

# Democratic Party of Wisconsin 2018 Platform

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2500 words

## Preamble

The Democratic Party of Wisconsin strives to build an open, just, and strong society where all people have equal rights and equal opportunities to live meaningful, secure lives. We work actively for open, honest, and responsive government that is accountable to the needs and will of the people.

## Justice, Human Concerns, and Democracy

Our government must support the values of freedom, family, fairness, and responsibility to community and to all persons.

One of the primary jobs of government is to ensure that everyone can lead dignified, healthy, and fulfilling lives. We value love, commitment, stability, and nurturing of all family members. Our Constitution guarantees that we are all equal regardless of race, color, class, religion, actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, age, occupation, national origin, physical disabilities or appearance, or political beliefs. We support marriage equality for all couples. We will work to ensure that basic civil liberties are forever preserved.

It is vital that government respect, support, and protect freedom of expression. When government attempts to limit the rights of its people, the fundamental philosophy on which our nation was established is destroyed. We hold sacrosanct our civil liberties, including but hardly limited to freedom of speech, the right to privacy, the presumption of innocence, the principle of *habeus corpus*, and due process under law. Nothing less than humane treatment of our fellow human beings is acceptable. Our government, with its checks and balances among the three branches, serves us, and protects our constitutional rights.

We must fully fund our state and local protective services. We recognize their contribution to our health and safety, and expect them to equitably protect the lives and property of all people in the community.

We will work to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed, an equal voice in government and fair and equal treatment under the law. We recognize that minorities, seniors, and the poor often face formidable challenges, including obstacles to voting and other discriminatory practices. Many people also suffer inadequate access to nutritious food, healthcare, education, and housing. We shall work to eliminate those obstacles.

We shall pursue legislation and cultural change that end racial and ethnic profiling, respect the sovereignty of our indigenous Native American host nations and ensure equality among genders. We shall work for gender-balanced, qualified representation at all levels of government.

Empowerment of people in all civic affairs strengthens our nation. Government must be an open institution that people trust, complying with open meeting and public record laws and elected through

1 transparent, publicly funded state and national elections. We support the reestablishment of fair, non-  
2 partisan oversight of elections. We support a fair, non-partisan redistricting process.

3  
4 Every citizen is guaranteed the right to vote and equal access thereto. We support same-day  
5 registration, special registration deputies, early voting, automatic voter registration, and making election  
6 days official holidays. We oppose voter ID requirements. We have the right and duty to inspect and  
7 count all votes and to have a voter-verified paper ballot that guarantees accurate vote counting. The  
8 President should be elected by popular vote.

9  
10 Our goal is a government and an electoral process free of the corrupting influences of money and  
11 power. We support limiting out-of-state campaign contributions. We strongly oppose the U.S. Supreme  
12 Court's decisions to allow unlimited political spending. The U.S. Constitution must be amended to make  
13 clear that corporations are not people and that money is not speech.

14  
15 Access to accurate information and a diversity of viewpoints are essential to empowerment. The  
16 broadcast spectrum belongs to all citizens. Therefore we will work to ensure diverse local ownership of  
17 media outlets. We support public broadcasting and other community-owned media outlets. We  
18 support free and equal access to news media for all candidates for public office.

19  
20 We respect the religious liberties of all people and welcome them into the Democratic Party. It is vital  
21 that we observe separation between government and religion. It is imperative to the survival of our  
22 democratic republic that the rights of people to choose their own religious and philosophical beliefs  
23 remain intact.

24  
25 We advocate for comprehensive immigration reform providing a reasonable legal path to residency and  
26 citizenship. The policy must include a fair opportunity for current undocumented residents to achieve  
27 legal status. All people should be afforded the same basic principles of life, liberty, justice, and fair  
28 access to economic security.

29  
30 It is important to care for all generations. We need affordable, quality, licensed daycare centers and  
31 government support to pay for childcare. We need health education and disease prevention programs  
32 concerning substance abuse, sexual health, and firearm safety.

33  
34 It is essential that we preserve Social Security programs for our elderly, disabled, and eligible children.  
35 Privatizing Social Security threatens the financial security of the most vulnerable. We must enhance  
36 programs for the aging and disabled, including subsidized long-term in-home or nursing home care.

37  
38 Access to affordable, quality healthcare is a right and the best solution to our national health care crisis  
39 is a single-payer system. Such a system must provide universal access for individuals of all ages,  
40 promote preventive measures, provide medications and therapy, and cover all physical and mental  
41 illnesses equally. Until that system is available, we support broader coverage and increased funding for  
42 the current healthcare programs on local, state and national levels, including BadgerCare, Medicare,  
43 Medicaid, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

44  
45 Personal moral, religious, and medical decisions should be left up to the competent individual. We  
46 believe in freedom of reproductive choice, family planning, and the individual's right to choose death  
47 with dignity including physician-assisted end-of-life. Everyone has the right to timely obtain  
48 medications, properly and legally prescribed by their healthcare provider, from any licensed pharmacy.

1 Funding for stem-cell research should be supported on its scientific merits.

2  
3 Wisconsin has a high rate of imprisonment at a high cost compared to neighboring states, with no  
4 evidence that it makes residents safer. We support reducing prison populations through increased use  
5 of probation, including parole of elderly and seriously ill prisoners who pose little threat. Specialist  
6 courts should be used to divert those suffering from substance addiction and mental health issues from  
7 prison to treatment.

8  
9 We oppose the death penalty as an inhumane and ineffective means of punishment. We believe in  
10 equitable sentencing standards and increasing the authority of judges to modify sentences.

11  
12 The war on drugs is a colossal failure. We must discourage dangerous drug use without criminalizing the  
13 user and provide rehabilitative treatment to addicted persons. We encourage non-penal sanctions for  
14 initial minor drug violations. Marijuana should be legal and regulated like tobacco and alcohol.

15  
16 We support the right to hunt and to bear arms, a concealed carry ban, background checks on all gun  
17 sales, banning the sale of assault weapons, and limits on the size of magazines.

## 18 19 **Education, Labor, and Economics**

20  
21 We affirm the Wisconsin Idea. Quality public education for all is critical to a healthy democracy and  
22 economy. Public funding for private schools diverts resources from and adversely impacts public  
23 schools. Increased governmental funding and financial aid is essential for all levels of public education.  
24 We advocate for free public education from age 4-20. We must end the student debt crisis.

25  
26 Students have the right to receive their education in a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment, free  
27 from harassment or discrimination. We support funding all elements of the curriculum, including the  
28 arts and physical education. Teacher and support staff compensation must keep pace with costs of  
29 benefits and inflation.

30  
31 Revenue caps on school districts and other local governments must be eliminated. State or federal  
32 governments must fully fund their mandates.

33  
34 Public investment in arts and humanities promotes healthy communities and a healthy economy. We  
35 support increased local, state, and federal funding of arts and humanities.

36  
37 Equitable access to public transportation and high speed internet must be provided in rural and urban  
38 areas.

39  
40 A strong and secure nation depends on sound economic policy that promotes and sustains full,  
41 meaningful employment. Business, labor, and the public must work together to re-establish American  
42 jobs on American soil. We support small business as a means of economic growth. We must resist  
43 outsourcing by eliminating tax breaks to employers who ship jobs overseas and creating incentives to  
44 bring jobs back to the U.S.

45  
46 The Federal Government should provide transitional jobs for all individuals who cannot find work and  
47 have no unemployment compensation.

1 Public and private workers have rights to at least \$15 per hour, pay equity for women, safe and  
2 equitable workplaces, and secure benefits. Workers' rights to organize, bargain collectively, and strike  
3 without fear of reprisal must, where lost, be restored and otherwise strengthened. Election by card  
4 check reduces employer intimidation of employees' choice of representation. Employees who benefit  
5 from union contracts should pay fair-share dues. We support public employees' rights to speedy  
6 mediation and binding arbitration of labor disputes.

7  
8 Businesses must be held accountable for contracts with their employees. "Right-to-work" legislation  
9 and the hiring of strikebreakers are anathema to a strong, justly-compensated workforce. Pension and  
10 other retirement funds must be strictly safeguarded and responsibly managed through regulation. In  
11 the event of bankruptcy, workers' unpaid wages must be the first claim on remaining assets.

12  
13 We support a tax system that is based on ability to pay. It is immoral to overtax those less able to pay  
14 while the wealthy are taxed too little. The Federal Budget must reflect responsible spending and fair  
15 taxation. The State Legislature must make corporate taxes on par with the national average.

16  
17 Financial markets should be more effectively regulated to prevent fraud, excessive speculation,  
18 inappropriate compensation, predatory lending, and the need for taxpayer bailouts of mismanaged  
19 firms. We must put the needs of Main Street before the needs of Wall Street.

20  
21 Mining authorizations should provide adequate tax revenue to support the affected communities.

22  
23 America must invest in a healthy economy by supporting worker training, affordable tuition at our state-  
24 supported universities and technical colleges, and ample funding for research.

25  
26 American companies should be established here at home, follow our labor and environmental laws, and  
27 pay taxes for the good of the commons. Furthermore, we must protect our industries from competition  
28 by enforcing tariffs against nations that tolerate unfair worker conditions and environmental  
29 degradation.

30  
31 Our wealth should be measured not only by GDP but also by broad measures of well-being that  
32 incorporate factors like health, education, literacy, employment and wages, and environmental quality.

### 33 34 **Agriculture and Environment**

35  
36 We must preserve family farming by creating market systems that assure a fair return to both farmers  
37 and processors. True cooperatives and family-farm subsidies are essential to the economic viability and  
38 quality of life in rural areas. We support value-added agriculture which includes farming endeavors  
39 outside traditional forms of agriculture. Regulations controlling environmental pollution from  
40 agriculture, especially CAFOs, should be strengthened.

41  
42 We support farming systems that are humane to animals, preserve our soil, water and forest resources,  
43 and produce wholesome, safe food for consumers. We support agricultural sustainability through  
44 growth in "buy fresh buy local" practices which ensure markets for local farmers and save fuel by  
45 eliminating costly transport. We also support truth in labeling of conventional, organic, and genetically  
46 modified food.

1 We oppose practices by genetically modified seed producers which attempt to monopolize the seed  
2 business by requiring that all seed be purchased from them.

3  
4 Climate change poses an existential threat to life on Earth. We support aggressive action to cut carbon  
5 emissions, enhance carbon sinks, and mitigate effects of climate change. Protecting ecological systems  
6 is essential to the economic and social welfare of our state, nation, and the future of humanity. Our  
7 legislators and leaders must pay heed to soil, water, and atmospheric pollution; scientific evidence of  
8 climate change; all invasive species; and decreasing biodiversity. Ecological sustainability requires a  
9 stable population and responsible consumption.

10  
11 We must maintain the integrity of our vast surface and subsurface fresh water supply, especially the  
12 Great Lakes. We support retaining and expanding publicly owned recreational and wildlands.

13  
14 We must develop clean, renewable, and sustainable energy sources without relaxing regulation of  
15 nuclear energy; increase production of fuel-efficient vehicles; apply no penalty tax to alternate fuel  
16 vehicles; reduce urban sprawl onto prime agricultural soils; improve and expand local, regional, and  
17 national mass transportation systems; and increase recycling and waste management, all while  
18 maintaining biodiversity.

19  
20 We support responsible environmental regulations affecting open space, wilderness areas, soil  
21 conservation, forest management, industry, toxic and hazardous waste disposal and cleanup, and  
22 surface and subsurface water protection. We oppose the transportation of shale and tar sands oil  
23 through Wisconsin.

24  
25 We must prioritize public health, environmental protection, and the land and water treaty rights of  
26 native communities in the planning and implementation of all mining projects, including frac sand  
27 extraction. We support public, local control of municipal water and sewage systems. To ensure the  
28 protection of our state's valuable natural resources, we support re-establishment of a Public  
29 Intervenor's Office and an independent Department of Natural Resources.

## 30 **Foreign Affairs**

31  
32  
33 We stand for human rights, social and economic justice, the rule of law, and popularly adopted  
34 democratic government worldwide. Our leaders and policies must honor international law and honor  
35 and promote international agreements that provide groundwork for a just, prosperous, environmentally  
36 healthy, and peaceful world. Our United Nations dues must be fully paid.

37  
38 We call on our government to be a cooperative and effective leader, a partner in the pursuit of global  
39 accords to improve the human condition and protect the environment. We encourage international  
40 efforts to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, discrimination, genocide, torture, genital  
41 mutilation, human slavery and trafficking, capital punishment, pollution, and climate change.

42  
43 We oppose unfair trade and immigration policies that undermine our economy, harm working people in  
44 our country and elsewhere, and harm the environment.

45  
46 We oppose unfettered international arms trade, nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, land mines,  
47 radioactive materials in conventional munitions, ballistic missile defense systems, cluster bombs,  
48 militarization of space, American-run or funded internment camps, and torture.

1  
2 We support a military sufficiently strong to safeguard national security. We must provide amply for the  
3 health and well-being of members of the military during and after their service. We support efforts to  
4 eliminate the use of National Guard troops in undeclared wars.

5  
6 Our military budget is disproportionately large compared to all other nations and should be reduced,  
7 with greater emphasis placed on economic development and diplomacy to achieve global security, and  
8 to curtail the undue influence of the “Military Industrial Complex.”

9  
10 War must always be a last resort. We must address grievances that foster terrorism, not fight wars that  
11 perpetuate them. We must abide by the Geneva Conventions.

12  
13 Preemptive war without verified direct threat to our country, including the use of drone strikes, is  
14 fraudulent, illegal, and disastrous.

15  
16 We call upon Congress to pass laws displaying visions and values that uphold our Constitution, reverse  
17 the failures and illegalities of the executive branch, and restore the global community’s respect and  
18 admiration of our country.

19  
20 **Conclusion**

21  
22 The membership of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin has crafted and adopted this platform. Our state  
23 and our country will become stronger and better by following the principles outlined herein. We expect  
24 all candidates supported by the Democratic Party to support this platform and, when elected, to work to  
25 implement it.