



2016 Platform

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## New Hampshire Democratic Party Platform

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*New Hampshire Democrats stand for policies that support strong, healthy communities and families, a strong economy with opportunities for growth and a fundamental system of fairness and justice. Democrats are committed to spurring job creation, building our infrastructure, and bringing fairness and opportunity to our economy and our civic life. We believe that healthy communities and strong families are essential to the well-being of our citizens and to our ability to foster business development and a vibrant economy. We are committed to upholding the right of every eligible voter to cast their ballot free from unnecessary restrictions. We pledge a government that works collaboratively across the aisle to address the issues that matter to the people of New Hampshire.*

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**To promote the strength of our communities, the health of our families and a vibrant, growing economy, New Hampshire Democrats are committed to:**

- Ensuring access to quality public education from early childhood through college.
- Providing access to affordable, comprehensive health care.
- Making affordable housing in a safe community accessible to all.
- Protecting the availability of clean, safe air to breathe and water to drink.
- Preserving our environment for future generations.
- Promoting energy efficiency, conservation and clean-energy technologies.
- Creating a favorable business environment with skilled workers and the infrastructure necessary to compete in a globalized economy.
- Protecting of the safety net for our most vulnerable citizens.
- Providing access to good jobs with fair competitive wages and benefits and safe working conditions.
- Protecting retirement and pension security so that every person can retire with dignity.
- Making New Hampshire an attractive home for our next generation.
- Investing in our rural and urban communities with recognition of the unique and important role each plays.
- Creating a safe, efficient, reliable, cost effective and interconnected public transportation system.
- Investing in our roads, bridges, ports, airports, water systems, utilities communication systems and broadband access as the foundation of a strong economy.
- Recognizing the sacrifices made by our veterans and their families and honoring our commitments to support them.



- Promoting a fiscally responsible budget and tax structure.
- Protecting the right of every eligible voter to vote.
- Protecting the constitutional rights of all without discrimination.
- Preserving New Hampshire's First in the Nation Primary.

## **Education**

Democrats have long valued education as the key to success, for individuals, for our state and for our nation. Democrats believe and are committed to quality public education that provides the foundation for a brighter future for all New Hampshire's children by preparing them for participation in our society and to build a workforce equipped to meet the educational demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our state is strongest when our workers are trained with the knowledge and ingenuity to perform at the highest levels.

We support policies that ensure all children have equal access to high-quality public education so that each student can pursue affordable advanced education and learning that leads to full and prosperous lives without the burden of excessive debt. We honor and support our educators and applaud their contributions to our communities. We encourage the participation of students in mathematics, science, technology, the arts, history, reading and writing as fundamental tools for life. We support policies that ensure access to participation in public preschool, early intervention services and learning, and elementary, middle and secondary education for all New Hampshire students, including: setting high expectations for all students, eliminating the achievement gap, enforcement of anti-bullying policies and laws, education for healthy lifestyles, education that is evidenced-based and civic education so that future generations have the tools to participate as leaders. We believe every student who wants post-secondary education should have the opportunity, and we support affordable access to New Hampshire's public community colleges, colleges, and universities. Education holds the promise for better jobs to keep our youth working, contributing and living in our New Hampshire communities.

## **Health Care**

Democrats believe access to affordable, comprehensive health care is a right. We support policies that build on the Affordable Care Act to expand access, ensure reasonable coverage for services, increase transparency related to cost and quality, and control health care costs in New Hampshire. We believe Medicaid and other publicly-funded programs are critical to maintaining health and reducing health disparities across the State. Democrats support coordinated health care that provides true parity for physical and mental health care and that also includes comprehensive services for substance abuse disorders. Democrats oppose the criminalization of people with mental illness or the transfer of the mentally ill who have not been charged with a crime to a prison setting. Patients with mental illness should be treated in a therapeutic environment not imprisoned. Democrats believe in health care that is free from government



interference in private medical decisions. We support access to the full range of reproductive health care, including contraceptive coverage and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education, in a manner that is respectful, private, and safe. We support a public health infrastructure to promote the health and safety of our population and policies to address the growing shortage of providers in underserved communities and populations.

Democrats believe in a comprehensive approach to combat New Hampshire's epidemic of drug and alcohol addiction. We recognize we must work collaboratively with advocates, law enforcement, first responders, prescribers, and people in recovery to improve and expand access to prevention, treatment, and recovery programs. We support increased funding and training in order to end this deadly epidemic.

### **Housing**

Democrats believe affordable housing is essential to the growth of our economy, the strength of our families, and our communities. We support policies that ensure access to safe, affordable, accessible housing without discrimination. We seek solutions for homelessness through a comprehensive approach that addresses its root causes. We support policies to assist struggling homeowners to refinance their mortgages when appropriate and prevent premature or improper foreclosures.

### **Environment and Agriculture**

Democrats support responsible economic development that protects our environment and preserves our natural resources for future generations. Protection of our environment is critical to the survival of our planet, to the health and well-being of our residents, and to the quality of life and economy of our State. We support policies that protect land we can cultivate, water we can drink, air we can breathe, and streams and lakes we can fish. We will confront the real and imminent threat of climate change and pollution. We support the protection of our public parks and recreation areas which enable us all to enjoy the beauty of our state. It is essential that all residents in every community have access to secure food resources. We value and support sustainable agriculture and the local family farms that feed New Hampshire and its economy.

### **Public Safety**

Democrats believe public safety, emergency preparedness, and homeland security are vital to our ability to build and preserve strong communities. We support our fire, police, and emergency responders and honor their often unsung work. Proper staffing is essential to public safety. Police and fire departments should be staffed according to national standards to reduce response times. We believe in policies, including reasonable background checks, that appropriately



balance the rights of individuals to responsibly own and use firearms, and to live in a community safe from violence.

We support laws that curb violent and repeat offenders, reduce recidivism through prevention, education, treatment and rehabilitation, and maximize taxpayer resources. We believe the administration of our prison system is a public responsibility and function. Democrats support efforts to prioritize treatment and rehabilitation, -- rather than incarceration, -- for low-level, nonviolent drug offenders. We recognize the collateral damage and harsh consequences of a conviction for the possession of marijuana and support decriminalization for possession of a small amount.

### **Transportation and Infrastructure**

Democrats believe that a good transportation system promotes social and economic justice by allowing all the people of our state the ability to take advantage of opportunities regardless of their geographic location or economic circumstances. New Hampshire's transportation system should be comprehensive, safe, efficient, reliable and cost effective. We support development of multiple modes of interconnected affordable public transportation, including buses and rail service throughout the state including the north country. We believe investment in roads, bridges, ports, airports, public transportation, water systems, utilities, telecommunications technology and broadband access will provide the foundation we need to ensure a strong economy.

### **Energy**

Democrats believe energy policies that promote energy efficiency, clean- energy technologies and energy conservation are essential to lowering energy costs, enhancing energy security and reliability and protecting our environment. We recognize the value of achieving energy efficiency as an environmentally-friendly and cost effective means of meeting our future energy needs. We recognize the need to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and support the increased use and development of sustainable, renewable and reliable sources balanced with appropriate safeguards to protect the health of our citizens, our economy and our environment.

Any major energy project must preserve our environmental heritage, utilize low impact technology, respect individual property rights, promote clean energy for New Hampshire's use, protect existing businesses including tourism, and create jobs.

### **Preserving the Safety Net for Our Most Vulnerable Citizens**

Democrats support policies that help enable vulnerable families and individuals to live, work and participate in their communities. We support community-based services for individuals with disabilities; physical and mental illnesses and low-income children, elderly residents including



the increased availability and continued access to affordable, high quality childcare, programs that enable individuals with disabilities and low income parents to find sustainable employment at a living wage; and partnerships with communities to reduce substance abuse and delinquency rates. We recognize the ongoing impact of domestic and sexual violence and support programs to provide safety and assistance to victims and their families.

### **Retirement Security**

Democrats believe every person deserves to retire with dignity. We believe that all residents of New Hampshire should have the opportunity to be financially secure as they reach retirement. We believe the promises of pension and medical benefits made to our public sector retirees should be honored. We believe that financially secure retirees benefit the State through their contributions to the economy and their volunteerism.

### **Honoring our Veterans**

As Democrats we honor our veterans and the innumerable sacrifices they and their families have made. As the only state in the United States that does not have a full service veteran's hospital, we support the efforts of our congressional delegation to expand access to health care by contracting with local hospitals and doctors via "Veterans' Choice". Our nation must honor its commitments to veterans of all wars, including physical and mental healthcare, education, and disability support. We support policies that create employment opportunities for veterans and address the problem of homelessness. Democrats are committed to welcoming veterans back into our communities with support and honor.

### **Business Investment and Jobs**

Democrats support policies that foster a vibrant and diverse business climate and economy. The foundation of a favorable business environment is a well-trained workforce with the skills necessary to compete in an increasingly globalized economy. We recognize and support policies that make it possible for businesses to thrive by building roads, highways, and bridges that allow the transport of goods throughout our state. We understand that access to broadband and telecommunication technologies is essential to our efforts to recruit businesses and promote entrepreneurship. Policies ensuring equitable access to credit are critical to promoting the growth of our businesses. Ensuring a robust workforce requires that New Hampshire offer affordable housing, access to health care and a good education in safe communities with clean air and water and we support policies that promote these essential elements of business development.



## **Job Security**

We support our workers and policies that ensure fair, competitive and living wages and equal pay for equal work. We support an increase in the minimum wage to ensure full time workers do not live in poverty. We support workers' rights to organize and bargain collectively for wages, benefits, and safe and fair working conditions. We will fight for the rights of women and minorities in all aspects of society, including equal pay at work. We recognize the negative impact of the growing wage gap and the resulting struggle of middle class workers to provide for the needs of their families and will work for policies to address this important concern.

## **Job Education and Training**

Democrats believe our residents are our most valuable economic asset. Skilled workers enrich our communities, ensure that our economy continues to grow and provides for a strong middle class. We ensure our workers have access to lifelong learning and affordable career, skilled trades and crafts training at high school, community colleges, universities as well as registered apprenticeship programs and other opportunities. We applaud the efforts of our community colleges and private business interests to forge partnerships that create apprenticeships and job opportunities.

## **Keeping and attracting the Next Generation**

Democrats believe that retaining the next generation and attracting young families and individuals to our state are imperatives for ensuring our economic growth. Fundamentally, this means ensuring that we offer good jobs with family friendly workplace policies that enable our young people to climb the ladder of success while also growing healthy families. We promote policies to ensure the availability of affordable housing and affordable childcare. We are committed to the investment in education and training necessary to allow the next generation to afford higher education without the burden of excessive debt.

## **Rural Development**

Democrats believe that investing in our rural communities-especially the North Country-builds a sustainable economy and vigorous middle class. We support the building and maintenance of our infrastructure, including roads, bridges, water, sewer, renewable energy, telecommunications, and broadband technologies. We support expanding access to capital for rural entrepreneurs, rural businesses, and farms. We will continue to push for rural health care systems as they are critical for sustaining a healthy workforce and a growing middle class. We vigorously support investing



in our local and regional food systems which provide access to fresh and nutritious food which benefit our citizens and fuel our local communities.

### **Urban Development**

Democrats recognize the important role of our urban areas in providing job opportunities and fostering growth of diverse vibrant communities. We appreciate the unique challenges presented in urban settings and support policies to address important concerns such as the shortage of affordable housing, the need for greater access to public transportation, homelessness, inclusive integrated population and public safety. We embrace the growing diversity of our urban areas and the arts, cultural and economic benefits it provides.

### **Voting Rights and Democracy**

Democrats seek to secure the right to vote and to broaden voter participation, not restrict it through voter identification laws or measures that are aimed at preventing students, the elderly, voters with disabilities, or minorities from exercising their constitutional right to vote. Democrats believe that voting is a right and responsibility and not a privilege, and that every step should be taken to ensure that all eligible individuals vote in every election. This means that registration must be made as easy as possible to include automatic registration and the continuation of same day registration. Polls must be safe and accessible. No eligible voter may be denied access to the polls, and every vote should be counted. We will explore other options to expand voter access including “no excuse” absentee voting.

### **First in the Nation Primary**

We are proud to support and defend New Hampshire’s first in the nation primary and will fight to protect this important status.

### **Working Together to Protect our Constitutional Freedom for All**

Democrats believe in basic protections and security for all people in our state, and that everyone should be free from discrimination including in employment, housing, education, and public accommodations. We are committed to full inclusion for all residents, and encourage initiatives to remove barriers to equal opportunity. We welcome any and all to our state and communities, including new Americans. New Hampshire Democrats believe in communities of citizens caring for and about each other, and support equitable treatment for all.

Democrats believe in working cooperatively whenever possible with Independents, Libertarians, and Republicans – our neighbors and friends – to move New Hampshire forward. When we disagree we do so with respect. Democrats oppose discrimination in all its forms and do not



divide the State along lines of race, religion, disability, immigration status, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.

### **Fairness and Justice**

Democrats believe in equal justice under the law. We support full, fair, and timely access to our courts, both criminal and civil, and in the protection of the constitutional right to a trial by jury. We oppose unreasonable bail for the indigent and the incarceration due to an inability to pay bail or criminal fines. We recognize the ongoing impact violent crime has on victims, and that justice delayed is justice denied. Consistent with Part 1, Article 18 of the New Hampshire Constitution which states “the true design of all punishments being to reform, not to exterminate mankind,” the Democratic party supports the repeal of capital punishment in our state.

### **Fiscal Responsibility**

Democrats believe government provides essential services to our citizenry. These services include the rule of law, the health and safety of our residents, consumer protection, the protection of our environment, public education and the physical infrastructure necessary to maintain a robust economy and expand employment opportunities. Democrats have worked to ensure these services are provided as cost-effectively as possible in order to avoid downshifting costs to the overburdened local property taxpayer. The budget not only must reflect the true costs of operating an effective and efficient government but also must be supported by sufficient revenues and honest revenue estimates. It is the New Hampshire way to take a hard look at all reasonable revenue solutions while respecting both the will of the people and the constitutional requirement of fair and equal taxation. Democrats are committed to engaging New Hampshire residents in an effort to develop fiscally sound, transparent and accountable approaches to a balanced budget designed to serve the needs of our residents and our economy.

Respectfully submitted,

The 2016 New Hampshire Democratic Party Platform Committee.

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