

# 2006 Boulder County Democratic Party Platform

On the evening of March 21, in caucuses across Boulder County, Democratic Party voters had a precedent setting opportunity to discuss and vote upon the 2006 Platform proposal, issue by issue. Those voting passed the majority of the platform, as presented. Only three policy recommendations were voted down and are not included in the following platform. The issues are now listed in an order reflecting the average of caucus participants' ranking choices. Note: While impeachment received a greater number of first place choices than its placement here would indicate, the number of last place choices it received mandates this position (see first place tally results on the addendum page). This platform will be submitted for approval to the Boulder County Democratic Party Assembly.

## The Boulder County Democratic Party Preamble

The Boulder County Democratic Party seeks to create and support a community of informed citizens actively engaged in the processes of democracy. We believe government must be open and accountable, and that it must dedicate itself to the common good today and for future generations.

Boulder County Democrats are champions of peace, equality, social justice and civil liberties. We believe that freedom of conscience and freedom of choice are innate rights of every human being. We are dedicated to ensuring that every citizen has access to adequate food, shelter and medicine and real opportunity to prosper.

We are prepared to defend our nation and our values. Still, we believe that war is waged only as a last resort. The powerful should never be allowed to silence the powerless. The immense blessings bestowed upon our county, state and nation obligate us to provide leadership toward international cooperation, peace and prosperity for all.

## Issue A: Health Care

**Affordable health care is a critical human need.** The current health care system in the United States is in crisis: far too many are uninsured or under-insured, costs have escalated dramatically, and the administration of the private medical bureaucracy system is wildly inefficient. **Boulder County Democrats support the development of a universal health care system that provides equal and affordable access to quality health care for every citizen.**

### Policy Preferences:

- We believe that a universal health care, single payer system is the most effective and efficient means of providing equal access to quality health care for every citizen – with medical providers paid through one agency (public or quasi-public), strong cost containment programs and emphasis on prevention.
- We call for repeal the Medicare reform act.
- Democrats support legalization of safe prescription drug purchases in the United States from countries such as Canada.

## Issue B: Foreign Policy and National Security

**The American people must stand united in common defense against global threats without sacrificing the nation's central values, and with an unwavering commitment to international cooperation and prosperity.** We call on our country to:

- Dedicate its significant intellectual, economic, diplomatic and creative resources toward the elimination of world hunger, poverty, disease, environmental degradation, terrorism and conflict.
- Honor existing international treaties and strengthen its collective security relationships, including those of the United Nations.
- Reject the policy of unilateral preemptive strike unless there is overwhelming evidence of an imminent threat.
- Support the humane treatment of prisoners of war and reject the use of torture.

### Policy Preferences:

- We believe the United States should agree to resolve disputes with – and become a party to – the International Criminal Court.
- We support a full and detailed evaluation of our current role in Iraq. We support the rapid development of an exit strategy, an immediate transition to a broad international presence in Iraq, and recognition of the US obligation to reduce the suffering of the Iraqi people brought on by this war.

## **Issue C: Conservation and Energy Independence**

**We support environmentally responsible growth, rapid movement toward energy independence, and protection of precious natural resources** including air, water, wildlife, forests and public lands, to ensure the long-term health and sustainability of the Earth and its resources for future generations. Specifically, Boulder County Democrats support:

- Development of renewable and alternative sources of energy.
- Dramatic increases in Federal CAFE standards.
- Conservation as a significant component of energy policy.
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants.
- Ratification by the United States of the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change.
- Balanced local growth with thoughtful zoning, public education, open space protection and regional planning initiatives to mitigate or eliminate the impact of local sales tax competition.

### **Policy Preferences:**

- The price of newly developed property in Boulder County should fully reflect the cost of sewers, roads, schools, public transportation, protection of biodiversity, water and other infrastructure demands. Developers should not be allowed to simply pass these costs on to the general community.
- We support a national gasoline tax to fund alternative energy development.
- Democrats support the elimination of all subsidies for nuclear and fossil fuels.
- Democrats propose a national policy objective of eliminating entirely any consumption of foreign oil by 2025.
- We support increased funding for research on conservation methods, efficient use of energy, renewable energy, recycling, and environmental innovation.

## **Issue D: Civil Liberties**

**Government's duty to protect its citizens includes a duty to protect each citizen's privacy.** We affirm the absolute rights defined by the Constitution, legal precedent and those granted by international treaty. We hold that:

- The government has no legitimate authority to intrude into the private lives of individuals who have not displayed evidence of being a threat to the security of others.
- The President of the United States is an elected official, bound by public trust, and is fully obligated to adhere to the laws of the United States, including those that protect the privacy of the individual citizen.
- We hold that government must be open and accountable, with power balanced among all three branches of the federal government.

### **Policy Preferences:**

- We call for the repeal of the PATRIOT Act with concurrent enactment of appropriate safeguards to ensure the well being of Americans and the civil liberties we hold so dear.
- We call for a full independent investigation of the circumvention of the FISA Court, and, if necessary, the enactment of laws to clarify the absolute illegality of spying on the American people.
- We affirm the principle of separation of church and state and believe that our government should not judge a citizen by his or her religious beliefs, nor should religious belief have any bearing whatsoever on one's qualification for public office. We oppose religious harassment and coercion. We affirm the right of everyone to practice his or her religion, or lack thereof.
- Laws and enactment of laws in Colorado that provide for **civil** marriage between any two consenting, committed, unrelated adults, should accord the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities to all married couples.
- Laws and enactment of laws in Colorado that provide for marriage between any two consenting, committed, unrelated adults, should accord the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities to all married couples.
- We support the Constitutional reproductive rights of women including the right in the early months of pregnancy to terminate that pregnancy.

## **Issue E: Education**

**Equal access to a high-quality, publicly-funded education is a central tenet of American democracy.** It also is critical to the economic, social and intellectual health of our state, our nation, and the world. Consequently, Boulder County Democrats strongly support:

- Public funding adequate to guarantee a quality education for every American.
- Training and wages for teachers consistent with the high value of their contribution to society.
- Strong financial support from the state for all Colorado's public universities and colleges.
- Federal funding for financial aid programs sufficient to compensate for tuition increases nationwide.

### **Policy Preferences:**

- We oppose vouchers. We believe that the potential socio-economic and religious segregation created by a voucher system will be detrimental to the quality of education for all children.
- In order to attract and retain the best educators possible, we believe professors working at Colorado's public universities and colleges should be paid professional wages that are competitive with those of professors working at peer institutions.
- Boulder County Democrats believe that the availability of quality early childhood education programs, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, is vital toward breaking the cycle of poverty and providing academic and economic opportunity for the next generation.
- The Boulder County Democrats call upon the state and federal government to enhance college access for disadvantaged youth through improving the ties between the K-12 education system and the higher education system.

## **Issue F: Economic Prosperity and Social Justice**

**We support policy that promotes diversity, social justice and economic opportunity for every individual.**

Specifically, U.S. policy should provide long-term economic stability while prioritizing:

- Reduction of the national debt.
- Long-term solvency of our Social Security system and other programs such as Medicare and Medicaid.
- Assured access for every individual to the basic necessities of life, including adequate medical care, shelter, nutrition, clean water, clean air, and a fair and living wage.
- Increased funding for education and training to enhance American competitiveness in global markets.
- Support only for those free trade agreements that guarantee the right of sovereign governments to protect the economic, environmental and physical health of their own citizens.
- Support for family planning efforts worldwide to dramatically improve the health and well-being of women and children.

### **Policy Preferences:**

- Although we recognize the economic value of some government subsidies to serve the public good, we call for the elimination of subsidies that are best categorized as corporate welfare.
- Permanent tax cuts are irresponsible fiscal policy and therefore are opposed by Democrats.
- Corporations that do not honor their obligation to the public trust and common good should be subject to revocation of their corporate charter.
- The federal, state and local minimum wage should be raised to a level that provides a reasonable living.
- Affirmative Action programs that have helped to ensure diversity and equal access to education and economic opportunity should be maintained.

## **Issue G: Campaign Reform and the Media**

**A healthy democracy is dependent upon an informed electorate with fair and equal representation in government.** We support:

- Election and campaign laws to ensure that the powerful have no advantage over ordinary citizens.
- Federal laws that guarantee and encourage the absolute freedom of the media to provide critical oversight of governmental activities and public access to information.
- Policies that will limit media consolidation and encourage competition to ensure the media's role as critical and unbiased observers.

### **Policy Preferences:**

- The Boulder County Democratic Party supports a transparent and verifiable voting process with the inclusion of paper ballots.
- Periodic upgrading of the 2002 Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act. After every congressional election (every two years), we believe these reforms should be reviewed specifically with the intent of eliminating newly discovered loopholes and abuses.
- Reinstitution of equal time laws. Recognizing that the airwaves are public property, we support laws requiring broadcast license holders to give free substantial airtime, equal in both quality and quantity, to all qualified candidates.
- Clean Money/Clean Elections. We support and will seek to institute a system of campaign reform called "Clean Money/Clean Elections." This system already exists in Arizona, Maine, Massachusetts, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Vermont, and allows for:
  - 1) a very limited number of modest contributions to use as seed money for the campaign;
  - 2) a certain number of moderate, per person contributions that will be used to determine eligibility for the program;
  - 3) participants in the CM/CE program to receive public funding to match non-participant soft money and special-interest donations.
- Rollback of media ownership limits to pre-1996 levels. We oppose the recent steps taken by the FCC to allow greater market ownership by a single organization.
- Increased government funding for public broadcasting.
- Full, fair, and readily available public access to all public information.

## **Issue H: Impeachment of President Bush**

**The Boulder County Democratic Party firmly believes that the laws set forth by the US Constitution demand a Congressional Inquiry into the legality of actions the President and his administration have undertaken.** We support the creation of a committee to examine this Administration's:

- Intent to go to war before congressional authorization, and the manipulation of pre-war intelligence to achieve that aim.
- Manipulation of pre-war intelligence.
- Encouragement and countenance of torture.
- Retaliation against critics, including, but not limited to, the outing of the CIA operative, Valerie Plame.
- The illegal circumvention of the FISA Court.
- Repeated assertions that the federal government could not have anticipated the 9/11 attacks or the breaching of the New Orleans levees, with indisputable evidence to the contrary.

Should the President and his administration be found liable of any of the above actions, we support the drafting of articles of impeachment.

# BCDP 2006 Platform Addendum

Because of time constraints at the caucuses, confusion on voting procedures and inconsistencies in the votes, the resulting statistics are limited in value, other than to indicate both the unity Democrats hold for a majority of the issues considered and some of our apparent differences. There were close calls, though, and **two policy recommendations, #3 and #5 from Issue A: Foreign Policy and National Security**, were within a margin of error of passing. In the spirit of fairness, we felt we should bring these two recommendations to the assembly for a final vote. They are as follows:

3. We call for the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq by December 2006. A multi-national plan should be implemented for the deployment of an international peacekeeping force. No additional money should be expended in Iraq until a specific exit strategy is in place.
5. We call for Congress to create a Cabinet Level Department of Peace.

Also, while there were many wonderful resolutions at caucus, none were able to pass in the majority of the nearly 200 precincts that met that night. But again, two clearly had much support in the majority of precincts that did consider them.

**The Resolution in Support of Boulder County Employees to Form a Union** passed in 68 of the 73 precincts that considered it. We believe this needs to be considered once more as a body at the County Assembly.

**The Resolution in Support of a Fair Immigration Policy** also did pass out of a significant number of the precincts that considered it, though not by nearly as much as the Union resolution. Yet because immigration has become of such tremendous concern for so many Americans in the weeks since the caucuses and because diversity is of concern to Boulder County Democrats, we felt it necessary to bring this resolution to the Assembly for a vote as well.

The following planks to be considered are as follows:

## Issue I: Unionization

**As a basic human right, working people should be free to form unions.** The Boulder County Democratic Party supports the right of Boulder County employees to unionize, and calls upon county commissioners and other elected county officials to:

- Establish a process whereby employees by majority vote can decide whether to form a union.
- Direct county management to be neutral on this issue.
- Recognize and negotiate with the employee union, should employees decide to form a union.

## Issue J: Immigrants and Foreign Nationals

**Democrats support the development of an immigration system that honors the human dignity of every worker whether documented or undocumented, includes the full protection of U.S. labor law, protects against exploitation, values diversity and provides the opportunity for workers to earn citizenship.** Specifically, Democrats support:

1. "Earned Legalization," allowing current undocumented immigrants to apply for permanent status by demonstrating their good moral character and contributions to the United States. We oppose all legislation that militarizes or creates an "iron curtain" border, includes mass deportation of non-criminal community members, changes unlawful entry from a petty offense to a felony, or criminalizes human acts of assistance to undocumented immigrants.
2. The Federal bipartisan DREAM Act providing citizenship for students who finish high school and complete two years of college or military service. We also support in-state college tuition rates for undocumented students who graduate from Colorado high schools.
3. Legal channels for immigrants to fill jobs in the United States for which there are no U.S. workers.

### **Ranking Order According to First Place Choice:**

1. Foreign Policy (193 1st place votes)
2. Health Care (130 1st place votes)
3. Conservation (93 1st place votes) (tie)
3. Civil Liberties (93 1st place votes) (tie)
5. Education (66 1st place votes)
6. Impeachment (64 1st place votes)
7. Economic Prosperity and Social Justice (39 1st place votes)
8. Campaign Reform (34 1st place votes)

### **Other Issues of Concern:**

Finally, we do not want to ignore the many serious and pressing issues that were brought up at caucus. All of these issues deserve serious examination by the party, the candidates, and the body present today.

Issues brought forward included (no particular order)

- 1.) Saving PERA from private interests
- 2.) Instant Run-off voting
- 3.) Criminal Justice Reform (including abolishing the war on drugs / death penalty)
- 4.) Saving our public lands from being sold to pay off national debt
- 5.) Making the PUC publicly elected rather than appointed
- 6.) Strengthening our stance on reproductive freedom
- 7.) Abolishing the Electoral College
- 8.) Protecting Endangered Species
- 9.) Holding the President accountable via censure
- 10.) Creating REAL tools for evaluating and improving our students instead of relying on solely on CSAP and NCLB.