

BCDP 2010 Proposed Platform – March 2, 2010

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. 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 the real opportunity to prosper. We recognize that these values are irrelevant if we do not, at the same time, maintain the health of the planet. While we believe that war must be waged only as a last resort, we are prepared to defend our nation and our values. We are mindful of the blessings of democracy as well as our consequent obligation to contribute toward international cooperation, peace, and prosperity - not only for ourselves, but for all.

A. Health Care

Boulder County Democrats believe that affordable health care is a basic human right. Far too many are uninsured or under-insured; the entanglement of coverage with employment not only encourages discrimination against workers and family members with mental or physical health challenges but is a major factor in the outsourcing of American jobs. In principle, therefore

- We support a single-payer or an expanded Medicare system for all because it contains costs while providing health care for everyone.
- We support the development of a universal health care system, including health and wellness programs, that provides equitable and affordable access to quality health care for everyone, regardless of preexisting conditions, marital status and age.

Policy Preferences:

- A single payer/ universal health care system.
- A robust national or state public option.
- No insurance mandates without a public option.
- The right of citizens to buy into Medicare
- Improving access to Medicaid for low income Coloradans. This includes funding SCHIP; safety-net services and community health centers; full use of advanced practice nurses and strategies for increasing access to outlying communities.
- Increase Medicaid reimbursements for advanced practice nurses.
- Increasing Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements to a level that would increase the viability of medical practices.
- No further reimbursement cuts.
- Legislation that increases transparency and accountability when private companies which use public money to provide health care.
- Banning exclusion of health coverage for pre-existing conditions and the practice of charging higher premiums for women or for other populations considered as high risk.
- Portability of health insurance.
- Increasing affordability by adjusting premium rates to personal income levels and providing group coverage opportunities to individuals.
- Legalization of safe prescription drug purchases in the United States from other countries.
- Public regulation of Pharmaceutical and insurance companies.
- Equal coverage for mental and physical health needs, recognizing that mental and physical health are intertwined and that prevention and treatment have equivalent priority.
- Expansion of dental, long-term, and disability services.
- Freedom to purchase insurance that covers any medical procedure allowed under the law.

- Subsidies for low-income women for abortion
- Subsidies for both men and women for birth control services.

B.US Foreign & National Security Policy:

The American people stand united in common defense against global threats without compromising the nation's core values and including an unwavering commitment to international security and cooperation. We stand for the following principles:

- Eliminating world hunger, poverty, disease, environmental degradation, extremism, terrorism, and war.
- Honoring existing international treaties and collective security relationships including those of the United Nations Charter.
- Opposing unprovoked and preemptive military aggression in accordance with the US Constitution, International Law, treaties, and conventions.
- Supporting the humane treatment of prisoners of war and rejecting the use of torture in accordance with the Hague and Geneva Conventions.
- Implementing immediate action to halt global warming as a priority US Foreign Policy objective.
- Establishing a strategic energy policy within the framework of U.S. foreign and domestic guidelines.
- Providing international leadership toward the elimination of nuclear weapons.
- Honoring international treaties for the non-militarization of space.
- Supporting human rights globally and in accordance with the UN Charter, treaties and conventions.
- Honoring the sacrifices of our military veterans to our nation with policies supporting the wellbeing of veterans and their families.

Policy Preferences:

- Support US membership in the UN International Criminal Court, in accordance with US law, precedents, treaties, and conventions.
- Support an immediate transition to a broad international presence in Iraq and Afghanistan, rather than relying primarily on the U.S. military to fight the Taliban and Al-Qaeda.
- Encourage international funding of Iraq's infrastructure reconstruction and the Iraqi petroleum industry's redevelopment.
- Support a two-state solution for the Israeli / Palestinian conflict and oppose Israeli settlements in occupied zones.
- Support fair trade, balanced trade, and call for re-examination of NAFTA and other trade agreements in light of US trade deficits.
- Support temporary increases to US corporate and individual taxation to finance protracted military operations abroad necessitated by war.
- Advance policies for the US government to fully support the United Nations-African Union peacekeeping forces to protect the millions of Darfuri civilians from genocide and mass rape
- Oppose the US complicity in conscription of children by foreign militaries and support the passing of The Child Soldiers Prevention Act
- Support a cabinet level Department of Peace
- Support the banning of land mines
- Provide adequate assistance with housing, physical and mental healthcare, education, rehabilitation and job trainings for veterans and their immediate families.

C. Conservation and Energy Independence

It is now widely held that environmental problems are global in nature and that it is in the best interest of all nations to pursue policies of sustainable development (United Nations' Brundtland Commission report, 1987). Boulder County Democrats acknowledge the intersection of environmental justice and sustainability and, in the interest of fairness,

are committed to ensuring that disproportionately affected populations are included in all stages of public policy development and implementation.

We believe that global warming is a real threat to our way of life and that the growth of the human population in the United States and on the planet increases the likelihood of famine, disease, and war and further stresses the environment. We believe the federal government's current inaction to be irresponsible and immoral. We therefore call on our leaders to take action to include policies which support the reduction of over population and mandate sustainable development, rapid movement toward energy independence, and protection of precious natural resources including air, water, wildlife, forests and public lands.

Furthermore we believe that reform of agricultural policies is needed to promote a healthier population and cleaner environment.

Policy Preferences

Boulder County Democrats call for enactment of policies that will:

- Mandate ratification by the United States of the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change.
- Establish conservation as a significant component of energy policy with increased funding for research on conservation methods, efficient use of energy, renewable energy, recycling and innovation.
- Implement mandatory recycling measures similar to, or stronger than, those established by California
- Support environmental education in public schools.
- Control unchecked population growth through age-appropriate sex education and access to affordable contraception to all persons of reproductive age.
- Support rapid development of clean, renewable alternative energy sources.
- Increase CAFE standards to 40 mpg by 2015 (CAFE = Corporate Average Fuel Economy).
- Phase out all coal plants and/or energy consumption by coal-fired generation.
- Eliminate all subsidies for fossil fuels.
- Eliminate all subsidies for nuclear fuels.
- Eliminate entirely any consumption of foreign oil by 2025.
- Provide incentives for hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles
- Mandate replacement of government fleets to 100 percent "light on energy consumption" vehicles (such as hybrid, electric and alternative-energy vehicles) as old vehicles are retired.
- Provide funding adequate to create public transportation systems that are comprehensive and efficient. Emphasis should be on alternative "rapid or reasonably equivalent" transportation for both local and long distance transit.
- Dramatically reduce net greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants to 350 ppm CO²
- Mandate severe penalties and no-tolerance policies for polluters.
- Uphold the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, EPA's National Environmental Protection Act and the Forest Protection Act to the highest standard in Colorado
- Establish stringent requirements and fees for commercial or consumptive access to our mineral, petroleum, forest, and water resources along with strict financial and liability mechanisms and reclamation bonds to ensure safe practices and full restoration at project's completion.
- Require all government buildings to meet standards equivalent to the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green-building certifications.
- Establish new building code standards for Boulder County with greater emphasis on green-design requirements for all new construction.
- Require all government offices to have "green" purchasing contracts for materials and equipment.
- Require mining companies to disclose chemical procedures, including "fracking," that impact groundwater.
- Require manufactures to be responsible for the full life cycle impacts of electronic products.

- Balance local growth with thoughtful zoning, public education, open space protection and true regional taxing, planning and revenue sharing districts to mitigate or eliminate the negative impact of local sales tax competition.
- Require newly developed property in Boulder County to fully reflect the cost of sewers, roads, schools, public transportation, protection of biodiversity, water and other infrastructure demands
- Shift agricultural subsidies and incentives to organic farms to minimize toxic chemicals, hormones and antibiotics in the food supply, water, soil and air.
- Promote healthy foods in society and school nutrition programs.
- Strengthen animal welfare protections to eliminate cruelty to farm animals.
- Regulate factory farms that pollute our communities and waterways.
- Ban genetically engineered crops until the impacts on the environment, farmers, and the public have been fully analyzed and mitigated.
- Support statewide legislation to allow “community choice aggregation.”
- Affirm that federal laws should not preempt the ability of states and local governments to enact stricter green initiatives.

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:

- All persons residing in the United States deserve equal protection under the law regardless of their race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and national origin.
- 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.
- 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 strict adherence to the writ of habeas corpus.
- We call for the closing of Guantanamo.
- With respect to all Guantanamo prisoners, we call for strict adherence to the Geneva Conventions. Prisoners shall be considered either “prisoners of war” (and treated in accordance with the Geneva Conventions) or civilians entitled to humane treatment and the right of due process in a timely manner.
- The United States must honor international agreements that prohibit all forms of torture, including water boarding.
- The United States should cease and desist from any engagement in extraordinary rendition (exporting of prisoners for interrogation by another country whose laws are more lax than ours).
- We call for a full independent investigation of the circumvention of the **Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act** Court by the Bush administration, 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.
- Democrats recognize domestic partnerships and believe that Colorado laws that provide for civil marriage between any two consenting, committed, unrelated adults must accord the same rights, privileges and responsibilities accorded to all married couples.

- Marriage between any two consenting, committed adults is a fundamental right. We call for repeal of the **Defense of Marriage Act**, originally signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1996, that defines marriage as a legal union between one man and one woman.
- We support the Constitutional reproductive rights of women including the right to be fully informed of reproductive options and the right in the early months of pregnancy to terminate that pregnancy without government interference.
- We affirm that women and men have the right to affordable, accessible birth control methods without government or outside interference.

E. ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Boulder County Democrats believe that access to employment at a living wage (assuring adequate shelter, food, and health care) is a basic right for every individual, regardless of race, color, creed, or sexual orientation.

- We support policies that promote economic opportunity and social justice as well as diversity in the workplace.
- We believe that adequate taxation, including a progressive state and federal income tax, is necessary in order to pay for community state and federal services that are necessary for a civilized and functioning society

Federal policies should:

- Make reduction of unemployment from current 9-10 percent levels the first priority
- Continue and expand public works and infrastructure programs, utilizing this opportunity to replace decaying bridges, repair and rebuild schools, create incentives and direct assistance to improve urban water systems and water treatment facilities, and strengthen the national electrical distribution grid
- Sustain and increase funding for education and training for young people and older Americans seeking to upgrade or retool their skills
- Continue to assure long-term solvency of social security, Medicare, and Medicaid
- Support free trade agreements only if these respect the right of sovereign governments to protect the health and welfare of their own citizens; free trade agreements not meeting this condition should be nullifiable by Congress
- Repeal Bush-era tax cuts to help move toward fiscal responsibility and a balanced budget, realizing that continued deficit spending may be necessary because of persisting effects of the 2008-2009 recession
- Restore the top individual income tax rate to levels that support a prosperous middle class.
- Eliminate the ceiling (currently \$106,800) on income that is subject to Social Security tax.
- Change the bankruptcy code to protect consumers from insolvency due to externally caused situations such as medical expenses and predatory lending practices.
- Provide sufficient numbers of case workers to assist those in need and, when possible, return them to self-sufficiency
- Provide adequate housing assistance to the needy
- Support the Employee Free Choice act, which gives workers the fundamental right to assemble, organize and bargain collectively at their workplace.

State, county, and local policies should:

- Support police, fire, and Emergency Services to assure safe streets, neighborhoods, and communities
- Conduct assessments of the benefits and costs of incarceration for petty drug-related other non-violent offenses, as opposed to community monitoring and community service

- Support the efforts of the Colorado Sentencing Reform Commission to examine sentencing reform across the system
- Build criminal justice systems which are fair to individuals across socioeconomic levels, age, ethnicity and cultural boundaries.
- Provide more adequate mental health services to incarcerated individuals

F. 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:

- Funding for public education that is allocated equitably across the state.
- Funding adequate to maximize the recognized benefits of smaller class size and inclusion mandates.
- Training and wages for teachers consistent with the high value of their contribution to society.
- Public education that balances emphasis on core knowledge with applied knowledge, problem solving, creativity, information gathering and learning skills.
- Funding of vocational training and training for those who may not be college bound.
- 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.
- We 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.
- We call upon the state and federal government to enhance college access for disadvantaged youth by improving the ties between the K-12 education system and the higher education system.
- We support reforming both the manner in which children are tested for proficiency and that in which schools are held accountable for student achievement
- We call for repeal of TABOR to allow for adequate funding of public education.
- We support funding for schools to provide curriculum that addresses citizenship, civics and leadership development.
- We support the Dream Act providing state college access and in-state tuition for all state residents regardless of documentation.
- We support funding for "hope scholarships" that provide an incentive and reward for graduates with good grades.
- We support the funding of programs for parents of disadvantaged students such as English as a Second Language classes and parenting classes.
- We support hiring policies in state-funded colleges and universities that ensure that professors are qualified but not intent on using their position solely for the purpose of espousing personal views, political or otherwise.

G. Healthy Democracy

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 and independent media to ensure the media's role as critical and unbiased observers.
- Efforts to restore the proper balance of power between all three branches of government.

Policy Preferences

We support:

- A transparent, technically verifiable and legally verified voting process, with preference for paper ballots, which prohibits the privatization of any part of the election management process.
- Public funding for elections.
- Periodic upgrading of the 2002 Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act. After every congressional election (every two years), 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.
- 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 and believe this action is an egregious abuse of the public trust.
- Increased government funding for public broadcasting.
- 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, Connecticut and Vermont, and allows for:
 - a very limited number of modest contributions to use as seed money for the campaign;
 - a certain number of moderate, per person contributions that will be used to determine eligibility for the program;
 - participants in the CM/CE program to receive public funding to match non-participating candidates' soft money and special-interest donations.
- Full, fair, and readily available public access to all public information.
- Instant runoff elections in which voters have one vote, but can rank candidates in order of preference. If no candidate receives a majority of first choices, the candidate with the fewest number of votes is eliminated, and ballots cast for that candidate are redistributed to the surviving candidates according to the voters' indicated preferences. This process is repeated until one candidate obtains a majority.
- Reform of redistricting laws to reduce ease of gerrymandering.
- Laws that allow for election-day registration.
- Government sponsored door-to-door voter registration (as in Canada).
- An amendment to the constitution that firmly establishes that human beings, not corporations, are persons.

H. Immigrants and Foreign Nationals

We believe that contributions from hard-working immigrants are just as significant today as they have been throughout our history. We honor and defend the basic human rights of every person in the United States regardless of citizenship status.

We also believe that the use of the immigration issue for political advantage; any exploitation of immigrants; any denial of immigrants' civil rights or attempts to limit or discourage civic engagement by immigrants regardless of

status; and all forms of unjust or selective enforcement including profiling and/or entrapment are unjust and immoral. Additionally, we believe:

- Health care and proper nutrition are basic human rights and should be extended to all immigrants regardless of status.
- The current immigration system is broken. A system must be developed that includes the full protection of U.S. labor law, protects against exploitation, values diversity and provides the opportunity to earn citizenship.
- Immigrant populations should be educated about and encouraged to participate in the political process.

Policy Preferences - We support:

- U.S. trade agreements and U.S. foreign policy structured in a manner that supports economic opportunities for people in developing nations and honors basic human and civil rights.
- Application of basic rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights to all persons in the United States regardless of citizenship status.
- Establishment of an expedited process for easy and early registration of residents who are undocumented.
- The right of documented residents to work and to have equal access to services provided by law.
- Legal channels for future flows of immigrants to fill jobs in the United States for which there are no U.S. workers. These channels must include portability to other authorized employers, appropriate living conditions, and the right to travel between the United States and the immigrant's home country.
- A moratorium on deportations of immigrant community members until enactment of immigration reform. This moratorium would apply to all immigrants except those convicted of violent crimes.
- A moratorium on 287(g) agreements and any attempt to require local or state government to enforce federal immigration law.
- "Earned Legalization," an expedited process allowing current undocumented immigrants to apply for permanent status by demonstrating their good moral character and contributions to the United States.
- The federal bipartisan DREAM Act, providing citizenship for students who finish high school and complete two years of college or military service.
- Inclusion of civil service as a qualifying option to prevent the DREAM Act from becoming a backdoor military draft.
- In-state college tuition rates for undocumented students who graduate from Colorado high schools
- Public funding for citizenship education programs for immigrants
- Repeal of the following Colorado House Bills:
 - HB 1017 requiring employers to attest that employees are legally in the country and that the employer has not altered or falsified the employee's ID documents.
 - HB 1023 requiring each state agency or political subdivision to verify that anyone 18 or over who applies for public benefits is in the country legally.
 - HB 1343 requiring state contractors to use a federal database to check the immigration status of new hires and denies state contracts to businesses that knowingly hire illegal immigrants.
- The prohibition of any legislation that creates an "iron curtain" border, that changes unlawful entry from a petty offense to a felony, or that criminalizes human acts of assistance to undocumented immigrants or that targets the immigrant community.