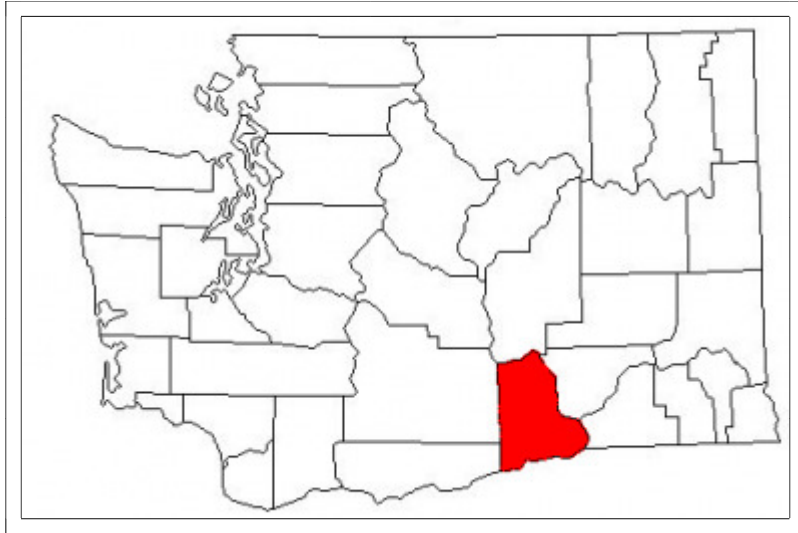




Benton County Central Committee

2010 Approved Platform



Preamble

No part of our Democratic heritage of beliefs and accomplishments is cherished more than our belief in the rights and worth of each individual. We cannot be timid in the direction our party takes. We embrace these core values and human rights in our Benton County Platform.

Human rights may be summed up in Franklin Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, freedom from fear and freedom from want". More specifically, in his State of the Union Speech in 1944 he proposed that an "economic bill of rights" should include these guarantees:

A job with a living wage
Freedom from unfair competition and monopolies
A home
Medical care
Education
Recreation

To promote these ends, the Democratic Party will continue to foster traditional Democratic social goals and policies including: preservation of a sound economy with middle-income jobs and wages, free and independent information media, affordable childcare, public education, tax fairness, protection of civil and property rights, decent and affordable housing, universal health care with fiscally sound Medicaid and Medicare programs, and a fiscally sound Social Security system. Our commitment to all minorities' equal rights and protection under the law will not be compromised.

We cannot tolerate the undermining of our privacy and most basic civil liberties, the shrinking of our wages and pensions, skyrocketing medical and pharmaceutical prices, unabated pollution of our air and water, and corporate corruption, which are denigrating our human rights and damaging all our citizens. We will be firm in the direction our party takes; our position on these issues must be clear and steadfast.

To Democrats, the good of the community is viewed as harmonious with the freedom and well-being of the individual. The role of government is not to facilitate the transfer of more wealth to the powerful, but rather to protect the civil liberties, rights, property, health, and well-being of all citizens through appropriate legislation, education, taxation, and regulation.

Young persons both native and immigrant have always been the source of our greatness. Welcome young people to participate in the Democratic Party at all levels and to lead us to a greater society.

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02 – Agriculture

The success of Washington farmers should not be taken for granted. Food produced in Washington enriches the diet of people all over the nation and throughout much of the world.

- 2.1 A guest worker program is essential to provide legal workers for agriculture. The program will ensure a reliable labor source is available for the industry while extending legal protections to the workforce.
- 2.2 We support sustainable agriculture – eco-friendly agricultural practices, including the conservation of water, the protection of topsoil, and reduction of antibiotic use in livestock production which will avoid disease and conserve resources for the long term.
- 2.3 We support an updating of farm subsidies to bring them in line with current 21st century conditions and with new scientific knowledge. We support the removal of land bank and crop subsidy abuse by large corporate farms
- 2.4 The food supply, fertilizer supply, and seed supply must not be controlled by a few monopolies.
- 2.5 There should be *mandatory* inspections of food production facilities by the FDA. We support the testing of all cattle being sent for slaughter with results determining which meat is shipped for sale whether for human or animal consumption. We support the tracking of food animals from birth which is now possible through the use of internet and home computers.
- 2.6 We support an agricultural policy that emphasizes nutrition and health through education, school lunches and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- 2.7 Investment in agricultural colleges and research is essential to achieve these goals. We support the Benton/Franklin Cooperative Extension in their efforts to educate the public.

03 - Corporate Power and Media Reform

We agree with President Obama that it is time to restore responsibility and accountability to our financial system.

- 3.1 The Glass-Steagall Act, separating investment banks from commercial banks, must be reinstated and updated for today's economy. A corporation that is too big to fail is too big to exist. Consumer confidence will only be restored through strong regulations, transparent accounting practices and regulated risk.
- 3.2 Therefore, under the jurisdiction of the Sarbannes-Oxley Act, we support an investigation of the recent financial collapse and prosecution of those who knowingly defrauded investors by hiding toxic assets and manipulating financial reports.
- 3.3 To combat the continuing possibility of fraud, we support a Federal Financial Consumer Protection agency to regulate financial products, consumer banking, and credit cards.
- 3.4 Laws preventing corporations from taking out insurance on property that is not owned by them or on the lives of their workers must be passed; such insurance has encouraged the sale of toxic assets and denial of medical care.
- 3.5 U.S. based firms must not receive subsidies or tax reductions while outsourcing jobs overseas. Multinational companies must pay their fair share of U.S. taxes and may not use foreign tax havens. Status as US corporations should be forfeited by these actions. We recommend the revision of Controlled Foreign Corporation laws to restrict these tax havens.
- 3.6 We oppose management and ownership by foreign companies of our ports and other infrastructure assets which are crucial to our safety and security.
- 3.7 We support the return of the windfalls profits tax.
- 3.8 We support the steps being taken at the federal level that will revise the laws for corporate charters and impose heavy taxes on the exorbitant salaries and benefits of wall-street fund managers and corporate officers at the expenses of tax payers, workers, stock holders, and consumers.
- 3.9 Free media expression, is essential to democracy. Therefore we support the 35% limit of media ownership in major markets and absolute Net Neutrality.
- 3.10 Corporations shall not be recognized as a human person. We support sound restrictions of corporate spending on campaigns.

04 – Economic Justice and Development

“We do not have a money problem in America. We have a values and priorities problem.” - Marian Wright Edelman

- 4.1 We support the United Farm Workers of America in their struggle for economic justice.
- 4.2 We support international trade policies that require US companies utilizing overseas labor to pay workers a living wage as well as uphold modern health and safety standards. Likewise, we support domestic labor policies which result in domestic workers receiving a living wage and receiving the protection of health and safety standards.
- 4.3 We support the use of Federal stimulus funds in partnership with the private sector to stimulate the economy and create jobs through direct support and investment in local and regional infrastructure projects, preferably on an expedited schedule. Investment in maintenance as well as, new and upgraded construction of highway, aviation, and marine transportation facilities, air and water quality facilities, power generation and transportation systems, telecommunications including broadband throughout the U.S.A., public safety and educational infrastructure, are required to move the United States into the 21st century.
- 4.4 We support the use of Federal stimulus funds for research and development of next-generation infrastructure.
- 4.5 We support legislation to require financial institutions issuing credit cards to citizens of Washington State to comply with Washington State usury laws, and with consumer protection legislation. We support consumer protection laws and regulations restricting unfair penalties. We support regulations which would minimize so-called predatory lending practices in all areas of lending — especially real estate.
- 4.6 We support the policy of balanced State budgets, but balanced over several years so as to better deal with business cycles. One reason for this approach is to avoid boom-and-bust funding, and better assure stable funding for state programs over the long term.
- 4.7 Strong anti-trust laws are essential for protecting consumers, promoting entrepreneurship and maintaining economic stability. The disproportionate power accumulated by monopolies, trusts and cartels is antithetical to democracy.

05—Education

“Education: a debt due from present to future generations.” - George Peabody

- 5.1 We support fully funded public education to provide up-to-date textbooks and materials, uncrowded and safe facilities, and optimum student-teacher ratios.
- 5.2 We support continued federal funding of Head Start.
- 5.3 We support state funding for the repair and maintenance of public schools and infrastructure, and for equipment and technology in compliance with the Americans-With-Disabilities Act in schools
- 5.4 We affirm the value of AMERICORPS, VISTA, Peace Corps, and Job Corps and support their continued funding.
- 5.5 We believe the 'No-Child-Left-Behind Act' should be improved, corrected, and then fully funded. We oppose the use of testing alone to measure the effectiveness of any given school.
- 5.6 We support charter and voucher school proposals only if they are developed in partnership with Washington public schools.
- 5.7 We support increased State and Federal funding for higher education, including increased financial aid, broadening eligibility for low interest and stable financial aid for college students, and ensuring more affordable tuition.
- 5.8 We oppose teaching creationism, intelligent design, mysticism and other non-science belief systems in Washington State Public School science classes.
- 5.9 Textbooks will be selected for complete and accurate information—not political agendas.
- 5.10 We support additional public funding for post high school education and vocational training.

06 – Energy and Environment

- 6.1 Local, state, and National air quality and water quality laws that protect our health must be enforced.
- 6.2 The U.S. should provide leadership in the development of international treaties to address global climate change.
- 6.3 Strong policies must be enforced to require conservation of water in agricultural development through dry land farming, drip irrigation, root irrigation and other methods to conserve resources, and enable more economic production. Conservation of domestic-use water must be required through metered use, zoning restrictions on planting, promotion of xeriscaping, and allowance of the use of gray water for domestic and industrial landscaping.
- 6.4 Implementation of a thoroughly researched and peer reviewed salmon recovery policy is needed. This policy must include cost benefit analyses to avoid overall damage to the regional economy. All stakeholders should be involved in the development of this policy. We believe that salmon can be protected without removing vital and green, hydro-electric power plants.
- 6.5 Natural resources including timber must be recovered and utilized in a sustainable way with environmental restoration for resource sites.
- 6.6 A strong and long term national energy plan must be developed by the Federal Government. This plan must stress the utilization of all domestic and North American resources to reduce our dependence on imported fossil fuels.
- 6.7 Federal and state subsidies should continue to encourage expansion of electrical production from green, clean, renewable technologies such as wind, solar, nuclear, and hydro power systems. Use of distributed source power at homes and businesses such as solar hot water heating, local wind power, and solar photovoltaic power must be encouraged in the federal and state plans.
- 6.8 The U.S. Nuclear Waste Management Plan must be brought forward expeditiously to ensure public confidence in the ongoing development of new safer Phase 3 commercial reactors. Federal loan guarantees are needed to provide the impetus for Construction and Operation (C&O) of the first wave of a renaissance of new nuclear electric power plants in the United States.

06 – Energy and Environment—*continued*

- 6.9 Department of Energy plans to design and construct a prototype of a spent nuclear fuel reprocessing plant should be expedited. After the first reactor burn cycle, spent fuel has major fuel value remaining that should be recovered for use in new electric power plants. Nuclear waste volume and new resource use are both reduced by this reuse.
- 6.10 Aggressive energy conservation laws must be passed and enforced to require use of more efficient lighting devices, appliances, green building designs, and efficient personal and public use of energy.
- 6.11 CAFÉ standards to require higher gas mileage in U.S. licensed vehicles must be enforced. The development of more fuel efficient U.S. electric, and hybrid vehicles can make these standards achievable.
- 6.12 Bio-fuel use in U.S. private and commercial vehicles must be encouraged providing that the fuels are not developed from food crops. Aggressive federal research should continue to promote production of bio-fuels from cellulosic and waste agricultural products.
- 6.13 We support the Tri-Party Agreement and other efforts of Washington State to ensure that Hanford Site clean-up is finished and the Columbia River's water quality is protected from the Hanford Site's contamination.
- 6.14 We support holding energy-related corporations and their governmental oversight agencies accountable for maintaining environmental, safety, and health regulations and their enforcement.
- 6.15 The shrub steppe ecosystem of Eastern Washington is a priority habitat of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife because it is rapidly disappearing due to agricultural and urban expansion. Before the arrival of European settlers in the 1800's, shrub steppe habitats covered over 10 million acres in eastern Washington. These arid-land systems support unique wildlife communities, including species of concern such as the sage sparrow, sage grouse, and pygmy rabbit, which occur only in shrub steppe. Only about 40% of the State's historic shrub steppe remains, and all of Benton County lies entirely within the shrub-steppe ecoregion. It is essential to preserve remaining areas of shrub steppe before it is lost from our natural heritage along with the wildlife species that depend on it.

07 - Foreign Policy

The United States can be true to our values and ideals while also protecting the American people.

7.1 We support the continuing participation of the US in the United Nations as a means of reconciling international issues and dealing with global concerns.

7.2 We should pay our legitimate United Nations debt.

7.3 We support the UN efforts to secure just and peaceful solutions to conflicts between nations. In particular, we support the involvement of the United Nations in efforts to restore peace in Iraq and Afghanistan and to establish a representative government on a schedule dictated by the complex process involved and not by artificial deadlines set for political purposes. We support efforts to exit Iraq and Afghanistan as soon as reasonably possible, but in a responsible manner. We oppose permanent bases in Iraq and Afghanistan.

7.4 We support efforts to protect the nation from terrorist attacks without suppressing basic human rights or allowing war to preempt diplomacy or peace and justice options. We believe that our efforts should refocus on proven sources of international terrorism, consider terrorism as a criminal matter rather than as a military matter, and should address the root causes of terrorism. Recognizing that our military is about national defense, we oppose any preemptive move toward war with any other sovereign nation.

7.5 We support the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We support and we expect our government to abide by the Geneva Convention. We support the U.S. ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

7.6 We support the ratification of the following international treaties: the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. In addition we support the signing and ratification of the Ottawa convention on Land Mines. We support the signing and ratification of reasonable agreements related to climate change.

7.7 We support humanitarian aid to needy populations.

07 - Foreign Policy *continued*

- 7.8 We support fair trade agreements that include provisions to protect the environment, encourage sustainable agriculture and manufacturing, and protect the democratic and economic rights of the work force. We encourage the World Bank and International Money Fund to fund development projects in a manner compatible with local conditions not first world country development agendas.
- 7.9 We believe all U. S. Territories including the Mariana Islands and Guantanamo Bay are subject to U. S. law including U. S. labor laws, due process, habeas corpus, and laws against illegal detention.
- 7.10 We oppose military aid to repressive regimes regardless of past diplomatic relations with the United States.
- 7.11 Understanding that nations often have to cooperate with each other, we oppose a unilateralist approach to foreign policy.
- 7.12 We favor normalizing relations with Cuba, including the lifting of US trade and travel restrictions to Cuba.
- 7.13 We believe all products of slave labor and child labor should be considered contraband and should be outlawed for sale in the United States.

08 - Government and Political Reform (Reforms may require constitutional amendments.)

We expect every citizen to do his or her part in exercising the self-government that is part of the American tradition, and by contributing just and fair taxes.

- 8.1 Federal elections should be publically funded to reduce the opportunity for special interests to buy House and Senate seats.
- 8.2 Use of Public funds for House and Senate seats must be restricted to a limited time period before the elections to avoid protracted distractions from the business of governing. No additional election spending for media time, mailings, or other bought campaigning will be permitted. Private citizens will remain free to campaign as volunteers.
- 8.3 Only the US Congress shall have the authority to declare war or send troops into armed conflict. Congress must be restricted from giving automatic blanket authority to the Executive branch for "police actions".
- 8.4 Balanced budgets should be maintained at State and Federal levels of government except in times of declared war or national emergency.
- 8.5 The church and state must remain separate. The wall of separation between church and State must be strengthened. Taxpayer funding for religious institutions or "Faith-based" initiatives should not be condoned. Full freedom for all religions and personal belief systems must be protected. All citizens' rights to adopt their own belief systems must be protected from government interference.
- 8.6 US Citizenship should require some period of public service for all young adults when they complete their secondary education or reach maturity. Service could include military, AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, Vista, or other newly created methods of service.
- 8.7 At least a 5-year period shall pass before a U. S. President, Vice-President, Senator, Congressperson or cabinet member, having left office, can become a lobbyist.
- 8.8 Washington State should follow the lead of States such as Arizona in working toward publically funded elections.
- 8.9 Senate rules should be restructured to eliminate minority blockage to governance action. In practice, we support repeal or drastic changes in the filibuster rules so that one fringe position senator cannot hold up the people's will.

08 - Government Reform *continued*

- 8.10 We support the creation and funding of Mental Health Courts to address the unique needs of offenders who are mentally ill or developmentally delayed.
- 8.11 Habeas Corpus must be restored for citizens and non-citizens completely and without compromise.

09 - Health Care

We applaud the efforts of President Obama and the U.S. Congress working to make health care accessible, portable and affordable for ALL citizens regardless of age, employment status, or pre-existing conditions, by passing the first real health care reform in decades.

- 9.1 We support the preservation of the Medicare program. We support efforts to keep it fiscally sound while ensuring that it pays health care providers enough to allow them to afford to take Medicare patients.
- 9.2 We support efforts to find a fair balance between malpractice tort reform and preservation of patients' rights for compensation for acts of medical malpractice and/or negligence
- 9.3 We will continue to work toward elimination of the Medicare Part "donut hole" and removing Part D windfalls to private interests. We must work with pharmacies to ensure they are adequately compensated and will not refuse Medicare prescriptions.
- 9.4 We support both Washington State and the federal governments' using their bulk purchasing power to directly negotiate with pharmaceutical companies for reduced drug prices particularly for seniors, people with disabilities and the underinsured.
- 9.5 We support the expansion of Medicare eligibility, by allowing the general public to buy in to Medicare as public option. By including younger healthier Americans, Medicare funding would improve while costs would remain low.
- 9.6 We support full funding of Medicaid to protect our most vulnerable populations.
- 9.7 We support robust funding for the preventive care provided by our public health programs as an investment in the general welfare as well as future cost savings. Our public health system must be capable of dealing with pandemics as well as acts of bioterrorism.
- 9.8 We support access to voluntary family planning, counseling, and information that discusses all options for reproductive choice.
- 9.9 We support full funding of veterans' health care and hospitalization.
- 9.10 We support a simple majority to pass emergency medical service levies. and fire service operating levies.
- 9.11 We support a strong public health program capable of dealing with pandemics and acts of bioterrorism.

09 - Health Care *continued*

9.12 We support a national medical program which uses modern information technology to manage and share health records while honoring the privacy rights of patients.

10 - Human Rights, Civil Rights and Human Services

“Those who would sacrifice freedom for security deserve neither” - Benjamin Franklin

- 10.1 Basic Human Rights and U.S. Constitutional Law must be maintained even in our vital and urgent needs to provide protection from terrorist attacks. Without human and civil rights, no one can be secure.
- 10.2 All persons under United States jurisdiction must be guaranteed equality before the law. We oppose all discrimination based on race, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.
- 10.3 We support greater funding at all levels for programs to eliminate child, domestic, and senior abuse.
- 10.4 We support full freedom for all religions and personal belief systems. All citizens' rights to adopt their own belief systems must be protected from government interference. The church and state must remain separate.
- 10.5 We support civil domestic partnership laws that provide rights on par with traditional marriage, including but not limited to, hospital visitation rights, child custody rights, and inheritance rights.
- 10.6 The state does not have the right to force reproduction therefore we affirm that all decisions regarding reproductive medical care remain private medical matters between patients and their health care providers.
- 10.7 We support US funding for voluntary family planning - nationally and internationally.
- 10.8 We oppose unreasonable censorship, surveillance, and invasion of individual liberties.
- 10.9 We support the Federal Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) courts for domestic surveillance and oppose attempts by surveillance authorities to circumvent FISA courts.
- 10.10 We oppose the use of military tribunals to circumvent the constitutional rights of any citizens. We support the closing of the Guantanamo detention facility as a place in which such questionable legal processes occur for even non-citizens.

10 - Human Rights *continued*

- 10.11 We oppose the use of torture or enhanced interrogation under any circumstances by our government or at the behest of the US by others. We believe those who have sanctioned torture should be brought to justice. Extraordinary rendition is illegal and must be stopped.
- 10.12 We oppose the training of foreign military and police in the use of torture and terrorism by US government institutions such as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security and Cooperation (formerly School of the Americas).
- 10.13 As we promote democracy and human rights abroad, it follows that we oppose the US provision of military aid to oppressive, authoritarian nations that do not support the human rights of all their citizens including the women and minorities. We oppose slavery in all forms.
- 10.14 We support fair trade and humanitarian aid where it is allowed to be effective.
- 10.15 We support the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1990 as well as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- 10.16 Whereas Circuit Court Judge A. Wallace Tashima found "that police practices, searches, arrests, detention practices, and plea bargaining practices lead to a greater burden on minorities that cannot be explained in race-neutral ways." We support the reinstatement of prisoner voting privileges.

11 - Immigration

President Obama recognizes that an orderly, controlled border and an immigration system designed to meet our economic needs are important pillars of a healthy and robust economy.

- 11.1 Individuals in the U.S. illegally shall be dealt with in a humane fashion.
- 11.2 Immigration laws must be reviewed and updated to meet current needs.
We must fix the dysfunctional immigration bureaucracy and enable legal immigration at reasonable levels.
- 11.3 Undocumented immigrants brought to the US as children who have attained age of majority shall be allowed to apply for citizenship in the State of their residence and not be required to travel to the foreign country of their birth to apply.
- 11.4 Guest worker programs need to be expanded so that foreign workers in all occupations can be allowed to work legally and move freely in the United States with comparable United States worker living wages, protection of all United States and local law.
- 11.5 The borders of the United States shall be secured to eliminate the violence and inhumane acts associated with illegal border crossings, drug trade, terrorism and human trafficking.
- 11.6 H1B1 Visa annual allowable members should be expanded to permit more US university graduates to enter the US immigration process and be able to contribute to the US economy as workers.
- 11.7 Legal immigrants to the U.S. shall not be treated as second class citizens.

12 - Indian Tribes and Treaties

Indian tribes share a common history with the United States. American Indian Tribal Governments make up a part of our national identity and community. We recognize them as self-determining, self-governing, and separate governments. Local, state, and federal governments must respect the decisions of the Native American Nations and tribal governments, affirm their rights derived from treaties and state compacts, and oppose attempts to diminish their sovereignty and cultures.

12.1 We continue to support treaties and tribal agreements.

12.2 We support continued efforts to maintain and restore salmon runs.

12.3 We support preservation and protection of sites of historic, cultural and religious significance.

12.4 We support provisions to improve the social, economic, and health status of American Indian people and tribes on a level equivalent to that of other Americans.

12.5 We support education of the American public about the inherent and treaty-based rights of Indian tribes.

12.6 We support respectful and civil relations between Indian tribes and local communities, the state and the nation.

13 - Labor

"Every advance in this half-century-Social Security, civil rights, Medicare, aid to education, one after another-came with the support and leadership of American Labor." - Jimmy Carter

13.1 The Benton County Democrats affirm that all workers shall be paid a living wage, and provided affordable health care and secure retirement.

13.2 We define a living wage as the wage necessary for a person working forty hours a week, with no additional income, to afford decent housing, food, utilities, transport, and health care.

13.3 Minimum wage must be indexed to inflation.

13.4 Farm workers are entitled to adequate housing and sanitation and an adequate number and quality of inspections for occupational health and safety standards, as well as inspections by the Food and Drug Administration necessary to ensure safe and sanitary living and working conditions.

13.5 Workers' rights to organize, join a union, and bargain collectively, without any interference, intimidation or threats from employers or the government, shall not be abridged or denied. We oppose so-called "right-to-work" laws as unconstitutional. We support "Card Check" as a legitimate method for unionizing.

13.6 We support the vigorous application of the Davis-Bacon Act as the criteria for wages paid on all federally funded contracts.

13.7 We support child labor standards limiting the hours youths are allowed to work during the school year. Education must remain the highest priority for our young adults.

13.8 Workers are entitled to unemployment insurance benefits when employers use unfair labor practices and lockouts during labor disputes.

13.9 We support laws prohibiting the unilateral redefining of workers as independent contractors to reduce labor costs, rendering workers ineligible for benefits and other protection.

13.10 We support the implementation of protective ergonomic standards through the Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA), which sets safety standards and enforcement for the workplace.

13 - Labor *continued*

- 13.11 We oppose any effort to restructure state and federal law related to overtime payment without the vigorous involvement and input from workers.
- 13.12 We oppose outsourcing of jobs to foreign countries, and support government policies that minimize outsourcing of jobs and product procurement.
- 13.13 We expect no less than consistent and even-handed enforcement of Labor and Industry (L&I) laws and regulations, including and especially those which protect workers.
- 13.14 We support establishment and enforcement of healthy workplace laws, including and especially anti-bullying and anti-harassment laws. We support the establishment and enforcement of a law that would provide legal protection for every worker targeted by a workplace bully.
- 13.15 Pensions must be protected and guaranteed by law.
- 13.16 We support the strict enforcement of the principle of equal pay for equal work.
- 13.17 Washington State's L&I will oversee workman's compensation claims at the Hanford Site. Hanford workers will be granted full access to their own medical records. We oppose RCW 51 which allows medical claims to be processed outside the state.
- 13.18 Government and private industry shall recover and make available to the workers medical and industrial hygiene records related to all workers so that they are paid just compensation for any injuries or illnesses incurred during their employment or as a result of their employment.
- 13.19 All trade agreements must include domestic labor agreements and international fair trade agreements, as well as, health, and environmental standards requiring all workers receive a fair and livable wage worldwide.

14 - Law and Justice

"You can only protect your liberties in this world by protecting the other man's freedom. You can only be free if I am free." - Clarence Darrow

14.1 We support allowing alternatives to incarceration within the criminal justice system at both the pre-conviction stage (such as drug or mental health courts) and the post-conviction stage (such as community programs).

14.2 We support research, legislation and enforcement measures to acknowledge and address the current racial disparity between persons of color in prison and their proportion in the state population.

14.3 We support the rescinding of the "3 Strikes" law in Washington State completely.

14.4 We support investigation and prosecution of illegal actions of elected officials no matter how high their office. We insist on holding elected officials accountable, without regard to perceived political consequences.

14.5 We support the repeal of the mandatory sentencing laws for drug offenses.

14.6 We support strong establishment and maintenance of the fire, police, and emergency services protecting our families and properties in our local communities.

14.7 Terrorism is a criminal act that shall be prosecuted through the criminal justice system. There is no need for extraordinary judicial process.

14.8 Habeas corpus shall not be suspended.

14.9 We insist that laws should be enforced impartially regardless of race, class, or creed.

15 - Military

We are a grateful nation that honors, thanks and fully supports the magnificent women and men who constantly toil to keep us safe, free and able to participate in the greatest experiment in Democracy the world has ever known.

- 15.1 We are determined to keep the United States military the best educated, best trained, most ethical, best equipped, unequaled and most respected group of military professionals in the world.
- 15.2 Basic Human Rights and U.S. Constitutional Law must be protected even in our vital and urgent needs to provide protection from terrorist attacks.
- 15.3 Continued enforcement of the Geneva Convention must be honored in the treatment of all prisoners of war. Torture is against our way of life and our traditions. It is never acceptable.
- 15.4 Only the U.S. Congress has the authority to declare war.
- 15.5 We support the acceptance of all qualified persons who wish to serve in to the military. "Don't Ask Don't Tell" must be repealed.
- 15.6 Military interventions must always be used as a last resort. Our troops must not be endangered until all other options have been exhausted.
- 15.7 We support a volunteer military.
- 15.8 Military members who declare themselves conscientious objectors should be given due process and allowed alternative non-military forms of service to our country.
- 15.9 Equal GI Bill benefits must be provided for all service men and women with no difference for National Guard versus regular services.
- 15.10 We support full funding of all veterans programs and benefits meant to rehabilitate and care for our veterans. Retraining of disabled veterans is essential. We cannot 'throw away' our soldiers after service.

16 - Transportation

Effective and efficient transportation is critical to maintaining our economy, environment and quality of life.

- 16.1 Transportation infrastructure has been neglected; we must reverse this decline to ensure the safety of citizens and facilitate commerce.
- 16.2 We support full funding for development and maintenance of highway, port, airport, and railroad transportation infrastructure.
- 16.3 Public transportation including, buses and railways must be promoted as environmental and economical alternatives.
- 16.4 Washington State highways need to have up-to-date, complete, and unambiguous signage.
- 16.5 Walking and cycling are healthful, inexpensive and environmentally friendly means of travel. All transportation plans should accommodate and encourage pedestrians and cyclists by providing lanes for them, which may prevent more tragic incidents.
- 16.6 We support the increase in CAFÉ standards to require higher gas mileage in U.S. licensed vehicles. We support the development of more fuel efficient U.S. electric and hybrid vehicles.
- 16.7 We support accessible transportation for people with disabilities to have the freedom to travel where, when, and how they choose.
- 16.8 Funding for transportation should be performance based; measured as to its effectiveness in meeting the state transportation policies and goals, and in moving people and goods in the most efficient manner.