

# **Colorado Democratic Party 2012 Draft Platform Proposal**

## **Where We Stand United on the Issues**

*Freedom, Equality, Economic Prosperity and Social Justice for All and  
A Government That Serves the Common Good*

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**April 14, 2012**

## **The Colorado Democratic Party 2012 Preamble**

Democrats coming together from across the state of Colorado have written this platform against the backdrop of Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, Wikileaks, the Citizens United court decision, the Fukushima Power Plant Meltdowns following the tsunami, hundreds of thousands of home foreclosures, the anti-fracking movement, deadly attacks on African Americans, a heartbreaking U.S. occupation of Afghanistan lasting over ten years, the 350 movement to curtail carbon emissions, and Republican efforts nationwide to nullify collective bargaining, sell off publicly owned properties, dissolve local governments in Michigan, obstruct free and open voting, and revoke women's rights to choose whether or not to have babies.

It is little wonder that the Concerns of Colorado Democrats focus clearly on the health of our people and our planet. We affirm that corporations are not people, our government derives its authority from poor and rich people equally, and our government serves the common good over the interests of power and greed. Colorado Democrats believe in, work and stand for a government that preserves the inalienable rights of all people to prosper and thrive in a nation that offers freedom, equal opportunity, fairness and justice for all and ensures the wellbeing of the people, the land, air, water and climate for present and future generations to come. Colorado Democrats seek to do no harm in the world and to leave the world a better place than we have found it.

# The Economy & Social Justice

We believe that the current economic crisis, the trade deficit, and the upward redistribution of our nation's wealth over the last ten years demand that we re-think our financial regulations, taxation, jobs programs, trade treaties, and priorities for the spending of taxpayer dollars.

The overarching and unprecedented challenges of both climate change and "peak oil" necessitate investment in domestically produced and sustainable energy sources and mass transportation systems. Years of neglect and austerity policies have left our infrastructure in disrepair, schools in decay, and essential services understaffed.

The benefits of speculation in our financial industry have been limited to just a few investors, but the resulting crash of 2008 affected the lives of all Americans. Over the past thirty years, with decreased regulation and tax breaks to the wealthy and corporations, economic prosperity has become increasingly limited to the few. Too many Americans are now without access to basic necessities, including: adequate medical care; shelter; nutrition; education; job training and a fair living wage. We can and must do better. Without fairness and equality of opportunity, democracy is in name only.

Colorado Democrats strongly urge our legislators to seize the opportunity to address our economic crisis through a massive jobs program that would put America back to work and also address these most critical challenges of our time. We believe job creation is an urgent priority and is essential to the health of our economy and to ensuring its competitiveness in the global economy. Such substantial investment in our economy of today is also the necessary deposit on a livable future for generations of Americans to come. We support government that serves the common good and promotes economic justice for all.

## Part I: Economic Policy

A healthy economic policy doesn't happen by accident. It is created, tweaked, and nurtured. It adapts. There is no such thing as a totally free market. When we fail to learn the lessons of history built upon the shoulders of experience, we are doomed to repeat our mistakes rather than use that experience to grow and prosper. Now is the time to focus on our shared economic goals, not with the shaded brow of special interests, but with the clear, caring discernment of a community that pulls together to improve the well-being of all, not just the well-being of a few. Such a community was the more perfect union our forefathers envisioned. To these ends, we support:

1. Investing in our nation, and its infrastructure, to further jumpstart the economy and put people back to work.
2. Reinstatement of the Glass-Steagall Act, created in the wake of the largest Depression in our nation's history to separate commercial and investment banking. After the repeal in 1999, increased risky investments and speculation brought our nation to the brink of another depression.
3. Raising the tax rate on Wall Street speculation, to deter risky investing that rewards the few at the expense of the many.
4. Stopping Wall Street oil price speculation by forcing the US Commodities Futures Trading Commission to enforce laws enacted by Congress to curb artificial marketplace inflation.
5. Ending offshore tax shelters on earned income available to individuals and businesses, moving capital and jobs offshore.
6. Creating incentives to reward American corporations for bringing jobs back to the United States.
7. Assessing penalties for companies sending jobs offshore.
8. Taxing all capital gains and qualified dividends as ordinary income.
9. Reducing corporate entitlements by closing corporate tax loopholes (modifications to the tax code that support special interest groups) that benefit large, already profitable corporations and Wall Street.
10. Reforming the tax code to eliminate deductions for corporate luxuries.
11. Ending corporate tax subsidies paid out to profitable corporations.
12. Enacting a progressive estate tax.
13. Restoring top individual income tax rates as needed to maintain: a balanced budget; a prosperous citizenry; infrastructure essential for national security and commerce; the education of our children; a healthy environment; and the health and well-being of all our citizenry.
14. Letting Bush tax cuts expire at the end of 2012.
15. Extending credits and incentives for children, families and education.
16. Eliminating the ceiling on income that is subject to Social Security tax (currently \$106,800).
17. Allowing the government to negotiate directly with drug companies to set prices for drugs covered under Medicare.
18. Assuring the long-term solvency of social security, Medicare, and Medicaid.
19. Prohibiting the privatization of Social Security and Medicare.
20. Protecting the Affordable Care Act as a first step in reducing the cost of healthcare for Americans and America.
21. Enacting not-for-profit, single payer healthcare.
22. Preventing cuts in Medicare physician payments for a decade, to ensure the long-term accessibility of healthcare for Medicare recipients.
23. Reducing the Pentagon budget by replacing private contractors profiteering from war and reconstruction with our own military personnel.
24. Reducing the Pentagon budget by eliminating unneeded weapons systems.
25. Reducing the Pentagon budget by ending all wars in which the United States is currently engaged at the earliest opportunity.
26. Scaling back worldwide military operations and expenditures to reinvest those savings in our own nation's critical domestic needs.

## Corporate Responsibility

Corporations are not people, but are instead created under the laws of the state with certain privileges granted by the government. Corporations must encourage ethical business leadership based on social responsibility and be accountable to the common good that allows for their very existence.

To those ends, we believe:

27. Corporations must pay their full share of taxes and be recognized as business entities legally separate and distinct from individuals.
28. Government regulation of industry is essential for the common good. We support strong anti-trust laws and believe Federal regulatory agencies must enforce adequate safeguards on behalf of the people and the environment.
29. Federal regulatory agencies must regulate and not protect the industries they were created to regulate. Industries must not be allowed to write the very legislation that regulates them.
30. Government must not enable or support businesses that behave contrary to the betterment of society. We support the full prosecution of corporations and their officers who violate securities and investment laws and regulations.
31. Regulatory agencies must receive adequate funding and staffing levels to enforce the law.
32. Colorado and Federal laws must be repealed that provide special, unequal protection to corporations from lawsuits, such as major pharmaceutical manufacturers, medical providers, the tobacco industry, and Colorado homebuilders.
33. U.S.-based multi-national corporations must be held accountable for human rights abuses, in this and other countries, committed in their factories and subsidiaries.

## Fair Trade

Fair trade requires respect for the life, health, and dignity of all people on the planet. We have the right as a sovereign nation to establish laws regarding the behavior of Americans abroad and foreign corporations in the United States.

34. We call for the renegotiation of terms in, or the repeal of existing trade laws and treaties, including NAFTA and CAFTA, and the support of only fair trade laws and treaties that guarantee worker protections, safe working conditions, limitations on child labor, a living wage, environmental protections, public safety and human rights.
35. We call for a global standard for earned income that respects the rights of workers around the world and ensures that no government or corporation is profiteering off the backs of its workers.
36. We believe that water rights and water systems should not be privatized, here or abroad.
37. Domestic and foreign community access to existing crops should not be limited through new patents.
38. We oppose the proposed super highway out of Mexico into the United States without adequate protection of American workers, our national security, and highway safety.

## Housing

While the Bush Administration helped nurture the housing collapse and taxpayers helped bail out large financial institutions, those large institutions, once again profitable, have yet to be made fully accountable for their actions, while we the people are still paying for their excesses. More than 2.7 million homes have been foreclosed upon since the 2008 collapse. It is estimated that by 2014 our economy will record \$1 trillion in losses to borrowers, local governments and financial institutions. One in five homes in Colorado has a lower value than the amount of its current mortgage loan. It is time for Wall St. to help repair the damage suffered by Main St. To these ends we believe:

39. Property Ownership records belong in the public domain, not in a privatized database system controlled by the financial industry. We demand our local and state elected officials take action to restore public recording of ALL mortgage information by County Clerks and Records of Colorado, and that our elected representatives in Washington pursue similar supporting legislation on a national level.
40. Those institutions that profited most from improper speculation and taxpayer bailouts must be held accountable, by both civil and criminal action.
41. Just as legal services are provided pro-bono by the government for those who can least afford legal representation, so, too, should representation be provided, at some pre-determined level, for those who believe they have been illegally or improperly foreclosed upon during a pre-defined period (2007-2012).
42. Loan modifications must be mandated for all loans originated during a pre-defined period to allow both the lender/investor and borrower to share in future appreciation of the property as an alternative to foreclosure.
43. Those foreclosed upon should be given first right of refusal in re-purchasing the home at current market value.
44. In the interest of competition, consumers deserve the right to select their own mortgage servicer, rather than be assigned a servicer at the whim of the industry.
45. We believe that judges in bankruptcy court must be granted the authority to "cram down" and modify mortgages on primary residences for all individuals, not just for second homes.

## Part II: Economic and Social Justice

A rising tide lifts all the boats and The Democratic Party believes it is important to provide an economic environment that creates opportunities to encourage innovation and provide growth and prosperity, while also developing a functional economy that helps the least among us create a better life for ourselves and our families. We support and demand an environment in which the only time a person looks down upon another is when turning to reach out a helping hand. We all do better together.

We believe that access to employment at a living wage with adequate benefits is a basic right for every individual, regardless of race, color, creed, or sexual orientation and is essential to the health of our democracy and our economy.

### **To those ends we call for:**

1. Adjustments to the poverty-line threshold to support a reasonable quality of life for the working families of Colorado and individuals with limited financial resources.
2. The reintroduction of the Colorado Earned Income Tax Credit and other measures to ensure a living wage.
3. Legislation that supports a gradual reduction of public assistance as individuals become increasingly able to support themselves.
4. Welfare reform that prioritizes the development of skills adequate for the individual to earn wages that will provide self-sufficiency.
5. Repeal of lifetime limits on public assistance.
6. The implementation of cost of living adjustments on Social Security and Social Security disability benefits, equal to actual increases in the cost of living.
7. A minimum wage increase that exceeds federal guidelines defining poverty, is indexed to inflation and accounts for the true costs for food, housing, utilities, health care, and transportation.
8. The restoration of funding cuts from the National Civilian Conservation Corps and AmeriCorps, and the funding of a national public works program, job training and re-training programs to retool the American workforce for the new economy, relieve underemployment and counteract homelessness.
9. Legislation that supports the creation of jobs to address Peak Oil Production (capacity limit) and Global Climate change, including jobs in alternative energy production, conservation and non-petroleum-based food production.
10. Equal pay for work that is comparable in terms of skill, effort and responsibility, regardless of gender, race, age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation. We support the Employment Non-discrimination Act and Affirmative Action programs that have helped to ensure diversity and equal access to education and economic opportunity.
11. Policies that improve the competitiveness of small businesses, and businesses owned by women, minorities, and individuals with disabilities.
12. Loans made available for Individuals, families, minorities and small businesses, with transparent and reasonable terms.
13. Legislative policies that enable borrowers to appropriately and urgently modify loans that were offered with unsound premises, terms or procedures.
14. Stringent regulation of payday and short-term lenders under state and federal banking laws, to prevent victimization of economically disadvantaged individuals through unreasonably high interest rates and fees.
15. The creation of a national 15% interest rate cap on credit cards and a 15% interest rate cap on payday lenders, to curtail usury levels that keep those most vulnerable in a cycle of debt.
16. A ban on predatory lending practices by the credit card industry, targeting youth.
17. Repeal of the 2005 changes to Bankruptcy Laws, where the 2005 changes heavily favored corporations and business interests. Repeal will ensure that bankruptcy offers a fresh start, not continued servitude to debt.
18. Change the bankruptcy code to protect consumers from insolvency due to externally caused situations such as medical expenses and predatory lending practices.
19. Legislation requiring all publicly supported social services offices are adequately staffed to ensure proper access to services for those in need.
20. Adequate funding to fully meet the demand for legal representation of low income and under-represented citizens of Colorado.
21. Affordable housing for working families in all parts of Colorado.
22. Affordable day care in close proximity to the jobs and homes of working families.
23. Adequate funding for the Colorado Housing Investment Fund to provide affordable housing for low-income workers, individuals with disabilities, seniors, young adults, and others with modest means.
24. Adequate funding of the National Housing Trust Fund Act, to create 1.5 million new housing units over the next decade, especially for low-income renters and owners and that focus on placement in mixed-income neighborhoods. (NHTFA has passed, but is as yet unfunded.)
25. Safeguards to protect all earned and vested retirement benefits of all working people and their families, regardless of work place.
26. Prosecution of corporate entities raiding private pensions funds.
27. Provision of cohort status for Rocky Flats employees to ensure government benefits and health care for work-related ailments.
28. The Federal government to make honest, genuine efforts to assure fair and just payment of all past, present and future royalties due Native American beneficiaries for the use of their lands and resources.
29. Cost assessments for alternatives to incarceration for petty drug-related and other non-violent offenses, such as the use of community monitoring, community service and restorative justice.
30. Just and fair treatment in our criminal justice system, including rehabilitation, education and mental health treatment to ensure opportunities to achieve, whenever possible, economic self-sufficiency.

### **Veterans' Affairs**

31. We have a sacred charge to care for the valiant men and women who have served, and who continue to serve, in our country's armed forces.
32. We support easy and efficient access to earned benefits for veterans and their families to health care, education and job opportunities. We support protecting and maximizing veterans' benefits. We call for an end to the steady erosion of benefits earned by this country's veterans.
33. We support policies that fully fund VA hospitals and other veterans' benefits.
34. We believe the military should allow military personnel to remain on active duty following recovery from serious injury.

## Labor:

America's working men, women, and families have built this country, created a middle class, have fought for this nation, secured the home front, and maintained basic employment protections for themselves and their descendants. Organized Labor, Working Class Americans, and the Democratic Party together have fought for what's now taken for granted as basic civil and human rights; such modern progress largely sprang from an American labor movement; and now extends around the world. The goal of American Labor is to see the nation's businesses and institutions prosper in a just and fair manner and share in that prosperity to the betterment of all citizens. Therefore be it resolved that working people be afforded the dignity of basic protections in the course of making a living, including but not limited to:

1. Anyone who does a fair day's work deserves a fair day's pay with adequate benefits, rights to organize, and a safe working environment.
2. We support the right of workers to a safe and healthy workplace through collective bargaining, training, and education, and adequate funding for enforcement of all State and Federal safety laws.
3. Freedom from emotional, mental and physical coercion when exercising rights to assemble and organize, bargain collectively over wages and working conditions, or seeking to have dues and political contributions deducted from their paychecks; and we believe these rights must extend to all public sector workers, including but not limited to: emergency medical responders, firefighters, law enforcement officers, and safety and security personnel.
4. We advocate guaranteeing a safe and healthy workplace for all workers by maintaining the Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), and other similar agencies with adequate funding for enforcement and training.
5. We demand strict enforcement of child labor laws.
6. We petition Congress to enact legislation preventing courts and bankruptcy laws to be used to abrogate labor contracts and pension obligations.
7. We support the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and oppose exempting more workers from its protection or weakening provisions that provide for and define coverage for non-exempt employees.
8. We call for the repeal of the requirement for a super majority vote in the Colorado Labor Peace Act as it negatively impacts the right of workers to exercise their collective bargaining rights.
9. We oppose restrictions upon the rights of workers to collectively negotiate union security provisions with their employers.
10. We support the principle that Colorado citizens should receive the benefits of Colorado state construction and procurement contracts through the use of incentives whereby state contractors are encouraged to hire Colorado workers.
11. We support the principle that consumer credit information NOT be used for employment purposes.
12. We oppose so-called "right to work" legislation, which restricts workers' rights to organize and collectively bargain for fair wages and working conditions.
13. We support state prevailing wage legislation that includes off-site project fabrication and the federal Davis-Bacon Act.
14. We oppose privatization of postal services, or any federal, state, or local government service, as part of our general opposition to any anti-worker initiatives or legislation proposed in Colorado or at the national level.
15. Colorado Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) should remain a defined benefit plan, directed by a board elected by the membership.
16. We support Colorado State Employee protections currently provided for in the state constitution, including provisions for veterans' preference in hiring.
17. We support the payment of extended unemployment benefits during times of high unemployment.
18. We oppose the use of foreign sweatshop labor as morally reprehensible with residual uncompetitive impacts on the United States.
19. We support the repeal of the exclusion of agricultural workers, including warehouse workers (i.e. potato and mushroom warehouse workers) to organize as is currently written in the Colorado Labor Peace Act.
20. We support the concept of full-time permanent employment with health care and pension benefits as a solution to the current economic downturn and oppose the use of contract employment.
21. We support the continuation of the United States Postal Service 6-day mail delivery service.
22. We oppose the Postal Service's announced plans to close post offices and mail processing facilities nationwide.

## 2012 CDP Platform – Health Care

The health of our citizens is essential to the strength of our nation. We believe that government's policies should "promote the general Welfare and secure the Blessing of Liberty to ourselves" as written in the opening lines of the Constitution of The United States. We believe, as a matter of social justice, that health care for all in the United States is a basic human right, that it is essential to the security of our nation, and that it serves the common good.

We recognize that when people are ill, in pain, or disabled, they are less able to take care of themselves or others, which quickly compromises individual liberty and personal responsibility. Our health care system must focus proactively on wellness, primary care, preventive medicine, public health, and disease prevention. It must also provide for a quality end-of-life experience for our aging population.

Universal access to necessary medical services is required to preserve freedom, liberty, opportunity, and ability to be productive. We support the recently enacted healthcare reform legislation (PPACA) as a first step in the process toward a quality universal single-payer health care system, independent of employment.

Recent health reform legislation attempts to reduce the cost and improve access to and the efficiency of our health care system. However, there continues to be much resistance to these reforms by a number of stakeholders in the system. Even Medicare (**a non-profit, low overhead system**), which Americans have paid into for decades, is now threatened with cuts to redress our national debt.

Even if there are no cuts to Medicare and our recent health care reform legislation, (PPACA) is fully implemented in 2014, still our costs will be greater and our outcomes of health care in this nation will lag behind that of other nations around the world that do have universal health insurance. We can and must do better. It is vital to our citizens and economy that our nation establishes an affordable, comprehensive, and efficient health care system for all.

### Health Insurance and Payment Reform

If health care costs are not contained, families will be strapped with ever increasing premium costs, forcing many to become or remain under or uninsured. Increasing premium costs will force more businesses to lay off employees, outsource labor or drop coverage altogether. Increasing costs and lowered income leave our state and national budgets fiscally unsustainable. Insurance reform is needed to reduce the cost of health insurance premiums while reducing administrative overhead.

**We call on upon our local, state, and national government to support the reforms enacted by the Patient Protection and Affordability Care Act (PPACA) and to:**

1. Enact Federal HR676 (AKA single-payer health care act), which would guarantee quality, affordable and comprehensive health care for all through a not-for-profit single-payer financed system-
2. Creation of this Single-Payer system shall not preclude the continued existence of for-profit health insurance companies to provide supplemental health insurance for uncovered services.
3. In the transition to single-payer, support a health care system that provides patient choice and continuity of care within our system of private providers
4. Eliminate insurance company and/or government interference in medical decisions, which should be between the patient and their health care provider.
5. Ensure that all health care models have strong cost containment measures, open and answerable to the consumers and the public, to lower administrative costs, while improving the quality of care.
6. Create a health care system that provides full portability and continuity of health care coverage, eliminating the need for coverage to be tied to one's employment.
7. Eliminate profiteering in health care financing, where for-profit insurers have a direct conflict of interest with their customers, resulting in delayed and denied payments, coverage exclusions, limits on provider choice, high deductibles, and avoidance of patients with serious illnesses.
8. Provide for the long-term solvency of Medicare; full and adequate funding of Medicare and Medicaid sufficient to promote the participation of health care providers.
9. Ensure that enrollees in traditional Medicare do not subsidize through their premiums enrollees in private Medicare Advantage.
10. Oppose the use of vouchers to privatize Medicare.
11. Permit Medicare to negotiate prescription drug costs directly with the pharmaceutical industry.
12. Oppose mechanisms that serve as financial barriers to care, including High Deductible Health Plans, which limit access to necessary care and medications.
13. Increase the transparency and accountability of medical cost, including: public and private expenditures; Medical Loss Ratios (requiring that at least 85% of every premium dollar be spent on actual health services); and premium increase requests.
14. Support consumer input in decision-making bodies established to enact elements of the PPACA, to better evaluate both insurance and health care policies, to help keep the quality of care up and the cost of care down.
15. Ensure that the full range of women's reproductive health care, including contraception, essential to wellness and the prevention of health complications, be covered by insurance.

## Health Care Reform

We believe that affordable, high quality health care system must be available to all citizens without regard to an individual's relative wealth.

### We call upon our local, state, and national leaders to:

16. Create a health care system focused proactively on wellness, primary care, preventive medicine, public health, and disease prevention.
17. Guarantee the provision of and funding for comprehensive health care, to include, but not be limited to: prescribed drugs, mental health care, dental care, vision care, rural health care, home health care, long term care, chronic disease care, end of life/hospice care, preventive medicine, including chiropractic and acupuncture, physical and occupational therapy, durable medical equipment, drug abuse rehabilitation, prenatal care, and postnatal maternal care.
18. Support increased funding and accountability for mental health care parity, and call for government funded providers to have users of services on their staff and governing boards.
19. Base public policies on scientifically sound research regarding the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, HIV, and AIDS.
20. Increase the availability of hospice care and home and community based services that address the needs of all, including people with all levels of disabilities of any age.
21. Increase the availability of shelters and programs for victims of domestic violence.
22. Continue federal funding of stem cell research to seek treatments and cures for disease, including but not limited to heart disease, diabetes, cancer, diseases of the nervous system and renal failure.
23. Support full legalization of use of medical cannabis when prescribed for a patient by a physician.
24. Support the Community Choice Act (CCA), providing community-based alternatives in long-term care programs, emphasizing independence rather than institutionalization.
25. Support the use of Advance Practice Nurses as Primary Care Providers, to improve access to primary care.
26. Support full payment for the services of advanced practice nurses (APN), reflecting their advanced nursing training, in Medicare and Medicaid.
27. Support new health care delivery models that emphasize the provision of continuous, comprehensive, coordinated care, such as Healthcare Homes (Patient Centered Medical homes) and ACO's (Accountable Care Organizations or groups of health care organizations, working together to provide comprehensive, coordinated care in order to reduce overall cost for Medicare clients)
28. Ensure that ACO's and Healthcare Homes are open to all licensed healthcare providers and who also share in the savings from reduced costs to Medicare recipients.

## Colorado Reform

Colorado Democrats support and appreciate that the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) health care reform will improve access to health care insurance for many Coloradans. Care We recognize that Colorado is a unique state in many ways, including in our health and wellness needs. In order to fulfill those needs and preserve the health of all effectively, Colorado will need additional resource from the national government via Health and Human Services Department, but we will also need to make Colorado solutions available to our citizens. We support the Colorado Health Exchange as a step towards universal health care.

### We call upon our state legislative leaders to:

29. Create a Colorado health care system that provides guaranteed coverage and high quality, affordable comprehensive health care for all residents, independent of employment, marital status and age, through a not-for-profit publicly financed health insurance system. We recommend a Colorado universal health care system that adopts the principles central to the "Colorado Single-Payer Health Services Plan" submitted to Colorado's 208 Commission on Health Care Reform.

### And as we transition to Single-Payer:

30. Support the establishment of a Colorado Health Care Cooperative in which all residents of Colorado are member owners
31. Facilitate and encourage the full partnership of health care providers, including nurses and home health providers in redesigning our current health care system.
32. Encourage regional input in health care system design.
33. Support full funding for SCHIP (State Children's Health Insurance Program), providing coverage for all uninsured, low-income children.
34. Permit the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to negotiate vaccine costs directly with the vaccine industry.
35. Support proper funding for community health care centers and clinics, as well as dental and medical-care vans moving in a regular circuit throughout the state's less populated or rural counties.
36. Support the use of all medical professionals especially Advanced Practice Nurses, to the extent of their education and training, and to practice independently as allowed by Colorado statute, to help reduce health care costs, while providing quality care.
37. Regulate health insurance premium increases.
38. Reinstigate "no fault" automobile insurance coverage for medical expenses.
39. Support local authority to license retailers that sell tobacco.



# Environment, Energy and Conservation

The Colorado Democratic Party believes a clean, healthy global environment is vital for today and the future. Colorado's economic mainstays, agriculture and tourism require environmental protection. 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.

While jobs and the economy can be supported by natural gas extraction, this "bridge fuel" can also have a devastating impact on the health of our land, air, water, and people. The gas rush we are currently experiencing in the state of Colorado distracts and delays us from the essential work of finding alternatives to fossil fuel use for our state's and nation's energy needs. We must make the development of alternative and sustainable energy, and the jobs they create a matter of the highest priority for our state and national energy policy.

We are alarmed at the damage being thrust upon our local communities and our democracy as our civil and community rights are preempted by the gas and oil industry and the regulatory agencies that serve to protect their interests. Our local, state and national leaders must manage growth, pollution, and the extraction of natural resources and provide for the long term protection of our people, our communities and our environment over and above the interests of short term corporate greed and profit. We must act to ensure clean air and water today and for the sake of our future generations.

## Part I: Energy Independence, Alternative and Renewable Energy, Conservation and Efficiency

Colorado Democrats strongly support a responsible energy policy addressing global climate change that includes energy conservation, energy efficiency and renewable energy in place of subsidized fossil fuel and nuclear produced energy. We believe in the priority of conservation and efficiency over "energy independence." Many new jobs will be provided with renewable energy projects. **Therefore:**

1. We support a national policy and full-scale commitment, including funding for energy independence from foreign oil, which prioritizes the development of renewable energy technologies and sources, the installation of alternative energy systems, and energy conservation.
2. We call for funding of large-scale education and workforce training programs for jobs created as a result of expanding alternative energy employment opportunities.
3. We call for a national fossil fuel carbon tax to fund renewable energy and renewable energy-based transportation.
4. We call for State legislation requiring Municipal Utilities provide 30% of their electricity with renewable energy.
5. We oppose the licensing of any new coal-powered power plants and call for a transition from coal-produced electricity.
6. We call for the elimination of all subsidies for fossil fuels and for nuclear power, phasing them out over time, to allow oil and coal companies to retool and retrain their workers to develop fuel cells, wind farms, solar systems, and other alternative energy sources.
7. We support incentives for electric power generated from solar and wind farms and support the provision of tax credits for the purchase and use of renewable energy systems for residential and commercial buildings.
8. We advocate that federal solar tax credits be extended indefinitely.
9. We support the adoption of "Green Energy" building code standards that utilize energy conservation, efficiency and sustainability principles to accomplish large savings in energy usage.
10. We support policies to encourage the development, manufacturing, and consumer use of pollution reducing and energy and water conserving devices and procedures, in U. S. homes and businesses.
11. We support legislation requiring all government buildings meet standards required for LEED gold or platinum (Leadership in Energy and Environmental design) certification by the U.S. Green Building Council for the design and construction of high-performance green buildings
12. We call for legislation at the state and national levels to implement the Passive House-type standard for buildings that promises overall energy savings of about 70 percent and a 90 percent lower heating load without the need for on-site solar power.
13. We call for incentives to encourage the development and use of hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles.
14. We support an increase in the federal Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards, dictating the number of miles per gallon that an automaker should get for the entire range of vehicles it sells.
15. We support conversion of government fleets to 100 percent "light on energy consumption" vehicles such as hybrid, electric and alternative-energy vehicles and natural compressed gas vehicles.
16. We support rescinding emission and fuel efficiency exemptions for SUVs, tractor-trailer type diesels, ATV's, snowmobiles, golf carts, etc.
17. We support strengthening and funding for strong enforcement of acts for the protection of our environment.
18. We support the development of methods that accurately measure the real costs of pollution, including human illnesses.
19. We urge the State Legislature to reestablish a Committee for Environmental Conservation, independent from the Legislatures' Agriculture Committees, to reflect the critical importance of protecting Colorado's natural resources.
20. We support incentives and funding for anti-pollution measures with a 'resource tax' on pollution and development to pay for environmental restoration.
21. We believe public transit should be expanded, including rail, light rail, and bus rapid transit, especially in underserved communities.

22. We support managed growth, land conservation, thoughtful zoning regulations, policies of cooperation on growth planning within the region, and public involvement in all phases of land use planning, including strategic water and transportation development in all planning decisions.

## Part II Energy and Our Natural Resources

We support legislation that regulates renewable energy standards and encourages development of renewable resources and environmental restoration. We strive toward a reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> and methane emissions to decrease the effects of global climate change. We advocate enacting more stringent laws and more funding for the enforcement of laws for coal fired plants as well as for coal, oil, gas and uranium extraction (drilling and mining).

All processes for the extraction of natural resources must eliminate threats to public health, safety and welfare. To protect their communities, local governments must have the right to ban, regulate or issue moratoria on processes for the extraction of natural resources.

During the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, we recognize the extraction of fossil fuels will occur. All fossil fuel extraction should be done with the most environmentally sound, best-understood, traditional (non-fracking) technologies.

Therefore:

1. We support the right, without preemption, of all local communities and counties to ban, regulate, and/or issue moratoria on commercial resource extraction within their jurisdiction.
2. In the absence of a ban we call for oil and gas exploration using the process of hydraulic fracturing to be suspended until such time as air quality, water quality, and health concerns for people and the environment have been assessed, positively addressed, and adequately regulated.
3. We call for regulating the oil production process known as "fracking" to include, but not be limited to: tracers to be included in the fracking fluids; and surface, potable well, and ground water baseline testing prior to mobilization.
4. We support city, county, statewide and national regulation of the techniques of hydraulic drilling, fracturing and production as used in resource exploitation.
5. We support the FRAC ACT, introduced by U.S. Representatives Jared Polis and Diana DeGette, to eliminate the Halliburton Loophole (clean air act, clean water act, safe drinking water act).
6. We support the BREATHE ACT, introduced by U.S. Representatives Polis, Holt and Hinchley, to close two drilling exemptions in the Clean Air Act.
7. We support funding and incentives to restructure and rebuild the U.S. electric grid (both local distribution and national transmission) as needed to increase efficiency and provide for backup systems that prevent outages.
8. We support enacting more stringent environmental protection laws and their enforcement, for currently operating coal fired plants.
9. We call for the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by 80-90% by 2050, ultimately reducing carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere to no more than 350 ppm (the number that leading scientists say is the safe upper limit for carbon dioxide—measured in "parts per million" in our atmosphere).
10. We call for increasing the state Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS) to 50% by 2020.
11. We support legislation promoting carbon neutrality.
12. We support Colorado renewable energy standards that ensure REAs (Rural Electric Administration) will purchase renewable energy produced within Colorado, made by small producers (including those produced by private homeowners) and allow these small-scale renewables to be sold on the grid.
13. We support requiring all utilities to buy-back from residences and small businesses all energy produced from renewable and non-fossil fuel sources at market rates.
14. We affirm that federal laws should not preempt the ability of states and local governments to enact stricter green initiatives.
15. We support efforts to put into effect comprehensive environmental pollution taxes and renewable energy rebate programs to address increasingly critical global climate change.
16. We support the disposal of toxic materials in a manner safe and non-threatening to people and the environment and strict regulations for financial liability and reclamation bonds to ensure safe practices and full restoration by the completion of projects utilizing, drilling or mining of our natural resources.
17. We call on the Colorado Legislature and the Congress of the United States to reassess oil shale leases and delay the leasing of any further Federal Lands for oil shale and natural gas development until environmental concerns have been satisfactorily reviewed and resolved.
18. We support stringent requirements and fees for commercial access to our mineral, petroleum, forest, and water resources
19. We support local ordinances, State legislation and Federal programs to ensure comprehensive and independent monitoring of all known or suspected public health, land use, local business, soil, water and environmental impacts resulting from resource extraction.
20. We support local ordinances, State legislation and Federal programs to require strict reclamation bonds and administer programs to ensure that industry stakeholders are directly liable for all public health, property loss, local business, soil, water use and environmental mitigation costs resulting from mining and drilling operations, as well as significant penalties in the event of irreparable damage.
21. Energy related mineral extraction in Colorado must be compensated by a fair and equitable distribution from severance taxes (a tax imposed on nonrenewable resources) equal to the maximum imposed by any state in the nation.

22. We support the repeal of the severance tax exemption for resources extracted from Colorado lands and a portion of these new funds be used to further develop alternative and renewable energy technologies and advance demand side management programs.
23. We support a "Carbon Tax" on fossil fuels and a "Resource Tax" on all other Natural Resource extraction-caused pollution and other incentives to fund anti-pollution measures and support better environmental mitigation and ecosystem restoration measures.
24. We support the repeal of the 1872 Mining Act, an antiquated law used by natural resource extraction companies to obtain approval for projects that would otherwise not be considered or approved.
25. We support funding for the effective regulation of abandoned, existing and any new conventional oil and gas industry operations to minimize and mitigate the adverse effect on non-resource extraction businesses, state, county and private property, as well as the people of Colorado who will be or could be impacted by extraction and related storage and transportation activities.
26. We support the prohibition of all venting or flaring of gases associated with coal, oil, and gas production, as it wastes non-renewable natural resources, contributes to climate change and is a recognized threat to health and the natural environment.
27. The use of the public's water for the purposes of "fracking" should not be considered a beneficial use under Article XV!, Section 6 of the Colorado Constitution. This process destroys the public's water by poisoning it with toxic chemicals; thus requiring its disposal deep underground so as to be permanently removed from the hydrologic cycle. In addition to a ban on "fracking" and associated operations, we support securing and formalizing the State's obligation to protect our water resources, including our water rights and down-stream water obligations.
28. Because drought and water quality are increasingly critical problems throughout the western U.S., including the Rocky Mountain interior, we support a prohibition against all deep-well fluid injection since this process impacts the hydrologic cycle, contaminates groundwater and is suspected of stimulating seismic activity.
29. We support a ban on all mining and drilling in municipal drinking water watershed, storage, and recharge areas.
30. We support the full public disclosure of all chemicals associated with past, current, or proposed natural resource extraction, along with the removal of any exemptions to federal laws such as the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and the Toxic Release Inventory under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act.
31. We support prohibiting the use of open pits for any fluids contaminated with toxins or produced waters from commercial and industrial operations.
32. We support the right, without preemption, of all local communities to ban, regulate, and/or issue moratoria on commercial resource extraction.

## Part III: Management of Public Lands, Wildlife, Water and Agriculture

### Public Lands and Wildlife

The public has a right to be fully informed about and to participate fully in decisions regarding the management of public lands and resources. We value our shared resources and hold our elected representatives responsible for their efficient management in a publically accountable manner. Public resources such as our national forests and parks, clean air and water, and the Earth's complex ecosystem cannot be easily measured in economic terms. Since the value of these resources far exceeds their perceived market value, they must be protected in perpetuity for the common good of future generations. We must consider the wide-ranging effects of our actions and support global environmental and economic sustainability. **Therefore:**

1. We call for the introduction of science-based sustainable environmental policies, to preserve our public lands and Colorado's unmatched natural environment and oppose commercial activity in conflict with the protection of public lands.
2. We call for an end to the policies of increased exploitation of national parks, monuments, forests and wilderness areas for private economic gain and oppose selling public lands outright, or leasing them at minimal rates.
3. We support the expansion of interconnected habitat areas, roadless lands, and wilderness.
4. We support full funding for strengthened enforcement of the Threatened and Endangered Species programs.
5. We support policies that direct Congress to ensure that the entire Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is maintained as an intact ecosystem off limits to development.
6. We support public and private efforts to conserve and preserve land through open space programs and support coordinated regional and state control of growth and open space acquisition.
7. We support the San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act and urge its passage.

### Water

Riparian systems and wetlands are critical components in the complex web of sustainable, health 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 believe that water, in Colorado, is owned by the public, pursuant to Article 16, section 5, of the Colorado Constitution, and as our most precious and limited public resource must be protected against harmful exploitation. **Therefore:**

8. We call for water policies that prioritize water conservation and careful management of limited water supplies.
9. We call upon the development of a statewide water plan and policies that require the preservation and protection of water resources and the enforcement of water conservation measures.

10. We support prohibiting additional trans-basin water diversions (the conveyance of water from its natural drainage basin into another basin).
11. We support long-range planning and the restriction of new development without adequate supplies of water.
12. We support more funding for strong local and federal enforcement of the Clean Water Act that protects water purity, wetlands, and wildlife ecosystems.
13. We support full disclosure by businesses and municipalities of all chemicals discharged or injected into groundwater or surface water.
14. We support curtailing use of water if the use results in its destruction or limits its reuse because of pollution.

## **Agricultural Policy and Land Management**

Colorado Democrats believe that policies of rational and sustainable use of our land and agricultural resources are essential to maintain our ecosystem integrity for the future. 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.

### **Therefore:**

15. We call for policies that balance the needs for urban development, open space, and recreation with the need to preserve agriculture and ranching as a traditional base of Colorado's economy.
16. We ask that the State of Colorado ensure that only legitimate agricultural land receives any property tax advantage.
17. We call for policies supporting the continuation of family-owned farms in agricultural operation to discourage their conversion to residential development, and to require county approval for parcels of 160 acres or less, up from 35 acres, to prevent urban sprawl.
18. We support limiting the allocation of agricultural subsidies to non-organic farming operations and increasing tax incentives to organic and sustainable farms to minimize toxic chemicals, hormones and antibiotics in the food supply, water, soil and air.
19. We call for the ban of genetically engineered organisms (GMO) and crops until sound, scientific research on their safety and long-term impacts on the environment, farmers, and public health has been fully analyzed and mitigated.
20. We call for expanding and strengthening local and state conservation easement programs (a voluntary agreement that allows a landowner to limit the type or amount of development on their property while retaining private ownership of the land). Conservation easements must legitimately benefit the public and meet the standards of best practices.
21. We call for reducing wastewater runoff from agricultural activities.
22. We call for State and Federal policies that encourage the shift from high-input agriculture (using fertilizer, pesticides and modern machinery to guarantee a large crop output) to low-input, organic agricultural methods that reduce the use of fossil fuel to run machines and make fertilizers and pesticides, build the health of the soil and promote the use of more efficient irrigation systems to save water.
23. We call for strengthening regulations that require the humane treatment of farm animals and of animals used for scientific research and support limits on factory farming of animals.
24. We call for the state legislature to enact legislation governing the cultivation, processing and sale of industrial hemp.
25. We oppose the U.S. Army's attempted expansion and federalization of additional lands surrounding the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site in Southeastern Colorado to specifically include the counties of Baca and Las Animas.
26. We support the enactment of a permanent and binding congressional ban on expansion of the Pinon Canyon Manuever Site.
27. We oppose low-level military flying maneuvers in Baca County air space for the sole purpose of military training.

## **Food Safety and Nutrition**

28. We support safe food practices, including full disclosure of all ingredients, labeling of genetically engineered or modified (GMO) food, irradiated food, food from cloned animals and their offspring, pesticides used, and "Country of Origin" ("COO")
29. We oppose the imposition of federal laws that undermine more stringent or specific state laws governing food safety
30. We support increased funding and legislation to regulate and reduce consumer exposure to substances that have been proven harmful to humans in food, water and personal products, including bisphenol A (BPA), lead, phthalates, petroleum-derived ingredients, etc.
31. We support ending food subsidies for crops such as corn, which result in the health damaging effects of high-fructose saturation of processed food and call for enactment of policies that will promote healthy foods in school nutrition programs and in society at large.
32. We call for increased funding for inspections of food imports to protect American consumers from the entry of unsafe and poisonous products into our country and also call for increased funding for inspections of domestic processing facilities.

## Education

Democrats believe that state public education policies should provide every student with an equal opportunity to reach his or her potential and that quality public education is an investment with real and tangible return for our economy. Access to a high quality education is not only a basic right; it is also a necessary component of a healthy democracy. Our students face a globally competitive economy and Democrats believe in equal opportunity to prepare all students to solve the problems of tomorrow. To this end:

### Funding:

**We demand full funding of a thorough and uniform education with public monies to public schools that are locally controlled.**

1. We support recommendations to create a unified comprehensive system of public education in Colorado supported by the allocation of balanced and equitable funding across the state.
2. We support stable, thorough, and uniform public education funding as mandated by the Colorado constitution and *Lobato v. Colorado*, and call on the state legislature to maximize public education funding through re-examination of state funding limits and new revenue sources.
3. We support efforts to build an adequate (at or above the national average) tax base for quality public education for both K-12 and Higher Education.
4. We support adequate funding for students of special needs.
5. We support adequate capitol investment for our crumbling public school buildings.
6. We oppose unfunded federal and state mandates on our local school districts.
7. We oppose public funds being used to support private or religious schools, or for-profit corporate education management organizations.
8. We oppose vouchers and tuition tax credits, which dilute funding from our already underfunded public schools.
9. We support continued funding of school meal programs for children living in or near poverty.

### Inclusivity and Diversity:

**We demand an education system, which is inclusive of our diverse population.**

10. We support policies and programs, which include, elevate, and honor all students regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, economic status, or English language acquisition.
11. We support the integration of diverse communities into public schools.
12. We demand diverse communities have principals, teachers, and paraprofessionals of color to reflect the student population..
13. We oppose any efforts or policies, which lead to re-segregation of student populations.
14. We recognize the needs of special populations of students including medically, emotionally, physically or developmentally disabled, English Language Learners, gifted/talented students and support programs of inclusion and enhancement.
15. We support anti-bullying policies in schools.

### Student Curriculum, Instruction, and Evaluation:

**We demand a rich, balanced curriculum, which acknowledges the importance of educating the whole child, and provides effective instruction and meaningful evaluation.**

16. We support a curriculum in all public schools, which recognizes the equal importance of all subjects including art, vocal and instrumental music, physical education, reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, civics, history, foreign language, theatre, vocational education, etc.
17. We support extracurricular activities, clubs, athletics and enrichment classes as part of a well-rounded public education system
18. We support a curriculum, which prepares students with 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills of critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, innovation, and collaboration.
19. We support a curriculum that strives for authentic teaching and learning and oppose the use of a scripted curriculum which "teaches to a standardized high-stakes test".
20. We oppose excessive standardized testing
21. We support early childhood education (preschool and full-day kindergarten) opportunities as the best investment for a child's future school success.
22. We support evidence-based intervention strategies for struggling students, drop-outs, and low-performing schools and oppose efforts to impose strategies that have no proven track record of success.
23. We support vocational, career, and technical training and post-secondary programs for high school students.
24. We support diverse learning styles, multiple measurements of achievement and evaluation tools, and multiple pathways to success.

## **Educator Rights:**

**We demand fair wages and benefits, safe working conditions, and legal rights for all public school educators.**

25. We support due process and believe it should not be weakened to address complaints against teachers.
26. We support a livable professional wage, safe and supportive working conditions, adequate benefits for all educators and the educators' right to organize.
27. We support fair and equitable recruitment, retention, licensing and hiring practices of teachers and leaders for all public schools.
28. We support the fair evaluation of educators using multiple, comprehensive measurements.
29. We support licensed, effective teachers in all public school classrooms.
30. We support efforts to eliminate the educator equity gap, which is the practice of placing inexperienced, underperforming, ineffective, or less qualified teachers and leaders in low-performing, high-needs schools.
31. We support academic freedom and believe that no educator should fear reprisal for exercising their first amendment rights.

## **Post-secondary Education:**

**We support providing access to affordable quality public higher education for all residents of the state**

32. We support the DREAM act at the federal level and the state's efforts to provide undocumented high school graduates with the opportunity to attend a state college or university at reasonable tuition rates.
33. We oppose higher education tuition increases and further cuts to student loans, financial aid, merit scholarships, or Pell grants that restrict poor, disadvantaged, or middle-class students from attending state colleges, universities or community colleges.
34. We support funding for merit scholarships for highly qualified students from Colorado to encourage them to attend universities and colleges in Colorado
35. We support vocational training programs in Green Energy Technologies, Information Technology, and other skills that will be needed in the 21st century economy for those that choose not to pursue a college degree.
36. We call upon the state and federal government to address the alarming college drop out rate, and to support completion of a higher education credential

# Civil Liberties

## Part I. Human And Civil Rights

Every human being has the right to be treated with dignity and all persons residing in The United States deserve equal protection under the law regardless of their race, disability, gender or gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, age, or physical or mental differences. We believe that all human beings are created equal, born with the right to equality, safety, and respect. We support the rights of people with disabilities to live freely and that they are extended the same rights as all Americans. We believe that women are entitled to the full and equal rights and privileges available, public or private, legal or institutional and support a woman's right to control her health care, including her method of birth control. We believe that our government has a duty to protect its citizens, including a duty to protect each citizen's privacy. The government has no legitimate authority to intrude into the private lives of individuals when there is no evidence of a threat to the security of others. Personal decisions concerning health, faith, political affiliations, or marriage are the domain of each individual's conscience and belief system and do not require governmental intervention. We support 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment guarantees of fundamental precepts of equality and liberty, including our rights to self-determination and autonomy. **Therefore:**

1. It is imperative that our laws fully protect and promote equality, safety, and respect for all aspects of life.
2. We support policies and laws that provide every child born in the United States equal access to the benefits of prenatal healthcare, preschool and early childhood development programs, quality schools, and other critical education and career development resources.
3. We support affirmative action and public assistance programs to enhance equal access.
4. We strongly oppose any legal measure that would destroy current affirmative action programs.
5. Abortion should be safe, legal, but rare.
6. All people of Colorado must have affordable, safe, legal, and confidential access to the full range of reproductive health services.
7. We respect an individual's conscience: A woman and her health provider should have protection from governmental interference.
8. We are committed to the principles of the separation of church and state as set forth in the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment: Congress shall make no laws favoring the establishment of religion nor prohibit the free practice of one's religious beliefs or lack thereof.
9. We urge the immediate and full implementation of the laws passed to provide improved access to housing, transportation, medical assistance, education, and employment opportunities for those with disabilities.
10. People with disabilities must have the choice as to where and how their healthcare needs are met.
11. People with disabilities must be able to live without fear, abuse, or retaliation.
12. We call for increased funding, through private and public sector funds, for group homes and sheltered workshops to serve the disabled population.
13. We support the enforcement of laws addressing the inequities between men and women.
14. We support strong US leadership with active participation in international efforts to improve conditions and eliminate abuses of all women.
15. We support government recognition of all marriages, regardless of sexual orientation, with all associated benefits, protections and responsibilities.
16. We urge our elected representatives at all levels to vigorously oppose legislation or ballot initiatives that would narrow the definition of marriage.
17. Civil unions should be honored across state borders.
18. We support the expansion and enforcement of the current definition of civil rights and hate crime laws to include sexual orientation and gender identity, and support efforts that promote training about and the reporting of hate crimes.
19. We support legislation and policies that promote dignity and safety for incarcerated members of the gay, lesbian, bi and transgender community.
20. We support true asylum to gay, lesbian, intersex, bi- and transgender immigrants who might face persecution from their home country's government due to their orientation or gender identity.
21. We support policies that ensure indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination, and to protect their environments and preserve their way of life.
22. We support the development of policies and laws that ensure true, informed consent for the release of information related to health and mental health issues.
23. We support policies and laws that ensure that federal and local governments do not interfere with the individual right to make decisions regarding their own death with dignity and self-determination.
24. We support legislation that prevents local, state and federal governments from using eminent domain to usurp property rights for the economic gain of a private individual, corporation or organization.
25. We support policies and laws that adhere to the four required elements of an eminent domain action: 1) An identified private property, 2) That must be taken, 3) For public use, 4) With just compensation
26. We support a stricter definition of "blight" as used for the purposes of eminent domain and/or condemnation of property.
27. We support the provision by the government of respect and protection to all non-violent citizen protesters, including those participating in civil disobedience. This is to include protection from any and all use of excessive force by officers of the law.

## Citizens United

Both the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights amending the U.S. Constitution apply to “people” and “men”. The terms “people” and “men” are commonly agreed to refer to human beings in plurality and NOT to entities such as corporations. Therefore, we concur that any rights and protections guaranteed in the Declaration of Independence and/or the Bill of Rights, including civil liberties specifically enumerated in the First Amendment, have absolutely no application to corporations or similar entities. Consequently, we call on our local, state and federal elected officials to work together to:

28. **Amend the U.S. Constitution** to overturn the flawed Supreme Court ruling in Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission and include the following suggested language:

**Section 1** [*A corporation is not a person and can be regulated.*]

The rights protected by the Constitution of the United States are the rights of natural persons only. Artificial entities, such as corporations, limited liability companies, and other entities, established by the laws of any State, the United States, or any foreign state shall have no rights under this Constitution and are subject to regulation by the People, through Federal, State, or local law. The privileges of artificial entities shall be determined by the People, through Federal, State, or local law, and shall not be construed to be inherent or inalienable.

**Section 2** [*Money is not speech and can be regulated through campaign finance reform.*]

Federal, State and local government shall regulate, limit, or prohibit contributions and expenditures, including a candidate's own contributions and expenditures, for the purpose of influencing in any way the election of any candidate for public office or any ballot measure. Federal, State and local government shall require that any permissible contributions and expenditures be publicly disclosed. The judiciary shall not construe the spending of money to influence elections to be speech under the First Amendment.

**Section 3**

Nothing contained in this amendment shall be construed to abridge the freedom of the press under the First Amendment.

## Human Trafficking

Forced servitude or selling of any person, whatever their legal status in the United States, are inhumane and we will not tolerate it. **Therefore:**

29. We support the implementation of the best practices in prevention to keep people from being coerced or forced into situations such as forced marriages, illegal adoptions, sweatshops, unpaid domestic service or the sex trades.
30. We support the implementation of the best practices in detection of trafficking crimes without widening the net to criminalize immigration facilitators who do not commit human rights abuses.
31. We support the implementation of the best practices in protection, such as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, that increase protections for victims of trafficking (example: the T-Visa, allowing for a trafficking victim to remain in the U.S. if s/he assists in the prosecution of the perpetrator).
32. We support the implementation of the best practices in prosecution that enhance criminal penalties and support international cooperation in the pursuit of trafficking networks.
33. We support the implementation of the best practices in reintegration of victims of human trafficking, including witness protection programs, educational / vocational training opportunities, financial assistance, shelter and counseling services.

## U.S. Patriot Act Repeal, FISA and NDAA Revision

We see no need to react thoughtlessly to baseless fear. We support deliberate, carefully considered solutions to the issues that face our nation and the world. It is time to undo the restrictions and invasions that occurred as a consequence of the U.S. PATRIOT Act and to reclaim our civil liberties as defined in the Bill of Rights. We support repeal of the U.S. Patriot Act, particularly invasions of privacy such as warrantless searches and seizures, roving wiretaps and searches of business and library records. Similarly, we support revisions to the National Defense Authorization Act of 2012 (NDAA), which would delete the destructive detainee provisions contained in that law. **Therefore call upon our elected officials to:**

34. Repeal the U.S. PATRIOT Act in its entirety, as well as any enhancements to the original act.
35. Firm up assurances of 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment protections against unreasonable search and seizure, including DNA acquisition / testing, cyber materials, GPS tracking devices, etc.
36. Support elimination of any surveillance and/or investigatory tactics that are intrusive, limit freedom of speech, interrupt peaceful assembly, invade individual privacy, or interfere with personal faith decisions.
37. Demand that due process is observed for all people detained under suspicion of terrorism, regardless of country of origin. “Due process” in this context includes the establishment of a clear threat to the security of others, information for the accused as to the nature of the charges against him/her, access to qualified and experienced counsel, and a legal process that is as speedy as possible while remaining just.
38. Encourage transparency in governmental proceedings and eliminate any secrecy that creates an obstacle for U.S. citizens, their families and their counsel from objecting to all the excesses of the US PATRIOT Act and/or exercising their right to prompt federal review of these violations of their civil liberties.
39. Support revision of the Federal Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) to: End warrantless wiretapping of U.S. citizens and end warrantless physical searches of the property or persons of U.S. citizens.
40. Remove the possibility of immunity from prosecution of telecommunications corporations that facilitate governmental spying on U.S. citizens.



41. Support revision of the NDAA to delete the destructive detainee provisions. These provisions provide for indefinite detention by the military of alleged terror suspects, without charge, trial or representation by counsel, and also mandate continued operation of the infamous Guantanamo detention site.

## Part II: Criminal Justice

We are the party of prevention and we maintain that investment of time and funds before there is a problem will save us dollars and human costs in the future. We believe in the power of the U.S. Constitution and the adversarial criminal justice system to achieve true justice when applied fairly, wisely and without bias. We passionately believe that anyone arrested on any offense is innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. We believe that personal liberty should be limited only after careful and objective consideration of risk to the greater community, without regard to socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age or class.

We support our government in implementation of evidence-based, fact-based and humanitarian approaches that are designed to keep us safe and secure not just now but in the future. We advocate a balanced approach to justice that seeks to restore the victim, the community and the offender while holding the offender accountable and responsible. When all of the above become the norm of the land, we know that we will reduce tax dollar expenditures and that we will also experience increased public safety.

**We call on our local, state and federal elected officials to work together to:**

1. Interrupt the school-to-jail pipeline by establishing guidelines and outcomes for disciplinary procedures, school resource officer programs and other security approaches.
2. Eliminate zero tolerance policies in schools, thereby allowing administrator discretion in evaluating response to major, intermediate and minor behavioral issues.
3. Support effective and relatively inexpensive violence prevention / bullying prevention programs in public, charter and private schools.
4. Advocate for uniform, evidence-based detention screening protocols in all judicial districts in our state and nation, ensuring that youth who are accused of a crime and who are at low-risk to the community are not incarcerated in secure holding.
5. Make retroactive the legislation allowing juveniles sentenced to life in prison as adults to seek parole after 40 years.
6. Eliminate the ability of district attorneys to directly file a juvenile case into adult court without judicial review and without an opportunity for defense or appeal.
7. Reclaim the judicial transfer hearing process that allows for a juvenile case to be moved into adult court based on the seriousness of the alleged offense.
8. Stop the practice of over-charging alleged offenders at the point of arrest in order to affect a plea-bargain and get credit for a conviction.
9. Clarify legal system language to allow all persons to participate fully and to consent fully to their participation in the process.
10. Establish parameters for informed consent of alleged offenders and victims, in respect to their age, mental health condition, disability and/or education.
11. Firm up assurances of 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment protections against unreasonable search and seizure, including DNA acquisition / testing, cyber materials, GPS tracking devices, etc.
12. Ensure access to quality defense counsel for all those who stand accused of a crime, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability to pay, mental health diagnosis or disability.
13. Support effective, evidence-based and relatively inexpensive restorative justice and alternative sentencing options for youth and adults.
14. Implement collaborative parent/community interventions for age-related conduct (curfew, runaway behavior, truancy, underage alcohol consumption, etc.) rather than immediate criminalization of such behaviors.
15. Decriminalize conduct related to mental health issues or addiction, providing resources for the treatment community to respond more effectively and permanently.
16. End the "War on Drugs" by focusing on addiction treatment and decriminalization of possession of drugs without the intent to sell.
17. Regulate and tax marijuana in a manner similar to alcohol, limiting its use to those 21 and older. We support Amendment 64, the Initiative to regulate Marijuana Like Alcohol.
18. Release any detainee when there is insufficient evidence to hold the individual, in compliance with the legal concept of habeas corpus.
19. Ensure that all detained / incarcerated persons are safe and have access to rehabilitative programs, so that we can all benefit when they're released.
20. Take the influence of money out of the criminal justice system by eliminating all for-profit institutions and programs.
21. Call for the evaluation of all youth & adult correctional programming and hold accountable those systems that are not performing well.
22. Restore the right of incarcerated persons to vote while in custody and
23. Restore all constitutional rights upon parole to the community.
24. Distribute our precious monetary and human resources effectively, with prison beds being reserved for those who pose a true danger to our communities and an abundance of non-institutional responses being available for those who require assistance but not secure holding.

25. Advocate for the ongoing education of all criminal justice system professionals, from point of arrest through parole, so that they can effectively identify and intervene with mental health issues, sexual victimization, trauma, domestic violence, child abuse / neglect, disability and other factors that may be part of a victim's or alleged offender's experience.
26. Establish a seamless continuum of resources for victims of crime, to include notification of hearings, notification of release of the accused on bond, individual and family shelter beds in the case of domestic violence of a female or a male, effective protective order systems that utilize electronic monitoring as needed, adequate funds for trauma counseling and restoration of physical damage, and so forth.
27. Address access to lethal means of accidental, suicidal and criminal acts, including regulating the storage of guns and ammo, limiting concealed carry permits, banning assault weapons, expanding requirements for background checks for prospective gun purchasers, and closing the gun show loophole that provides swift and unchecked access to deadly weapons.
28. We support a ban of guns on college and university campuses.
29. Abolish the death penalty in the State of Colorado and in the United States of America.
30. We support comprehensive sentencing reform in the State of Colorado
31. We call for urine analysis testing to be required only upon probable cause that a law has been violated, and that it never be a condition of any state or federal benefits

## **Torture & The Principles of the Geneva Conventions**

The United States has long been a signatory of the Geneva Conventions that have, since 1949, articulated protections and protocols for the treatment of people who are not currently taking part in hostilities during a time of armed conflict (whether due to injury/illness, civilian status, war prisoner status or military service that is medical or religious in nature). The Geneva Conventions clearly delineate conduct that comprise "grave breaches" of these long-time agreements, including torture, inhumane treatment, unlawful confinement, and deprivation of the right to a fair trial. We wholeheartedly support the tenets of the Geneva Conventions. **Consequently, we call on our local, state and federal elected officials to work together to:**

32. Support the United States in compliance with all tenets of the Geneva Conventions.
33. Demand that torture of prisoners of war, including "enhanced interrogation techniques", be officially eliminated in policy and practice of U.S. governmental representatives, including all branches of the military and the intelligence communities.
34. Insist that the United States cease and desist from participating in the "extraordinary rendition" of any individual regardless of country of origin.
35. Insist that the United States observe due process in the apprehension, transport and detention of any individual regardless of country of origin. "Due process" in this context includes the establishment of a clear threat to the security of others, information for the accused as to the nature of the charges against him/her, access to qualified and experienced counsel, and a legal process that is as speedy as possible while remaining just.
36. Demand that the United States close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay immediately.
37. Demand that the United States adhere to the Geneva Conventions in the individual, independent review of the status of each of the detainees held in the Guantanamo Bay detention facility.
38. Demand that the United States abide by the results of said review in determining the appropriate transfer of legal jurisdiction of each detainee to the appropriate authorities within the U.S. judicial system and/or the International Court for timely resolution of their legal cases.
39. Investigate and consider closing the Western Hemisphere Institute of Security Cooperation (formerly the School of the Americas), based on its odd role in training Latin American and South American soldiers in questionable interrogation, detention and warfare tactics.
40. Encourage the United States to cease cooperation with nations that are factually determined to practice torture, abuse, illegal detention and other human rights violations.

# International Relations and Foreign Policy

We believe our foreign policy should reflect our highest principles of freedom, justice for all, equality, human dignity, the right of a people for self-determination, the rule of international law, and the principles stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We support engaging with the people of the world as partners and contributing to the peace and security of the world as a free, open and democratic society.

We believe that our nation can work positively together with others to assist in the resolution of international conflict without imposing its will. Conflicts can best be resolved by agreements between the parties involved. We believe that keeping citizens safe from terrorism must not undermine international agreements affirming the fundamental rights of all human beings.

Extremism can best be fought by giving hope, eliminating injustice, lifting the blinders of ignorance, and promoting mutual respect that leaves no room for demonizing those from other cultures or questioning of the right to self-determination. A policy of projecting our power unilaterally around the globe cannot meet the standards for a fair, just, and effective foreign policy and contributes to the loss of our civil liberties at home.

The motives for war must be transparent, initiated only for the protection of our own citizenry or the rights of others. It must be a just cause that takes us to war and war must only be used as a last resort.

We strongly support our military personnel and their families for their sacrifice on our behalf. We also recognize that citizen' rights to disagree with and protest against our government's decision to go to war, in no way undermines our support for our men and women in uniform

## **We call upon our Congressional leaders and the President of the United State to:**

1. Partner within the community of nations to achieve peaceful resolution of conflict, protect human rights, and enact economically just trade policies.
2. Attack the global threat of international terrorism at its source, through education, reduction of poverty, reduction of ethnic disputes, reduction of resource limitations, and reduction of extremism.
3. Base US foreign policy on the American values for freedom, democracy, the wellbeing of a people and their environment and the rights of workers to a living wage.
4. Take a leadership role in the development of international policies that consider worldwide inequities in resource distribution and use.
5. Promote the right to self-determination and mutual respect amongst all nations.
6. Support a Department of Peace to focus energy and resources toward working with communities on a global level to establish peace and unity.
7. Make every effort to normalize our relations with all countries.
8. Vigorously pursue non-violent conflict resolution and foreign policies based on diplomatic engagement.
9. Support full adherence to the Anti Land-Mine, Anti Cluster-Bomb, and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaties
10. Honor international treaties for non-militarization of space and oppose the reckless pursuit of defense systems with dubious, untested merit.
11. Work energetically toward achieving the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.
12. Oppose long-term commitments of the U.S. military in regions where our national security is not threatened.
13. Oppose military engagement, arms aid or sales to bolster the positions of dictators or for the purpose of promoting regime change, not supported by the people of a nation.
14. Support the Arab Spring and other popular movements toward democracy with all actions short of direct military intervention.
15. Condemn the use of military and financial support of coups against freely and fairly elected governments.
16. Ensure that profit never is a motivation for war.
17. Use only the appropriate military force and only as a last resort in defense of the United States from attack or when threatened by international terrorism.
18. Expand the current War Powers Act to preclude any type of invasion onto foreign soils without a formal declaration of war by Congress.
19. Strongly oppose preemptive military action, violence, or threats as tools of our foreign policy, without clear provocation.
20. Oppose the use of drone strikes except in the case of a legally declared war.
21. Use effective and appropriate technologies and methods to protect our nation that do not impinge on our civil liberties.
22. Maintain strict adherence to international agreements, including the Geneva Conventions, The Nuremberg Principles, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International War Crimes Tribunal that affirm the fundamental rights of all human beings.
23. Ensure full United States participation in the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, and ratification of the Law of the Sea.
24. Prohibit the use of torture under all circumstances, on our own or foreign soil.

25. Recognize terrorists as criminals to be dealt with by appropriate international systems of criminal justice.
26. Respect the right of our citizens to protest our government's decision to go to war.
27. Support free and fair elections in all countries.
28. Pay the debt the United States government owes to the United Nations for past dues and peacekeeping expenses.
29. Oppose all forms of ethnic cleansing, genocide, and apartheid and support the United Nation's initiatives to intervene where necessary.
30. Provide strong humanitarian assistance to the citizens of South Sudan, including Darfur, and fully fund and support peacekeeping forces to stop the genocide and mass rape there.
31. Provide immediate and adequate assistance to end the effects of the famine in Somalia.
32. End the U.S. embargo on Cuba and normalize relations with that nation.
33. Oppose the conscription of children by foreign militaries and support the Child Soldiers Prevention Act..
34. Stop forced medical experimentation on poor populations.
35. Reject the restriction of foreign aid to "Abstinence Only" methods for the purposes of providing birth control or for the treatment of sexually transmitted disease.

## **Middle East**

The Middle East conflict requires a new paradigm to achieve peace in that region of the world. The international community must help the people of the region get beyond the issues of law, occupation, suicide bombers, and economic controls and handouts.

### **We call our leaders to:**

36. Stand up and prevent any pre-emptive invasion or attack or military action against Iran.
37. 37. Work for the safe and responsible withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Afghanistan or
38. Support multilateral international coordination of political, military, financial and humanitarian efforts to promote Iraqi and Afghan regional stability.
39. Recognize and meet the United States' obligation to reduce the suffering of the Iraqi and Afghan people.
40. Prohibit war profiteering in any reconstructive efforts in Iraq or Afghanistan.
41. Commit to using dialogue and diplomacy to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace between all the peoples of the Middle East
42. Dedicate the influence and financial leverage of the United States Government to engage the governments of Israel and Palestine in negotiations leading to resolution of their conflict, without dictating specific solutions. Conflicts around the world can best be resolved by agreements between the parties involved.
43. Work for a just and equitable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
44. Support a reduction of Israel's settlement program in occupied territories.
45. Make sure that all agreements for ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict include the end of the use of violence against each other, and the acceptance of the other's right to exist.
46. If a two state solution is chosen, support a fair division of territory that provides each with an economically and socially viable geography, a sovereign state with full internal control, and specific, secure borders.
47. Until such time as a peace agreement is accepted by both Israel and Palestine, support the enforcement of international law regarding human rights and the Geneva Conventions.

## **Immigration:**

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 have contributed to our national economic, intellectual, and cultural life. We believe contributions from hard-working immigrants are just as significant today as they have been throughout our history. We welcome those who would like to become legal residents or citizens of the United States.

We oppose the institutionalization of undocumented immigrants as a marked and permanent underclass, We honor and defend the basic human rights of every person in the United States, regardless of citizenship status. These rights include health care, education, proper nutrition, family unity, protection under the law including labor law, protection from exploitation and entrapment, and the right to the pursuit of happiness.

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 ask our legislators to reject attempts by anyone to provoke isolation and xenophobia (fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners) against particular groups or communities among us, including our newest immigrant residents. This is a politics of “divide and conquer” that has outlived its usefulness.
2. We call for the application of basic rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights to all persons in the United States regardless of citizenship status.
3. We support the reversal of the 1996 welfare reform law, which made most legal immigrants, including those of long-standing residency, ineligible for health care, welfare and other essential programs.
4. We support a comprehensive immigration reform bill that promotes a more direct path toward citizenship for undocumented immigrants.
5. We support streamlining applications for visas, work permits, and residency into a more rational, just, and humane process with substantial reductions in waiting time.
6. We support legal channels for future flows of immigrants to fill jobs in the United States for which they are qualified. These channels must include portability to other authorized employers, appropriate living conditions, adherence to International Labor Organization standards of right to earned wages and safe and humane working conditions, and the right to travel between the United States and the immigrant’s home country.
7. We support federal legislative efforts to create a fair and easily managed temporary worker program which is workable for small businesses, and which includes a “path to citizenship” for undocumented workers and their families.
8. We call for the establishment of an expedited process for easy and early registration of undocumented residents.
9. Once documented, they should be allowed to work and have equal access to services provided by law including the right to obtain an immigrant driver’s license.
10. We support family reunification
11. We oppose the classification of illegal immigration as a criminal offense.
12. We believe that undocumented immigrants who have committed no criminal offense should not be subject to incarceration
13. We call for a moratorium on deportations of immigrant community members until enactment of immigration reform, which moratorium would apply to all immigrants except those convicted of violent crimes.
14. We call for repeal of the Clear Law Enforcement for Criminal Alien Removal (CLEAR) Act, which denies undocumented immigrants a voice to report crimes without fear of deportation.
15. We support cancellation of deportation orders, the wider use of U-Visas (giving victims of certain crimes temporary work eligibility) and a streamlined path to citizenship for undocumented workers who provide information on violations of labor law by their employers or for other crimes. This would apply only to those who have not been convicted of a crime themselves.
16. We oppose any legislation that criminalizes human acts of assistance to undocumented immigrants or that targets the immigrant community.
17. We believe that immigrant populations should be educated about and encouraged to participate in the political process.
18. We oppose denial of an immigrant’s civil rights and attempts to limit or discourage civic engagement by immigrants.
19. We support increases in federal funding for English language and civic education classes.
20. We support the federal bipartisan DREAM Act that provides citizenship for students who finish high school and complete two years of college or military service.
21. The Dream Act should include civil service as a qualifying option (along with military service and college course work), to prevent the DREAM Act from becoming a back-door military draft.
22. We support instate tuition rates for undocumented students who graduate from Colorado high schools.
23. We call for U.S. trade agreements and US foreign policy to be structured in a way that supports economic opportunity for developing nations, while honoring basic human and civil rights in all countries party to the agreements or affected by the foreign policy.
24. We support the use of incentives for other countries to expand their economies in order to provide their citizens with work opportunities and support labor rights that improve their standard of living, making it unnecessary for their citizens to seek work in the United States.
25. We support strategic demolition of the border wall.

## **Healthy Democracy: Campaign, Election and Media Reform and Government Ethics**

Colorado Democrats believe a healthy democracy is rooted in an honestly informed electorate that is involved, engaged, and able to approach issues with empathy and courage. It includes universal adult suffrage, free, recurring, competitive and fair elections enhanced and supported by unbiased multiple sources of information.

A citizenry with hopes of holding politicians accountable must be able to critically analyze factual data, test logic and imagine alternatives. To remain engaged, they must know their voice is heard and not drowned out by those with money, influence and corrupted power. They must be assured that all steps of the election process are fair and transparent with votes tallied by true, honest and publicly verifiable systems. Election laws must ensure equal representation, achieved through fair and impartial redistricting. The right of all citizens to vote must be protected, regardless of race or minority status. All eligible to vote must have full and unfettered access to the means to vote.

To ensure the highest caliber of leadership, voters must have access to information that enables them to draw clear and valid distinctions amongst candidates seeking to govern. Campaigns must be fair and open. The exorbitant cost of elections must be tempered by policies that ensure all qualified for office can be assured of the opportunity to seek it. Qualified candidates must be given fair and equal access to media. The right to speak freely must not be exercised at the expense of another's capacity to speak at all. Money is not free speech.

We expect our elected officials to be committed to the highest standards of behavior, personal integrity and honesty and to demand transparency and open government that works in hand with the media rather than at odds with it. Media must serve as an unbiased observer, free of the domination, manipulation and control of those who seek to influence for their own profit. Media competition must be ensured and consolidation limited.

At a time when public confidence in government is perhaps at its lowest in our history, when government has come to a standstill, held hostage by those who seek to serve themselves and not the common good, it is imperative that health and trust be restored to our democracy or we risk losing it all together.

Government must be in alignment with the will of the people. Leaders must be held accountable when they fail that will. The people must be informed by facts, not deception. One voice must equal one vote that is surely counted. Our government must be of, for and by the people, not corporations. And speech must in truth be free.

## **Campaign Reform:**

Our Republic is based on a free and fair election process where one person has one vote. This premise is in danger of collapse because of a pair of 2010 court rulings that have effectively put our democracy for sale to the highest bidder and even shields the identity of those bidders.

We, the people, will not sit idly by while a system in which well-meaning elected officials are always looking over their shoulder with the knowledge that voting their conscience may cost them the next election, not because the majority disagree, but because corporate interests and those who might otherwise profit disagree. Corporations are created under the laws of a state as separate legal entities with privileges and liabilities distinct from those of its members. Yet, the US Supreme Court has declared that for the purposes of political gain, corporations have the same rights to free speech as people, and their "speech" and monetary support of a candidate or issue cannot be limited.

"Super PACs," or political action committees, also now share in the ability of any individual or group to cloak itself from disclosure while being granted the ability to provide unlimited funding into the political process. That appellate court ruling has effectively gutted disclosure efforts, which should allow knowing just who is funding any type campaign and should allow the common person the ability to appropriately weigh their decisions at the polling place. When a corporation fails, shareholders may lose their investment and employees their job. The same cannot be said when our political process fails. **To these ends, we support:**

1. Amending the U.S. Constitution to Overturn *Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission*, End "Corporate Personhood" and Get the Money out of Politics
2. The Fair Elections Now Act (S. 750 and H.R. 1404) which was re-introduced in 2011. The bill would allow federal candidates to choose to run for office without relying on large contributions, big money bundlers, contributions from lobbyists, and would free those elected to work for their communities, not for campaign funds targeting the next election cycle
3. Initiatives to require corporations to obtain an affirmative vote for each political contribution to a political candidate at a public meeting of stockholders where a quorum is present. Plans for such a vote must be on the agenda with each specific candidate listed
4. The rights of citizens to band together and form advocacy groups in an effort to impact political discourse and election outcomes
5. Public financing of election campaigns. Public financing of elections should be the sole mechanism for fair elections and should be an urgent priority at every level of government
6. Full disclosure of all sources of funding for all political advertising and activities. We call for open, honest and fair campaigning, and the elimination of anonymous advertising
7. The review of legislative campaign finance reforms every two years with the intent of eliminating newly discovered loopholes and abuses

## **Election Reform:**

An engaged citizenry demands a voting system that is accessible, monitored at each step throughout the entire process and is thoroughly verifiable. **We call for:**

8. Voting systems, which have no elements of proprietary software or privatization and are publicly owned and operated.
9. Using Paper Ballots which allow voters to review their votes before being cast and have access to prove their ballot is accounted for, with special attention to meeting the needs of people with disabilities
10. Requiring that votes be counted anonymously, without the use of barcodes
11. Auditable processes using a statutory random sample of 5% on select machines using hand counted verification which meets National Institute of Standards and Technology requirements
12. Discrepancies examined through elective audits as requested by the candidates before the certification of results
13. Support of Instant Runoff (Ranked Choice) Voting in which voters have one vote, but can rank candidates in order of preference. If no candidate receives a majority of first choices, the candidate with the fewest number of votes is eliminated, and ballots cast for that candidate are redistributed to the surviving candidates according to the voters' indicated preferences. This process is repeated until one candidate obtains the support of a majority
14. Election of the President of the United States by popular vote

**Participation in the Voting Process is a right and a privilege.** We support:

15. A convenient voter registration system that produces complete, accurate, valid and verifiable lists of citizens who are eligible to vote
16. Government-sponsored door-to-door registration
17. Voter registration services when applying for public assistance
18. Policies that ensure people who have been previously disenfranchised or discriminated against have full access to the election process including persons with disabilities and people experiencing homelessness
19. A change in election eligibility rules to allow those who will be 18 years of age by the date of the general election to vote in caucuses and/or primaries
20. Legislation that prohibits voter caging (purging otherwise qualified voters, often from target neighborhoods, from the rolls after mail sent to them is returned) and other methods of depriving voters of their right to vote
21. We support the achievement of fully transparent elections where anyone who chooses to can verify that any or every ballot is voted in private, cast and kept constitutionally anonymous and then interpreted and counted correctly in public.
22. Errors found in a timely manner by the public shall be made available to canvass boards so that the information can lead to corrections in election results before certification.

## **Media Reform:**

A free press, the 4th Estate, must be supported and nourished in a democratic society. Full unrestricted access to our legislative, executive and judicial branches by the press provides a necessary check and balance in the name of the public good and is a cornerstone of our governmental process that demands support and attention. **We support:**

23. A rollback of laws that have allowed media ownership to be consolidated into the hands of a few
24. Increased government funding for public broadcasting
25. Federal laws that guarantee and encourage the absolute freedom of the media to provide critical oversight of government activities and public access to information
26. An end to all war news censorship
27. A requirement that licensed broadcast media provide some level of public service broadcasting
28. A return to the principles of the Fairness Doctrine and Equal Time Doctrine. Broadcast license holders should be required to give free substantial airtime to all qualified candidates or issues, both in terms of quality and quantity, without artificial or arbitrary exclusionary limitations.
29. "Net Neutrality" and oppose any effort of large broadband networks to charge content providers for access to customers.

## **Ethics and Government:**

We expect that our elected officials at every level of government be committed to the highest standards of behavior, personal integrity, honesty and a commitment to transparency and open government, with substantial consequences for failure to do so. We expect our elected officials attend to and maintain the checks and balances provided among the legislative, executive and judicial branches, and stand up against the corrupting influence of money in our system of government. Above all, we expect officials to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States. **In support of these core concepts:**

30. We support prohibiting political candidates or office holders from accepting gifts/payments from lobbyists, other than as specifically permitted by law
31. We demand that members of Congress heed their Constitutional mandate for oversight of the Judicial and Executive branches of our government. We encourage our elected representatives to speak out publicly in support of that oversight.
32. We expect that Democrats elected to the U.S. Congress shall support and enact legislation which requires complete transparency in the budgeting and appropriating of all Federal funds, especially military expenditures, in such a way that the average American citizen can easily see what is approved for expenditure on a real time basis. We expect all elected Democrats to support financial transparency at all levels of government.
33. We denounce the overstepping of Presidential powers through use of internal legal opinions (signing statements) which presume to allow the Executive Branch to diverge from the original intention of Congress in legislation.
34. We support reform procedures that prohibit one senator or a minority of senators from holding legislation hostage for an indefinite period of time.
35. We call on the US Senate to abolish the super-majority filibuster.

36. We call for legislation prohibiting elected officials or members of their staffs from being involved in paid lobbying for four years after leaving public office.

### **Investigations**

Trust in our government and our democracy has been severely eroded in this new century as falsehoods have been spread to start unwarranted wars, torture has been condoned or ferreted away to foreign shores, the privacy of our own citizens has been invaded, and facts have been ignored or concealed regarding government involvement in and response to national crises. To restore transparency and confidence in our institutions and to honor the American ideal that "no one is above the law," **we call for:**

37. A truly independent Grand Jury and public investigation, with subpoena power and the power to grant immunity, into anomalies ignored by the 9/11 Commission.
38. An independent investigation, with subpoena power and the power to grant immunity, into the source of orders that resulted in torture, torture sites, rendition, illegal detention of nationals and immigrants, and related issues.
39. Reviews of the investigations into the illegal invasion of Iraq, Abramoff and other lobbyists, the response to Hurricane Katrina, Wall Street contribution to our recent economic collapse and other major issues.

### **PARTY PROCESSES:**

Processes within our own Colorado Democratic Party occasionally need to be publically reinforced to best represent the values or issues that Democrats within our state believe in. **To these ends, we:**

40. Demand that the National Democratic Party, including the office of the President, shall not endorse or give monetary support to any one Democratic candidate over another prior to any contested statewide primary election
41. Endorse proposals to join with other western states in holding western primary elections on a single date early in the election calendar
42. Support a cycling of early primaries which should vary from cycle to cycle, including some western states early in the calendar
43. Support policy/rule changes for the Democratic Party to do away with super delegates.
44. Call for all duly certified Democratic Party candidates to be included and allowed approximately equal time in all party debates and forums
45. Ensure that the online platform balloting be a keystone part of our platform development process.