



**COLORADO  
DEMOCRATS**  
*BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE*

# **Colorado Democratic Party 2020 Platform**

*Submitted to the State Democratic Assembly  
By the Platform Committee of the Colorado Democratic Party  
April 9, 2020*

*Dennis K. Obduskey and Anthony E. Graves, Co-Chairs*



## Committee Co-Chairs Overview

DEDICATED and ENERGIZED DEMOCRATS from across Colorado produced this important policy document while people across our state, the nation and around the world grappled with the deadly Corona Virus Pandemic. As we submit this document, our party's thoughts and best wishes are, first and foremost, with the people impacted by the terrible public health crisis caused by the virus and we extend our deepest appreciation to the healthcare professionals and first-responders on the front-lines of this terrible historic event. We also commend every person committed to end the spread of the virus by staying home. We are all *Alone, Together*.

The need for social-distancing during the spread of the virus and its disruption to daily activity forced the Colorado Democratic Party to change the platform committee process significantly. However, it did not diminish the passion and resolve of dozens of dedicated volunteers from around the state who combined hundreds of resolutions from county caucuses - most of which passed through county assemblies and then to the Platform Committee. The Platform Committee is composed of representatives from House Districts, Congressional Districts, State Party Officers, Democratic Party Initiatives, and statewide elected officials.

The Platform Committee used the 2018 Platform as a base document that we revised for your consideration for 2020. The bulk of the work took place during the past 4-6 weeks, with some virtual county assemblies finishing just days earlier. Together, we discussed, debated and forged consensus on most of the amendments for the 2020 Platform. We held more than forty hours of conference calls to weigh-in on amendments to each plank. We believe this platform represents the diversity of our state party and contains many voices and perspectives. The whole of the committee voted overwhelmingly to support the 2020 Platform with each plank receiving between 91%-98% approval.

Many who have been involved in this process are strong believers that the Platform of the Party is important – both as a guide for candidates and elected officials who Democrats put their trust in, and for members of the public wondering “*what do Democrats stand for?*” We hope that this document offers a helpful guide for all in understanding the core values and priorities of the Colorado Democratic Party.

While this document is not perfect, we have done our level-best to aggregate the many voices of our party under imposing time constraints and amid a global pandemic that has constrained our process. We have attempted to clarify and update the language throughout, and created new additions focused on the Corona Virus Pandemic and general preparedness. We have also created a special section on Seniors in the Civil Liberties plank. Our intent was to continue refining our party's living document that aspires to be a timeless guide, relevant beyond the next election.

Our platform continues to support efforts to advance a universal healthcare system; fight for common sense gun control; pursue immigration reform and create a pathway to citizenship for DACA families; build a better public education system, from kindergarten through college, while tackling funding challenges – and of course, preserve and protect our climate and environment. This is our party, this is our voice.

We sincerely thank all Colorado Democrats and the members of the Platform Committee for your efforts in crafting the 2020 Colorado Democratic Party Platform.

*Dennis K. Obduskey and Anthony E. Graves*  
Co-Chairs of the CDP Platform Committee, 2020

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# OUR PLATFORM - OUR VALUES

**In America, government is a contract with the people.** The people of Colorado and their way of life are the focus of the Colorado Democratic Party Platform. They are the heartbeat of our democracy.

**We strive to empower people,** by building on trust and transparency, by amplifying our collective voices, by protecting the foundations of democracy and freedom.

**We seek to lift people up,** to protect them from threats new and old, to establish equal and fair access to the Colorado way of life.

**We speak up to protect the rights of all people.**

We are guided by the following core values:

1. **Empathy, Caring and Respect**
2. **Individual and Social Responsibility**
3. **Strong Working/Middle Class**
4. **Equality and Fairness**
5. **Service and Community Building**
6. **Trust, Honesty, and Open Communication**
7. **Courage and Strength**
8. **Innovation and Excellence**

We believe these core values foster freedom, opportunity, prosperity, and equity for all Coloradans and their families.

**We still believe in the self-evident truth that all people are created equal.** We hold that Colorado is exceptional because of its people. And its people are diverse. Our platform is a guideline to advocate for their freedom and opportunity, to protect their dignity--regardless of all the diverse identities represented throughout Colorado.

We acknowledge that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are more difficult for some people in our society to attain. Our mission is to work hard to address that.

**American love of freedom is an empty concept without our civil liberties.** We acknowledge that our civil liberties are under attack, and we are committed to the protection of these sacred rights.

**Colorado is beautiful. And we want to keep it that way.** Our economy and health depend on it. The health of our land, air, food, and water--and the health of future generations--cannot be bought and sold.

**Democracy functions only when driven by fairness and equality of opportunity.** Prosperity is best ensured when those who seek work can find jobs and be rewarded fairly.

**We believe our votes are our voice.** The people of Colorado must be assured that all elections are fair and transparent.

**The physical and mental health of our citizens is essential to the strength of Colorado.** Universal access to necessary medical services is required to preserve dignity, opportunity, and the ability to contribute to society.

**Colorado's hard-working citizens and unions helped build this country.** The Democratic Party is proud of our legacy as the partner of workers fighting for fair treatment and a living wage. That legacy lives on through our values and commitment today.

**Colorado Democrats believe in a strong, well-funded public education system where all students and educators are empowered.**

**We believe that criminal justice cannot be enacted without the understanding that true justice results from fairness and equal protection under the law.**

**We honor and defend the basic human rights of everyone in Colorado, regardless of citizenship.** We value the cultural and economic contributions of immigrants and refugees to the vibrancy of our state.

**We believe The United States' foreign policy should reflect our highest principles.**

**We will fight for the day when liberty and justice FOR ALL is no longer a dream of the weary.** Our Party will fight for all people, not special interests. FDR proclaimed that "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."

**We are of, by and for ALL the people of Colorado. This platform is a testament to their hopes and hard work in the past, and it is dedicated to our future together.**



# OUR VALUES ARE EMBEDDED IN ASPIRATIONS

**A primary objective of a party Platform is to provide inspiration and declaration of what we, as Democrats, believe.** It seeks to inform the public of our goals and show evidence that many of them are the same, regardless of political affiliation. We believe our efforts will help lead to material success. **Our values provide guidance to current members of the party and identify issues supported by the majority of Democrats within the state.** It acknowledges that we have a very diverse state, yet we honor that diversity across all areas from the smallest county to the most populated metro area. We are all Coloradans and respect our similarities and differences.



## CIVIL LIBERTIES

Colorado Democrats value empathy, caring for people, and respecting every person's dignity and rights. We believe that Coloradans have a social responsibility to ensure that every person in our community is treated with equity and fairness under the law regardless of identity or status. Diversity is one of our greatest strengths of our nation and as Democrats we embrace our differences and our communities are stronger together. We Democrats will demonstrate our strength by courageously standing up for all Coloradans to fight against the forces of hate which try to divide our communities and exploit us.

### Part I: Human and Civil Rights

#### Universal Beliefs

1. We support the provision by the government for the respect and protection of all non-violent citizen protesters, including those participating in civil disobedience. Protesters should be protected from any and all use of excessive force by officers of the law.
2. We support policies and laws that provide every child in the United States equal access to the benefits of pre and postnatal health care, preschool and early childhood development programs, quality schools, nutrition and other critical education and career development resources.
3. We support affirmative action and public assistance programs to enhance equal access and strongly oppose measures that would eliminate current affirmative action programs.
4. We support policies and laws that ensure that federal and local governments do not interfere with an individual's right to make decisions regarding their own death with dignity and self-determination.
5. Eminent domain should be used only as an instrument for the public good by local, state and federal government. We oppose the use of eminent domain, including the definition of blight, to usurp property rights for the economic gain of private individuals, corporations, organizations, government entities or other private-public partnerships.
6. We support the development of policies and laws that ensure informed consent for the release of *information related to physical and mental health issues*. *Under HIPAA, patient consent should be given before records are shared with providers or caregivers. Consideration should be given to the potential impacts that the release of sensitive healthcare information can have on young people and their futures.*

#### Women, Gender Equity, and Reproductive Rights

1. We support the Equal Rights Amendment and enactment and enforcement of laws addressing all inequalities that women face.
2. We support the protection of a woman's right to have a choice in all aspects of her body and health with the right to privacy.
3. We believe all people should have access to affordable, safe, and legal reproductive health care, including abortion, and should not be infringed on by anyone.
4. We believe all people of Colorado must have affordable, safe, legal, and confidential access to the full range of reproductive health services.
5. We support strong United States leadership and active participation in international efforts to improve conditions and eliminate abuses of all women.

#### Religious Liberties

1. We are committed to the principle 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.
2. We oppose religious exemption laws, legislation, and ballot initiatives which mask discrimination as religious beliefs.
3. We oppose the creation or use of legislation, executive order, or policy that intentionally or unintentionally discriminates against any religion groups.

## **People with Disabilities and ADA**

1. We demand the immediate and full implementation of laws to provide improved access to housing, transportation, medical assistance, education, and employment for those with any and all disabilities.
2. We oppose any legislation that would weaken the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## **LGBTQ Community**

1. We support measures that promote equality for, and non-discrimination against, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) people in all aspects of their lives.
2. We support our military personnel and demand that all members can serve openly, including our transgender and gender non-conforming service members.
3. We support the right of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals' ability to use facilities consistent with their gender identity and expression in any public place.
4. We support the expanding federal anti-discrimination law to list sexual orientation and gender identity and expression as protected classes and the expansion and enforcement of the current definition of civil rights and hate crime laws that include sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and support efforts that promote education and training about and the reporting of hate crimes.
5. We support the protection of marriage equality and we urge our elected representatives at all levels to vigorously oppose legislation or ballot initiatives that would narrow the definition of marriage.
6. We support legislation and policies that promote dignity and safety for incarcerated members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer communities, solitary confinement is not an acceptable solution for safety.
7. We support asylum for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex immigrants who face persecution in countries, that support criminalizing their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

## **Indigenous People (Native Americans)**

1. We support policies that ensure indigenous peoples have the rights to self-determination, to protect their environments and to preserve their ways of life.
2. We support honoring existing treaties with Native American tribes and ensuring the protection of the sovereign rights of the Native American population.

## **Senior Rights**

1. We support proactive policies that protect seniors during emergencies, such as the Coronavirus Pandemic of 2020. Seniors are the most vulnerable of our citizens when these and similar unforeseen events occur. Seniors are more likely to be alone and unable to request assistance in a life-threatening circumstance.
2. We believe in full legal protection for seniors from discrimination by employers in hiring and when employed. If a senior is fit to perform all required duties, salary and advancement should be commensurate with experience, regardless of age.
3. We support protection and expansion of Social Security. This includes opposing all efforts to weaken or privatize it, reduce coverage or benefits, or fail to make yearly, accurate, and appropriately computed COLA adjustments.
4. We favor ensuring liquidity of the Social Security Administration and increasing long-term care benefits by raising the tax limit on our most affluent citizens to \$250,000.
5. We support legislation establishing a governmental entity dedicated exclusively to negotiating lower prices on prescription drugs, hospital stays, medical devices and procedures, all of which are used most often by seniors.
6. We support the reintroduction of legislation passed by the House in the 115th Congress establishing a Seniors Bill of Rights, including "Protection from Abuse, Scams and Exploitation" and ensuring "Safe and Livable Communities with Adequate Housing and Transportation Options."
7. We believe seniors should have representation in all public policy matters that may affect them personally. Seniors, who have unique needs, should be able to age with dignity and safety, so they can continue to thrive and remain vital and creative citizens throughout their lives.

## **Corporations are not people.**

1. Courts have undermined the civil liberties of Coloradans by determining that corporations are also somehow people deserving of the same civil liberties. Corporations are an artificial legal entity, not capable of living, breathing, eating, caring for children, or dying. Corporations deserve some legal protections, but by conflating the rights of corporations with the rights of people, it dehumanizes all Coloradans and gives corporations more latitude to exploit Coloradans.
2. Shareholder interests should not be prioritized over the needs of Coloradans and the long-term well-being of the state. Corporations should be restrained by public responsibility and consider the downside risk to the public before executing a decision, including the consequences of decisions long-term and the impact of the company's operations on the community and the environment.

## **Slavery and Human Trafficking**

The sale of any person is inhumane and should not be tolerated anywhere, and efforts should be taken to protect people from slavery and forced servitude.

### **Therefore:**

1. We support the implementation of best practices in prevention to keep people from being coerced or forced into situations such as forced marriages, illegal adoptions, sweatshops, unpaid domestic service and sex trades.
2. We support the implementation of best practices in detection of trafficking crimes across borders.

3. We support protections for victims of trafficking, including allowing for a trafficking victim to remain in the US if they assist in the prosecution of the perpetrator.
4. We support enhanced criminal penalties and international cooperation in the pursuit of trafficking networks.
5. We support reintegration of victims of human trafficking, including witness protection programs, educational / vocational training opportunities, financial assistance, shelter and counseling services.

#### **US Patriot Act Repeal, FISA, and NDAA Revision**

1. We see no need to react thoughtlessly to baseless fear and believe it is time to undo the restrictions and invasions that occurred with the US Patriot Act and reclaim our civil liberties as defined in the Bill of Rights. We support the repeal of the US Patriot Act, particularly provisions allowing invasions of privacy such as warrantless searches and seizures, roving wiretaps, searches of library records, and bulk data and metadata collection. Similarly, we support revising the National Defense Act of 2012 (NDAA) to delete the destructive detainee provisions.

#### **We therefore call on our elected officials to:**

1. Repeal the US PATRIOT Act in its entirety, as well as any enhancements to the original act.
2. Firm up assurances of 4th Amendment protections against unreasonable search and seizure, including DNA acquisition, gathering of electronic materials, GPS tracking, drone surveillance, etc.
3. Eliminate public and/or private surveillance and/or investigatory tactics that are intrusive, limit freedom of speech, interrupt peaceful assembly, invade individual privacy, or interfere with personal faith decisions.
4. Demand that due process be observed for all people detained under suspicion of terrorism.
5. Encourage transparency in governmental proceedings and eliminate any secrecy that creates an obstacle for US citizens.
6. Revise the Federal Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) to end warrantless wiretapping of US citizens, eliminate or reform FISA courts, and end warrantless physical searches of the property or persons of US citizens.
7. Remove immunity from prosecution from telecommunications and other corporations that facilitate governmental spying on US citizens.
8. Revise NDAA to delete the detainee provisions that provide for indefinite detention terror suspects, without charge, trial or representation by counsel.

## **Part II: Criminal Justice**

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

##### **Juvenile Justice Reform**

1. Interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline and eliminate zero tolerance policies in schools.
2. Support effective violence and bullying prevention programs in schools and strongly oppose any and all cyber, digital or internet bullying, harassment and any content meant to harm, demean, discriminate, insult or in any way offend people.
3. Advocate for uniform, evidence-based protocols so that youth who are accused of a crime and who are at low-risk to the community are not incarcerated. Support restorative justice and alternative sentencing.
4. 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 and ensure that juveniles who are or have been sentenced to life in prison be able seek parole after 40 years.

##### **Community and Victim Support**

1. Provide a continuum of resources and services for victims of crimes, including: notifications, shelter, counseling, and effective protection orders.

##### **Community Policing**

1. Ensure that all communities regardless of race, ethnicity, or immigration status receive fair and equitable policing without fear of police interactions.
2. Ensure that all law enforcement officers have proper training in de-escalation and use non-lethal force whenever possible.
3. Eliminate discriminatory practices in policing, including stop and frisk and racial profiling and "show-ups."
4. Provide a formal process to file complaint about officers and investigate all complaints with equal urgency with an unbiased third party including whistleblower status protections for department employees reporting an officer complaint.
5. Reform and Implement Model Policy and Procedure for eyewitness identification.
6. Ensure that police officer training programs prioritize de-escalation training over combat training.

##### **Criminal Defense**

1. Ensure access to quality defense counsel for all those accused of a crime.
2. Eliminate onerous conditions of pre-trial release and cash bail for non-violent offenders.
3. End the practice of overcharging offenders to effect plea-bargain.
4. Restore right for criminals to vote while in custody and return all constitutional rights when on parole.
5. Establish parameters for informed consent for offenders and victims, considering age, mental health, disability, and education.
6. Comply with habeas corpus.

## **Sentencing reform**

1. Abolish the death penalty federally.
2. Support comprehensive sentencing reform, including ending mandatory sentences.
3. Reserve prison beds for those who pose a true danger to society and seek alternative sentences for others.
4. Ensure accountability for “white collar” offenders.

## **Prison Reform**

1. Ensure safety of detained persons and provide access to rehabilitative programs.
2. Eliminate for-profit institutions and programs.
3. Evaluate and hold accountable all youth and adult correctional programs.
4. Significantly reduce solitary confinement and ban extreme sensory deprivation.
5. Provide adequate treatment, rather than incarceration, for those with mental health issues.
6. Provide ongoing education of criminal justice personnel on dealing with specific issues of the offender.
7. Support workforce development and continuing education for detainees.

## **Marijuana and the War on Drugs**

1. End the War on Drugs. Focus on treatment, not criminalization.
2. Amend banking laws to allow cannabis-related financial transactions.
3. Remove classification of cannabis as a schedule 1 substance.
4. Protect rights of cannabis patients and lawyers and other professionals who consult with cannabis-related businesses.
5. Prohibit drug testing unless there has been probable cause of a crime, specifically prohibit use for state and federal benefits.
6. Plant limits be consistent with voter intent for both medical and recreational users of marijuana.  
Expunge records of those arrested before legalization, release those now incarcerated for acts that are now legal and remove barriers to industry participation based upon those now-legal acts.

## **Firearms and Gun Safety**

We agree with individual ownership of firearms for hunting and personal safety, but also believe that firearms should be regulated as follows:

1. Ban assault weapons, bump stocks, high capacity magazines, large caliber ammunition and armor piercing bullets.
2. Enact universal background checks federally. And a 10-day waiting period for firearms purchase.
3. Enact restrictions: Must be 21 and must demonstrate competency with firearms to purchase a firearm.
4. Prohibit the possession and purchase of firearms by people with violent criminal offenses or on terrorist watch list.
5. Except for security personnel, ban firearms on K-12 schools, college campuses and allow cultural institutions to ban firearms on their premises.
6. Enforce extreme Risk Protection Order law, which would allow families and law enforcement to seek a court order to temporarily disarm a person who is dangerous to themselves or others.
7. We call on law enforcement at all levels to enforce extreme risk protection orders (ERPO-Red Flag Laws).
8. Enact criminal penalties when adults fail to properly store firearms and minors gain access and harm themselves or others.
9. Restrict firearms use in National Forest to designated areas, except during hunting season.
10. Create a national gun ownership registry and encourage Congress to pass laws advancing civil liability, licensing of firearms, voluntary buy backs and support research and funding of gun violence led by the Center for Disease Control (CDC).
11. We call on Congress to pass laws, including civil liability, to require anyone who manufactures firearms and/or ammunition, including 3D printed firearms, to be licensed to do so.



# **THE ECONOMY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

The wage gap between the top 1% and the remaining 99% is greater than it has ever been; the middle class is shrinking and people living under the poverty level increasing. We must re-think our financial regulations, taxation, jobs programs, trade treaties, and priorities when spending taxpayer dollars. We also believe that a minimum wage that allows employers to keep employees in poverty and frequently require governmental assistance is unacceptable corporate welfare.

## **Part I: Economic Policy**

### **We support:**

1. Repealing the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) and the Gallagher Amendment (regarding property taxes).
2. Expanding economic opportunities by investing in public lands, buildings and public research and development infrastructure.
3. Enforcing the Dodd-Frank law regarding the banking and investment industries.
4. Separating commercial and investment banking (as per Glass-Steagall, repealed in 2007).
5. Demanding that banks that are “too big to fail” increase their cash reserve ratios so that they are not a threat to the economy.
6. Eliminating public liability for speculative investment practices.
7. Refusing to bail out companies unless losses are borne by shareholders and bondholders.

8. Canceling government contracts with companies that violate the public trust and ensuring that violations of public trust would be considered a breach of contract and prohibit the company from obtaining future government contracts
9. Ending offshore tax shelters and tax evasion.
10. Creating incentives to reward companies that bring jobs back to the United States and penalizing companies that send jobs offshore.
11. Taxing all capital gains, qualified dividends, and carried interest as ordinary income.
12. Reforming the corporate tax code to increase collections by setting a competitive international rate, which is fair and consistent domestically.
13. Enacting a progressive estate tax and returning to a more progressive income tax.
14. Restoring tax-rates on the top incomes and investment income to pre-Regan levels. Repeal 2017 tax cuts.
15. Extending tax credits for children, families, and education.
16. Reducing the Pentagon budget by replacing private contractors profiteering from war and reconstruction with our own military personnel.
17. Reducing the Pentagon budget by eliminating obsolete, ineffective, redundant, or unnecessary weapons systems and ending all wars in which, the United States is currently engaged at the earliest opportunity.
18. Eliminating tax-exempt status of any religious organization that promotes political candidates or issues.
19. Excluding required-minimum distributions from deferred tax retirement accounts from state and federal income tax when accounts have a combined total of \$100,000 or less.
20. Fully funding Colorado's Public Employment Retirement Association (PERA).
21. Congressional analysis of the potential benefits related to Universal Basic Income (UBI).

### **Corporate Responsibility**

#### **We believe:**

1. Corporations must pay their full share of taxes and be recognized as business entities legally separate and distinct from individuals.
2. Corporate interests should not be prioritized over the needs of Coloradans and long-term wellbeing.
3. 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.
4. Corporations should be restrained by public responsibility. Corporations exist under laws determined by the public.
5. Public ownership of "natural monopolies" in network industries, such as energy and the internet, is preferable to the regulated monopoly framework.
6. Federal regulatory agencies must regulate or not enable and protect the industries they were created to regulate.
7. 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 or health and environment laws and regulations, or human rights.
8. Regulatory agencies must receive adequate funding and staffing levels to enforce the law and protect the people.
9. Colorado and Federal laws that provide special, unequal protection to corporations from lawsuits or in other ways must be repealed.
10. US-based multinational corporations must be held accountable for human rights abuses in this and other countries.

### **Fair Trade**

1. We call for the negotiation or renegotiation of terms in, or the repeal of, existing or proposed trade laws and treaties including the Trans-Pacific Partnership, NAFTA and CAFTA. We support only fair as well as free trade laws and treaties that guarantee worker protections, safe working conditions, limitations on child labor, living wages, environmental protections, public safety, and human rights.
2. 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.
3. We believe that water rights and water systems should not be privatized here or abroad.
4. We believe that domestic and foreign community access to existing crops should not be limited through patents.
5. We oppose the proposed superhighway out of Mexico into the United States without adequate protection of American workers, our national security, and highway safety.
6. We call for prohibition of the use of the Trade Promotion Authority, or Fast Track, to push trade agreements through Congress without providing opportunity to make amendments or changes to the text.
7. We believe we must ensure that trade agreements do not encourage the migration of jobs from one-member country to another.
8. We call for the prohibition of investors using special trade courts to sue countries for compensation for potential lost profits due to regulations or laws in a home country, state or locality.

### **Housing**

#### **We believe:**

1. 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 Recorders of Colorado and that our elected representatives in Washington pursue similar supporting legislation on a national level.
2. Lack of affordable housing has created a hardship for employers and employees, and therefore we support development and adequate funding of affordable housing

3. 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, for those who are facing foreclosure or eviction.
4. We support the expansion of tenant rights, including extension of past-due rent window, increase in written notice prior to entering, raising rent, or other material changes to the lease agreement, and allowing tenants to withhold rent in the event the landlord fails to maintain essential and agreed-upon services.
5. As an alternative to foreclosure, loan modifications should be permitted which allow both the lender/investor and borrower to share in future appreciation of the property. Those foreclosed upon should be given first right of refusal in repurchasing the home at current market value.
6. Judges in bankruptcy court must be granted the authority to modify mortgages on primary residences for all individuals.
7. We must support Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) to promote economic development in struggling areas that are underserved by traditional financial institutions.
8. Adequate funding for the Colorado Housing Investment Fund and the National Housing Trust Fund Act to provide affordable housing for low-income workers, individuals with disabilities, seniors, young adults, and others with modest means and focusing on mixed income neighborhoods.

## **Part II: Job Creation and Community Based Economic Solutions**

### **Democrats call upon elected officials to:**

1. Publicly fund important infrastructure projects.
2. Fund job training and retraining programs, in order to retool the American workforce for the new economy, relieve underemployment, and counteract homelessness.
3. Support the creation of jobs to address Global Climate crisis, including jobs in alternative energy production, conservation, and non-toxic-based food production.
4. Enact policies that improve the competitiveness and sustainability of small businesses and businesses owned by people in marginalized and rural communities.
5. Encourage corporations to set limits on executive compensation, create more jobs, and increase worker wages
6. Give preference to US Companies using US materials and labor in jobs paid for with US, state, or local government funds – in whole or in part.
7. Support worker-owned cooperatives or business entities owned and controlled by their members, the people who work in them.
8. Support the establishment of postal, state and community-owned public banks.
9. Support the development of Community Land Trusts to support community control of neighborhood resources.
10. Encourage and support Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and neighborhood-based, non-profit corporations to create jobs and housing and improve physical and social infrastructures.
11. Provide robust economic support to all individuals impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and explore the creation of national employment and workforce development programs comparable to the creation of the WPA and Civilian Conservation Corps.

## **Part III: Economic and Social Justice**

### **We call for:**

1. Raising the minimum wage to a living wage to reflect inflation and productivity gains.
2. Remove sales tax on food.
3. Affordable student loan interest rates equal to the Federal Reserve rate to banks.
4. Adjustments to the poverty-line threshold and benefits (like SNAPs) to support a reasonable quality of life for working families and individuals with limited financial resources.
5. Fostering skills adequate for the individual to earn wages that will provide self-sufficiency.
6. Repeal of lifetime limits on public assistance.
7. The implementation of cost of living adjustments on Social Security and Social Security disability benefits equal to actual increases in the cost of living.
8. The ending of the Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision and repeal of the Government Pension Offsets.
9. Equal pay for work that is comparable in terms of skill, effort, and responsibility for every individual.
10. The Employment Non-discrimination Act and Affirmative Action programs that help ensure diversity and equal access to education and economic opportunity.
11. 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.
12. The creation of a national 15% interest rate cap on credit cards, to curtail usury levels that keep those most vulnerable in a cycle of debt.
13. A ban on predatory lending practices by the credit card industry.
14. A repeal of the 2005 changes to Bankruptcy Laws that heavily favored corporations and business interests to ensure that bankruptcy offers a fresh start, not continued servitude to debt.
15. A bankruptcy code that protects consumers from insolvency due to externally caused situations such as medical expenses and predatory lending practices.
16. Legislation to require that all publicly supported social services offices be adequately staffed to ensure proper access to services for those in need.

17. Adequate funding to fully meet the demand for legal representation of low income and under-represented citizens of Colorado.
18. Affordable day care near the jobs and homes of working families.
19. Safeguards to protect all earned and vested retirement benefits of all working people and their families regardless of workplace.
20. Prosecution of corporate entities, executives and officers raiding private pension funds.
21. Provision of cohort status for Rocky Flats employees to ensure government benefits and health care for work-related ailments.
22. Investing in services that enable seniors to live independently as long as possible and contribute the highest quality of life for people of all ages.
23. Fully funding emergency shelter and food systems, and a vigorous program for assisting people experiencing homelessness and those in need - to have productive lives.
24. Programs to end homelessness, especially for families with children, veterans, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and people with mental illness; and oppose criminalization of resting in public places.
25. We oppose any effort to balance budgets on the backs of the poor, the elderly, veterans or the middle class.
26. We recognize and support the spirit of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act and all the rights guaranteed in that Act in the same manner that Democrats support Civil Rights Acts in the 1960s and urge the United States Senate to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
27. We support efforts to end Colorado's Wait List for people with developmental disabilities.
28. We oppose efforts to limit access to the courts for victims of negligence.
29. We support measures to restore and strengthen the Voting Rights Act.

### **Veterans' Affairs**

We support:

1. Easy and efficient access to earned benefits for veterans and their families to health care, education, and job opportunities.
2. Protecting and maximizing veterans' benefits. We call for an end to the steady erosion of benefits earned by this country's veterans.
3. Policies that fully fund the Veterans' Administration, and VA hospitals.
4. Allowing military personnel to remain on active duty following recovery from serious injury.
5. Accountability for employees and management of the VA who breach the compact and violate the trust of veterans.
6. Property tax exemption for disabled veterans.
7. We oppose efforts to privatize the VA.

### **Mining, Agriculture, Business and Local Affairs**

The Democratic party supports:

1. Preserving agriculture, ranching and tourism as traditional bases of Colorado's economy while balancing the needs of urban development, open space, recreation and preservation of wildlife.
2. Reforming the 1872 Mining Act to provide appropriate supervision and regulations of 21st century mining on federal lands, including preventive and safety measures, environmental restoration, and reimbursement for federal oversight costs.
3. Encouraging and supporting public and private investment in research and development of new sustainable agricultural practices and technologies.
4. Embracing new technologies designed to use resources more efficiently and sustainably.
5. Encouraging production systems that are not detrimental to the natural environment, biodiversity, or the rights of organic farmers.
6. Encouraging, expanding and strengthening local and state conservation easement programs.
7. Safe food practices and vigorous USDA inspection and food safety testing.
8. Scientific investigation into the safety of genetically modified organisms (GMO) and banning untested GMO's or those deemed unsafe, and comprehensive labeling of GMO's in food and identifying place or origin and protect farmers whose crops have been contaminated by genetically modified organisms.
9. Promoting the use of farmers' markets and buying locally.
10. Encouraging greater federal investment in cattle industry standards to prevent disease and expand the tracking and publishing of statistics related to foodborne illnesses, including prion diseases.
11. Opposing the U.S. Army's attempted acquisition of additional lands surrounding the Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site in Southeastern Colorado.
12. The use of local vendors and businesses.
13. Developing microgrids, and a locally based, distributed energy grid to support some rural communities during a national crisis.
14. An entire repeal of the ad valorem tax credit.
15. Restoring the name "Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area" to the area currently named McInnis Canyon.
16. Increasing access to high-speed Internet for rural Colorado.

### **Transportation**

Colorado Democrats believe we should:

1. Increase funding to long distance passenger rail, including Amtrak and any other commuter train service.
2. Support public transit, light rail, bus rapid transit, high-speed rail, driverless/ interconnected and other vehicle technology through expansion, especially in underserved communities.
3. Support an expedited statewide public transit system, including rail, in the north-south and east-west corridors.
4. Increase the sales tax on gasoline by one cent and use the proceeds to improve the condition of state highways.
5. Support an emphasis on an affordable and safe, public transportation system.

6. Support continuation and expansion of the strategic build-out of FasTracks.
7. Support additional accommodations for people with disabilities entering and departing the transit system at service points.
8. Support indexing transportation fuel taxes to inflation.
9. Adequately fund transportation projects so that private-public partnership highway projects are not necessary.
10. Evaluate any proposed highway expansions on how local communities are affected and ensure that affected populations are fairly compensated.

### COVID-19 Response and Protection Against Future Pandemics

In response to the global Coronavirus pandemic, and the failed efforts of the Trump administration to protect the country and preserve the public health, we support the following actions to mitigate the long-term impacts of COVID-19 and to prepare and defend the country against future threats:

1. Investing in disease prevention and epidemiology research, strategies and institutions – including increased funding for the Center for Disease Control and the preservation of the National Security Council directorate to prepare for global pandemics.
2. Awareness and preparation to protect and defend the nation against national security risks during and cyber security threats during a global pandemic.
3. Development and maintenance of the domestic supply chain for goods, pharmaceuticals and other critical “lifelines” – and an increase in the strategic national stockpile and logistics networks between federal, state and local government.
4. Invest in our healthcare system and patient care to protect against a massive failing of our public health system due to a lack of preparedness, supplies, funding, communication and training – and support universal healthcare for all.
5. Safeguarding employment protections, HIPAA privacy and defend against insurance discrimination for individuals and family members impacted by the Coronavirus or comparable threats in the future.
6. Distribution of trusted information in the interest of public safety, the advancement of public health and the preservation of life.
7. Protecting consumers of healthcare services and pharmaceutical products from price gouging through strong federal laws.
8. Increased public funding of the National Institutes of Health and critical research.
9. Bolstering of global alliances to defend against national security risks and facilitate a coordinated global response in fighting COVID-19 and future pandemics.
10. Free testing and no-copays and accessible treatment, even for patients who test negative for the virus.
11. Economic protections to defend against lost wages, retirement investments and pensions.



## LABOR

The entrepreneurial spirit of the American economic system has led to innovations and wealth generation with the potential to advance the standard of living for all American people. However, rewards are going primarily to the wealthy and are not shared with the people who generated the wealth. It is time to level the playing field. It is time that corporations stopped sucking the profits out of America to do stock buybacks and for the personal benefits of the executives to stash them in offshore accounts while the middle and working class struggle to pay their rent or mortgage, or put food on the table fall behind. It's time for a tax code that supports working Americans so that everyone makes a living income for themselves and their families. no one working full time lives in poverty and every American has the opportunity to get ahead.

### Statement of Principles:

1. **WEALTH INEQUALITY** - We believe wealth inequality is greater than at any time in our country's history and continues to grow. This is a threat to our democracy. The top one-tenth of one percent owns almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent. Between 1963 and 2016, low income families went from having no wealth on average to being about \$1,000 in debt, while the wealth of the top 1% grew sevenfold. Deregulation and government policies have resulted in a massive redistribution of wealth from working people to the wealthy oligarchs. This is a crisis in our nation.
2. **WORKING POVERTY** - Nobody who works 40 hours a week should live in poverty.
3. **COLLECTIVE BARGAINING** - One of the most significant reasons for the 40-year decline in the middle class is that the rights of workers to collectively bargain for better wages and benefits have been severely undermined. Unions are and must remain a pillar of our economy, and workers' rights must be respected.

### Calls to Action:

1. **FAIR DAY'S PAY** - We believe that anyone who does a fair day's work deserves a fair day's pay with adequate (?) better elaborate benefits, rights to organize, and a safe working environment.
2. **MINIMUM WAGE** - We call on Congress to increase the US minimum wage from \$7.25 to more than \$17.50 an hour by 2021, or to a base living wage that accounts for the true costs of food, housing, utilities, health care, and transportation and accounts increases for inflation. Anyone who works 40 hours a week should be able to obtain a middle-class lifestyle and not live in poverty.
3. **PAYCHECK FAIRNESS** — We support equal pay for equal work. It is an outrage that women earn just 80 cents for every dollar a man earns – and women of color make even less. We support fighting for pay equity by signing the Paycheck Fairness Act into law. It is an outrage that women earn just 78 cents for every dollar a man earns.
4. **SAFE AND HEALTHY WORKPLACE** - We support the right of workers to a safe and healthy workplace through collective bargaining, training, and education, as well as adequate funding for enforcement of all state and federal safety laws. We support the adequate funding of enforcement and personnel training for 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.

5. **PAID TIME OFF** - We support requiring employers to provide at least 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave; two weeks of paid vacation; and 7 days of paid sick days; and 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave, because real family values are about making sure that parents have the time they need to bond with their babies and take care of themselves, their children, and relatives when they get ill.
6. **FREEDOM FROM COERCION** - We believe in freedom from emotional, mental, and physical coercion when exercising rights to assemble and organize, bargaining 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 and private sector workers.
7. **CHILD LABOR LAWS** - We demand strict enforcement of child labor laws.
8. **LABOR CONTRACTS AND PENSION OBLIGATIONS** - We continue to petition Congress to enact legislation preventing courts and bankruptcy laws from being used to abrogate labor contracts and pension obligations.
9. **FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT (FLSA)** - We support strengthening the FLSA and oppose exempting more workers from its protection or weakening provisions that provide for and define coverage for non-exempt employees.
10. **CARD CHECK LEGISLATION** - We support making it easier for workers to join unions. (Sara to check if other proposed legislation by fighting for the Employee Free Choice Act, or the Workplace Democracy Act.
11. **AGRICULTURAL AND WAREHOUSE WORKERS**: We demand the repeal of the Colorado Labor Peace Act, which--in addition to imposing unfair supermajority requirements for voting to unionize--denies all collective bargaining rights to agricultural and warehouse workers.
12. **UNION SECURITY PROVISIONS** - We oppose restrictions upon the rights of workers to collectively negotiate union security provisions with their employers.
13. **HIRING OF COLORADO WORKERS** - We support the principle that Colorado citizens should receive the benefits of Colorado state construction and procurement contracts using incentives whereby state contractors are encouraged to hire Colorado workers.
14. **CONSUMER CREDIT INFORMATION** - We support the principle that consumer credit information not be used for employment purposes.
15. **CRIMINAL RECORDS** - We support any "Ban the Box" legislation which prohibits employers from seeking job applicants making unnecessary or unrelated past conviction disclosures not applicable to the job.
16. **"RIGHT-TO-WORK" LEGISLATION** - We oppose "right-to-work" legislation, which restricts workers' rights to organize and collectively bargain for fair wages and working conditions.
17. **DAVIS-BACON ACT** - We support state prevailing wage legislation that includes off-site project fabrication and the federal Davis-Bacon Act.
18. **POSTAL SERVICE** - We support the U.S. Postal Service, continuation of the 6-day mail delivery service, expanding services to include financial services, and repealing the congressional mandate requiring excessive pre-funding of health care benefits. We oppose privatization efforts recreating the postal banking system.
19. **COLORADO PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION (PERA)** - PERA should remain a defined benefit plan, directed by a board elected by the membership.
20. **VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN HIRING** - We support Colorado State Employee protections currently provided for in the state constitution, including provisions for veterans' preference in hiring.
21. **EXTENDED UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS** - We support the payment of extended unemployment benefits during times of high unemployment at times of high unemployment or national emergencies.
22. **SWEATSHOP LABOR** - We oppose the use of sweatshop labor.
23. **EMPLOYMENT** - We support the concept of full-time permanent employment with health care and pension benefits instead of extended use of contract employment.
24. **INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE** - We support putting at least 13 million Americans to work by investing \$1 trillion over five years towards rebuilding our crumbling roads, bridges, railways, airports, public transit systems, ports, dams, wastewater plants, and other infrastructure needs.
25. **YOUTH JOBS PROGRAM** - We support creating 1 million jobs for disadvantaged young Americans by investing \$5.5 billion in a youth jobs program. Today, the youth unemployment rate is off the charts. We have got to end this tragedy by making sure teenagers and young adults have the jobs they need to move up the economic ladder.



## EDUCATION

Democrats are the party of public education. Colorado Democrats believe that our state public education policies should provide all students with an equal opportunity to reach their potential. Education is not only a basic right; it is fundamental to 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. Education is the single most powerful investment that a society can make in its future.

### Modernizing Education in Colorado

Colorado Democrats hold a vision for education that ensures all Colorado children receive a quality and equitable education with schools fully funded to achieve these ends. We support making education a top priority by calling for a statewide ballot measure to

amend the Colorado Constitution to codify that all children within the borders of the state receive a free public, uniform, and high-quality education that prepares students for careers and higher education.

### **Preschool and K-12 Funding**

We demand full funding of a thorough and uniform education with public monies to public schools that are locally controlled. We also demand increased funding for Preschool and K–12 education. This can be accomplished by repealing Article X10, Section 20, also known as the Taxpayer’s Bill of Rights (TABOR), and the Gallagher Amendment from the Colorado Constitution.

#### **To this end:**

1. We support the adequate and equitable funding of public education in Colorado.
2. We support better funding for public schools that includes a new formula to equalize differences in state regions.
3. We support the creation of a unified, comprehensive system of public education in Colorado.
4. We support increased funding for mental health, counseling services, and suicide prevention for all schools to meet the needs of all students.
5. We support continued funding of nutritious school meal programs for children living in or near poverty.
6. We support efforts to build an adequate tax base for quality public education at all levels.
7. We support adequate funding for students with special needs.
8. We support adequate capital investment in our aging public school buildings so that they are suitable learning environments.
9. We oppose the use of public funds being used to support private, or religious schools, for-profit charter schools, and corporate education management organizations.
10. We oppose vouchers and tuition tax credits for non-public K-12 education which dilute funding from our already underfunded public schools.
11. We call for a moratorium on the expansion of charter schools, at least until such time as charter schools:
  - a. Are subject to the same transparency and accountability standards as public schools.
  - b. Cease expelling students that public schools have a duty to educate.
  - c. Cease to perpetuate *de facto* segregation of the highest performing children from those whose aspirations may be high but whose talents are not yet as obvious.
12. We believe that charter schools should be held to the same standards as traditional K-12 schools.
13. We support the elimination of dark money from public school board elections and support establishing campaign finance reforms for these elected positions.

### **Inclusivity and Diversity**

We demand an education system which is inclusive of our diverse population. We oppose policies and practices that discriminate and further widen the achievement and opportunity gaps.

#### **As Colorado Democrats:**

1. We support policies and programs which include, elevate, and honor all students regardless of English language acquisition.
2. We support the integration of diverse communities into public schools.
3. We support diverse communities having principals, teachers, and paraprofessionals that reflect the student population.
4. We oppose any efforts or policies which lead to re-segregation of student populations.
5. We recognize and support programs of inclusion and enhancement regarding the needs of special populations of students including medically, emotionally, physically or developmentally disabled, English Language Learners, LGBTQ+, and gifted/talented students. and support programs of inclusion and enhancement.
6. We support anti-bullying and suicide awareness policies in schools.
7. We support lower class sizes especially for at-risk students, for homeless, ELL, and economically stressed children.
8. We oppose the criminalization of student behavior which can be managed by staff and family.
9. We support parental involvement in school activities and outreach programs, especially for poor and at-risk and vulnerable student populations.
10. We support adult education programs that provide career training and continuing education.

### **Student Curriculum, Instruction, and Evaluation**

We demand a rich, balanced curriculum, which acknowledges the importance of educating the whole child as an individual with unique needs and talents and provides effective instruction and meaningful evaluation.

#### **To this end:**

1. We support a curriculum in all public schools which recognizes the importance of all subjects including art, vocal and instrumental music, physical education, reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, media literacy, civics, history, foreign language, theatre, vocational education, etc.
2. We support a curriculum that is engaging, culturally relevant, and challenging.
2. We support extracurricular activities, clubs, and athletics, and enrichment or honors classes as part of a well-rounded public education system.
3. We support a curriculum which prepares students with essential skills of critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, innovation, and collaboration.
4. We support a curriculum that strives for authentic teaching and learning and oppose curriculum which teaches to standardized high-stakes tests.

5. We oppose excessive standardized testing, and especially any corporate-driven, state-mandated curriculum, or high-stakes teacher or student measurement tool which is not research-based, scientifically supported, and/or recognized by the academic community. One-size-fits-all schooling leads to standardization and conformity, which undermines the qualities required of an empowered and engaged citizenry.
6. We support early childhood education (preschool and full-day kindergarten) opportunities as the best investment for a child's future school success.
7. We support the READ Act and efforts to enhance student literacy.
8. We support evidence-based intervention strategies and GED programs for struggling students, drop-outs, and low-performing schools and oppose efforts to impose strategies that have no proven track record of success.
9. We support vocational, career, and technical training and post-secondary programs for high school students.
10. We support diverse learning styles, multiple measurements of achievement and evaluation tools, and multiple pathways to success.
11. We support the decoupling of student test scores from teacher evaluation and compensation.
12. We oppose pay-for-performance, or merit-based pay.
13. We support NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) as a reliable and sufficient data source. It is a government-run and non-profit endeavor that has been used in every state for years and has been verified for validity and reliability through multiple independent reviews and should suffice for national, state, and local education agencies students' academic performance and accountability.
14. In light of breaches of student data, we advocate for student privacy rights that reflect ethical, lawful, and responsible security of student data.
15. We oppose the monetization of student data and support legislation which prohibits student data exchanged for services, benefit, or for profit in any way.
16. We oppose for-profit training programs oriented toward factory model education and the practice of placing inexperienced and non-credentialed teachers in low-performing, high-needs schools with hard-to-serve students.

### **Educator Rights**

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

#### **To this end:**

1. We support the right of teachers to form and join unions, including teachers of charter schools.
  2. We support due process and believe it should not be weakened to address complaints against teachers.
  3. We support a livable professional wage, safe and supportive working conditions, and adequate benefits for all educators and education support professionals and the employee educators' right to organize.
  4. We support fair, equitable, and non-discriminatory recruitment, retention, licensing, and hiring practices of teachers and leaders for all public schools.
  5. We support funding to improve teacher compensation immediately to attract and retain quality teachers and prevent teacher churn; to improve educational support professionals' pay; to attract and retain quality bus drivers, custodians, maintenance workers, food service workers, paraprofessionals, and clerical workers; and to improve compensation for substitute teachers to ensure student learning is not compromised when a teacher is away from the classroom.
  6. We support fair, and equitable, and non-discriminatory recruitment, retention, licensing, and hiring practices of teachers and leaders for all public schools.
  7. We support licensed, effective teachers in all public school classrooms.
  8. 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.
  9. We support academic freedom and believe that no educator should fear reprisal for exercising their constitutional rights.
  10. We support providing teachers with better tools, administrative support, and procedures to handle disruptive behavior.
  11. We support a safe workplace free of guns. Arming teachers would make our schools less safe and put students and staff at increased risk of becoming a victim of gun violence.
1. We believe that the Secretary of Education should have public education experience.

### **Higher Education**

We support providing access to affordable, high-quality, broad-based, public higher education that supports well-rounded residents of all residents of the country and state. We demand increased state funding of Colorado's public higher education institutions, including community colleges, trade schools, colleges, and universities.

#### **As Colorado Democrats:**

1. We support free public higher education for all students, including high school students, attending community colleges and colleges or universities.
2. We support our undocumented students and demand that the federal government follow Colorado's efforts to provide in-state tuition and financial aid to undocumented high school graduates with the opportunity to attend a state college or university.
3. We oppose tuition increases that reduce access and affordability to a higher education.
4. We oppose further cuts to student financial aid, such as student loans, work-study programs, scholarships, and Pell grants, which restrict students' access to higher education, community colleges, colleges, and universities.
5. We support the rights of faculty, part-time faculty, and adjunct-faculty to unionize fair and equitable compensation for adjunct and part-time faculty at our public institutions of higher education community colleges, colleges, and universities for fair and equitable compensation.

6. We support the rights of graduate students and student-athletes at our institutions of higher education to unionize as employees for equitable treatment and compensation.
7. We support funding for merit scholarships for highly qualified students from Colorado to encourage them to attend institutions of higher education - community colleges, colleges, and universities in Colorado.
8. We support increased state funding of Colorado's higher education institutions.
9. 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 who choose not to pursue a college degree.
10. We support restoration of statutes of limitations and bankruptcy protection on student loan debt. We insist that Congress structure loans and/or provide statute of limitations to alleviate college debt, and/or at the minimum reduce high interest rates on students and make student loan interest rates comparable to what most banks pay.
11. We support and must make STEM education more accessible for women and minority students.
12. We support allowing individuals convicted of non-violent felonies to apply for and have the ability to receive student loans.



## ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CONSERVATION

The Colorado Democratic Party declares that our survival depends on keeping our environment healthy, locally and globally. Colorado's economic mainstays of agriculture and tourism depend on a clean, sustainable, and protected environment. Global climate change, pollution, and resulting environmental problems pose growing threats, as does consumption of natural resources. We must deal with these urgent issues now by pursuing policies that maintain the integrity and biodiversity of our ecosystems, and the overall health of our planet.

While natural gas extraction supports some jobs, it is not a bridge fuel, it impacts the health of our land, air, water, and people. The accelerated development of energy efficiency, as well as sustainable energy technologies, and the jobs they create, must be the highest priority for our state and national energy policy.

Our local, state, and national leaders must manage growth, pollution, and the extraction of natural resources while providing for the long-term protection of our people, our communities, and our environment over and above the interests of short term needs and profits. We must ensure clean air, land, and water today and for the sake of future generations of humans and all other species.

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

1. We support full-scale commitment to a national policy that prioritizes the development of renewable energy technologies and energy conservation, and ramps down reliance on finite, polluting, and climate-altering fossil fuels.
2. We call for the United States to rejoin the Paris Climate Accords, and to take a global leadership role in promoting actions to increase development and distribution of clean and renewable energy sources, and to reduce all fossil fuel development and consumption, pursuant to reversing humanity's global carbon output and the resulting climate change that threatens all life on Earth.
3. We call for funding of large-scale education and workforce training programs for jobs created as a result of expanding alternative energy employment opportunities.
4. We call for state legislation that requires all utilities to provide, pursue, and achieve the goal of 100% clean, renewably-sourced power with urgency and haste (achieving no less than 80% clean-energy by 2030).
5. We oppose the licensing of any new coal power plants and call for a transition from coal-produced electricity no later than 2024.
6. We call for the elimination of all subsidies for fossil fuels and conventional nuclear power.
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, and advocate that federal renewables tax credits be extended indefinitely until the cessation of fossil fuel consumption.
8. We support policies that encourage the development, manufacturing, and consumer use of pollution-reducing and energy and water conserving devices and procedures in US homes and businesses.
9. We support legislation that requires all government buildings to meet LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental design) gold or platinum certification.
10. We further call for legislation at the state and national levels to implement Passive House-type standards in all dwelling units, such as consideration of building orientation, solar or green roofs.
11. We call for the prompt phase out of gas in new construction.
12. We call for incentives to encourage the development and use of electric, hybrid, and alternative fuel versions of all types of vehicles, and call for the phased elimination of all emissions and exemptions for all forms of vehicles.
13. We call for further increases in the federal Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards that dictate the number of miles per gallon that an automaker should get for the entire range of vehicles it sells.
14. We support conversion of government fleets to electric vehicles.
15. We support indexing transportation fuel taxes to inflation to fund transportation infrastructure.
16. We believe trade negotiations should include carbon emission requirements and regulations which hold the U.S. and our trading partners accountable for our respective carbon emissions.
17. We call for Colorado utilities to publish their curtailment costs at least once a year to enhance transparency regarding actual use of renewable energy investments.

18. We support assisting workers displaced by the transition of energy sources to secure training and placement in new careers, with fair-wages, benefits with special focus on workers from historically marginalized, disenfranchised, or oppressed communities and demographics, including fair-wages, benefits, workforce development dollars and placement assistance.
19. We support funds for the urgent and continual upgrading of the US power grid, so it can handle a variety of energy sources for enhanced efficiency, security, reliability and flexibility.
20. We support guarantees that renewable energy produced by consumers can be sold back to the local utility at the same price as energy that is purchased from the local utility.
21. We support increased funding for infrastructure to increase the use of human-powered vehicles such as bicycles for transportation.
22. We support community ownership local energy investment.
23. We support elected officials not taking fossil-fuel money or trading in wall-street traded utilities.
24. We support investment in sustainably produced hydrogen fuel.

## Part II: Energy and Our Natural Resources

1. We recognize the Martinez ruling, which states that the Colorado Oil & Gas Conservation Commission must weigh the health and safety of the public and environment when considering the issuance of permits to extract minerals, as the standing law of Colorado.
2. 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; and furthermore, We oppose state or state agency suits against municipalities or counties taking action to regulate fracking or otherwise protect their citizens.
3. We support the federal repeal of the Halliburton Loophole--Safe Drinking Water Act exemptions and call for the subsequent prohibition of deep-water reinjection wells. We support requirements for full decontamination of produced water from hydro fractured ("fracked") wells such that said water is at minimum safe for agricultural use.
4. We support the elimination of all other petroleum industry exemptions to federal environmental laws, including but not limited to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act; 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.
5. We support at all levels the divestment of public funds from fossil fuel investments, and the reinvestment of such funds into clean renewable energy investment portfolios.
6. We support the rapid closure by no later than 2024 of coal fired plants.
7. We call for the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by 80-90% by 2030, with the goal of ultimately reducing carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere to no more than 350 ppm.
8. We call for increasing the state Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) to 60% by 2022 and 80% by 2025.
9. We support Colorado Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) that require REAs (Rural Electric Authorities) to purchase renewable energy produced within Colorado, including that produced by private homeowners. This does not have to be limited to Colorado and include concepts such as for community ownership and microgrids.
10. We affirm that federal laws should not preempt the ability of states and local governments to enact stricter "green" initiatives.
11. 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.
12. We support stringent requirements and comprehensive whole-cost based fees for commercial access to our land for mineral, petroleum, forest, and water resources and do not support exploitation through extraction.
13. We support local ordinances, state legislation, and federal programs that require strict and sufficient reclamation bonds and programs to ensure that industry stakeholders are directly liable for all public health, property loss, local business, water use, environmental mitigation and other costs resulting from mining and drilling operations, as well as significant penalties in the event of irreparable damage. We believe that energy, gas and oil companies should not be self-bonded. The bonds should be collected at the start of the extraction process and should cover the entire cost of reclamation.
14. We call for Colorado severance taxes (a tax imposed on nonrenewable resources) equal to the maximum imposed by any state in the nation; we support the repeal of the severance tax exemption for resources extracted from Colorado lands.
15. We support the reform or 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, and which ignores current market-based land valuations.
16. We support funding for the effective regulation of abandoned, existing, and any new 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.
17. 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; we support imposition of penalties for incidents of flaring.
18. We support a ban on all mining and drilling in municipal drinking water, watershed, aquifers, storage, recharge areas and superfund sites.
19. We support prohibiting the use of open pits for any fluids contaminated with toxins or produced waters from commercial and industrial operations.
20. We oppose the development of tar sands oil anywhere in the world, and the transportation thereof via any means.
21. We call for strict adherence to 2500 feet as the minimum safe distance or setback of oil & gas extractive operations from human dwellings, high-occupancy buildings, parks, and water sources, and cite Martinez as the legal basis to deny variances

or exemptions.

22. We support the full accounting of all external costs, including but not limited to impacts on public health and safety, ecological integrity, wildlife health, and quality of other natural resources for future use; the publication thereof, and all policies, laws, and regulations that recapture the cost of externalities from the responsible operator(s).
23. We support all requirements for state agencies with regulatory involvement in or authority over environmental, energy, or conservation policies to take public input into greater account, to greater engage the public, and to provide slots on boards and commissions for members of the public who do not have ties to their related industries and resulting conflicts of interest.
24. We support a responsible and sustainable logging industry in Colorado that includes environmental mitigation and reforestation.
25. We support trade agreements that hold the U.S. and our trade partners accountable for their carbon emissions.
26. We support establishing strict limitations, especially during droughts, on significant industrial uses of fresh water and aquifers such as for fracking fluid, from municipal water supplies. We support sustainable harvesting of aquifers water – it is the lifeblood of the future of Colorado.
27. We support measures to reduce the production and consumption of petroleum-based plastics for single use applications; we support measures to promote plant-based or bio-degradable plastics for durable long-term use.
28. We call for policies that support small family farms, educate more people on how to grow their own food, and enable an independent and sustainable pathway for farmers indebted to corporations. We support policies that preserve their ability to operate profitably via sustainable practices; protect them from fluctuations in land values and market rates for commodities; ensure that relevant tax benefits apply to true working farms; examine subsidy and regulatory structure to preserve competitive balance with larger agricultural operations.

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

### **Public Lands and Wildlife**

1. We call for an end to exploitation of national parks, monuments, forests, and wilderness areas for private economic gain; we oppose selling public lands outright or leasing them in a way that is unsustainable, except for the purpose of conservation or protection of ecology, habitat, and contained species.
2. We support the expansion and protection of interconnected habitat areas, roadless lands, wilderness and wildlife corridors.
3. We support full funding to more strongly enforce the Threatened and Endangered Species programs.
4. We call for Congress to ensure that the entire Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is maintained as an intact ecosystem which is off limits to development.
5. We support public and private efforts to conserve and preserve land through open space programs; we support coordinated regional and state control of growth and open space acquisition.
6. We support the protection of natural habitats and intact ecosystems through science-based management of public lands that promotes the optimal balance between human use and the natural world, with special attention paid to protection of threatened and endangered species, or those that may become so.
7. We support the restoration, protection, and management of the Gray Wolf as a non-game species by Colorado Parks and Wildlife on designated public lands.
8. We support the restriction of shooting in National Forests and Parks.
9. We support increased funding for the National Park System.

### **Water**

1. We call for the development of a statewide water plan; for policies which require the protection of water resources and the enforcement of water conservation measures, that considers environmental and ecological needs as equal to our own.
2. We support the prioritization of water supply in long-range planning, including the ability to restrict new developments, for which there would be inadequate permanent supplies of water.
3. We support full disclosure, by both private commercial and public, governing entities, of all chemicals discharged or injected into the ground or maintained on the surface.
4. We support improved water use efficiency and conservation in urban areas and call for full implementation prior to approval of any new trans-basin diversions of water to the Front Range.
5. We support a trend of strengthening regulations and laws when existing laws do not adequately protect water quality, wetlands, and other aquatic ecosystems.
6. We support maintenance and regular inspection of dams and other water infrastructures.
7. We support policies to establish subterranean water banks and to recharge aquifers.
8. We support reduction of high water consumption grass and increased use of xeriscaping.

### **Agricultural Policy and Land Management**

1. 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.
2. We call for policies that support small family farms; preserve their ability to operate profitably via sustainable practices; protect them from fluctuations in land values and market rates for commodities; ensure that relevant tax benefits apply to true working farms; examine subsidy and regulatory structure to preserve competitive balance with larger agricultural operations.
3. We support limiting the allocation of agricultural subsidies to non-organic farming operations, and increasing tax incentives to organic, regenerative, sustainable farms to minimize toxic chemicals, hormones and antibiotics in the food supply, water, soil, and air; we additionally support incentivizing intensive and rotational grazing methods of ranching.
4. We call for expanding and strengthening local and state conservation easement programs. Conservation easements must

legitimately benefit the public and meet the standards of best practices.

5. We call for reducing all forms of agricultural runoff that contaminate water sources and non-agricultural soils.
6. We call for strengthening regulations that require the humane treatment of farm animals, livestock, and animals used for scientific research.
7. We call for the increased promotion of the cultivation and applications of industrial hemp.
8. We oppose the US Army's attempted expansion and federalization of Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site; we oppose the expanded conduct of low-level aircraft maneuvers; we support Congressional action to prevent this expansion.
9. We support effective public notice before commercial or governmental dispersal of pesticides.
10. We support subsidizing urban farming cooperatives to bring better understanding of food and the provision of higher nutritional resources to poor and racially marginalized communities, promoting farmers markets, and a culture of buying locally.
11. We support the prohibition of the sale or planting of high water-consumption grass or grass seed in Colorado, and the promotion of native and low water-use grasses.
12. We support phasing out the corn subsidy, given negative impacts on public health & topsoil quality, inefficient water consumption, promotion of herbicides and pesticides, and promotion of inefficient ethanol fuel.
13. We support expanding the legitimate use of local and state conservation easement programs and the funding of independent scientific research on adverse issues.

### **Food Safety and Nutrition**

1. We support comprehensive fact-based labeling of foods with respect to ingredients, production methods, sources and country of origin.
2. We oppose limiting scientific research of GMOs and support funding independent third-party research on the safety and long-term impacts of the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) on the natural environment, farm workers, and public health.
3. We support promoting a comprehensive approach to reducing factors which are negatively impacting pollinator health and funding independent investigations into issues related to pollinator health and population collapse; and support programs to enhance pollinator habitat on public and private lands.
4. We oppose the imposition of federal laws that undermine more stringent or specific state laws to govern food safety for the benefit of consumers.
5. 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.
6. We call for ensuring that food assistance includes the elimination of food deserts and providing whole, healthy foods; ending food subsidies and programs that significantly contribute to clear risks to public health, such as low cost sugars and fats that significantly increase obesity, diabetes and healthcare costs, or lead to environmental collateral damage; and promoting the best nutritional education and purchasing opportunities in all Colorado communities.



## **HEALTH CARE**

Because the values of the Colorado Democratic Party include empathy and caring for others, we advocate for health care policies that protect all Coloradans.

We believe healthcare is a public good that should be available to all Coloradans regardless of their ability to pay.

We believe health-care to be a Human Right enshrined by the oldest and most revered principles of our founders as a significant part of 'Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness', as well as a fundamental goal embodied in the Constitutional call for our common defense and promotion of our general welfare.

'For profit' corporations have, by definition, a very different goal and have in effect developed a health-care system that is the most expensive and least productive in overall patient outcomes in all developed nations. Health Care by nature, is misaligned with a for-profit system. For this reason, we support Universal Coverage for life and affordable, patient-centered health care for all. This system should be independent of employment and include every race, age, religious belief, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin and economic status.

### **We Support Universal Coverage**

We support health care for all, as a fundamental human right, including Medicare / Medicaid for all. This program should be independent of employment and prioritize the health of Coloradans.

### **Colorado Health Care Reform**

If the federal government fails to create an Improved Medicare for All health care program, we support the state of Colorado creating a public health plan for residents. In creating this state plan, we call upon our state legislative leaders to:

1. Develop the state program in full partnership with all health care providers from all regions of the state, and properly fund community health care centers and clinics so all Coloradans have access to affordable health care.
2. The State of Colorado should have the authority to negotiate pharmacy pricing and hospital reimbursement rates across communities. Further, all communities, rural and urban, should have the financial resources and support to serve their constituents.

3. Increase funding for mental health services to prevent emergency medical services, behavioral health admissions, involvement with the criminal justice system, fractured families, and completed suicides, and to contain expenses and improve Coloradan's health and well-being.

### **Minimum standards for health care programs**

We call upon our local, state, and national government to ensure local, state, or federal health care programs meet the following minimum standards:

1. Guarantees the provision of and funding for comprehensive health care, to include at a minimum: prescribed drugs; mental health care (including case management); vaccines, dental, vision, hearing, and speech care; rural health care; home health care; long term care; chronic disease care; end of life/hospice care; preventive medicine; chiropractic and acupuncture; physical and occupational therapy; durable medical equipment and medical supplies; laboratory and imaging services; inpatient and outpatient hospital care; drug abuse rehabilitation; prenatal care; postnatal maternal care, and the full range of women's reproductive health care services.
2. Provides patient choice of providers, facilities, treatment, and continuity of care – with flexibility for people with disabilities.
3. Eliminates insurance company and/or government interference in medical decisions, which should be between patients and health care providers.
4. Ensures that all health care models are fully funded, have strong cost containment measures, and are transparent and accountable to the consumers and the public.
5. Provides full portability and continuity of health care coverage and eliminates the linkage of coverage to one's employment.
6. Eliminates profiteering in health care and health care financing. (Move to another section...)
7. Increases the availability of hospice care, as well as home- and community-based services, that address the needs of all, including people with all levels of disabilities, of any age.
8. Support the expanded use of the Colorado All-Payer Claims Database for reducing health care costs, improving population health, and increasing health care quality for all Coloradans.
9. Increases the availability of shelters and programs for victims of domestic violence.
10. Continues 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.
11. Supports the full legalized use of medical cannabis when prescribed for a patient by a physician and removes all federal and state bans on research into the medical efficacy of cannabis. Cannabis should be "descheduled" to advance medical research and utilization.
12. Supports the provision of community-based alternatives in long-term care programs that emphasize independence rather than institutionalization.
13. Supports the use of Advance Practice Nurses as Primary Care Providers to improve access to primary care.
14. Supports full payment for the services of Advanced Practice Nurses that reflect their advanced nursing training in Medicare and Medicaid.
15. Supports new health care delivery models, such as telemedicine, that emphasize the provision of continuous, comprehensive, and coordinated care – including, standardized Electronic Health Records (EHR) and Health Information Exchange (HIE).
16. Supports research into cures and treatments for senior-related medical conditions.
17. Guarantees a woman's right to make decisions regarding her pregnancy, including a safe and legal abortion, regardless of ability to pay. We oppose any effort to weaken or undermine that right, including requiring women to follow unnecessary procedures, and limiting funding of essential female reproductive health services such as those provided by reproductive health service providers, like Planned Parenthood.
18. Colorado guarantees a woman's right to make decisions regarding her pregnancy including a safe and legal abortion, regardless of ability to pay. We oppose any effort to weaken or undermine that right, including limiting funding of essential female reproductive health services. By offering education and family planning this has in effect lowered the abortion rates and we feel this is most important to continue on this course.
19. Significantly reduces the need for abortion by eliminating financial barriers to contraceptive service and pre- and post-natal care, providing comprehensive reproductive education, funding nutrition, affordable childcare.
20. Ensures the full implementation of the "Death with Dignity"/"Right to Die" legislation to allow terminally-ill patients and their doctors to discuss end-of-life decisions and permit medical personnel to assist terminally ill patients with ending their lives at the patient's discretion, compassionately limiting their pain and suffering. We also support ending discrimination and differential treatment of people with disabilities seeking equal dignity and respect while assessing their end-of-life decisions.
21. Protects transgender and gender nonconforming individuals from discrimination in insurance coverage and healthcare, as well as full coverage of all transition-related care.
22. Supports increased funding and accountability for mental health care parity – improving and broadening existing mental health programs – and call for government-funded providers to have users of services on their staff and governing boards.
23. Focuses on prevention and wellness, especially regarding obesity and obesity-related disease.

### **Support and Enhance Medicare**

1. Provide for the long-term solvency of Medicare as well as for the full and adequate funding of Medicare and Medicaid sufficient to promote the participation of health care providers.
2. Ensure that enrollees in traditional Medicare do not subsidize enrollees in private Medicare Advantage through their premiums.
3. Oppose the use of vouchers to privatize Medicare.
4. Permit Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices directly with the pharmaceutical industry and phase out the Medicare 2-year waiting period for SSDI benefit recipients and eliminate it immediately for people with life-threatening illnesses.
5. Increase the transparency and accountability of medical costs through the PPACA.

### **Veterans Administration and Veterans**

1. Issue vouchers to veterans to see non-VA doctors. Maintain this program until the Veterans Administration can provide care in a reasonable time frame.
2. We support the granting of benefits to spouses and dependents of veterans or active duty members of the military regardless of cause of death and support the mental health needs of all veterans, and their families, who have been traumatized during their service to our country.

### **Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE)**

We believe that CTE is a serious public health threat. Medical studies link high impact sports to the development of CTE later in life. We strongly encourage political leaders to help raise awareness of the connection between high impact sports and CTE through legislation and other means

### **The Opioid Crisis**

1. We support the state of Colorado being more active in solving the opioid crisis, including by providing state funds to treat opiate addiction in all Colorado communities, and promoting alternative pain management approaches.
2. Patients who need opioids for pain relief and to function in society should have full prescription access to those drugs.
3. We believe that major pharmaceutical companies that profited from the opioid drug market should be required to contribute to any rehabilitation efforts in our communities. We support charging an additional federal tax to pharmaceutical companies to be forwarded directly to the states to be used exclusively for opioid addiction and treatment.

### **Healthy Food**

1. The health of our communities is largely based on the quality of the food available. We support a grant program that would help provide funds to individuals, families, or groups to receive funds to achieve their food supply needs at their own home. And we support ensuring all Coloradans have access to healthy food



## **HEALTHY DEMOCRACY**

The Colorado Democratic Party believes that nurturing a healthy democracy is critical for a representative government and helps to ensure that our public servants in all branches of government work for the public good. Even during a national emergency, democracy is not for sale nor a so-called “sacrificial lamb.”

A healthy democracy has expansive voting rights, simple voter registration, accessible polling options, an electorate informed by accurate media reports, a political process including campaign finance rules that encourages “regular” citizens to run for office and ensures minority rights, districts that are fairly drawn, voting methods that allow the true will of the people to be heard, and trusted vote-tallying and auditing processes.

All levels of government should be subject to strict rules of transparency, and all people should have reasonable access to public servants at all levels.

### **Election Integrity**

The integrity of elections and the public's trust in the accuracy of election results is essential to a healthy democracy. Democrats:

1. Require thorough audits up to full manual hand counts to ensure that all cast votes are counted
2. Demand that all aspects of the elections be transparent and open to public inquiry – and we support legislation that will require full disclosure of funding sources for all political advertising and activities.
3. Use of hand-marked paper ballots which provide for a permanent paper trail and which allow voters to review their votes before being cast.
4. Fully staff and fund efforts to prevent election meddling. Investigate and prosecute election interference, whether foreign or domestic.
5. Prohibit election administrators from adopting procedures which unfairly influence elections and from involvement in any campaigns on their ballot other than their own election campaigns.

### **Expand Voting Rights, Voter Access and Citizen Petitioning Powers**

Voting rights must be protected and should be expanded. The people with a stake in the outcomes should have a voice. Colorado has been a leader in expanding access to voting. We believe we must:

1. Ensure the right to vote by reinstating and enforcing the Voting Rights Act.
2. Guarantee the right of suffrage and HAVA (Help America Vote Act) access to voting to citizens without a street address, citizens who were formerly incarcerated, citizens whose first language is not English, disabled citizens and all other citizens of voting age.
3. Support postage-paid mail-in ballots.
4. Allow online petition signatures for ballot initiatives and/or reduce the number of signatures for state ballot initiatives.
5. Require only a bare majority to overturn constitutional language that originally passed with a majority.
6. Require a supermajority vote of the legislature to amend or change a statute approved by the voters via a citizens' initiative.

### **Candidate Recruitment and Ballot Access**

The quality of our representative government is dependent on good candidates running for office. Candidates should compete on a level playing field and impediments should be minimized. We believe we must:

1. Change Colorado statute to allow the political parties to return to the previous assembly threshold of 20% or otherwise provide for easier primary ballot access via the assembly process.
2. Allow online petition signatures for candidates and/or reduce the number of signatures for state ballot initiatives.
3. Require US presidential and vice-presidential, gubernatorial, US Senate and US House candidates to submit 5 years of tax returns.
4. Oppose organizations using the Democratic name, such as the DNC, DSCC, and DCCC, who make endorsements prior to a primary election or bar contracts with organizations who work with a particular Democratic candidate.
5. Pay a living wage to elected officials commensurate with the time and experience required for the positions. Elected officials should also receive adequate stipends for housing, travel and staffing needs.
6. In the absence of appointment for or automatic replacement of a vacancy in state and local elected offices, we support a special election when the vacancy occurs more than nine months before the next election for that office.
7. Limit recall petitions of elected officials to a specific violation of oath of office or specific election misdeeds, not political motivations.

### **Campaign Finance Reform**

An informed electorate, not financial interests, should determine election outcomes. The Democratic Party should work to reduce the influence of money in campaigns. We believe we must:

1. Require full disclosure of funding sources for all political advertising and activities.
2. Adopt public funding of elections to attract more diverse candidates.
3. Recognize that corporations are not people, and money is not speech.
4. Pass a constitutional amendment to overturn the influence of corporations as currently permitted by Citizens United or bring a new case that can overrule Citizens United to the Supreme Court.

### **Better Voter Representation and Voter Satisfaction**

Our current electoral system concentrates power and excludes people. Eliminating structural impediments can result in inclusive representation and improve voter satisfaction. We believe we must:

1. Support the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact.
2. Oppose an Article V constitutional convention which can become controlled by special interests.
3. Support statehood for the District of Columbia.
4. Create new district maps that should be the least gerrymandered and that meets the required districting criteria.
5. Adopt proportional representation for multi-member bodies. When members of a multi-member body are elected in single-winner contests, consolidate districts to provide for multi-winner contests.
6. Replace plurality voting with methods that allow voters to rate or rank candidates.

### **Government Ethics**

Ethical behavior of decision-makers and decision-influencers affects citizens' trust in their government. We should minimize and penalize opportunities for corruption. We believe we must:

1. Require the executive and legislative branches to maintain publicly available logs of government officials' interaction with lobbyists and constituents.
2. Oppose elected officials simultaneously working as lobbyists or leaving office and then becoming paid lobbyists.
3. Require national and state legislators to avoid financial conflicts of interest and enforce the 2012 STOCK Act.
4. Require the US president, vice-president, US senators, congressmen and governors to place their assets in a blind trust or in index funds.
5. Every government employee and contract worker have the obligation to refuse any order which would cause them to violate their oath of office.
6. Protect whistleblowers from retaliation and public identification.
7. Require ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council) or other template bills to clearly communicate the origin of the bill text.
8. Publicly announce Requests for Proposals for government contracts, have an open application process with public, archived records, including justification for choosing the eventual contractor up to and including details of the applicants' scores.

### **Government Accountability**

Government officials should govern. We believe we must:

1. Change rules to make a government shutdown harder to achieve by requiring legislators to increase the debt ceiling as needed but also to simultaneously create a fiscally responsible plan to reduce the debt in the future.
2. Institute a GAVEL amendment for the US Senate and the US House of Representatives so that every bill and every nominee get a committee vote.
3. Demand each branch of government take its checks-and-balances responsibility seriously, both in dealings with other branches of government and within its own branch.
4. Repair US Senate rules. As long as our federal government is paralyzed by political polarization, the US Senate rules should be changed to spread power among its members rather than concentrate power in the Majority Leader.
5. Repair our US legislative vacancy process. For a vacancy in a position requiring approval by a legislative body, an appointed acting official should be approved within 90 days or vacate the post.

## Media Reform

An open and accountable government requires that voters be factually informed on issues, candidates and the workings of government. A functioning and trustworthy media are a cornerstone of a healthy democracy. We believe we must:

1. Defend fact-based journalism and take action to hold the media accountable.
2. Protect journalists, their sources, and the freedom of the media to provide critical oversight of government activities including war news when doing so does not endanger our troops.
3. Rollback laws and policies, e.g., 1996 Telecommunications Act, that have allowed media ownership to be consolidated into the hands of a few, and require Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) access to provide free, fair, and open public access television as a First Amendment, Freedom of Speech forum for all US residents on an equal and non-commercial basis.
4. Provide financial incentives for media competition, local ownership, and independent media.
5. Support Net Neutrality and oppose efforts of large broadband networks to charge content providers for access to customers.
6. Return to the principles of the Fairness Doctrine and Equal-Time Rule. 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.
7. Return control of Voice of America to a non-partisan board with independent auditors.
8. Significantly increase government funding of public broadcasting, e.g., PBS.
9. Require licensed broadcast media to provide an increased level of public service broadcasting.
10. Require that ownership of media be prominently disclosed.
11. Regulate data collection to prevent threats to democracy and to individuals' privacy.



## IMMIGRATION

We honor and defend the rights of everyone in Colorado regardless of citizenship. We value the contributions of immigrants and refugees to the vibrancy of our state. We value the contributions that those from other lands bring to our national economic, intellectual, and cultural life. We value diversity and must provide a pathway for aspiring Americans to earn citizenship. We recognize that the current immigration system is broken.

We have seen an increase in hate crimes and activity of white supremacist and white nationalist groups throughout the US, including in Colorado. Immigrant communities have become a target for the current administration. We have seen the ending of DACA, turning away of refugees, and termination of Temporary Protected Status for vulnerable communities.

### Therefore:

1. We support a compassionate immigration reform bill that promotes a more direct pathway toward citizenship for undocumented immigrants.
2. We call for upholding rights guaranteed by the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights to all persons in the United States regardless of citizenship status.
3. We oppose efforts to build or finance a border wall between the US and Mexico and support strategic demolition of existing wall structures.
4. We support legislation that provides a pathway to citizenship for students and those who came here as children, which includes reinstating DACA and passing a Clean-DREAM Act.
5. We support continuing in-state tuition rates for undocumented students and the expansion of financial aid for undocumented college students.
6. We support streamlining applications for visas, work permits, and residency into a more just and humane process with substantial reduction in wait time and backlogs.
7. We oppose separating families. We support strengthening local immigrant and refugee communities, family reunification, and accepting close family members of current or future immigrants.
8. We oppose the practice of deporting immigrants and/or refugees to areas where their health, safety, or lives are in jeopardy.
9. We support reinstating TPS to those who have lost this protection and extending an opportunity for residency to all TPS holders.
10. We support the Colorado immigrant driver's license program and urge its expansion, so more immigrants can obtain a driver's license.
11. We support undocumented immigrants having a voice to report crimes without fear of deportation, and therefore urge the repeal of state and federal laws and practices that erode trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement agencies. We support sanctuary state policies to protect undocumented immigrants from deportation. We support establishing and adequately funding law enforcement training programs to identify, prevent, and end profiling and discrimination of immigrants.
12. We believe that undocumented immigrants who have committed no criminal offense should not be subject to incarceration or detention, especially to meet Department of Homeland Security's daily quota, which was established to deliver millions of dollars a year to private prison companies.
13. Children taken into custody by the Department of Homeland security should not be detained in cages and should receive appropriate nutrition, medical attention and mental health services while in custody. Non-citizens that have served the U.S. Military should not be deported unless they have been dishonorably discharged or committed serious crimes.

14. We call for a moratorium on deportations of all immigrant community members, who have not been convicted of serious crimes, until the enactment of comprehensive immigration reform.
15. We oppose the classification of undocumented immigration as a criminal offense.
16. We call for a congressional review of the actions and administrative oversight of ICE and the abuses and weaponization of its authority against immigrant communities.
17. We support protections for immigrant workers including labor laws that prevent exploitation, portability to other authorized employers, appropriate living conditions, adherence to International Labor Organization, standard of rights to earned wages, safe and humane working conditions, the right to travel between the United States and an individual's country of origin, and the opportunity for all workers to engage in collective bargaining.
18. We support a reform of the H-1B Visa Worker Program to address worker abuses and displacement of US workers.
19. We oppose laws that make any immigrants, including those of long-standing residency, ineligible for health care, public assistance and other essential programs.
20. We support cancellation of deportation orders, the wider use of U-Visas (giving victims of certain crimes temporary work eligibility), and a streamlined roadmap to citizenship for undocumented workers who provide information on violations of labor law by their employers or for other crimes.
21. We oppose any legislation that criminalizes humane acts of assistance to undocumented immigrants or the immigrant community.
22. We believe immigrant populations, regardless of citizenship status, should be engaged and encouraged to participate in the civic process across all levels – **excluding** the right to vote.
23. We support foreign policy and trade agreements that help other countries expand their economies in order to provide their citizens with work opportunities and support labor rights that improve their standard of living, making emigration a matter of choice and not necessity.
24. We recognize the legitimate rights of refugees fleeing persecution, violence, and climate degradation, and therefore we support a modernized process that allows for more individuals seeking refuge to enter the US quickly and securely.
25. We oppose the practice of deporting non-citizen veterans who have served in the US military and urge a moratorium on the practice which would apply retroactively. As such, we support a fast-track process to allow non-citizen US veterans to become US citizens.
26. We oppose any attempts to eliminate birthright citizenship guaranteed by the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution.
27. We urge our legislators to reject xenophobia, ensure that our laws fully protect and promote equality, safety, and respect for all people in the US, so that all people can live without fear, abuse, or retaliation. We reject cutting back on the number of visas issued for legal immigration.
28. We support increases in federal funding for English language, civic education, and citizenship classes.
29. We support funding and federal action to address the health, safety and family unification needs of immigrants detained at U.S. borders, including, but is not limited to, adequate food and shelter, treatment of medical and health needs, education for children, keeping families together, fast tracking hearings through additional judges and guaranteeing legal representation.



## DEPARTMENTS OF STATE, DEFENSE & HOMELAND SECURITY

Colorado Democrats believe our foreign policy should reflect our highest principles of democracy and human rights. We believe the United States should engage with the people of the world as partners, contributing to the peace and security of the world. We believe peace and people prosper by giving hope, eliminating injustice, lifting the blinders of ignorance, and promoting mutual respect. We believe conflict should be settled through diplomacy whenever possible and military action is a last resort to be executed proportionately to the threat and in accordance with international laws and agreements. Colorado Democrats believe the United States best upholds its values when we work for equity, justice, sustainability, and peace around the world in community with the people and other countries of the world.

### US Role in the World and International Community

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

1. Base US foreign policy on the values for freedom, democracy, the well-being of a people and their environment, and the rights of workers to a living wage.
2. Partner within the community of nations to achieve peaceful resolution of conflict, protect human rights, and economically just trade policies.
3. Make every effort to normalize our relations with all countries.
4. Ensure full United States participation in the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, and ratification of the Law of the Sea.
5. Pay the debt the United States government owes to the United Nations for past dues and peacekeeping expenses.
6. Promote the right to self-determination, support free, fair and transparent elections in all countries, ensure full participation and protection of all people in their respective nations, unbiased media coverage and unbiased public and private education.
7. Oppose military engagement, or arms aid or sales, to bolster the positions of dictators, violators of human rights, or for the purpose of promoting regime change not supported by the people of a nation.
8. Condemn the use of military and financial support of coups against freely and fairly elected governments.

## **US Approach to Sustainable Peace**

Extremism is best fought by giving hope, eliminating injustice, lifting the blinders of ignorance. We believe we should:

1. Provide funding and support of internationally established peacekeeping forces, humanitarian assistance, and address the needs of refugees.
2. Support foreign aid which makes available all forms of birth control and treatments of sexually transmitted diseases.
3. Support policies that focus energy and resources toward working with communities on a global level to establish peace and unity.
4. Reaffirm our relationship with and commitment to the community of nations to work collaboratively to: rejoin the Paris Climate Accords; reduce carbon emissions; move toward a renewable energy economy; achieve peaceful resolutions to international conflict; and reinstate country of origin labeling (COOL).

## **International Human Rights**

1. Recognize terrorists as criminals to be dealt with by appropriate international systems of criminal justice.
2. Oppose all forms of genocide, ethnic cleansing, violent suppression of peaceful protest, mass rape and apartheid and support the United Nations initiatives to intervene where necessary.
3. Oppose the conscription of children.
4. Oppose forced medical experiments on humans.
5. Close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay and end the practice of indefinite detention without a trial.
6. Lead in developing international policies that consider equitable resource distribution and use.

## **US Approach to Militarization**

1. Work to achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and support full adherence to the Anti-Land Mine, Anti-Cluster Bomb, Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaties and international treaties for non-militarization of space.
2. Support solutions to areas of conflict that enable the withdrawal of all US troops and reduce the number of US military bases around the world.
3. Oppose the use of drone strikes except in the case of a legally declared war or international police action.
4. Use ethical and appropriate technologies and methods, domestically and internationally, in a way that does not impinge upon our civil liberties in order to protect our nation.
5. Audit defense contractors and ensure that unauthorized payments or cost overruns are reimbursed by the contractors and ensure that profit is never a motivation for war.

## **US Approach to Conflict Generally**

1. 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.
2. Expand the War Powers Act to preclude any invasion on foreign soils or preemptive military action without a declaration of war by Congress.
3. Oppose regime change and unilateral military occupation
4. Use only the appropriate military force and only as a last resort in defense of the United States from direct attack.
5. Prohibit the use of torture and "enhanced interrogation techniques" on domestic or foreign soil.

## **US Approach to Specific Conflicts**

### **Terrorism**

1. Address the global threat of international terrorism at its source through education, reduction of poverty, ethnic disputes, resource limitations, and extremism.

### **Israel & Palestine**

1. Promote Israeli security, Palestinian rights, and democratic values by working toward a just and equitable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
2. 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.

### **Middle East**

1. Oppose any unjustified invasion, attack, or military action against any country in the Middle East.
2. Stand by our allies to develop an improved strategy to defeat ISIS.
3. Support multilateral international coordination of political, military, financial and humanitarian efforts in areas of conflict Middle East.
4. Prohibit war profiteering in any reconstructive efforts in the Middle East, or other theaters of US military operations.
5. Commit to using dialogue and diplomacy to achieve a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace between all the peoples of the Middle East.

### **Cuba**

1. Normalize relations with Cuba.

## **Anti-Democratic Interference**

1. We oppose anti-democratic values in governments around the world, and their actions to undermine democratic governance in those nations and abroad.