

Utah Democratic Progressive Platform (draft)

Updated 3/4/2020

The purpose of this caucus is to advance democratic progressive political policy throughout Utah. We will accomplish this through a strong grass roots network of progressive Democrats across the state, working to enact policies that promote social justice and equity for all people. We will support candidates and elected officials who espouse the following values in their platforms and policies:

1. Healthcare

We believe that healthcare is a human right. Whereas the commodification of healthcare has had disastrous effects for many, and whereas access to, and quality of, healthcare is stratified by socioeconomic status, location, and race, we support the establishment of a single payer national healthcare system. We also support the full and immediate expansion of Medicaid in the state of Utah.

2. Air Quality

Whereas air quality in Utah is consistently among the worst in the nation, and in the world during times of inversion, and whereas poor air accounts for hundreds of premature deaths and serious illnesses annually, we support bold efforts to improve air quality and reduce the harmful health effects of carbon emissions and CFCs.

- a. We support the Community Renewable Energy program established to allow municipalities to request that their energy obtained from Rocky Mountain Power be 100% renewable.
- b. We object to the establishment of an inland port in the northwest quadrant of Salt Lake County and to the satellite model of the port that would add to air pollution throughout the state.
- c. We support the expansion of public transit, including that which connects to rural counties throughout the state. We support a renewable energy model for public transit, including more electric vehicles and a high-speed electric rail.

3. Housing

- a. We believe that housing is a human right. We believe that every man, woman, and child deserve safe housing fit for human shelter. To that end, we endorse a Tenant's Bill of Rights to protect renters from predatory practices.

- b. One in eight Utahns face a severe housing burden, meaning they spend more than fifty percent of their household income on housing alone. We support examining all solutions to our housing crisis, including, but not limited to:
 - 1. Conversion of empty properties to affordable housing structures.
 - 2. Incentivizing developers to include long-term, affordable units in all multi-unit plans.
 - 3. Increasing social services to assist people experiencing homelessness.
 - 4. Increasing wages.
 - 5. Reducing the tax burden on the working class.

4. Education

- a. We believe it is the right of every person to receive an education that is honest and complete, and which:
 - 1. Prepares them to function in a global economy.
 - 2. Fosters an understanding of the functions of civil society.
 - 3. Engenders the ability to communicate ideas and relate to a changing world.
- b. In today's global economy, we recognize that solely a K-12 education is insufficient to prepare our youth to compete in a growing global economy. We support access to an affordable, debt-free secondary education for all who seek it.
- c. We believe that those who are tasked with educating our youth should earn a living wage. They should not have to work multiple jobs or use their personal income to educate our youth. We support an increase in educator salaries.
- d. We believe that income tax revenue received by the state should continue to be directed toward funding education.
- e. We understand the importance of early childhood education as a basis for lifelong learning. We support expansion and funding of early childhood education throughout the state and full-day kindergarten in public schools for all who seek it.

5. Tax Policy

- a. We support efforts to end the sales tax on food, which negatively impacts low-income residents.
- b. The trend of encouraging “growth” by extending tax incentives to real estate developers and multinational corporations is not sustainable. Every corporation that operates within the state benefits from a dependable infrastructure that

was built and is maintained by our workforce and tax dollars. In order to support sustainable growth in Utah, we seek an end to subsidizing multinational corporations through tax incentives.

- c. Current tax laws benefit the wealthy and perpetuate inter-generational poverty. We support a progressive tax plan that unburdens the working class and requires the wealthy to contribute more to the general welfare.
- d. We support the elimination of the Social Security benefit deduction cap, which presently stops at \$120,000 of income.

6. Criminal Justice

- a. We support an end to the death penalty.
- b. We support the elimination of for-profit prisons that are contracted through the government. We support legislation at county and state levels that would prohibit the sale of land to any entity that participates in for profit detention of people. We also support an end to civil asset forfeiture, which functions on a guilty until proven innocent premise.
- c. Cash bail systems target the poor. Inability to pay cash bail causes those without means to remain incarcerated despite posing no threat to their community. Such practices lead to the loss of employment, making it impossible to pay fines and legal fees. We demand an end to the cash bail system in Utah.
- d. We support education programs within the corrective system.
- e. We demand humane conditions within the prison system.
- f. We support the legalization of recreational and medical cannabis/marijuana and encourage their use instead of opioids, which will help end the war on drugs. In 2018, Utah voted in favor of Proposition 2, which would have legalized medical marijuana within the state. However, in a special session, the legislature overrode the proposition, depriving the people of certain protections that the proposition would have afforded. We should restore those protections and also encourage research into the medical benefits of cannabinoids. In addition, we support the decriminalization of cannabis at the federal level, and we seek expungement of criminal records for those victimized by unfair sentencing practices in regards to nonviolent drug offenses.
- g. We oppose the convict labor system as used to offset the cost of correctional services. Instead, inmates should receive minimum wage pay with the ability to support their families.

- h. We agree that "all research and successful drug policy show that treatment should be increased and law enforcement decreased while abolishing mandatory minimum sentences," as stated in "Prison Song" by System of a Down. We encourage the corrections system to offer mandatory drug rehab instead of prison sentences for those whose incarcerations are related to drug abuse. In addition, we support the abolishment of mandatory minimum sentences.

7. Jobs/Labor

- a. We recognize the role of labor unions in establishing the rights of the working class. Over the last three decades, these rights have been infringed upon by the lobbying efforts of multinational corporations. To reaffirm said rights, we demand the end of right-to-work laws that require individual employees to pay out-of-pocket for their union representation. We reaffirm and support labor unions and the rights of workers to engage in collective bargaining.
- b. As we move toward a green, energy-driven, and more just economy, we recognize that there will be changes in labor needs. We recognize the prospect that changes in workforce needs may displace some workers. We affirm the rights of those people to fully participate in a changing economy, and to that end, we support Federal and state jobs programs to educate workers and prepare them to participate in a new sustainable workforce.
- c. The minimum wage ought to be sufficient to support the needs of the worker. The federal minimum wage has not kept pace with inflation, which has caused an increase in the number of people living in poverty. In addition, the Utah Legislature has enacted preemptive laws that prevent municipalities from increasing their minimum wages. We support an increase in the federal minimum wage to \$15/hr and an end to preemption by the Utah legislature in regards to the right of municipalities to raise the minimum wage within their borders.

8. Rights of the Disabled

- a. We believe that housing and education are basic human rights. Those with disabilities are afforded assistance through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Fair Housing Act, which we support. We also advocate for accessibility features provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in public and commercial buildings, parking, sidewalks, ramps, etc., and we support other state and federal legislation that assist and provide tools to those with disabilities to more equally fare in our competitive world.
- b. We commend businesses that employ the Disabled and encourage others to do so. We believe that many individuals with disabilities -- visible or otherwise -- offer unique viewpoints, creativity and/or enhanced traits that, if given the opportunity with reasonable accommodation, can provide a business advantage

offer their colleagues a more complete and rewarding perspective on humanity.

9. Racial Justice

- a. In Utah, people of color are imprisoned at a rate five times that of white people. The current justice system is systemically flawed by its targeting of minorities, and its denial of justice to those living in poverty. Therefore, we demand an end to police brutality and the targeting of racial minorities.
- b. We support the requirement that all on-duty police officers be equipped with active body cameras that record their interactions and that they be trained in de-escalation tactics.
- c. We recognize the role of governmental policies that were enacted largely by the white majority, which has led to intergenerational poverty among people of color. Therefore, we support a program of reparations to descendants of slaves and displaced, indigenous peoples.

10. Reproductive Justice

- a. We support Roe vs. Wade and seek to bar legislation that would limit a person's ability to receive reproductive care. We believe that body autonomy is the right of every person.
- b. We support the availability of free contraception and comprehensive sex ed and other measures help to prevent unwanted pregnancies. We also support providing easier means of giving up a child for adoption.

11. Campaign Finance

- a. We recognize that the current system of campaign finance, specifically in regards to the Citizens United ruling, prevents the free and fair election of representatives and allows for anti-government corruption. We support the repeal of Citizens United and support a constitutional amendment preventing Super PACs.
- b. We support the institution of an independent board to determine fair boundaries for voting districts. In 2018, the citizens of Utah voted in favor of Proposition 4. We believe that the people should choose their representatives, not the other way around. We demand that the Utah State Legislature respect the will of the people to eliminate gerrymandering.
- c. We support the Protect Voting Rights Act that would outlaw voter suppression measures we are seeing throughout the United States. We also support election cyber security reform.

- d. To reduce government corruption, we support the Tax Returns Uniformly Made Public Act that would require a President-Elect to place assets in a blind trust before the oath of office can be administered. We also support stricter job qualifications and conflict-of-interest requirements for cabinet members and judicial nominees including the exclusion of high-powered lobbyists. We also support the elimination of lifetime appointments.