business, research and development, employment skill building, information technology,

- and arts, culture, and other amenities that stimulate a creative economy, attract business and tourism, and improve quality of life for all.
7. Creates an equitable economic environment through: strong consumer protection, banking, access to pensions, and corporate governance laws; encouraging the growth of local banks, credit unions, and other cooperatives; and preventing discrimination based on race, color, gender, age, physical and mental ability, religion, ancestry, national origin, and sexual orientation.
  8. Supports an energy policy that seeks to protect the people of Maine from corporate speculation and profiteering, and supports the non-profit operation of public facilities for public purposes without creating local economic hardship.
  9. Believes the authors of the U.S. Constitution did not intend corporations to be included in the definition of the word “person” and “people,” and supports legislative remedies and/or a Constitutional amendment to correct contrary court decisions.
  10. Protects people from the repercussions of natural disaster.

## **B. Health Care and Education**

*We support a democratic government that:*

1. Believes that quality health care is a fundamental human right and therefore supports a universal, single-payer, and nonprofit health care system on a national level and, in addition, supports the efforts of individual states to develop single payer systems until the goal of national coverage can be achieved. Strengthens Medicaid, Medicare, Dirigo, and veterans’ benefits. Addresses the unique medical needs of all individuals, especially discrepancies of health care delivery to minorities.
2. Supports public and preventative health initiatives, wellness and healthy living, and disease prevention. Ensures prenatal and childhood care and inter-operationally coordinated electronic medical records.
3. Protects a woman’s access to reproductive choice.
4. Strives for a strong healthcare workforce by providing incentives to recruit, educate, and retain well-qualified primary care physicians and nurses as well as other direct care workers.
5. Provides health care and community support for people with disabilities, making it possible for them to live freely and to perform productive work.
6. Supports individual choice in managing the end of one’s life.
7. Ensures food safety through science-based testing, quality control by a dedicated federal agency, the identification of imported food by country of origin and the identification of any genetically modified content, and support for local food production and distribution.
8. Ensures humane living, transportation, and slaughter conditions for farm animals raised for food.
9. Helps children succeed by: supporting youth and families with affordable early childhood education and other vital services; preventing domestic violence; protecting children from abuse, neglect, and the dangers of poverty; and focusing on prevention and intervention and providing adequate funding.
10. Ensures a learning environment that: challenges all children to reach their highest potential; respects their backgrounds; protects them from violence, abuse, and bullying; and provides programs to prevent substance abuse, suicide, and other destructive behaviors. Supports alternative educational settings and special-needs programs.
11. Invests in public educational institutions, provides lifelong learning opportunities for all, equitably funds all school districts, improves salaries and professional working conditions for all teachers and staff, develops criteria for excellence in schools, involves

- community members and parents in student-centered education, and improves educational quality through training and development.
12. Recognizes our responsibility to provide post-secondary education opportunities for everyone, with financial support and minimal student debt.

### **C. Ethical Government and Democracy**

*We support a democratic government that:*

1. Promotes the general welfare by: delivering promised social services, making needed public investments, embracing transparency and accountability, and promoting the most effective use of available financial resources.
2. Opposes contracting out the jobs of public employees to profit-making businesses.
3. Calls for an uncensored and democratic media to foster the equitable distribution of economic, social, cultural, and informational assets; and ensures an informed citizenry by: promoting the diversification of communications media, supporting public broadcasting and locally-based public access television; upholding public interest standards for broadcasters; restoring the Fairness Doctrine and Equal Time Rule; expanding cable franchising; increasing public access to communications, supporting equal access to the Internet; and extending low cost, high speed Internet access to all communities.
4. Promotes democratic accountability through: campaign finance reform, including publicly funded elections at all levels; a fair assignment of legislative districts; increasing the allowable number of terms for state legislators; and electoral reforms such as preference voting, proportional representation, voter-verified paper ballots, non-partisan election commissions, Election Day National Holiday, elimination of excessive personal identification for voting, and counting of every vote including valid provisional votes.
5. Maintains the integrity of the Maine and the U.S. Constitutions by strengthening the separation of powers and by requiring executive, legislative, and judicial accountability.
6. Supports fair and equitable compensation for legislators and ensures that they are provided with the tools and resources they need to perform their work adequately.
7. Promotes reforms in the legislative and regulatory processes to reduce the influence of professional lobbyists and to increase the ability of the public to influence legislation and regulation.
8. Places a priority on negotiation, mediation, arbitration, reconciliation, and restitution; and enables the prevention, management, and peaceful resolution of conflict.
9. Supports a fair, progressive tax system that focuses tax responsibilities on those most able to pay.
10. Limits land taking by eminent domain exclusively to federal, state, and local governments, and only for projects directly benefiting the public and not for private gain or benefit.
11. Supports the elimination of the income cap on Social Security taxes.
12. Calls for a democratic and accessible national presidential nomination process that is truly representative of national political party constituencies and is not unnecessarily burdensome to the candidates in the commitment of time, money, or resources.
13. Understands that government regulation is for the protection of individual citizens and consumers, and not for the benefit of corporations or their corporate profits.

## **D. Freedom, Safety, and National Security**

*We support a democratic government that:*

1. Protects the full enjoyment of the Bill of Rights as a living document, especially its guarantees of free speech, free exercise of religion, separation of church and state, and freedom from all forms of discrimination.
2. Supports the right of women to be secure in their persons, as articulated in *Roe v Wade*, and guarantees them the right to access all forms of reproductive choices.
3. Endorses the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including its guarantee that all people have the right to food, water, shelter, medical care, and a good education.
4. Does not torture or condone torture, and expeditiously closes the Guantánamo Bay detention camp.
5. Guarantees the right to personal privacy and rejects all forms of spying on American citizens without warrants.
6. Upholds the ancient right to habeas corpus for everybody by rejecting detention that is secret, indefinite, and not subject to court review or in which detainees lack access to counsel and loved ones.
7. Protects our communities by requiring businesses and organizations to act responsibly toward their employees, their communities, and the environment.
8. Protects our communities by properly regulating corporations and financial institutions, strongly prosecuting corporate crime, preventing crime of all kinds, reforming prosecution of nonviolent offenders, uniformly enforcing laws, and enacting new laws where needed.
9. Works for the preservation of public peace, health, and safety and is responsible for peaceful economic security and justice through the enactment and enforcement of law.

## **E. Civil Rights**

*We support a democratic government that:*

1. Affirms its special responsibility to promote full participation of all persons in all of society's activities.
2. Promotes and enforces all laws, including Affirmative Action and Hate Crimes Laws, that protect civil rights; prohibits racial, ethnic and religious profiling; provides for equal treatment; guarantees equal access to higher education, employment, and housing; and prohibits discrimination based on race, color, gender, age, physical and mental ability, religion, ancestry, national origin, or sexual orientation.
3. Respects the dignity of all immigrants, ensures their human rights, and offers a path to legal residence for undocumented immigrants.
4. Extends to gay and lesbian couples and their families all the same legal and social rights and protections that heterosexual couples now receive, including civil marriage, and opposes any constitutional amendment or legislation that would deny these rights.
5. Calls for a transparent, equitable voting system where every vote counts, including write-ins, and prohibits efforts to intimidate and discourage voters or restrict voter rights.
6. Protects employees against unfair and arbitrary dismissal by (at a minimum) creating a right to administrative due process.
7. Immediately suspends discharges under the "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy and removes heterosexual orientation as a condition for military service.
8. Fairly and uniformly enforces the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), bringing into full compliance all public accommodations, including all federal facilities, with no exceptions.

## **F. Environmental Protection**

*We support a democratic government that:*

1. Develops and implements a comprehensive energy resource plan to increase efficiency, to reduce pollution and reliance on fossil and unclean fuels, and to mitigate global climate change by promoting the research and use of domestic, environmentally sound and renewable energy sources with particular caution for the placement and use of all alternative energy sources, and the fuel supply of biomass boilers. The development of the plan should be transparent and open to public comment.
2. Conserves our working landscape and natural heritage through responsible stewardship of our environment and natural resources and opposes environmental degradation in accordance with the “precautionary principle”: do no harm to the public good.
3. Promotes protection of open space and responsible land and marine use laws and planning processes; makes comprehensive environmental and socioeconomic impact reports an integral part of the decision making process for all proposed projects that may significantly affect Maine's communities and environment; and supports local control of projects having potentially negative impact.
4. Conserves and protects land, water, forest, wetland, vernal pools, air space, and marine resources; expands public lands to preserve biodiversity, vital habitats, scenery, recreation, hunting, and fishing; and promotes sustainable farming and fishing.
5. Ensures access to clean, safe, public drinking and swimming waters, and enacts laws to protect surface waters and aquifers against economic exploitation.
6. Leads New England's campaign against airborne pollution; defines, limits, and monitors out-of-state waste; eliminates harmful waste; enforces the state's “Solid Waste Hierarchy” as currently in the statutes; and promotes recycling.
7. Supports the re-writing of the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 to provide protection for people according to the “precautionary principle.”

## **G. Global Peace, Security, and Justice**

*We support a democratic government that:*

1. Safeguards our national security through peaceful solutions to international challenges; supports international law and ratified treaties; works closely with allies and in good faith with all nations; strengthens the United Nations and its peacekeeping operations; opposes subversion of popularly elected governments; actively works to prevent genocide; and joins the International Criminal Court.
2. Maintains a strong, effective defense force that is equipped and organized to handle legitimate foreign threats and is complemented by a reliable intelligence service; opposes the use of private contractors in combat zones; strives to end civilian casualties; works to reduce arms and the arms trade worldwide and ultimately to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction; opposes new arms races; and never launches undeclared or pre-emptive wars.
3. Works to end the threat of terrorism multilaterally, primarily through negotiations and cooperative police work, using force only as a last resort.
4. Strives for a comprehensive approach to achieving sustainable peace and stability in the greater Middle East through renewed emphasis on diplomatic means, economic and social development, and reduction of military presence, notably:
  - In Iraq, by pursuing diplomatic solutions, transferring control to the Iraqi people, accelerating the return of our soldiers and contractors in a responsible manner, and fostering an international stabilization program that supports the Iraqi people and improves their economy.

- In Afghanistan, by refining our strategic objectives to focus on eliminating the threat of terrorist attacks against the U.S. and its allies through enhanced use of diplomatic, political and economic means; by working with allies to achieve military disengagement in a short period of time; and by supporting Afghan efforts to achieve a credible, legitimate government committed to reducing the influence of corruption and narcotrafficking and promoting economic and social development, including human rights.
  - In Iran, by cooperating with other nations to help the people of Iran and their government decide through direct negotiation that they do not need nuclear weapons, and by demonstrating to Iran the advantages of improved relations with the world community.
  - In Israel and Palestine, by active involvement in an international peace process allowing Israelis and Palestinians to co-exist with mutually recognized borders.
5. Promotes human dignity and international security by dramatically increasing support for humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, international development, and the elimination of poverty.
  6. Takes a leading role in an international effort for reconstruction and sustainable development in Haiti.
  7. Leads in shaping a global economy that supports a fairer distribution of growth and development among all peoples; protects indigenous trades and resources; strengthens democracy; and protects the environment, labor rights (including right to a fair wage), public health, and the public good.
  8. Strengthens regulation of international financial and commodity transactions.
  9. Ensures that current and future trade agreements support and strengthen domestic jobs, businesses, and farms by assisting their integration into the global economy; eliminates all forms of government assistance for outsourcing of jobs and businesses; reforms WTO, NAFTA, and other U.S. trade agreements so that they include enforceable protections for workers' and consumers' human rights and enable sustainable environmental quality for all.
  10. Acts aggressively to reduce the U.S. trade deficit.
  11. Diminish the role of the Department of Defense in world affairs to a strengthened and expanded Department of State. Appoint ambassadors and high-level aides who are culturally and educationally experienced for their posts. Strengthen the entire diplomatic corps in cultural and language training, governance and diplomatic skills. Eliminate partisan political appointments in the diplomatic corps. Expand citizen cultural and educational exchanges with all nations and coordinate efforts and provide leadership in the developing world for non-governmental Organizations and universities.

*We, as Democrats of Maine, support these principles and pledge to work cooperatively with local governments, other states and nations, and all other parties for a better future for all Maine's people.*