

Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party Ongoing Platform

Thank you for your interest in the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party Platform. This document is part of the platform, known as the Ongoing Platform. These statements embody the beliefs and principles of the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, and consist of statements of support or opposition with regard to particular policies. Each of these items has received at least a 60% affirmative vote at a State Convention of the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party. The categories are arranged alphabetically, and the ordering of the points does not reflect rank or priority.

AGRICULTURE

The family farm is the keystone of our society and must be preserved.

We Support:

- Preservation and protection of farmland through soil conservation and sound sustainable ecological practices.
- The economic well-being of rural communities through the preservation of small business and family farms and fair prices for agricultural products.
- Access to farm credit at reasonable terms and interest rates, including temporary relief during economic emergencies.
- Educational research and development programs, including sustainable agriculture.
- Cooperative and marketing systems structured for the financial security of producers and improvement of products.
- Use of agricultural surpluses to alleviate hunger in the United States and all other nations.

BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

We believe American business in cooperation with working men and women can create economic prosperity. We believe the role of government is to encourage and regulate business in order to create economic opportunity for all.

We Support:

- Reasonable regulations that encourage fair competition, ensure safety, environmental and labor standards, and prevent price discrimination.
- Community reinvestment to promote local business and home ownership.
- Small business development, especially ownership by members of economically disadvantaged groups.
- Regulation of interstate businesses, especially banks, to prevent adverse effects on locally owned businesses and banks.
- Economic investment in troubled regions or industries.
- Responsible use of economic development funds.
- Businesses that build, employ, and invest in the United States.
- Affordable housing for all Minnesotans, including assistance to local governments that promote mixed-income housing opportunities.
- Counties', townships' and cities' right to set stricter standards than those required by the state for land use and local development, and the right to enact zoning ordinances to protect the health and well-being of their community.

CIVIL, HUMAN, AND CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

We recognize that when the rights of any citizen are threatened, the rights of all are endangered. We therefore pledge to preserve our constitutional and civil rights.

We Support:

- Separation of church and state and the right to privacy.
- Only voluntary enlistment in the armed services.

We Oppose:

- Discrimination against any person on the basis of race, creed, religion, immigration status, sex, sexual or affectional orientation, HIV status, gender identity or expression, marital or homemaker status, disability or age.
- Government interference in all matters related to the control of one's own body, including protection of the rights of women to bear children, practice birth control and obtain safe and legal abortions, and the rights of patients and their families, guardians, and physicians to honor a decision not to extend life by artificial means.
- Barriers to participation in society.

CONSUMER ISSUES

We believe consumers have a right to safe and reasonably priced products, fair treatment in the marketplace, and complete and accurate information about products and services.

We Support:

- Fully funded consumer education and public enforcement to protect consumers from fraudulent practices.
- Equally available and affordable goods and services that meet consumer needs such as public utilities, transportation, consumer credit, insurance, telecommunications access and housing.
- Food quality and labeling standards that protect the public from unsafe food products and deceptive labeling.
- Licensing of health care professionals and counselors and establishment of health care data collection systems to inform the public about costs and quality of health care.
- Requiring housing inspection when government-backed mortgage loans are involved, with liability for failure to notice defects.

EDUCATION

We believe a vigorous and universally available system of public education is basic to a productive, democratic society.

We Support:

- A strong system of public education at all levels, with stable funding and equal educational opportunities.
- Academic freedom, student and faculty rights, and church-state separation in public school curriculum and educational funding.
- Moderate class sizes and a safe, suitable environment for both students and teachers.
- A broad curriculum of liberal arts, technology, social issues, vocational, and physical education.
- High standards for teachers and compensation that reflects the responsibilities society places on them.
- Effective services in the areas of health, counseling, careers, and nutrition.
- Publicly accessible, high quality libraries and information systems.
- High quality, well-funded post-secondary education, affordable for everyone.
- Continuing education and adult literacy programs.

ENERGY

We believe in safe, sustainable and secure energy sources that offer coming generations access to fuels and power.

We Support:

- Increased use of renewable energy sources.
- Aggressive energy conservation in transportation, commercial, industrial, residential and governmental sectors.
- Decreasing dependence on nuclear power.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE PUBLIC

We pledge to ensure the political rights of all citizens through fair elections and responsible government.

We Support:

- Campaign finance reform, including:
 - a. Fair public financing of presidential and congressional elections.
 - b. A ban on gifts from lobbyists to elected officials.
 - c. Disclosure of financial political campaign support.
- Enforcement of standards of ethical conduct and accountability for elected officials.
- Ensuring public availability of government information.
- Policies that enforce honest conduct by government officials and contractors who provide services to government agencies.
- Adequate government funding for research and development in areas of humanitarian and scientific significance.
- Government agency actions that ensure citizen safety and fair treatment.
- Providing veterans and military personnel with the appreciation, respect, and benefits deserved because of honorable service to our country.
- Efforts to locate and bring home service personnel who are prisoners of war or missing in action.
- Native American tribes’ rights to self-government and the generation of revenue to serve their people.
- The use of ranked choice voting, also known as instant runoff voting, for state and local elections.

We Oppose:

- Unnecessary government regulations.
- Using government agencies for political purposes.
- Laws and policies that restrict government employees’ right to participate in the political process.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

We believe that all people should have the opportunity to be self-sufficient, secure and healthy. Cost-effective and adequately funded programs can help ensure these basic needs.

We Support:

- Nationally funded, community –based comprehensive and affordable health care for all.
- Services to children to ensure their healthy start in life.
- Adequate provision for the needs of physically, mentally or emotionally challenged persons, including in-home and institutional care services.
- Institutional and outpatient mental health programs and services that provide equal access, continuity of care, and protection of patient rights.
- Private and public funding for health care programs that include pregnancy care, family planning and abortions, regardless of age or income.
- Expedited funding for AIDS and HIV research, and care for the afflicted.
- Programs to assist displaced persons, including refugees, displaced homemakers, and the homeless.
- Adoption of a single payer health care system.

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

We promote the American labor movement and the rights of all workers.

We Support:

- The right of workers to organize and bargain collectively.
- Comparable wage standards and pay equity.
- A minimum wage that keeps pace with inflation and provides full time workers with an income above the poverty level.
- Adequate compensation for injured workers.
- Programs to promote full employment.
- Hiring Minnesotans for jobs created when state/local tax incentives are involved in development projects.

We Oppose:

- The permanent replacement of striking workers.
- Sexual harassment in the workplace.

NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY

We recognize the intertwined relationship between national security and international policy. We believe in a foreign policy that strives for international cooperation, supports human rights, and respects international justice. Such a policy will have the effect of restoring American leadership in world affairs and thereby greatly enhancing the security of our borders as well as the safety of our citizens at home and abroad

We Support:

- Free elections and democracy.
- Foreign aid that helps people achieve economic self-sufficiency.
- Fair trade policies based on mutual understanding of each country’s problems and culture.
- The protection and promotion of women’s rights, including comprehensive, adequately funded international family planning programs. Countries receiving foreign aid must be required to protect and promote women’s rights.
- United Nations mediation of international conflicts and global reduction in armed forces and nuclear and conventional weapons.
- Israel’s right to exist within secure borders, Palestinian rights to self-determination, and continued peace efforts in the Middle East.
- Marine life conservation and prohibition of drift netting.
- International cooperation to protect the global environment in areas such as preventing acid rain, preserving the rainforests, preserving the ozone layer, and preventing global warming.

We Oppose:

- Terrorism, and dictatorial and exploitative international policies.
- All forms of United States exploitation in foreign countries, and any attempts to dictate their political systems.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

We believe in leaving the world in better condition than we found it.

We Support:

- Preservation of biodiversity and wilderness.
- Strong environmental programs with provisions for strong enforcement that provide for healthy surroundings for all citizens and for sustainable, long term use of natural resources and a strong role for government in environmental protection.
- Living and working conditions free from significant exposure to poisons and radioactivity in air, water and soil.
- Responsibility of individuals, businesses and government to notify others of possible environmental hazards, to clean up those they have created, and to compensate others for any resulting damages.
- Industry incentives, public education and collection programs to reduce consumption of resources and production of hazardous waste.

We Oppose:

- Disposal of hazardous wastes below ground.
- Nuclear power, as it is not a viable energy source.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION

We advocate strong law enforcement policies combined with vigorous crime prevention programs that emphasize education, treatment and rehabilitation.

We Support:

- Protection of victims of crime through the mandatory arrest of domestic abusers and mandatory sentences for convicted rapists, as well as government-funded programs to house, treat, counsel and educate victims of abuse, rape or other violence.
- Protection of children exposed to abuse or violence, with stiff penalties for child abusers.
- Reasonable firearm policies that promote public safety and crime prevention without infringing on the rights of hunters and other sports enthusiasts.
- Enforcement of traffic safety laws, particularly against chemically impaired drivers.
- Mandatory sentencing of drug dealers.
- Abolition of capital punishment, and freedom from unreasonable searches, seizures and surveillance contrary to our constitutional rights.

RETIREMENT SECURITY

We believe all Americans have a right to a secure retirement.

We Support:

- The independent status of Social Security, with funds invested and used solely for payment of benefits.
- Full funding of Medicare and Medicaid.
- Full funding and protection of retirement programs.

TAX AND BUDGET POLICY

We believe government budgets must be based on sound fiscal policies and fair taxation aimed at achieving economic growth, conservation of resources and full employment.

We Support:

- Balancing the federal budget and reducing the National debt.
- A progressive tax structure with minimal reliance on sales and excise taxes.
- Taxing all income producing property owned by tax-exempt organizations, at the same rate as other income producing property.
- Establishing a lower tax base for industry in rural areas of Minnesota as an aid to the economic well-being of those areas.
- Taxing agricultural lands on the basis of production value rather than market value.
- Providing tax incentives for equity investment in small businesses.
- Reducing the military budget and using the savings to fund social, scientific and environmental programs and research and development.
- Exempting senior citizens from paying property taxes if their income does not exceed 125% of the poverty level and they live in single-family homes.
- Denying tax exemptions for schools that practice or advocate racial segregation.

TRANSPORTATION

We believe that in order to prosper, all residents and businesses must have access to efficient and affordable transportation.

We Support:

- Multi-modal, environmentally sensitive solutions that use natural resources efficiently.
- Well-designed and maintained roads and bridges throughout the state.
- Increased investment in Minnesota's transportation and infrastructure, on a regional and statewide basis, including public transportation, mass transit, commuter rail corridor, light rail, buses, pedestrians and bicycles.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

We honor and respect the men and women who have served and are serving our country. We must advocate for their physical and emotional well-being, both abroad and at home, as well as their economic security. We must ensure that our military is the best-trained, equipped, and supported force in the world and that the men and women of our military are ready to meet the new threats of the 21st century. Their sacrifices and those of their families must never be forgotten.

We Support:

- Providing veteran' benefits to members of the state militia (National Guard and Air National Guard) and military reserves deployed in active federal service equal to those provided to members of the active military as defined by Article 10.
- Providing timely and sufficient funding to appropriate government agencies to honor all our obligations to active duty military and military veterans.
- Providing veterans and military personnel with appreciation, respect, and benefits merited through honorable service to our country.
- Efforts to locate and bring home service personnel who are prisoners of war or missing in action.
- Only voluntary enlistment in the armed service.