

# Colorado Democratic Party Platform, 2008

## To the Colorado Democratic State Assembly:

After collecting the resolutions and platforms passed by Democratic County Assemblies all across Colorado, the Platform Committee met on six occasions to debate, condense and assemble them into our Colorado Democratic Party Platform.

The platform is posted on line at the Colorado Democratic Party website under "About Your Party:" <http://coloradodems.org/content/view/322/69/>

The dedicated committee members who worked hard to prepare this document setting out our Democratic principles, ideals and goals deserve our special thanks for their efforts.

John Walsh, Chair, Platform Committee

## Principles of Colorado Democrats

We, the **DEMOCRATIC PARTY**, are the oldest political party in America and the youngest in spirit, and will remain so because we are committed to government for, of, and by the people.

We **respect** all people and pledge to build and maintain a nation that is secure and respected worldwide for living up to the basic principles of our Constitution and for maintaining the same high standards for all international relations.

We **support** the equal right of all people to have freedom of expression, religion and the pursuit of happiness as well as a quality public education, a clean and safe environment, a secure and healthy future, a fair living wage, secure retirement, equal opportunity, and universal access to quality health care.

We **honor** the privacy and security of every individual, and an ethical government and society that is fair, open and fully accountable to all people.

We **realize** that citizenship entails responsibility to the commonwealth of our nation and support the fair and just contribution of all citizens.

We **accept** our fundamental responsibility to all future generations to pursue only policies that are sustainable and maintain or improve global well-being. We reaffirm that the constitutional guarantee of separation of church and state is fundamental.

## Top Priorities for Colorado Democrats

### **The Iraq Invasion and Occupation Page 5**

We call for the immediate, safe and responsible withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq, coordinated with multilateral and international political, military, financial and humanitarian efforts to promote Iraqi and regional stability, along with the closing of all U.S. bases in Iraq, the end of funding for the U.S. occupation of that country, and the recognition of the United States' obligation to reduce the suffering of the Iraqi people.

### **Health Care Page 3**

The health of our citizens is essential to the health of our nation. Our health care system should be focused proactively on health promotion, preventative medicine, public health, and disease prevention, as well as primary care. We support implementation of a quality universal single-payer health care system, independent of employment.

### **Human & Civil Rights Page 3**

Our nation was founded upon the principles of individual rights and liberties. We believe that the individual rights of liberty and freedom have priority over the power of government. We must ensure that all citizens are protected from the abuses and intrusions of government into our personal lives. We call for our country to live up to its own ideals by upholding our international treaty obligations, including the Geneva Conventions, and by renouncing the use of torture in any form.

### **Education Page 8**

Strong public schools are the foundation of democratic community life. We believe that public education must be fully-funded from preschool through post-secondary education to provide a quality education to all and to ensure a competitive economy. We support content standards and a state accountability system that emphasizes fair measurement of student progress over time and overall academic performance to enhance student achievement and incorporate up-to-date knowledge and valuable workforce skills.

### **Environment Page 9**

We believe that a clean and healthy global environment is vital for today and the future. Today, global climate change poses one of the greatest challenges humanity has faced. We support sustainable environmental policies to respond to that challenge, to preserve our public lands and Colorado's unmatched natural environment, and to ensure clean air and water today, and for future generations.

**Energy Policy, Conservation and Alternatives**

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We believe Colorado can and should be a national leader in the development of a sustainable and responsible energy policy that includes aggressive conservation methods and massive investment in research, development and implementation of renewable and alternative energy technologies, so as to decrease our dependence on declining non-renewable resources, lessen our impact on the environment and lessen our contribution to global climate change.

**Jobs, Economy and Fiscal Policy**

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We are committed to building a society that gives all individuals the opportunity for economic success. We call for the restoration of a progressive tax structure, and the repealing recent tax cuts that have largely benefited the wealthy and have contributed to the national debt. We support measures for elimination of poverty, and for fair trade policies with our foreign trading partners. Finally, we support urgent efforts to balance the federal budget.

**Campaign, Election and Media Reform**

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We will create public confidence in the government by restoring the integrity of the voting and campaign finance process, including public financing of campaigns. We support Internet neutrality, and call on the FCC to reinstate prior standards limiting the concentration of the media in the hands of a few corporate entities.

**Reproductive Choice**

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We believe that all women must be guaranteed affordable, safe, legal and confidential access to the full range of reproductive health services, including access to emergency contraception (the “morning-after pill”), birth control, and birth control information. We support a woman’s right to choose, and strongly oppose efforts to overturn or circumvent *Roe v. Wade*, such as changing state law to make abortion illegal, prosecuting individuals who assist women to cross state borders to obtain a legal abortion in another state, or legally redefining a fertilized egg as a “person.”

We believe that abortion should be safe, legal, and rare. We support educational and legal initiatives to accomplish this without making criminals of women or doctors.

**Science and Technology Policy**

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We believe in the power of the human mind to gain understanding of the world around us to solve problems facing humanity. To that end, we support funding research and education in science and technology and call for an end to politicizing

scientific study. We insist on freedom of inquiry for scientists, appointing qualified scientists to panels without regard to political or religious beliefs, and allowing scientists to publish their results without political interference.

**Censure and Impeachment**

**Page 3**

No person is above the law. President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney and their administration have abused their power and appear to have repeatedly violated the Constitution. They should be investigated, censured, and, if appropriate, impeached.

**Immigration**

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We support safe and legal immigration that takes into account the safety of immigrants and the needs of our economy. To that end, we call for a simple, fair guest worker program, and support control of our borders and the enforcement of our laws.

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## Colorado Democratic Party Platform, 2008: Detail

[Planks receiving substantial “priority” votes by Platform Committee members are in bold.]

### ETHICS & GOVERNMENT

We expect that our elected officials at every level of government be committed to the highest standards of behavior, personal integrity, honesty and a commitment to transparency and open government, with substantial consequences for failure to do so.

We support restoration of accountability, common sense ethics and integrity in all branches of government and lessening the influence of lobbyists in crafting legislation.

We support a ban on former members of Congress or former senior Congressional staff lobbying or being in any way involved in lobbying Congress or any government agency for two years after termination of association with Congress.

We support prohibiting political candidates or office holders from accepting gifts/payments from lobbyists, other than as specifically permitted by law.

We support restoration of checks and balances between the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branches of the United States Government.

We specifically reject Bush Administration principle of the “unitary executive” which significantly disturbs the balance of power between the three branches of our government.

We denounce Bush Administration overstepping of Presidential powers through excessive use of internal legal opinions (signing statements) which presume to allow the Executive Branch to diverge from the original intention of Congress in legislation.

#### Investigations

**We urge the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to restore constitutional order by fully investigating members of the Bush Administration for violations of Constitutional law, statutory law and international law with respect to the Iraq War and occupation, electronic surveillance inside the United States in violation of FISA, extraordinary rendition, torture, and illegal wiretapping, and attempts to retro actively legalize such violations, and to pursue impeachment and further prosecution if it is found to be appropriate. No elected or appointed government official should be above the law or immune to appropriate prosecution.**

We hereby declare that the investigations into the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the illegal invasion of Iraq, Abramoff and other lobbyists, the Hurricane Katrina response, and other major issues were inadequate and warrant review.

#### Responsibilities of Congress

We demand that the Congress heed its Constitutional mandate for oversight of the Judicial and Executive branches of our government. We encourage our elected representatives to speak out publicly in support of that oversight.

#### Budgeting and Appropriations

The American people have a right to know what its Government is funding with all of the money it spends, including the portion financed with revenues from taxpayers as well as the portion financed with the ever-growing federal debt. To that end, Democrats elected to the U.S. Congress shall support and enact legislation which requires complete transparency in the budgeting and appropriating of all Federal funds, especially military expenditures, in such a way that the average American taxpayer can easily see what is approved for expenditure on a real time basis.

The American people have overwhelmingly concluded that Bush administration policies have led America in the wrong direction. Therefore, we recommend that all policies, directives and executive orders issued or established by the current administration be re-examined by Congress and the new administration, and if necessary, be rescinded.

### HEALTH

In the United States, as a matter of social justice, we support a quality universal health care system not tied to employment, as a basic right of all citizens. The health of our citizens is essential to the health of our nation.

**To that end, we support guaranteed, quality, affordable and comprehensive health care for all through a not-for-profit single-payer financed system. This is a system that provides patient choice and continuity of care within our system of private providers; is portable and not tied to employment; returns medical decisions to the patient and health care provider (eliminating insurance company interference), and includes strong cost containment measures; and reduces administration costs. We support a National Health Insurance Single Payer Act similar to HR 676. We recommend a plan in Colorado that adopts the principles central to “the Colorado Single-Payer Health Services Plan” submitted to the 2008 Health Care Reform Commission.**

Comprehensive health care includes, but is not limited to: prescribed drugs, mental health care, dental care, rural health care, home health care, long term care, chronic disease care, end of life/hospice care, preventive medicine, physical and occupational therapy, durable medical equipment, drug abuse rehabilitation, prenatal care, and postnatal material care.

**Caveat:** Creation of this Single-Payer system shall not preclude the continued existence of for-profit health insurance companies for the purpose of providing supplemental health care insurance coverage.

We also believe our health care system should be focused proactively on health promotion, preventive medicine, public health, disease prevention, as well as primary care.

We support increased funding and accountability for mental health care, and call for government funded providers to have users of services on their staff and governing boards.

We support educating the public about scientifically sound policies regarding STDS/HIV/AIDS and comprehensive programs for their research, prevention, and treatment.

We support increasing availability of hospice care, and home and community based services that address the needs of all, including people with all levels of disabilities of any age.

We support increasing availability of shelters and programs for victims of domestic violence.

We support federally-funded research and investigation involving stem cells for the purpose of seeking treatments and cures for heart disease, diabetes, cancer, diseases of the nervous system and renal failure.

We call for full legalization of use of medical cannabis prescribed for a patient by a physician.

Until the adoption of the Single-Payer Plan makes the following steps unnecessary, we support:

Providing for the long-term solvency of Medicare; full and adequate funding of Medicare and Medicaid sufficient to promote the participation of health care providers; ensuring that enrollees in traditional Medicare not subsidize through their premiums enrollees in private Medicare Advantage; amending Medicare part D to close the coverage gap (the “doughnut hole”); and permitting Medicare to negotiate prescription drug costs directly with the pharmaceutical industry.

#### **Full funding for SCHIP (State Children’s Health Insurance Program).**

Proper funding for community health care centers and clinics, as well as dental and medical-care vans moving in a regular circuit throughout the state’s less populated or rural counties.

Regulating premium increases on health insurance; prohibiting pre-existing condition exclusions by insurance companies; and reinstating “no fault” automobile insurance coverage for medical expenses.

### HUMAN and CIVIL RIGHTS

#### Equal Protection

We believe in equal protection under the law. We believe that all people are created equal. It is imperative that our laws fully protect the equality

of every individual residing under the jurisdiction of the United States regardless of race; ethnicity; national origin; gender or gender identity; sexual orientation; age; religious affiliation; and physical or mental differences.. We support policies that promote equality, safety, and respect for all in all aspects of life, including but not limited to employment, public accommodations, education, health care, spousal equality and beneficiary rights and responsibilities.

#### **Amendment to the Colorado Constitution**

There shall be no new amendment to the Constitution that infringes on, limits, denies, or circumvents the equal rights or civil rights of citizens.

#### **Civil Rights and Liberties**

We believe the American people must stand united in common defense against global threats while ensuring that individual civil liberties and democratic principles are not circumscribed.

Our nation was founded upon the principles of individual rights and liberties. The current administration has violated our constitutional rights and we believe that the individual rights of liberty and freedom have priority over the power of government. We must ensure that all citizens are protected from the abuses and intrusions of government into our personal lives. We also need to elect and support leaders who will support and defend our Constitution as a priority, not an option.

Claims of national security should not be used to limit those individual civil liberties guaranteed in the Constitution and Bill of Rights on which this country was founded.

#### **Privacy**

We believe that our government's duty to protect its citizens includes a duty to protect each citizen's privacy. 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.

We believe that all medical decisions and information about an individual are matters of privacy that may not be breached by any government or private entity, whether at home or abroad.

#### **Patriot Act**

**We support the affirmation of the importance of civil liberties contained in our Bill of Rights and demand repeal of the USA Patriot Act and subsequent enhancements thereto which permit non-judicial abrogation of Constitutional rights of citizens or non-citizens of the United States.**

We strongly oppose passage of H.R. 1955, the so-called Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007, which expands the scope of the Patriot Act and threatens our First Amendment and other basic rights.

#### **FISA and Domestic Spying**

We reject Bush Administration claims of legal powers to fight terrorism in ways that violate the rights of U.S. citizens under the Bill of Rights. These excesses include the following: the use of secret, warrant-less searches and seizures of the persons, homes and private records of American citizens without required probable cause; the jailing of U.S. citizens by Presidential designation as an "enemy combatant"; intrusive surveillance and investigative practices that limit freedom of speech, peaceful assembly, privacy, and religion; and the imposition of secrecy or other obstacles to prevent U.S. citizens, their families and lawyers, from objecting to these excesses, or exercising their right to have these violations promptly reviewed by Federal courts.

We denounce the use of domestic electronic surveillance without the strictest court oversight, and believe it is unconstitutional and contrary to the Bill of Rights. We support adherence to the Federal Intelligence Security Act (FISA). We oppose the continuing surveillance of U.S. Citizens by the government without appropriate and specific warrants and judicial oversight.

No immunity shall be granted to telecommunication companies involved in government spying on U.S citizens.

We shall work towards even stronger regulations limiting government wire tapping and other forms of surveillance of American citizens to protect our rights

#### **Geneva Convention and Torture**

We support applying the principles of the Geneva Convention and habeas corpus to all prisoners and detainees, and oppose the use of torture, and the use of extended detention without the filing of timely charges, under any circumstance.

We further believe that torture debases all those involved, and is contrary to the ideals, traditions, Constitution and laws of the United States. The United States must therefore honor all international agreements that prohibit torture, and must deny material support and training to any persons who engage in it, or who abuse human rights. The United States should also cease and desist from any involvement in "extraordinary rendition" of persons, that is, the seizure, detention and transportation of persons across international lines without due process of law.

#### **Guantanamo Bay**

We support immediate closure of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay.

Specifically for all Guantanamo prisoners, we call for strict adherence to the Geneva Conventions, and for individual, independent review of the status of those prisoners as required by the Conventions. Consistent with the results of that required review, we support the transfer of legal jurisdiction for Guantanamo Bay prisoners to the proper authorities within the US judicial system and/or the International Court for processing.

#### **Eminent Domain**

We support laws preventing Federal, state, and local governments from using eminent domain to usurp property rights for the economic gain of a private individual, organization, or corporation and a stricter definition of "blight" in this context.

#### **Equality for women**

We believe that women are entitled to the full rights and privileges, public or private, legal or institutional, available in the United States. We support efforts to address the current inequities between men and women. We support strong U.S. leadership and active participation in international efforts to improve conditions for and eliminate abuses of women and children across the planet.

#### **Reproductive Choice**

We support a woman's right to choose, and strongly oppose the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. Reproductive choice is a private matter between a woman and her doctor. It is not the province of any other person, private entity, or the government. Democrats oppose any legislation or initiative that would restrict a woman's right of access to abortion. Such restriction is a violation of privacy. This right of privacy should not be abridged by a requirement for notification or consent from spouse, parents or guardians. No female should be forced to undergo an abortion against her will.

We believe that abortion should be affordable, safe, legal but rare. We support educational and legal initiatives to accomplish this without making criminals of women or doctors. We oppose legislation, such as that passed and signed into law in South Dakota in 2006 and more recently introduced in Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Georgia, and Tennessee, that changes state law to make abortion illegal and/or to prosecute individuals who assist women to cross state borders to obtain a legal abortion in another state.

To promote health and well-being, Democrats believe that Colorado residents must be guaranteed affordable, safe, legal and confidential access to the full range of reproductive health services, to be provided without posing undue burdens or unwarranted governmental intrusion. All women should have access to emergency contraception (the "morning-after pill"), birth control, and birth control information. Pharmacists should not be allowed to limit this access. We must ensure that prescription birth control is covered equally with other prescription drugs, such as Viagra.

We oppose any backdoor or deceptive tactics to undermine *Roe v. Wade* such as the attempt to legally redefine a fertilized egg as a "person" through the "Recognition of Life" amendment to the Colorado Constitution.

## Equal Opportunity

Many children born in the United States do not yet enjoy equal access to the benefits of prenatal healthcare; preschool and early childhood development programs; quality schools; and other critical education and career development resources. Therefore, we support affirmative action programs and public assistance programs to enhance equal access, and resolve to protect equal opportunity. We strongly oppose the upcoming ballot initiative deceptively named "Colorado Civil Rights Initiative" that would destroy current affirmative action programs, or any similar legal measure.

## Human Trafficking

We condemn human trafficking, modern slavery, and forced labor, and we support the victims of human trafficking whatever their legal status in the United States. Many people in the commercial sex trade are victims of human trafficking and are being forced, against their will, to engage in these acts by traffickers.

## GLBT Issues

We promote equality, safety and respect for all citizens, regardless of sexual or gender orientation or gender identity, in all respects of life including: employment; housing; education; healthcare; spousal equality; beneficiary rights and responsibilities. We oppose any Amendment to either the Colorado or U.S. Constitution that discriminates against or denies civil rights or equal rights to any person. We support the expansion of the current definition of civil rights and hate crime laws to include sexual orientation, gender identity and disability; and support efforts that promote training about and the reporting of hate crimes

We support civil unions for all couples with all the benefits, protections and responsibilities of married spouses; and urge the defeat of the Federal Marriage Amendment and the repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act.

We urge our elected representatives at all levels to vigorously oppose legislation or ballot initiatives that would narrow the definition of marriage to a partnership between two persons of opposite genders thus excluding other committed, but non-traditional relationships.

We call on the Colorado Legislature and U.S. Congress to enact legislation that extends basic protections and provides all benefits of heterosexual married couples and heterosexual civil unions under common law to same-sex partners in marriages and civil unions. These benefits will include but not be limited to: health insurance and other insurance benefits to partners; legal custody of children; second-parent and co-parent adoption rights; employment benefits; property rights; pension coverage; inheritance rights; and access by partners to emergency rooms and intensive care units in hospitals. Civil unions should be honored across state borders.

We support legislation and policies that promote dignity and safety for incarcerated members of the Gay, Lesbian, Bi and Transgender community and extends true asylum to Gay, Lesbian, Bi and Transgender immigrants who might face persecution from their home country's government due to their orientation or gender identity.

## Americans with Disabilities / Citizens with Disabilities

We urge the immediate and full implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines, enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Housing Act, as amended, and the Architectural Barriers Act, to provide improved access to housing, transportation, medical assistance, education, and employment opportunities for those with disabilities.

We support the rights of people with disabilities to live freely in the most integrated setting in their communities. We believe that we must develop more opportunities for individuals with disabilities through more accessible systems of cost-effective community-based services, including services to those people with developmental disabilities. The waiting list for services and care must be eliminated.

We support vouchers that allow individuals with disabilities to choose independently between home care or care in an institution for their health and long-term care needs. The administration of health care should be self-directed whenever possible, and should be guided by the concept of "nothing about me without me." We also support efforts to extend workers' rights to caregivers.

We urge the participation of people with disabilities in policy-making bodies for issues that may involve them, as they are the experts.

People with disabilities must be able to live without fear, abuse, or retaliation. Complaints about retaliation against people with disabilities must be taken seriously. We support reporting retaliation to the appropriate authorities for a swift and just resolution.

We call for increased funding for group homes and sheltered workshops to serve the disabled population who are adults (over 18 years of age). It is suggested that the sheltered workshops be modeled after centers such as the Tommy Nobis Center of Marietta, Georgia, which secure funds partly through contracts with the private and public sector for simple work projects. This helps defray some of the costs of the program.

## Free speech

We strongly support protection of the right to free speech under the First Amendment. We support legislation to disallow "free speech cages" (restricted designated area for exercise of free speech in a public setting).

## Separation of Church and State

We are committed to the fundamental principle of the separation of church and state on which our country was founded: the freedom of our citizens to practice their religion or the lack thereof without interference from the state; protection from the intrusion of the state into private decisions such as individual and family medical decisions; women's reproductive rights; same sex civil unions; the elimination of the use of public funds for faith based social services and vouchers for religious schools; the elimination of the use of public property for the display of religious symbols such as the ten commandments, as well as precluding religious views from eliminating family planning funds from U.S. foreign aid.

## Differing Opinions

We resolve that the Democratic Party is the party of inclusion. We respect the individual conscience of each American on difficult issues, and welcome all our members to participate at every level of our party. We view this diversity as a source of strength, not as a sign of weakness, and we welcome into our ranks all Americans. Recognizing that tolerance is a virtue, we are committed to resolving our differences in a spirit of civility, hope and mutual respect.

## INTERNATIONAL

**We believe it is imperative that the United States restore its reputation in the international community. To this end, we support: Dedication of significant intellectual, economic, diplomatic and creative resources toward the elimination of world hunger, poverty, disease, environmental degradation, terrorism and conflict; and the U.S. taking a leadership role in the development of policies domestically and internationally that are sensitive to worldwide inequities in resource distribution and use, and that prioritize the long-term environmental security of the planet.**

We support non-violent conflict resolution and the use of diplomacy, and strongly oppose preemptive military action as a tool of our foreign policy.

To that end, the United States should partner within the community of nations toward peaceful resolution of conflict, protection of human rights and economically just trade policies. We believe that the global threat of international terrorism must be attacked at its source through education, the reduction of poverty, ethnic disputes, resource limitations, and extremism; in addition to the appropriate use of force as a last resort. Extremism can best be fought by giving hope, eliminating injustice, lifting the blinders of ignorance, and promoting mutual respect that leaves no room for demonizing those from other cultures or questioning of their right to self determination.

**We call for the immediate, safe, and responsible withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq; the closing of all U.S. bases in Iraq and the recognition of the United States' obligation to reduce the suffering of the Iraqi people; coordinated with multilateral and international political, military, financial, and humanitarian solutions that ensure regional stability; and consistent with these positions, we oppose continued funding for the U.S. occupation of Iraq.**

We support returning ownership and control of Iraqi petroleum production and infrastructure to the Iraqi people.

We strongly support our military personnel, but insist upon our right as citizens to disagree with and protest against our government's decision to go to war, a position that is not inconsistent with that support.

We demand that the Congress prohibit creation of an agreement between the United States and Iraq forcing United States forces to remain in Iraq.

We support a multi-national effort to ensure the rule of law in Afghanistan.

We support expanding the current War Powers Act to include any type of invasion onto foreign soils without a formal declaration of war by Congress.

We resolve that the "War on Terror" is not a war. Terrorists are criminals to be dealt with by international systems of criminal justice. War on terror incorrectly implies the world is legally a battlefield, and fosters a culture of fear.

We support full adherence to the Anti Land-Mine, Anti Cluster-Bomb, and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaties, as well as honoring all international treaties for the non-militarization of space. We also call for full United States participation in the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, and ratification of the Law of the Sea. We believe the United States should work energetically toward achieving the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

We ask Congress and the Administration to work together to pay the debt the United States government owes to the United Nations for past dues and peacekeeping expenses, so as to help restore America's standing in the world community.

We support a Department of Peace, which focuses energy and resources toward working with communities on a global level to establish peace and unity;

We are fundamentally committed to using dialogue and diplomacy to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace between all the peoples of the Middle East. We strongly reconfirm support for Israel and for the right to self determination for the Palestinians and we look forward to joining with all parties to work towards peace, based on respect for human rights.

We support the end of the U.S. embargo on Cuba and the normalizing of relations with that nation.

We recognize the critical situation in Darfur and urge our country to provide strong humanitarian assistance and fully fund and support peacekeeping forces to stop the genocide there.

#### **We strongly oppose preemptive military action against Iran.**

We reject the restriction that foreign aid be tied to "Abstinence Only" method of birth control, or limiting financial aid to organizations that exclude other methods for birth and sexually transmitted disease control.

#### **CAMPAIGN, ELECTION & MEDIA REFORM**

We believe that trustworthy elections are a cornerstone of democracy. To ensure the effective functioning of our democratic government, we advocate effective campaign reform, public access to the full spectrum of political opinion, full voter registration and accuracy of voting with verification.

We support efforts to ensure that all caucus and voting locations accessible in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

We celebrate our Democratic process and encourage voting in the country that made voting a true right of passage into citizenship; and making election day a national holiday as it is in other countries who fought, like we did, to have this right.

We call for the replacement of the Electoral College with the direct election of the President and Vice President of the United States.

We support adoption of the National Popular Vote Bill in a compact with other states

We call for reform of redistricting laws to reduce ease of gerrymandering.

We support lengthening the period of Colorado term limits to 12 years to allow office holders to gain more experience and leadership, and to provide greater historical perspective in their decision-making process. We support increased funding for legislative research and support staff.

We support voter registration that is convenient for voters to complete and even simpler to renew, and that produces complete, accurate, valid and verifiable lists of citizens who are eligible to vote.

We call for participation in the election process and in voting be assured for all individuals, with special care to ensure that previously disenfranchised or discriminated groups (including minority groups, persons with disabilities, felons who have completed their sentence, homeless persons, etc) have full access to the election process, and opposed any effort to disenfranchise any group or person.

We call for Colorado to comply with the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993, which requires state agencies to offer voter registration services to citizens when applying to public assistance.

We support changing the Colorado eligibility rules for voters so that voters who will be 18 by the date of the general election can vote in the caucuses or primaries.

#### **Voting Systems**

We believe that trustworthy and transparent elections are basic to democracy, and that trustworthy elections require that each vote is anonymous, secure, verified by the voter, counted as intended by the voter and auditable by a hand count.

We support a voting process that allows voters, including voters with disabilities, to hand mark or machine mark their votes onto full-text paper ballots, that allows voters to check their votes before they cast them, to know that the votes on their paper ballot are what get counted, and to have access to proof that every ballot is accounted for and that every vote is correctly understood and counted; and which includes physical (paper) audit trails, including for voting machines.

We believe that that all machines employing Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) technology used for voting in any public election must, as a minimum, produce a voter-verifiable record, meet all National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST) requirements for data encryption and security, and that it be independently auditable with respect to source code, reliability, and vote integrity. Validation of DRE results should be performed by manual comparative audit of a random sample of between one and five per cent of the paper records. All recounts must be done strictly with paper records (ballots).

We call for the elimination of computerized voting using secret/proprietary programs that cannot be audited or independently verified.

We call for all polling places to have enough ballots on hand for all voters at all elections.

We call for citizen-monitored vote processing at every stage of ballot processing, including the manned central tabulation unit.

We believe that a comprehensive review of the election process should be conducted, recommendations formulated and improvements made.

We support preferential or instant runoff voting in races with more than two candidates;

We support a statutory random audit that is a true audit of 5% (at least two) of the voting machines used where all of the ballots of each randomly chosen machine are hand counted and verified against the machine total;

We oppose bar codes to audit or recount votes.

We call for election discrepancies to be examined through elective audits as requested by the candidates before certification of election results.

We call for the full funding of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

#### **Campaign Reform**

We believe in publicly-financed campaigns for public office.

We call for "Clean Money/Clean Elections" for state and federal candidates (used in 7 states-CMCE provides a specified base amount of funding to any state candidate who qualifies by raising a minimum number of small contributions. It encourages candidate participation by providing additional funding to participating candidates if non-participating candidates raise more than the base amount.)

We believe that legislative campaign finance reforms should be reviewed every two years with the intent of eliminating newly discovered loopholes and abuses.

We call for full disclosure of the sources of funding for all political advertising and activities is necessary. We call for open, honest and fair campaigning, and the elimination of anonymous advertising.

We denounce the practice of push polling, that is, "polls" designed to influence or change the views of voters under the guise of impartial polling.

### **Media Reform**

In recognition of the fact that the airwaves are public property, we call for enforcement of Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules that promote multiple owners of media outlets to ensure the free expression of diverse opinions to promote the public good. We support rolling back media ownership limits to pre-1996 levels, oppose recent steps by the FCC to allow greater market ownership by a single organization, and strongly oppose the concentration of our media in a few partisan hands.

We support reinstating equal time requirements (the fairness doctrine) and the principle of fair and balanced reporting. We further support laws requiring broadcast license holders to give free substantial airtime, equal in both quality and quantity, to all ballot qualified candidates, sufficient for substantial presentation of the issues.

We call for increased government funding for public broadcasting, and full fair and readily available public access to all public information.

We believe that an independent media that fosters critical thinking on the part of all Americans in separating fact from propaganda, knowing that fairness and balance may be an illusion.

We support the simplification of the FCC licensing process to encourage the creation and licensing of new media outlets such as low-power FM radio.

We support freedom of speech and press as the most vital of our constitutional rights. It is essential that we speak and write our concerns, regardless of current popular sentiment. We also believe in the promotion of greater understanding of the history, cultures and peoples of all countries and regions of the world through education and unbiased reporting of news.

We support federal laws that guarantee and encourage the freedom of the media to provide critical oversight of governmental activities and public access to information.

We support "internet neutrality" which preserves the free and open Internet for all users and prevents internet providers from building a discriminatory, tiered system in which select companies pay higher fees to internet providers in return for preferential, faster web communications from their websites to web users than from other websites.

We support legislation requiring that meetings of and documents created by elected officials concerning election procedures, including those meeting and documents of the Colorado County Clerks Association, not be exempted or deemed not covered by open meeting and open records laws, and creating an administrative remedy for violation of those open meeting and open records laws.

### **Party Procedures**

In the interest of promoting democratic principles in the operation of our Party, and consideration of state platforms in the national platform process, the National Democratic Party should appoint a committee to review the platforms that have been prepared with due consideration by each state and produce therefrom a comprehensive summary. This summary should be included as an attachment to the national Democratic Party Platform, as a public expression of the grassroots Democratic Party values. The summary and state platforms should be used as guidelines in the legislative considerations of our elected Democratic representatives and by appointed Democratic party officials.

In 2009, we call for the Democratic Party to reexamine the super delegate system, and consider its abolition or modification, as it is unreasonable for the Democratic Party to send over 800 non-committed delegates to the national convention.

We demand timely and full public disclosure of participating individuals and companies that fund 527 committees

### **Debates**

We believe all federal political debates should follow a format not dictated by the participants or the media, and should be focused on substantive issues.

We call for all duly certified Democratic Party candidates to be included and allowed approximately equal time in all party debates and forums.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

We support a statewide approach to crimes by and against children that links family, school and social institutions and the general community in the prevention, detection, and prosecution of crime, and support violence prevention, drug education, and dispute resolution, as well as programs in schools dealing with these issues have proven effective in reducing violence among children, and we encourage their continuation and expansion.

**We call for the criminal justice system to recognize the inherent difference between children and adults in the criminal justice system. We advocate separate trial and sentencing procedures for serious offenses; juvenile facilities, not prisons, as the best rehabilitation facilities; and a reasonable opportunity for parole and community corrections of convicted juvenile offenders currently serving life in adult prison.**

**We support a thorough overhaul of the current system of retributive justice that incarcerates prisoners with little hope for, or assistance with, rehabilitation, including programs of alternative sentencing and restorative justice, particularly for non-violent offenders, and a revision of sentencing guidelines to restore more discretion to judges.**

We support the treatment of mental illness and drug addiction as opposed to incarceration.

We call for the devotion of more resources need to be devoted to programs that prevent crime, provide rehabilitation, and reduce repeat offenses, with the understanding that violent criminals definitely need to be imprisoned.

**We demand the elimination of for-profit private prisons that have no current incentive to rehabilitate or release prisoners, and prohibition of any Colorado inmates be in any private facility.**

We call for a major overhaul of the current probation system which is fraught with opportunity for abuse.

We support restoring the right to vote for felons who have served their time and informing them of their rights.

We support full habeas corpus rights.

We believe that lifetime in prison without the possibility of parole should be the maximum penalty, and that the death penalty should be abolished in Colorado

We call for the protection of the safety of all incarcerated persons.

We insist on a criminal justice system with the capacity to solve crimes, prosecute dangerous individuals and incarcerate criminals when necessary to protect our communities. Implementation of government policy to support the right of citizens to feel safe and secure in their homes, neighborhoods and communities. One of the primary responsibilities of state and local government is to provide for adequately funded, staffed and trained public safety resources (police, fire and EMS) to respond to emergencies and prevent crime and disorder.

At the same time, we insist that our criminal justice system be fair to all people across economic levels, races, ages and ethnic and cultural boundaries.

### **Firearms Issues**

We support the Brady law, the ban on semi-automatic weapons, and measures to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. We oppose making concealed weapon permits more readily available. The mechanism to conduct background checks should be available to private parties as well as licensed dealers. We encourage closing the loophole that permits ineligible people to purchase guns at gun shows.

## Drug Issues

**We support re-evaluation of the drug war and mandatory sentencing, and the creation of a realistic drug police to replaced the failed "War on Drugs." Colorado spends 12% of its budget on prisons. The drug war and mandatory sentencing have resulted in the overpopulation of prisons with non-violent "criminals," the early release of violent criminals; and have drained financial resources away from important state responsibilities such as quality public education, healthcare, job training, etc.**

## Domestic Violence

**We believe that the federal and state government must crack down on domestic violence. Children deserve to have homes that are safe and nurturing. We encourage the establishment and maintenance of shelters for victims of domestic violence and want education and rehabilitation programs for violent offenders.**

We support funding training of all new police recruits, experienced officers and prosecutors in the issues surrounding domestic violence. There must be mandatory reporting by physicians, teachers and social workers of suspected child abuse or neglect, and abusers must be prosecuted to the full extent of the law, recognizing that both children and parents must be afforded due process.

## EDUCATION

Democrats believe that state public education policies should provide every student with an opportunity to reach his or her potential and that quality public education is an investment with real and tangible return for our economy. A high quality education is not only a basic right; it is also a necessary component of a healthy democracy. People cannot be expected to participate thoughtfully and responsibly if they lack the ability to understand the complex issues facing our county, our country and the world. The United States and Colorado are increasingly involved in a globally competitive economy. Our workforce must have 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills to be innovative and solve the problems of tomorrow. Democrats believe that federal and state legislation should invest in every student to provide an opportunity to develop his or her potential while providing a world class education and supporting the whole child.

To this end, we demand full funding of a thorough and uniform education with public monies in public schools that are locally controlled. We support allocating education funding with balance and equity across the state. We support the work of Governor Ritter's P-20 Council and its intent to study and make recommendations to create a unified comprehensive system of education in Colorado.

We support stable education funding that will bring Colorado up to the national funding average. We call on the Legislature to maximize education funding through reexamination of state funding limits; funds from severance tax increases; and creative uses of, and innovative ways to increase, the revenues generated by the School Trust Lands (such as wind farms), while also protecting the environment.

We call for the repeal of TABOR, and an increase in funding above and beyond Amendment 23, which, at a minimum, should remain in place with guaranteed annual funding increases to meet the state's long-term public education needs. We support efforts to build an adequate tax base for quality public education (both K-12 and higher education).

**We oppose vouchers and all unfunded mandates. We call for improved educational opportunity for all through equal access to quality public education from early childhood through adulthood, including: workforce preparation and re-training; English Language Acquisition programs for adults; parenting classes; increased investment in educational materials, especially for small and rural districts; and focusing on closing socioeconomic, racial, linguistic and disability-related achievement gaps.**

We support full funding for Head Start, preschool and full-day kindergarten, English Language Acquisition programs, Special Education, Gifted and Talented programs, Career and Technical Education (vocational), science and technology, quality on-line programs, adult literacy, dropout prevention, after-school programs, and providing and capital investment in crumbling schools to provide a safe learning environment. We believe that public education should balance an

emphasis on core knowledge with applied knowledge, problem solving, creativity, information gathering and learning skills.

We support a review and revamping of the Colorado State Accountability System (CSAP). We recognize that CSAP alone does not adequately represent the quality of our schools. We support content standards and a state accountability system that emphasizes academic performance rather than seat time to incorporate 21<sup>st</sup> century and workforce knowledge. Testing should provide student and program evaluation, career planning for individuals and immediate feedback for instruction. Any state accountability system should be grounded in fair measurement and provide longitudinal measures (growth over time) that enhance student achievement in a safe and healthy environment which respects differences of sexual orientation, gender, and gender-identity. It must communicate useful information to parents, schools, teachers, and communities. We support reducing the number of assessments for the Colorado State Assessment Program and seek to decrease emphasis on high stakes testing.

We support the recruitment, retention and fair compensation of highly qualified educators. Teacher training must be ongoing and of the highest quality. It must prepare teachers to meet the diverse needs of their students, close achievement gaps, and develop well rounded citizens. Accordingly, instructors should be paid a professional wage based on the quality of their job performance. Loan forgiveness programs would encourage teachers to work in environments that are the most in need. Teachers' rights to due process should not be weakened. We should continue to require that educators be licensed and that they receive adequate benefits, such as health insurance. 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 are concerned that the current Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA / No Child Left Behind) is both punitive and overly burdensome. Federal mandates must be federally funded. We call on the federal government to abolish or significantly revamp the ESEA so that it is supportive of districts; reduces redundant reporting; measures growth longitudinally (over time); supports disadvantaged students; fully funds initiatives and provides multiple pathways for students. We oppose ESEA allowing military recruiter's full access to student records.

We believe that schools of choice, such as charters and options, should have a positive effect on districts, students, and communities and should provide a unique instructional model that demonstrates success in student growth. Schools of choice should be accountable and should have the same regulations and standards as other public schools. We believe that charter schools should only be approved by the local elected school board. We oppose using any public funds to support students in private or parochial institutions.

We urge the Federal Government to heed research that links education in music and the arts to citizenship, social effectiveness, and creative thinking. We support the arts being given equal weight with reading, writing, science and math in American schools in order to ensure development of the creativity that future leaders will require to develop a prosperous and sustainable American economy.

We support facilitating student achievement by limiting primary classes sizes to 20 and intermediate classes sizes to 23, giving clear standards and expectations for each grade to all parents at the beginning of the school year, and using innovative strategies to increase parental involvement and partnerships with schools.

We support requiring seat belts on all public school buses in the State of Colorado.

We support funding for schools to provide curriculum that addresses citizenship, civics and leadership development. We believe that teaching civic engagement, and modeling fairness, tolerance and participation in the political process, supports democratic ideals and gives youth a way to pay back society. Therefore we call for Congress to restore funding to programs similar to the National Civilian Conservation Corps and AmeriCorps.

We support providing access to affordable quality public higher education for all residents of the state, including the continuation of affirmative action programs, and the broader use of scholarships, loans and grants to enable all qualified students to attend higher education and

vocational programs. Federal funding for financial aid programs must be sufficient to compensate for tuition increases nationwide. We support funding for "Hope scholarships" that provide an incentive and reward for graduates with good grades. We call upon the state and federal governments to enhance college access for disadvantaged youth by improving the ties between the K-12 education system and the higher education system.

We support the DREAM Act (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors), which provides state college access and in-state tuition for all state residents, regardless of documentation, if they entered the United States before the age of 16, have resided continuously in the United States for at least five years, have earned a high school diploma or a general education development certificate (GED) or have been admitted to an institution of higher education in the United States.

We believe that higher education must be funded at a level that allows it to maintain excellence in its mission, and that academic integrity and freedom of expression for college students, faculty and administration is essential for promoting democracy.

We recommend that the State of Colorado move toward providing eight semesters (or the equivalent) of tuition-free public post-secondary education to all eligible Colorado residents who meet necessary admission requirements.

## ENVIRONMENT

**We believe that a clean, healthy, and sustainable world is vital both for today and the future. Environmental stewardship requires foresight, wisdom, and responsibility. We call for the preservation of critical environmental protections, which continue to be reversed by the Bush Administration. We recognize that the environment, growth, and transportation constitute an integrally linked, complex system, and believe that government must be open and responsive to the recommendations and insights of the scientific community.**

We believe that transportation policy has important impacts on our environment and our quality of life. We urge policy-makers at all levels of government to look at transportation in evaluating the environmental impacts of development and to promote and fund alternative modes of transportation when they will enhance air quality and reduce congestion.

Current environmental protections must be strictly enforced, and fines for polluters must be increased to exceed the cost of compliance. We believe global warming is a major threat to our security. It is imperative to rapidly shift our economy to a sustainable one based on energy efficiency and clean renewable energy production.

We promote the conservation of resources through reduced consumption, and reducing our carbon footprint.

We support a comprehensive review of the laws and regulations addressing environmental concerns for the purpose of re-directing spending and enforcement activities to the areas with greatest impact on global climate change, clean water and clean air with due regard for the rights of owners of land and the realities of agricultural production.

The public has a right to be fully informed about and to participate fully in decisions regarding the management of public lands and resources. As Democrats, we value our shared resources and hold our elected representatives responsible for their efficient management in a publicly accountable manner. We call for the conservation of resources through reduced consumption. Public resources such as our national forests and parks, clean air and water, and the Earth's complex ecosystem cannot be easily measured in economic terms. Since the value of these resources far exceeds their perceived market value, they must be protected into perpetuity for the common good of future generations. We support the development of methods that accurately measure the real costs of pollution clean-up and associated human illness. We urge the reestablishment of a Committee for Environmental Conservation, independent from the Legislatures' Agriculture Committees, to reflect the critical importance of protecting Colorado's natural resources. We must consider the wide-ranging effects of our actions and support global environmental and economic sustainability.

**We call for an end to the policies of increased exploitation of national parks, monuments, forests and wilderness areas for private economic gain. We oppose selling public lands, and leasing public lands at minimal rates. We oppose the increased**

**economic exploitation of national parks, monuments, forests and wilderness areas, and mountain top mining on public lands. We support studies to determine equitable and environmentally responsible guidelines for managing access to state and national parks and monuments. Public lands are a national treasure, and must be funded and stewarded in ways that will preserve them for future generations of Americans and ensure the survival of plant and animal ecosystems. We resolve to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the National Park Service by fully funding and supporting the restoration and reinvigoration of the National Parks. We urge the designation of new Colorado wilderness areas, particularly those in the Colorado Wilderness Act of 2007 introduced by Rep. Diana DeGette (D-Denver).**

We support the protection of wildlife, and the preservation and expansion of interconnected habitat areas, roadless lands, and wilderness. We oppose resource exploration and exploitation in these areas. We support stronger state and federal laws and regulations to protect and preserve our public lands and wildlife from energy development.

We support policies that direct Congress to ensure that the entire Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is maintained as an intact ecosystem off limits to development. Few places as untrammelled as the "1002 area" remain on the planet, and fewer still on the same magnificent scale. Any but the most transitory intrusions (e. g., visits for recreation, hunting, fishing, subsistence use, research, etc.) will create irreparable and permanent harm.

We support the Endangered Species Act, urge that the Endangered Species lists be kept current and be based upon the best data evaluations by science, and call for strengthening enforcement of the threatened and endangered species programs and associated funding.

We support a comprehensive review of the laws and regulations addressing environmental concerns for the purpose of re-directing spending and enforcement activities to the areas with greatest impact on global warming, clean water and clean air with due regard for the rights of owners of land and the realities of agricultural production.

## Water

We call for water policies that prioritize water conservation, management of limited water supplies, allowing new development only when adequate supplies of water exist and the protection of water purity for humans and natural ecology. America's wetlands are a critical component in the complex web of sustainable, healthy ecosystems, and must be rigorously protected. We support prohibiting trans-basin diversions, including from the Arkansas basin, and including the proposed Yampa River and San Luis Valley projects, which are to the detriment of the basin-of-origin's economy and environment. We urge the preservation of minimum stream flows to preserve the existing ecosystems. Recreational in-stream water use is a beneficial use and should have the same status in the water rights system as more traditional uses.

We support strengthening and strong enforcement of the Clean Water and Clean Air Acts. We call for the immediate passage of the Clean Water Restoration Act of 2007. This important legislation protects America's waters by ensuring that all U.S. waterways continue to be safeguarded by the Clean Water Act, and will restore the Clean Water Act's scope of power from the erosion caused by several recent Supreme Court decisions.

We call upon Congress to develop a federal water policy to preserve, protect, and efficiently and equitably distribute existing water resources, as well as developing new methodologies to increase collection and improve management of water resources for rural and urban uses. We urge the Colorado Legislature, through the inter-basin roundtables, to develop a statewide water plan. We call for the use of gray water and the reuse of water for irrigation purposes, rather than using potable water, and support efforts to educate and inform the public about water issues.

We oppose construction of the Northern Integrated Supply Project's Glade Reservoir on the Cache La Poudre River, due to serious concerns about its negative impact on the vibrancy and health of the river, and environmental, economic and recreational well being of Northern Colorado. We believe that present and future agricultural, municipal, and industrial water needs can be met by water conservation, increased efficiency, reuse, and water sharing partnerships among users.

We support holding responsible for their cleanup all government agencies, businesses, organizations, or individuals who have caused a site to become contaminated. We believe that cost-effective environmental protection and hazardous waste site clean up are a sound investment in a strong Colorado economy and safeguarding its citizens' health, welfare and quality of life.

Significant funding must be available for environmental education in schools and for the general public. We must increase support and funding for research of conservation methods, more efficient use of energy, renewable energy, recycling, and environmental innovation. We call for efforts to promote or require the recycling of all reclaimable materials in Colorado, and across our nation. We support measures to promote or require alternative methods of disposal of organic residue, such as grass and yard clippings, tree trimmings, etc. We support legislation to phase out plastic drink and food containers through the substitution of recyclable, biodegradable containers.

We support the reduction of emission of toxic elements (especially mercury) and toxic chemicals from all sources, including manufacturing, and public education on the health dangers of such toxic materials (especially mercury).

We support limiting the use of hazardous cleaning materials in schools and public buildings, and encourage the use of certified "green" (non-toxic) materials.

We call for legislation supporting localized economic development and green (environmentally-friendly) investing.

#### **Forests**

We must end the exploitation of our public natural resources. We support recognition of the importance of forests worldwide to the health of our climate, our planet, and our future. Commercial activity on public lands must be consistent with sustainable healthy forests. Forest management and protection must be based on scientifically sound policies. Managing healthy forests requires ecological fire policies. We believe that healthy forests protect healthy watersheds, and are an integral component of healthy, sustainable ecosystems.

#### **Green Construction**

We support green construction standards and resolve that the 30% federal solar tax credit be extended for 10 years and the cap on tax credits for solar PV residential systems be eliminated.

We call for legislation at the state and national levels to implement the Passive House Standard for buildings and to implement increased functional use of solar energy and energy conservation for new building design and retrofit design in the U.S., thereby reducing our use of fossil fuels, as well as legislation to require alternative energy options in new home construction.

#### **Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site**

**We demand open, secrecy-free, public hearings in Congress with regard to environmental issues on military bases. We oppose further expansion of Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site, and support the federal law that prohibits appropriated funds from being used for any action related to the expansion of the Maneuver Site.**

#### **Global Climate Change**

**We believe global climate change is a major security threat and may pose the greatest challenge mankind has ever faced. We support shifting our economy to a sustainable one based on energy efficiency and clean renewable energy production. We support immediate action to halt global climate change, as a U.S. foreign policy priority. We support implementation as a U.S. foreign policy priority, immediate action to halt global climate change, including but not limited to ratification of and adherence to the Kyoto Protocols on global warming by the United States. We support partnership efforts to address the problems of global climate change, environmental degradation; and outlawing the patenting of native species.**

We support air quality protection efforts and urge the repeal of the Clear Sky Initiative, which guts critical air quality protection efforts. We demand significant reductions in the emission of air pollutants and greenhouse gas; and must strengthen and vigorously enforce regulations.

We support the California Clean Car Initiative for higher gas mileage and lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

#### **Resources Extraction Regulation**

We urge repealing the 1872 Mining Act, an antiquated law used today by mining companies to obtain approval for mining projects that would not otherwise be considered, much less approved.

Due to the threat to public health, the environment and the economic well being of the area, we call for the banning of in situ uranium leach mining in Northern Colorado. We also call for the review and possible banning of all in situ leach mining in Colorado, as well as open pit or strip mining within close proximity to populated areas.

We urge the State Legislature to protect citizens from irresponsible mining, protect water quality, make mining exploration permits public and to give local officials a say in the mining process

We support increasing Colorado's severance tax rate on the extraction of mineral and other natural resources to levels more comparable to similar taxes in our neighboring states. A portion of these new funds should be used as a funding source for developing alternative and renewable energy technologies.

The principles of environmental justice must be used to equalize impacts between stakeholder communities. Democrats favor regulating the oil and gas industry to minimize adverse impact on the lives of surface owners living near extraction and transportation sites; and Democrats favor legislation that establishes fair compensation to surface owners for damage or disturbance done in the investigation, development, or extraction of oil, gas or minerals.

We urge the Department of Interior, the State of Colorado and Garfield County to prohibit any natural gas leases or any drilling on the Roan Plateau.

We call on both the Colorado Legislature and the Congress of the United States to delay the leasing of any further Federal Lands for oil shale and natural gas development until environmental concerns have been satisfactorily reviewed and resolved.

#### **Open Space**

We support public and private efforts to conserve and preserve land through open space programs, and support coordinated regional and state control of growth and open space acquisition. We support notification of public entities of tax sale properties for their review as possible open space, prior to public notice of the sale.

We support permanent protection as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System all places categorized as Management Area 1 in the draft San Juan Forest and BLM management plan, as well, as wilderness recommendations for places such as the HD Mountains, Grizzly-Peak, and the San Miguel Range, Cascade Creek, Ice Lake Basin, Engineer Mountain, the South San Juan Mountains, and all of Hermosa Creek, the largest pristine landscape left in Colorado.

#### **Transportation and the Environment**

We believe that transportation policy has important impacts on our environment and our quality of life. We support effective transportation systems to meet the diverse needs of our communities. We urge policy-makers at all levels of government to look at transportation in evaluating the environmental impacts of development and to promote and fund alternative modes of transportation when they will enhance air quality and reduce congestion. These systems should be viewed as a cost of growth, and be fully reflected in the price of development. We believe public transit should be expanded, including rail, light rail, and bus rapid transit, especially in under-served communities.

Recognizing the increased speed and sophistication of off-road vehicles, we support legislation that would license off-road vehicles, with license plates clearly visible at a distance, and increase penalties including seizure of vehicles for travel off designated routes inside restricted areas.

#### **GROWTH**

We support county and municipal efforts to plan for and manage their growth and to protect their quality of life and the diversity of their communities. Local governments must develop and implement enforceable policies of cooperation and regional planning, and cooperate to prevent competition for local sales tax revenue. We support public involvement in the planning process at all levels of government. We

support statewide strategic water planning, and the consideration of water availability in all planning decisions.

**We support local governments balancing growth with preservation of quality of life, conservation of open space, thoughtful zoning, and involvement of the public in the planning process.** Local government must enforce all zoning regulations and seek adherence to Master and Community Plans, while allowing limited flexibility where the overall community health, both economic and environmental, is at risk. Standards and statistics must be used to guide approval or disapproval of development projects for example: population trends; economic trends; income levels; population densities; public and private traffic patterns; environmental impact; and many others.

**Development must pay its own way. The price of newly developed property 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 urge policy-makers at all levels of government to look at transportation in evaluating the environmental impacts of development and to promote and fund alternative modes of transportation when they will enhance air quality and reduce congestion.

**We support the availability of affordable housing with affordable day care in close proximity for all people, especially for those with modest means and disabilities; and urge universal (disability accessible) design in all new housing, and call for the creation of state and federal housing trust funds to increase affordable housing within the means of people with fixed and very low incomes.**

We support achieving business growth in an environmentally friendly, sustainable manner.

## IMMIGRATION

The United States is a diverse nation built by people from all parts of the world.

**We support efforts to restore medical and other benefits to legal immigrants on the basis of equal protection of the laws. The 1996 welfare reform law made most legal immigrants, including those of long-standing residency, ineligible for health care, welfare and other essential programs. This exclusion must be reversed at local, state and federal levels.**

We reject of the politics of division, and isolation efforts by any candidate for office that sow fear and xenophobia against any person or community, and recognition of the ineffectiveness of State level immigration policy.

**We call for repeal of the Clear Law Enforcement for Criminal Alien Removal (CLEAR) Act which denies undocumented immigrants a voice to report crime without fear of deportation;**

**We support comprehensive, humane reform of immigration and labor laws to provide protection for the labor force; to prevent exploitation; to provide stricter health and safety inspections; and provide the opportunity for farm workers to engage in collective bargaining.**

We support enforcement of existing legislation penalizing businesses who recruit and employ undocumented immigrants, and funding for enforcement of existing border control laws and a guest worker program that is manageable for small businesses.

We support federal legislative efforts to create a fair and easily managed guest worker program which is workable for small businesses, as which includes a "path to citizenship" for undocumented workers and their families.

We call for the establishment of an expedited process for easy and early registration of undocumented residents. Once documented, they should be allowed to work and have equal access to services provided by law including the right to obtain an immigrant driver's license.

We support 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 tuition rates for undocumented

students who graduate from Colorado high schools. The DREAM Act should include civil service as a qualifying option (along with military service and college course work). This will help prevent DREAM Act from becoming a back-door military draft.

We call for U.S. trade agreements and U.S. foreign policy to be structured in a manner that supports economic opportunity for developing nations while honoring basic human and civil rights.

We support the use of incentives for other countries to expand their economies to provide their citizens with work opportunities and labor rights that improve their standard of living, and thereby constructively limit undocumented immigration into the United States.

We support uniform immigration laws and enforcement nationwide, not a patchwork, and call for immigration reform to remain in the hands of Congress, not the Colorado General Assembly.

We oppose any exploitation of immigrants, denial of an immigrant's civil rights and any attempts to limit or discourage civic engagement by immigrants.

We oppose institutionalization of undocumented immigrants as a marked and permanent underclass, and oppose the classification of illegal immigration as a criminal offense. Undocumented immigrants who have committed no criminal offense should not be subject to incarceration other than temporary detention.

We reject attempts to provoke isolation and xenophobia (fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners) against particular groups or communities among us, including our newest immigrant members.

## MILITARY AND VETERANS

**In recognition of their service to our country, we support our military and veterans, and advocate competitive pay for personnel in our armed forces, and supplying our troops with the equipment needed to protect them when put in harm's way.**

**We call for protecting and maximizing benefits to veterans and their families, and stopping the erosion of promised benefits. We demand policies that fully fund Dept. of Veterans Affairs hospitals and military hospitals.**

We support providing superior health care to all injured soldiers and their families, in a timely manner, regardless of cost, utilizing civilian as well as military facilities. We advocate that all active duty personnel, veterans and their spouse and dependent children receive free and thorough lifetime physical, mental and dental health care for injuries and conditions sustained during or as a result of their service, including medical answers that are based in truth. We support legislation that facilitates the Department of Veteran Affairs' ability to contract with community health providers to provide the medical care that rural isolated veterans would have received at a Department of Veterans Affairs medical facility.

Military personnel should be able to make an informed choice on experimental drugs or treatments. Paperwork and "red tape" must be aggressively minimized, and rules and regulations must be rewritten as needed to recognize all medical and psychological conditions that may afflict a veteran.

We support improving educational benefits for veterans, and urge restoring benefit levels to match those provided to veterans of the Second World War. Armed Forces assessment of disability at discharge shall be presumptive in determination of benefits. We support the 21<sup>st</sup> Century lifetime GI Bill introduced by Senator Jim Webb, which provides 36-months of benefits that will actually cover tuition and living costs for our veterans.

We urge lifting the ban on gays in the military and repealing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policies. Members of the GLBT community in the military should be able to openly live normal lives.

No veteran should be homeless. We support eliminating the homelessness of our veterans by whatever means necessary.

We support legislation that provides aid for ex-spouses with dependent children of U.S. military troops in a manner consistent with those extended to spouses.

We advocate the immediate and permanent cessation of the use of all depleted uranium weapons.

**We oppose the use of armed private contractors to fill roles more appropriately conducted by the military.**

We condemn the practice of requiring service members who received reenlistment or other bonuses, and who subsequently become disabled due to combat-related injuries received by virtue of their reenlistment, to reimburse the government those payments.

**JOBS AND ECONOMY**

We are committed to providing opportunities for all Coloradans to achieve economic success.

**Economic Justice and Equality**

We support government that promotes economic justice for all. We affirm our support for the working families of Colorado. We urge the State Legislature to fully fund programs for seniors, children, families, people with disabilities, and individuals with limited financial resources, and support programs that provide Coloradans access to the basic necessities of life, including adequate medical care; shelter; nutrition; education; job training and a fair living wage.

**We support increasing the minimum wage indexed to inflation and set to exceed federal guidelines defining poverty, to a living wage. While compensation for executives and corporate profits have reached stratospheric levels, the average wage of the average worker has declined and costs for healthcare, housing, transportation and energy have skyrocketed. The Democratic Party considers this a national disgrace.**

We resolve to implement cost of living adjustments on Social Security disability benefits equal to actual increases in the cost of living.

We believe that the earned and vested retirement benefits of all working people and their families should be protected by law, regardless of their place of work. We support the Social Security Fairness Act (S. 206) which would repeal the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision rules the Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance of the Social Security Act.

We support an adjusted poverty-line threshold that provides a reasonable quality of life, including sufficient food; shelter; health care; educational opportunities; child care; transportation; and leisure.

We support the Employment Non-discrimination Act and Affirmative Action programs that have helped to ensure diversity and equal access to education and economic opportunity by ensuring that all workers will receive equal pay for work that is comparable in terms of skill, effort and responsibility, regardless of gender; race; age; disability; ethnicity; sexual orientation; or religious affiliation

We support policies that improve the competitiveness of small businesses, and businesses owned by women, minorities, and individuals with disabilities.

We support cohort status for Rocky Flats employees (to ensure government benefits and health care for work-related ailments).

We support a gradual reduction of public assistance as individuals become increasingly able to support themselves, and welfare reform that prioritizes development of skills adequate for the individual to earn wages that will provide self-sufficiency, and the rescission of lifetime limits on public assistance.

We support reintroduction of the Colorado Earned Income Tax Credit and other measures to ensure a living wage and to mitigate the "cliff effect" that occurs when a small increase in income leads to termination of a work support benefit.

We support efforts to restructure student loan programs to enable reasonable access to economic opportunity.

We support efforts to protect young adult credit ratings and to ban predatory lending practices by the credit card industry, and support programs to help youth (18-25) establish good credit practices.

In order to improve access to services for those in need, Democrats support legislation that requires all publicly supported social services offices to provide adequately staffed case management services to all clients.

We recognize that a well-educated and well-trained work force will enhance America's competitiveness in the global economy. We support increased funding for education, training, and demand the restoration of

all funding cut from the National Civilian Conservation Corps, and AmeriCorps funding. It is imperative for the well-being of all that these programs are adequately funded and continue to be fully available to all people, especially those with low income.

We believe that payday and short-term lenders should be regulated under state and federal banking regulations. We condemn the victimization of economically disadvantaged individuals through unreasonably high interest rates and fees.

We support affordable housing for working families in all parts of Colorado with affordable day care in close proximity. We support the creation of a statewide Housing Trust Fund to provide needed housing for low-income workers, individuals with disabilities, seniors, young adults, and others with modest means. We also support passage of the National Housing Trust Fund Act, which would create 1.5 million new housing units over the next decade especially for low-income renters and owners, and focus on low-income households in mixed-income neighborhoods.

We support the protection of private pensions and encourage the prosecution of corporate entities raiding the funds.

We resolve that Colorado provide adequate funding for legal representation to low income and under-represented citizens.

We believe that the Federal government must make honest, genuine efforts to halt the long standing corruption and mismanagement by the U.S. Department of the Interior of the Indian Trust Fund, and assure fair and just payment of all past, present and future royalties due Native American beneficiaries for the use of their lands and resources.

**Workers' Rights**

**We oppose the so called "Right to Work" ballot measure, which would restrict worker's rights to organize and collectively bargain for fair wages and working conditions.**

We oppose any measure that limits public employees' right to participate in a labor union including any measure that limits the deduction of dues and political contributions from employee paychecks.

We opposes any measure that restricts the right of employees to belong to and participate in a labor union including any measure that restricts the right of unions to bargain representation or agency fee provisions in collective bargaining contracts.

We resolve to support keeping state labor law reform in the hands of the Colorado General Assembly, and not embodied in the State Constitution.

We believe that all workers have a fundamental right to assemble, organize, bargain collectively, and jointly petition businesses and government for better working conditions, and to vote on all matters without intimidation or coercion from management or outside influences.

We endorse restoring majority rule for union certification, the right to strike without fear of retribution and prohibiting the hiring of permanent replacements in strikes or giving preferential status to workers who cross picket lines.

We support the right of workers to pay union and professional membership dues through payroll deductions.

We oppose the privatization of postal services, and all anti-worker initiatives or legislation proposed in Colorado or at the national level.

We support maintaining the Colorado Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) as an actuarially sound defined benefit plan, directed by a board elected by the membership, and establishing a 30-year actuarial period, and oppose any attempts to undermine or abolish it.

The PERA board should continue to be comprised of those who have a direct stake in the health of PERA. Any changes that may be needed to insure the actuarial health of PERA should be done with the consent of its membership. We oppose any attempt to create a two-tier plan for old and new [PERA] members.

We advocate guaranteeing a safe and healthy workplace for all workers by maintaining the Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and other similar agencies with adequate funding for enforcement and training.

National Guard Reservists' jobs must be protected for the duration of their active service. We support providing tax credits to businesses that employ Guard Reservists who are activated for service.

We support classified State employees and their civil service protections as currently provided for in the State Constitution.

We demand the strict enforcement of the child labor laws throughout Colorado. We encourage employers to implement practices for the safety and protection of minor employees.

### **Corporate Responsibility**

We call for corporations to be accountable to the common good, receptive of public oversight, that they pay their full share of taxes, and that they be recognized as business entities legally separate and distinct from individuals. We encourage the fostering of ethical business leadership based on social responsibility. Government must not enable or support businesses that behave contrary to the betterment of society. We support the full prosecution of corporations and their officers who violate securities and investment laws and regulations.

We call for the repeal of Colorado and Federal laws that provide special, unequal protection to corporations from lawsuits, such as major pharmaceutical manufacturers, medical providers, the tobacco industry, and Colorado homebuilders

We call upon Congress to enact legislation preventing business from using bankruptcy as a tool to abrogate labor contracts and pension obligations.

We believe that government regulation of industry is essential for the common good. Federal regulatory agencies must provide and enforce adequate safeguards for the people and the environment rather than looking first to the interests of the industries they were created to regulate. Industry must not be allowed to write the legislation that affects them, and regulatory agencies must receive adequate funding and staffing levels to enforce the law. We support strong anti-trust laws and their enforcement.

We believe that U.S.-based multi-national corporations must be held accountable for human rights abuses, in this and other countries, committed in their factories and subsidiaries.

### **Fair Trade**

We support only those free trade agreements that guarantee enforceable worker protections such as: the right to organize; a grievance process with open third-party oversight; safe working conditions; length of the workday; a reasonable living wage; environmental protections; and limitations on child-labor, and that do not violate our law or endanger our public safety.

We call for the review of all existing trade agreements to ensure that our trade partners are living up to their labor and environmental obligations and that they are enforceable and balanced for America's workers. We call for a moratorium on all future trade agreements until this review is complete.

Fair trade requires respect for the life, health, and dignity of all people on the planet. Water rights and water systems should not be privatized by multi-national corporations. Community access to sustenance crops should not be limited through patenting by multi-national corporations. We have the right as a sovereign nation to establish laws regarding the behavior of Americans abroad and foreign corporations in the United States.

We oppose the proposed super highway out of Mexico into the United States without adequate protection of American workers, our national security, and highway safety.

### **SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, & INFRASTRUCTURE**

Science and technology are tools of progress and help maintain a stable, educated workforce.

We support public research and development programs and public/private partnerships to stimulate job growth, including funding for innovative research and technology; and

**We support the fair and responsible use of technology that advances and promotes civil rights, justice, government services, culture, environment, public safety, health, transportation, communications and jobs.**

**We demand the return of freedom of inquiry to scientists, appointing qualified scientists to panels without regard to political or religious beliefs, and allowing scientists to publish their results without political interference in order that we may have open, honest debate on public policy.**

### **Transportation (General)**

**We support expanding public transit, including rail, light rail, bus, and other alternatives, to create comprehensive and efficient public transit systems, and decrease the need for automobile transportation. Road projects (avoiding toll roads) should only be one component of integrated, multi-modal links between local, regional, and national transportation.**

We advocate improving access along the I-70 central mountain corridor through the introduction of alternatives other than wholesale highway widening and support a mass transit solution to I-70 congestion which is comprehensive enough to be actually viable, as well as a supplemental draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement to address the egregious bias and methodological deficiencies of the I-70 PEIS, as manifested in its disregard of environmental, cultural, and localized economic impacts.

A healthy economy relies on appropriate maintenance of our public infrastructure, including roads, bridges, water, sewer, earth friendly transportation system, and funding of police, fire protection and school facilities. We support effective transportation systems to meet the diverse needs of our communities. These systems should be viewed as a cost of growth, and be fully reflected in the price of development.

We call upon Congress to enact legislation creating tax incentives to redevelop rail links for efficient long distance transportation of bulky and heavy cargo.

We believe that a Colorado Transit Task Force comprised of members from throughout Colorado should develop and implement a strategic plan for public transit, including the use of efficient alternative energy in public transit systems.

We support the promotion and consideration of construction and maintenance of bicycle lanes in all of the road construction projects at the local, state and national levels, and support continued expansion and integration of bike and pedestrian trail systems throughout Colorado.

We support extension of the RTD Light Rail/Commuter Rail system to Castle Rock, to Denver International Airport, and potentially to Colorado Springs and other locations.

### **Internet**

**We support open and equal access to the Internet with restrictions on large conglomerate control, as well as implementation of broadband service choice for all, especially in small communities and rural areas.**

### **Libraries**

**We support the adequate funding of all public and academic libraries.**

### **Recreational Facilities**

It is important for government to support community amenities including art and culture, parks (including dog parks and other pet-friendly facilities) and recreation, libraries, historic preservation and the acquisition of open spaces.

### **TAXATION & FISCAL POLICY**

**We support a progressive tax system and a repeal of tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans that will reduce the growing income disparity between rich, the middle class and poor. We support policies which decrease and eventually eliminate poverty in the United States.**

We support an economic stimulus package that rebuilds our infrastructure and creates jobs (similar to the HRA of the 1930s), with policies strengthening the U.S. dollar and reducing interest rates on home mortgages.

### **Reducing Poverty and Providing for Basic Necessities**

We support adequate federal funding for a social safety net that provides basic necessities for all Americans and reduces poverty.

We support preserving the long-term solvency of Social Security and other programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), without privatization, by removing or raising the cap on social security wages.

We support legislation to raise the threshold for income taxation on Social Security benefits to \$50,000, adjusted for inflation.

We support policies that promote diversity, social justice and economic opportunity, and balance the federal budget by adopting a pay as you go policy. We must stop borrowing from our children's future.

#### **A Progressive Income Tax**

Democrats are realists who know that in order to receive the services and benefits that we want government to provide for us, revenues must come into government in the form of taxes. Given that our middle class is shrinking and an inefficient tax system is causing the economic disparity between the wealthy and working class to widen we support a more progressive tax system and would oppose any movement toward a flat tax that favors the very wealthy.

**We support repealing tax cuts which benefit only wealthy individuals and large corporations because of the record national debt incurred by a Republican Administration who involved this country in an endless war and resorted to budgetary gimmickry to disguise its true cost.**

We call for making targeted tax cuts for lower and middle income earners and small business.

We call for removal of the Alternate Minimum Tax calculation since it is no longer taxing the 100 wealthiest in the U.S. who pay no taxes but is in fact adding an additional tax burden to families making between \$100,000 and \$200,000 per year.

We support legislation that, for all compensation packages that are more than 40 times the average compensation package of an employee, taxes the difference in compensation as windfall income at a higher marginal rate.

#### **Closing Loopholes**

We support the closing of excessive loopholes and government incentives given to large corporations. Government subsidies should only be used to promote the public good, such as creating jobs in a depressed economy.

**We urge the repeal of tax incentives for U.S.-based corporations who export work to other nations to avoid paying the real cost of goods and services formerly obtained from U.S. workers, and demand that the U.S. government be prohibited from doing business with formerly U.S.-based corporations who move offshore to escape paying U.S. corporate taxes.**

#### **Wise Spending of Tax Dollars**

We require the restoration of an adequate tax base to fund state programs cut during times of financial adversity in the areas of health, K-12 through higher education, and transportation, especially as directed by Amendment C, and urge the State Legislature not to enact any new tax cuts.

We oppose vouchers and tuition tax credits because they take public tax dollars away from public education and give them to unregulated private and religious schools. They also diminish the State's already insufficient financial support for public schools and erode the very foundation of our democracy.

Certain necessary public functions and services carry a larger inherent burden of public trust, as their abuse causes great harms, including public functions such as our military, police, tax collection, intelligence, prison and detention facilities. Therefore we reject the outsourcing of such functions to private and for-profit entities as a massive conflict of interest and demand that such services be performed and overseen only by our government.

We recommend increased funding and staff for the Internal Revenue Service to allow for collection of unpaid taxes and to increase the frequency of corporate auditing.

#### **Reforming Other Taxes**

**We request simplification of the tax code and revocation of the TABOR amendment.**

The impact on local government caused by energy related mineral extraction must be accompanied by a fair and equitable distribution of severance tax revenues. An increase in the severance tax rates to make them more comparable to neighboring states is long overdue as is a legislative effort to maximize the retention of this revenue.

We support a ballot measure to end the ad valorem tax credit given to oil and gas companies.

We support legislation increasing the tax credit for qualified Child and Dependent Care Expenses for all children and dependents in a household.

The estate tax is the only significant federal tax on accumulated wealth and is an essential part of a fair tax system. We believe that the estate tax is an essential part of a fair and balanced tax system, and must be preserved. There is an exemption built into the law that is specifically designed to exclude family-owned farms from estate taxes. We support reasonable reforms that allow these legacies to remain, but also preserves the principle of a tax on inheritances.

We support collecting revenue from sales of alcohol to pay for alcohol and drug abuse education, prevention, treatment & rehabilitation.

#### **AGRICULTURE & FOOD SAFETY**

We recognize and celebrate the fact that agriculture and ranching have long been a staple of the Colorado economy and our heritage.

We support family owned and operated farms. We believe that government subsidies should be reserved for small family farms only.

We call for balancing the needs for urban development, open space, and recreation with preserving agriculture and ranching as a traditional base of Colorado's economy; and encouraging expanding and strengthening local and state conservation easement programs.

**We support safe food practices, including full disclosure of all ingredients, labeling of genetically engineered or modified food, food from cloned animals and their offspring, pesticide use and "Country of Origin" (or "COO")**

**We call for reducing waste runoff and reducing use of pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers, antibiotics and growth hormones.**

We support efforts to encourage the growth and development of organic farming, including legislation providing substantial tax incentives for farmers who engage in organic farming, and farmers who employ sustainable farming practices.

We call for efforts to ensure fairness to farmers and ranchers in their dealings with biotech companies that sell genetically engineered seeds, plants, and animals.

We call for a moratorium on open-air field trials of pharmaceutical-producing food crops, and protecting farmers whose crops have been contaminated by genetically modified organisms. Biotech companies should be held liable for damage and injuries due to the release of genetically engineered organisms into the environment.

We support efforts to encourage farmers markets, and buying locally.

We support greater investment by U.S. government and the cattle industry in higher standards to prevent mad cow and other diseases.

We support an increase of import inspections is critical for the protection of the American consumer, especially in light of last year's unprecedented number of unsafe and poisonous products entering our country, as well as an increase in the budget of FDA budget.

We support agricultural policies and practices that minimize environmental degradation and maximize public health and consumer safety.

We call for strengthening regulations requiring the humane treatment of farm animals and of animals used for scientific research.

We oppose the imposition of federal laws which gut state laws governing food safety, particularly at the behest of corporate lobbyists who represent the interests of the food industry over the safety of the public. We further oppose the politicization of public safety agencies, such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), to subvert public safety standards through such corporate-sponsored legislation and other related activities.

We support the legalization of non-psychoactive hemp production.

We oppose any attempts to weaken the organic standards of the National Organic Program to insure the quality of the organic food supply.

## **ENERGY**

We believe that conservation, the use of renewable energy, and the elimination of energy waste are significant components of responsible energy policy, and key to address global climate change.

### **Energy Independence and Alternative/Renewable Energy**

We support implementation of a national policy and massive program for energy independence which prioritizes practices that promote the development of renewable energy technologies, the installation of alternative energy systems and energy conservation -- including a significant increase in Federal Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards.

This program should include a massive effort (similar to prior federal efforts like the Manhattan Project) to develop alternative energy sources such as wind, solar, tidal, geothermal, atmospheric gases, water, nuclear, magnetic, biological and as-yet unimagined alternatives to begin immediately providing incentives to explore and support these ideas. The program should set a date certain for the nation/state to become energy independent. For example, United States should adopt an energy standard achieving 20% of our national domestic energy used from renewable energy sources by the year 2020, the current Colorado State Standard.

**We support the rapid development and increased utilization of renewable and alternative sources of energy generally, and specifically, sufficient to supply 25% of Colorado's state power needs from renewable sources by 2020 while extending Amendment 37 requirements to all utilities in the State; and working toward the elimination of any consumption of foreign oil by 2025.**

We believe that environmental problems are global in nature and that it is in the best interest of all nations to pursue policies of sustainable development. We believe the federal government's current inaction to be grossly irresponsible and immoral. We support assisting other countries to reduce their use of fossil fuels, as well as promote a national world view that focuses on the importance of interdependency among all nations.

### **Vehicle Fuel Efficiency**

We support requirements for manufacturers to produce street vehicles that achieve average mileage rates of 40 mpg by 2015.

We also support conversion of government fleets to 100 percent "light on energy consumption" vehicles such as hybrid, electric and alternative-energy vehicles.

### **Carbon Footprint Reduction**

We support dramatic reduction of net greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants. As part of that effort, we support a national fossil fuel carbon tax to fund renewable energy (both distributed and grid supported) and renewable energy-based transportation.

We oppose the licensing of any new coal-powered power plants.

### **Energy Conservation and Efficiency**

We believe in 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, including the use of more energy-efficient construction methods and materials, and increased citizen education on reducing energy consumption.

We support policies to encourage the development, manufacturing, and consumer use of energy-saving devices and procedures, and installation and design of alternative energy and energy/water conservation/anti-pollution retro-fitting measures in U. S. homes and businesses.

We support legislation: requiring all government buildings meet standards equivalent to the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green-building certification; requiring newly developed property to 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; and adopting "Green Energy" building code standards that utilize energy conservation,

efficiency and sustainability principles to accomplish large savings in energy usage.

### **Incentives**

We support incentives and funding for individuals and businesses for alternative energy/water conservation/anti-pollution measures, including the following:

We support incentives for electric power generated from wind farms.

We support incentives and funding of university programs that educate and research areas of non-polluting and renewable energy development, including funding workforce training for jobs created as a result of expanding alternative energy employment sectors, and including close monitoring of potential negative effects from the development of alternative energy sources as pertains to the health and welfare of citizens here and worldwide.

We call for funding of large scale education and training programs on energy issues (New Deal scale)

We call for incentives to encourage the development and use of hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles.

We support a residential solar tax credit.

We support funding and incentives to restructure and rebuild the national electrical grid to increase efficiency, redundancy (backup systems that prevent outages), and robustness.

We call for the elimination of all subsidies for fossil fuels and for nuclear power, and redirecting current federal energy subsidies from coal and oil producers to renewable energy sources, phasing out over time to allow oil and coal companies to retool and retrain their workers to develop fuel cells, wind farms, and solar systems.

### **Energy Regulation**

We support policy that will better regulate the power and control, transparency and accountability of Rural Electric Associations (REAs).

We support raising renewable energy standards within Colorado to insure REAs will purchase renewable energy produced within Colorado, made by small producers (including those produced by private homeowners) and allow these small-scale renewables to be sold on the grid.

We support rescinding emission and fuel efficiency exemptions for SUVs, tractor-trailer type diesels, ATV's, snowmobiles, golf carts, etc.

We support requiring all utilities to begin using energy sources that are renewable (non-fossil fuel) in ever increasing percentages.

We support requiring transparency of all energy providers (including REA's) to include all environmental impacts both in economy and carbon emission.

We support requiring all utilities to buy-back all energy produced by individuals and residences that stems from renewable and non-fossil fuel sources.

We call for considering imposing "a 'resource tax' on pollution, development, and fossil fuel to pay for development of renewable energy and environmental restoration.

We call for Colorado legislation that will set standards for Rural Electric Associations that will provide a fair system for net metering in all areas of Colorado.

### **Oil & Gas Extraction Issues**

We support regulating the oil & gas industry better so as not to adversely impact the lives of surface owners living near extraction & transportation sites.

We support 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, and insist upon surface owners receiving fair compensation for damage or disturbance done in the investigation, development, or extraction of minerals.