

DAUPHIN COUNTY DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE (DCDC) 2016 PLATFORM

PREAMBLE

The Democratic Party believes in leveling the playing field so that every American has access to the opportunities needed to achieve their American Dream.

REFORMING GOVERNMENT

Our government should work for everyone and not just the wealthy and well-connected. Therefore, the DCDC supports:

- Redistricting reform, so voters choose their elected officials rather than elected officials choosing their voters.
- Campaign finance reform to include ending secret, unaccountable money in politics. Outside groups, like super PACs, should publicly have to disclose political spending.
- Merit selection of statewide judges.

DEFENDING AND STRENGTHENING CIVIL RIGHTS

We believe in an America where everybody gets a fair shot and everybody plays by the same set of rules. At the core of the Democratic Party is the principle that no one should face discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability status. Therefore, the DCDC supports:

Equal Pay for Equal Work—End the Earnings “Gender Gap”

Full-time women workers’ earnings are only about 78 % of their male counterparts’ earnings—even after factoring in qualifications such as education and experience. The pay gap is even greater for African-American and Latina women; the former earning 64% and latter 56% of what their male counterparts earn. Therefore, the DCDC supports:

- Legislation which strengthens Pennsylvania law to eliminate the gender pay gap.
- Increasing the protection to employees who have filed a complaint against an employer and prohibiting retaliation against employees for discussing wages (“pay secrecy”).
- Narrowing the “factor other than sex” defense to apply only to bona fide business related factors, including education, training, or experience.

The Criminal Justice System and Law Enforcement

The Democratic Party is leading the fight to build a fairer and more unbiased criminal justice system that eliminates racial profiling and disparity. Thanks to State Reps. Patty Kim (D-Dauphin) and Jordan Harris (D-Philadelphia), criminal record expungement after 10 years for second- and third- degree misdemeanors is now Pennsylvania law. To build on these efforts, the DCDC supports:

- Legislation to “ban the box” for local, county, and state employers and contractors, so that applicants have an opportunity to demonstrate their qualifications before being asked about their criminal records.
- Continued rethinking of drug policy: expanded use of drug courts permitting nonviolent offenders to serve their sentence in drug rehabilitation programs that have proven more effective than prison, and decriminalization of recreational marijuana. Leave our jails and prisons for serious and violent offenders.
- Reentry programs that help reduce convicts returning to crime, by assisting them with finding and providing stable employment and housing, as well as counseling.
- Strengthen bonds of trust between communities and police by investing in training programs to help ensure law enforcement officials are properly trained on issues like implicit bias, conflict resolution, use of force, and disability awareness.

Racial Justice

America’s long struggle with race is far from over. We must pursue policies that address the six main types of discrimination waged against people of color: education, physical, political, legal, economic, and environmental. Therefore, the DCDC supports:

- Ending mandatory sentencing for nonviolent drug offenses, applying the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 retroactively, and eliminating the sentencing disparity for crack and powder cocaine.
- Reforming the “strike” system to focus on violent crime by narrowing the category of prior offenses that count as strikes to exclude nonviolent drug offenses, and reducing the mandatory penalty for second- and third-strike offenses.
- Ending racial profiling by federal, state, and local law enforcement officials.
- Addressing the inadequate environmental cleanup efforts of Superfund hazardous waste sites in communities of color.

Voting Rights

The DCDC believes in expanding access to the ballot box. Therefore, the DCDC supports:

- Fighting any attempts to reinstate unconstitutional voting ID laws in Pennsylvania.
- Repair the Voting Rights Act. Congress should move quickly to pass legislation that would fix the damage done by the Supreme Court in 2013 and restore the full protections American voters need and deserve.
- Early voting in Pennsylvania of at least 20 days of early in-person voting, including opportunities for evening and weekend voting. We also support electronic voting. These two initiatives will reduce long lines and give more people an opportunity to vote.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Rights

Sexual orientation should be immaterial under the law. Therefore, the DCDC supports:

- The reform of the Pennsylvania Human Rights Act to include sexual orientation.
- Support policies to ensure students can attend school without fear of bullying, and work to reduce suicides.
- Veto any legislation that purports to “protect” religious liberty at the expense of others’ rights.

Women’s Rights

America has taken tremendous strides when it comes to expanding opportunity for women—but the fight is far from over. Therefore, the DCDC supports:

- Paid family & medical sick leave. The U.S. is the only country in the developed world without guaranteed paid leave of any kind. We support legislation to guarantee up to 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave for businesses with 50+ employees.
- Women’s health decisions should be made by a woman, her family, her faith and her doctor. The DCDC will stand up to attempts to defund Planned Parenthood, which would restrict access to critical health care services for lower-income women. We will also fight to protect the Affordable Care Act, which bans insurance companies from discriminating against women, and guarantees over 47 million women access to preventive care.
- The DCDC recognizes that quality, affordable child care is a growth strategy. Women are now the primary or co-breadwinners in two-thirds of families with children. But out-of-pocket child care costs have soared by nearly 25% during the past decade. Investing in child care must be a national priority—including supporting on-campus child care.

Disabilities

Today, 19% of Americans (56.7 million people) live with disabilities. The DCDC will work to toughen the protections against disability-based discrimination, increase accessibility in our communities, expand employment opportunities, and increase financial independence for people with disabilities. The DCDC supports:

- Strengthening programs that support people with all types of disabilities to live at home, rather than in institutions.
- Ensure all businesses and services, both public and private, are open and available to all citizens, including people with disabilities.
- Ensure the provisions within the Americans with Disability Act are followed and enforced.

MINIMUM WAGE

The DCDC believes that no adult who works full time should earn wages less than an amount that provides for their basic living needs. Therefore the DCDC supports:

- Legislation raising the minimum wage to a livable wage.

IMMIGRATION

Since the founding of this nation, generations of immigrants have contributed to the strength of the United States and Pennsylvania. Immigrants have spurred economic

growth, fueled innovation, defended us abroad, and added to the unique character of our nation. The DCDC advocates a more humane immigration enforcement system. Therefore, the DCDC supports:

- Comprehensive immigration reform legislation with a path to full and equal citizenship that treats every person with dignity, upholds the rule of law, protects our borders and national security, and brings millions of hardworking people into the formal economy.
- Deport felons and those who threaten national security and public safety-not families.
- Promote naturalization. There are an estimated 9 million lawful permanent residents (green card holders) in the U.S. who are eligible to become citizens. The DCDC believes we need to do more to help the millions of people who are eligible for citizenship to take that last step.

CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY

Climate Change is perhaps the most important issue facing the world today and carbon pollution is its biggest driver. A key path forward is action to move the United States to a clean-source, non-fossil fuel burning energy infrastructure.

Since President Obama took office, the U.S. has increased solar generation by twenty-fold and tripled electricity production from wind power. DCDC salutes these long overdue steps toward reducing pollution, and reducing our consumption of nonrenewable resources. The DCDC salutes the bipartisan efforts we have made. Therefore, we support:

- Promotion of alternative energy sources, including their affordability.
- A moratorium on the practice of hydraulic fracturing for natural gas until such time as 1) the fracturing industry acknowledges the dangers involved in its operations; 2) engages in every reasonable step to avoid unnecessary risks; and 3) commits to full restitution by the industry of any harm to human life and health, damage and loss of value to property, harm to water supplies, harm to animals, and harm to the environment. Before or after the end of such a moratorium, a severance tax should be imposed on natural gas extracted from the shale.
- Money set aside in the Commonwealth's budget to deal with environmental disasters that may occur from fracking.

GUN VIOLENCE PROTECTION

More than 33,000 Americans are killed by guns each year. The DCDC believes in the Second Amendment, but also believes in commonsense reforms that keep guns away from terrorists, domestic abusers, and other violent criminals. Therefore, the DCDC supports:

- Legislation that closes the gun show loophole by requiring criminal background checks on all transactions taking place at events that sell firearms. We also support background checks on private owner gun sales.

- Legislation to reinstate the assault weapons ban. Military-style assault weapons do not belong on our streets. They are a danger to law enforcement and to our communities.
- Legislation to make straw purchasing a crime. When an individual with a clean record buys a gun with the intention of giving it to a violent felon—only so that felon can avoid a background check—it should be a crime.
- Legislation requiring any person seeking to own, possess, purchase or otherwise acquire a firearm to obtain a firearm safety certificate, which obligates the applicant to successfully complete a safety training course that includes live firing, a safe-handling demonstration and a written test of firearm laws.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Quality education regardless of where you live is crucial for each Pennsylvanian to reach their full potential, from the day they start kindergarten to the day they start their career. Therefore, the DCDC supports:

- A fair and effective school funding formula. Pennsylvania has perhaps the widest funding gap between rich and poor districts in the US.
- More long-term resources to restore funding cuts and fully fund public education.
- Close the education achievement gap that begins with a world class education from birth through college. We believe in doubling the investment in Early Head Start and ensuring every child has access to high-quality preschool to begin closing the achievement gap.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Pennsylvania has the third-highest student debt load in the country. That means young Pennsylvanians are delaying buying houses and starting families. To support students, families, and Pennsylvania's economic future, we need to make higher education more accessible, as well as safer. The DCDC supports:

- Enable Americans with existing student loan debt to refinance at current rates.
- Hold colleges and universities accountable for controlling costs and making tuition affordable.
- Everyone being able to enroll in a simplified, income-based repayment program so that borrowers never have to pay more than 10 percent of what they make.
- Aggressive criminal enforcement of sexual abuse on college campuses.