



**January 16, 2012**  
**2011-2012 Platform Committee Draft Planks**

The Platform Committee, consisting of elected representation from each State House Subdistrict (roster below), worked hard this past year crafting a revised Denver Party Platform, consisting of 14 planks, or policy areas. Please review the following carefully, and come to your precinct caucuses on Tuesday, March 6, 2012, starting at 7:00 p.m., prepared to discuss and vote on each plank. Comments and questions may be directed to the following committee members:

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**JOBS AND A FAIR ECONOMY**

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We believe that we can create a just world that is fair for everyone. We reject "you're on your own" economics. In the words of President Obama, "we're greater together than we are on our own." We believe in a vigorous economy that strengthens our country based on hard work and responsibility, not greed and reckless speculation. We support a role for government in spurring job creation, rebuilding infrastructure, investing in clean energy technology and education, and restoring fairness and opportunity in our country. Therefore:

1. We endorse an economic structure that maximizes opportunity for everyone, decreases disparity, and strengthens the middle class.
2. We endorse government efforts to stimulate job creation and economic growth in both the private and public sector and we support the passage of American Jobs Act that would create more jobs without increasing the federal deficit.
3. We support Wall Street Reform, the Consumer Protection Act and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, that would protect consumers from unfair financial practices.
4. We support foreclosure reform that would help prevent home foreclosures, help stabilize the housing market, and keep people in their homes.
5. We call for significant efforts to repair and restore our infrastructure, support basic and applied research, address the energy and transportation needs of the future, and encourage public-private partnerships.

6. We support fiscal responsibility, including efforts to reduce waste in public spending and excessive regulations where protection of health, safety, and the environment is not compromised.
7. We believe the federal deficit and debt needs to be reduced, through a combination of judicious cuts in spending and enhanced revenue, including a progressive tax code that eliminates loopholes while lowering base rates, where possible.
8. We believe that government has an important role in mitigating the effects of unemployment through education, retraining, unemployment insurance, healthcare for the unemployed and other support programs.
9. We believe public policy should reenergize manufacturing, and support small business, entrepreneurship, and innovation.
10. We believe that corporations are not persons and should not be treated as persons under the law and support legislation to reverse the effects of the Citizens United case.
11. We support public funding of political campaigns.
12. Pass legislation to encourage more lending to small businesses; enact a Financial Speculation Tax to discourage harmful speculation which contributed to the crisis of 2008.

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## **AGRICULTURE**

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We support family farming and ranching as mainstays of the Colorado economy. We also urge an active link between urban and rural lifestyles, as an expression of the value we place on both communities. In particular,

1. We support policies that promote sustainable and low impact agriculture, including organic farming, urban gardening, and small producers. We also favor local production, marketing, and consumption of food to the fullest extent possible.
2. We support crop insurance programs that mitigate against cyclical losses from natural causes. We oppose subsidies that artificially reduce prices non-nutritious food commodities while increasing the cost of nutritious alternatives.
3. We support humane treatment of agricultural animals and encourage less dependence on factory farming.
4. We support reforms so that only valid operating farms are eligible to receive agricultural tax benefits.

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## **WATER**

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Riparian systems and wetlands are critical components in the complex web of sustainable, healthy ecosystems, and must be rigorously protected. Because water is a critical issue in our arid climate, we support efforts to educate and inform the public about water issues. We believe policies must prioritize water conservation, management of limited water supplies, and the protection of water purity for humans and natural ecology. We urge the preservation of minimum stream flows and support stream flow restoration efforts. Therefore:

1. We support active urban conservation and improved water use efficiency.
2. We support incentives for improved agricultural water use efficiency and mechanisms such as reuse, leasing and cooperative alliances aimed at avoiding permanent depletion of water from agricultural lands.
3. We support long-range planning and the restriction of new development without adequate supplies of water.
4. We support strong local enforcement of the Clean Water Act and support the enacting of stronger local laws when existing laws do not adequately protect water purity, wetlands, and wildlife ecosystems.
5. We support full disclosure by businesses and municipalities of all chemicals discharged or injected into groundwater or surface water.

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## **FOREIGN POLICY**

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We believe our foreign policy should reflect our highest principles of freedom, justice for all, equality, self determination, human dignity, the rule of international law, and the principles stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Therefore,

1. We oppose all forms of ethnic cleansing, genocide, and apartheid.
2. We support vigorous pursuit of diplomatic initiatives to resolve conflicts, including the relentless pursuit of nuclear non-proliferation and land mine mitigation.
3. We oppose long-term commitments of the U.S. military in regions where our national security is not threatened.
4. We endorse protection of the nation as a priority, with use of effective, appropriate technologies and methods that do not impinge on civil liberties, and under no circumstances include torture.
5. We support a just and lasting peace between the Israelis and Palestinians.

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## **HEALTH CARE**

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We believe that health care is a right, not a privilege. We support public financing of health care for all. Our health system should focus proactively on wellness, public health, preventive medicine, disease prevention, and mental health, as well as primary care. Therefore:

1. We support the Patient Protection and Affordable Health Care Act.
2. We support a public option and improved Medicare for all.
3. We support creation of a non-profit Colorado Health Care Exchange to offer affordable, universal health care for all residents of Colorado.
4. We support fully funding Medicaid.

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## **ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY**

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Global climate change, pollution, and resulting environmental problems pose a threat to our survival. We believe that we must deal with these urgent issues now and pursue policies that maintain ecosystem integrity and biodiversity, and the overall health of our planet. We support green energy, strict enforcement of critical environmental protection and science-based sustainable environmental policies. Our public resources and lands must be preserved for future generations. State and local governments must manage growth, pollution, and the extraction of natural resources to protect the quality of life for their citizens. Therefore:

1. We support the conservation of natural habitats and healthful management of public lands.
2. We support programs and policies that encourage recycling, composting, and energy conservation.
3. We support a market-based cap and trade system to regulate pollutants and emissions.
4. We strongly endorse the new energy economy and support incentives for individuals and companies to switch to renewable energy.
5. We support a reasonable severance tax for natural resources extracted from all Colorado lands.
6. We support the disposal of toxic materials in a manner safe and non-threatening to people and the environment. Chemicals used in hydraulic fracturing must be disclosed and appropriately regulated.

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## **TRANSPORTATION**

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Denver and Colorado need a comprehensive public multi-modal transit system that takes into consideration environmental and neighborhood impacts, neighborhoods with the greatest need for public transportation, non-motorized transportation needs, and transit oriented development.

Therefore we support:

1. Emphasis on a public, not private, transportation system.
2. Strategic build out of FasTracks, with Union Station as a center.
3. An expedited statewide public transit system, particularly along I-70 and I-25.

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## **IMMIGRATION**

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We honor and defend the basic human rights of every person in the United States regardless of citizenship. As a nation of immigrants, we value the contributions that those from other lands and ethnic groups that have contributed to our national economic, intellectual, and cultural life. We welcome those who would like to become legal residents or citizens of the United States. The current immigration system is broken. A system must be developed that includes the full protection of U.S. labor law, protects against exploitation, values diversity, and provides the opportunity to earn citizenship. We urge the enactment of comprehensive reforms to immigration laws. Therefore:

1. We support keeping families together.
2. We support substantial penalties on those who hire undocumented workers. We support streamlining application for visas, work permits, and residency into a more rational, just, and humane process with substantial reductions in waiting time.
3. We support a simple, comprehensive temporary worker program.
4. We endorse a path to citizenship, as envisioned by the proposed national DREAM Act, for long-time residents who have paid taxes, or defended our country in the armed forces, and have not been convicted of a felony.
5. We support in-state college tuition rates for undocumented students who graduate from Colorado high schools.
6. We oppose legislation that changes unlawful entry into the United States from a petty offense to a felony.

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## **EDUCATION**

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We demand an educational system, which is inclusive of our diverse population, guarantees funding, encourages community involvement, and educates the whole individual through academic rigor, athletic competition, artistic endeavor, and career/technical training. Public education is a right and we reject attempts to privatize it. Therefore:

1. We support funding school meal programs for children living in poverty.
2. We oppose vouchers and public funding of religious schools.
3. We insist that all educational professionals earn a living wage and have the right to organize.
4. We support the repeal of No Child Left Behind including its philosophy of "teaching to the test."
5. We support the full funding of public higher education.
6. We support in-state tuition rates for all graduates of Colorado public schools.
7. We support universal access and full funding for early childhood education.
8. We oppose the re-segregation of the Denver public school system being caused by charter schools.
9. We support foreign language instruction beginning in grade school.
10. We support access to equal education for the disabled.
11. We support anti-bullying policies in schools.

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## **VETERANS AFFAIRS**

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We have a sacred trust to the men and women who have served and who continue to serve our country. As an obligation to our veterans and their families,

1. We support easy and efficient access to earned benefits for veterans and their families to health care, education, and job opportunities.
2. We support expanding opportunities for unemployed veterans and providing incentives to businesses to hire them.

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## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SECURITY**

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We believe that government must support the rule of law, protect the private choices of citizens, and provide safe communities that are free from violence. Everyone has a right to feel safe and secure in their home and neighborhood. Strong families and safe communities are thanks to the hard work and sacrifice of first responders and we will continue to support those who protect and serve. We also believe that crime can be reduced through comprehensive prevention and rehabilitation programs. Therefore:

1. We support strong and fair penalties for violent crimes, especially crimes against women and persons particularly vulnerable such as children, the elderly, and disabled.
2. We speak out in a unified voice against hatred, racism, racial profiling, and violence directed against any group and support legal protections through “hate crime” legislation.
3. We support comprehensive social services and assistance for the victims of crime.
4. We seek to provide state-of-the-art equipment and training for police officers and first responders.
5. We support alternatives to incarceration for non-dangerous offenders, including juveniles, and those with mental illness and drug addiction, through community-based corrections and diversion programs.
6. We support reducing crime rates by increasing high school graduation rates, anti-truancy measures, after-school programs, and restorative justice programs.
7. We seek to promote strong families and communities by making rehabilitation, education and job readiness top priorities within our state prison system.
8. We promote responsible gun ownership, gun safety programs, and sporting associations, and also remain determined to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals. We strongly urge a comprehensive common sense ban on deadly assault weapons.
9. We support DNA and science-based verification systems to prevent innocent people from being punished for crimes they did not commit.
10. We support the replacement of the death penalty with a term of permanent incarceration.
11. We oppose sentencing juveniles to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.
12. We oppose privatizing the penal system.
13. We support ending mandatory sentencing.
14. We support reasonable regulations on guns, including closing any gun-show related loopholes.

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## **CIVIL RIGHTS**

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All persons residing in the United States deserve equal protection under the law regardless of their race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, economic status, and physical disability. We believe in fairness, equal rights, equal opportunity, and being part of an inclusive society. Therefore:

1. We support the equal treatment of gay, lesbian, and transgender individuals, including the right to adopt children and the right of same sex couples to marry, have hospital visitation rights and full access to insurance.
2. We oppose all hate crimes and support legislation that facilitates the prosecution of hate crimes, such as the Matthew Shepard and the James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.
3. We support equal pay for work as emphasized in the Lilly Ledbetter Act.

4. We support the rights of disabled people as provided under Americans with Disabilities Act.
5. We support the fight against human trafficking.
6. We believe that the government has no legitimate authority to intrude into the private lives of individuals who have not displayed evidence of being a threat to the security of others.
7. We believe that voting is a basic right and oppose measures that decrease or inhibit access to voting.
8. We oppose indefinite detention of United States citizens without due process.
9. We support religious freedom and support policies that ensure the full separation of church and state.
10. We support repealing the Patriot Act.

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## **LOCAL AFFAIRS**

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Local governments deserve special attention because they impact people on a day to day basis. Therefore:

1. We support full funding of emergency shelter and food systems, and a vigorous program for assisting homeless and needy people to have productive lives.
2. We support efforts to promote the sustainability and integrity of all Denver neighborhoods - particularly "at risk" neighborhoods.
3. We support the use of local vendors and businesses.
4. We object to public policy that allows Denver neighborhoods to be turned into permanent toxic waste disposal sites, such as Globeville.
5. We support well-regulated, taxed, medical marijuana facilities.
6. We support full funding of the Denver Public Library system, including neighborhood needs.
7. We support a state constitutional amendment modifying or eliminating the Taxpayers Bill of Rights (TABOR).

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## **LABOR**

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In order to restore our economy we must revive American manufacturing. This will require action on many fronts, including addressing global currency manipulation, reforming tax policy, enforcing and reforming our trade policies, strengthening government procurement policies, and increasing investment in job training. The following actions need to be taken:

1. Stem currency manipulation by passing the Currency Exchange Rate Oversight Reform Act.
2. Renew tax incentives for investment in renewable energy and expand loan guarantees to include investments in energy efficiency.
3. End tax incentives that encourage the export of US jobs and institute tax policies that bring manufacturing and other jobs back to the US.
4. Encourage buying Colorado and US-made goods and reform trade agreements to raise global labor and environmental standards.
5. Enforce our trade laws and reauthorize a robust Trade Adjustment Assistance program, which supports workers who lose their jobs due to trade.
6. Provide federal assistance to state, and local governments to avoid more layoffs and cutbacks of public services.
7. We support the rights of employees to form unions. We also support strengthening laws that protect employees from intimidation and retribution.