

1 **PLATFORM OF THE MONTANA DEMOCRATIC PARTY**
2 **Adopted June 11th, 2016**
3 **PREAMBLE**
4

5
6 The Montana Democratic Party is the party of the people. We welcome to our cause Montanans of every
7 color, creed, and condition. Our history as a party teaches us that by working together and speaking as
8 one, we can move society forward, especially when we raise our voices for those among us with little
9 money, influence, or acceptance.
10

11 Our cause as Montana Democrats is as simple and as ambitious as the purpose stated in the Constitution
12 of the United States: We strive to create “a more perfect union.” Like the founders of this nation, we
13 believe that such a union must be a government of the people and by the people dedicated to securing
14 for every single citizen the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Like the
15 delegates who crafted Montana’s constitution, we believe that a more perfect Montana requires that we
16 secure even more expansive liberties. We treasure our explicit right to the privacy of our persons, our
17 property and our communications; our right to a clean and healthful environment; and our right to be
18 notified, to observe, and to participate when our governing bodies make decisions.
19

20 As Montanans, we are deeply grateful for the heritage, opportunity, freedom, landscape, and lifestyle we
21 enjoy in this “last best place.” As Democrats we believe that, by ensuring and expanding these blessings
22 for every Montanan, we improve the quality of life for all Montanans.
23

24 Within this framework of belief, Montana Democrats are guided by these enduring principles:
25

26 **Agriculture and Rural Development.** Directly or indirectly, agriculture affects all economic activity in
27 Montana. The family farm and ranch is the backbone of our small-town, rural way of life, and as our
28 population ages, sustaining the family farm or ranch becomes more challenging. We regard family
29 farming and ranching as a cornerstone of our heritage and economy that must be preserved.
30

31 **American Indians.** We believe in the equality of all people, but as Montanans we have a particular
32 obligation to Montana’s first people. We recognize that Montana’s American Indians are not only
33 Montanans, but also members of their own tribal nations with the sovereignty to govern themselves and
34 the right to preserve their cultural integrity.
35

36 **Cultural Enrichment.** We believe that access to the arts, libraries, museums, and cultural experiences is
37 an essential component of the quality of life and the economy in Montana. We are committed to ensuring
38 that those who create and provide this access are encouraged to prompt us to imagine, marvel, reflect,
39 and learn.
40

41 **Energy.** As we confront global climate change, Montana Democrats believe that we must reduce our
42 reliance on fossil fuels through a combination of energy conservation, energy efficiency, and the
43 development of clean, renewable energy sources. We believe that we can achieve this goal AND create
44 or provide transitions into good Montana jobs.
45

46 **Good Government.** We view government as the means by which individuals work together to solve
47 mutual problems, balance competing interests, and accomplish common goals. Good government meets
48 its constitutional obligations to protect health and safety and to promote community, commerce, and
49 culture. At every level, good government is open, accountable, and responsive to the people.
50

51 **Health Care and Human Services.** We are dedicated to ensuring quality of life and equality of
52 opportunity for all individuals and families, regardless of their socio-economic status. Fundamental to
53 such quality and equality is access to the basic necessities of life, including, at a minimum, health care,
54 education, shelter, adequate nutrition, human dignity, and lives free of violence.

1
2 **Human and Civil Rights.** We believe that neither a peaceful planet nor a democratic society can survive
3 without appreciation for the diversity of all people and respect for the unique value of each person. We
4 embrace the rights guaranteed by the constitutions of our state and nation, recognizing that the meaning
5 and application of those rights evolve as our knowledge and understanding as human beings in a
6 democratic republic evolve.
7

8 **Hunting, Fishing, and Outdoor Recreation.** We recognize that the opportunity for Montanans to enjoy
9 our spectacular landscapes, clean waters, and abundant fish and wildlife is an integral part of our
10 heritage, identity, and lifestyle. We believe in public ownership of the fish, wildlife, streams and rivers of
11 our state and rely on our government to hold these resources in trust for the beneficial use of our citizens
12 and future generations.
13

14 **International Relations.** In the spirit of the late Senator Mike Mansfield, we believe that America should
15 treat all nations and peoples with the same dignity and respect we expect of one another. While we must
16 maintain the military strength to be secure as a nation, we believe our greatest strength and our greatest
17 security lie in our effective use of commerce, aid, diplomacy, and collaboration to improve the well-being
18 and good will of all peoples and all nations.
19

20 **Jobs and the Economy.** We know that it requires both government and private business to create the
21 quality jobs necessary to sustain a healthy economy. Government at both federal and state levels is
22 responsible for funding infrastructure, education programs, and economic growth policies that are major
23 job creators and strengthen and diversify our private-sector economy.
24

25 **Justice – Access to Justice.** We expect our justice system to operate impartially and efficiently to
26 protect and enforce the rights of all citizens equally, to provide every citizen with a venue to seek redress
27 of grievances, and to ensure the safety and well-being of our communities.
28

29 **Justice – Crime and Punishment.** We believe that the best approach to reducing crime is providing the
30 education, opportunities, and social services that prevent crime. When crime does occur, we believe in a
31 fair, balanced approach that seeks to restore the victim, safeguard the public, and rehabilitate the
32 offender.
33

34 **Labor.** We believe that stable jobs with livable wages are another cornerstone of a stable economy and a
35 healthy society. Because the vast majority of Montanans make their living as wage-earners, we seek fair
36 compensation for their labor so that they can provide for their families and sustain their communities.
37 Montana workers deserve safety, security, and dignity as conditions of their employment, as well as
38 conditions of their retirement after a lifetime of hard work.
39

40 **Public Education.** We believe that public education not only acts as the primary catalyst for a strong
41 economy, upward mobility, and the quality of life in Montana, but also fosters the lasting bonds of
42 understanding, acceptance, and community that make Montana such a desirable place to live. We are
43 therefore committed to a continuum of high-quality public education opportunities that develop the
44 potential of every Montanan and of Montana itself.
45

46 **Stewarding Our Natural Resources.** The teeming bounty of Montana's natural resources has always
47 been at the heart of our prosperity, our heritage, and our lifestyle as Montanans. We believe that we must
48 work together to ensure that these resources not only contribute to the strong economy needed to sustain
49 families and communities in the 21st century, but also provide the clean and healthful environment that is
50 our constitutional right.
51

52 **Taxation.** We seek a progressive, broad-based, equitable tax system that reflects and enhances our
53 changing economy and adequately supports a full range of quality public services and public education.
54 We believe in being fiscally responsible while promoting quality of life and equality of opportunity for all
55 our citizens.

1
2 **Veterans and Active Military.** We ask Americans in the military to risk their lives and disrupt their
3 families' lives to serve our country. In gratitude for their sacrifice, Montana Democrats regard as sacred
4 our obligation to care for America's military – during active duty and for the rest of their lives.
5

6 **Women.** We are the party of trail-blazing women. We are committed to securing equal opportunities in
7 education, employment, and leadership for every woman and to ensuring safe, healthy, and nurturing
8 environments for all women. To achieve these goals, women must have an equitable role, not only in
9 determining local, state, and national policies, but also in allocating resources to meet the needs of
10 families and communities.
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14 PRINCIPLES AND POSITIONS

15 16 17 **AGRICULTURE and RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

18 *Directly or indirectly, agriculture affects all economic activity in Montana. The family farm and ranch is the*
19 *backbone of our small-town, rural way of life, and as our population ages, sustaining the family farm or*
20 *ranch becomes more challenging. We regard family farming and ranching as a cornerstone of our*
21 *heritage and economy that must be preserved.*
22

23 **We support:**

- 24 ● Agricultural policies designed to promote and enhance decentralized, sustainable,
25 community-based family farm agricultural production.
- 26 ● Fair trade policies for Montana agricultural products.
- 27 ● Value-added agricultural enterprise.
- 28 ● Marketing and other promotion efforts emphasizing the high quality of Montana's agricultural
29 products.
- 30 ● Competitive and reasonably priced transportation of farm inputs and commodities.
- 31 ● A financial security net with a goal of no net loss in the population of family agriculture producers.
- 32 ● Legislation that enhances food safety and security.
- 33 ● A combination of progressive land use and tax policies.
- 34 ● Estate and finance laws that encourage the transfer of agricultural operations from parents to
35 children, or to new family farm and ranch owners.
- 36 ● Eminent domain laws that prioritize all surface property rights.
- 37 ● Policies that provide reasonable fees and rental rates for agricultural land.
- 38 ● Dedicating federal and state resources to assist farmers and ranchers to learn about and adopt
39 practices proven to increase soil health, water retention, and the resiliency and productivity of
40 their crops and livestock.
- 41 ● Sufficient funding for ag research at our institutions of higher learning, for ag experiment stations,
42 and for cooperative extension services, as well as youth ag activities and curriculum.
- 43 ● Encouraging the use of fee title acquisition, conservation easements, or leases to help farms stay
44 in the family while contributing to the protection of wildlife habitat and open space, even if there is
45 a net gain of public land in the state.
- 46 ● Strengthening subdivision review regulations to protect family farms, maintain open space, and
47 address wildlife habitat needs.
- 48 ● Federal farm programs to ensure market-derived commodity prices and incomes at levels that
49 sustain and advance family-scale farm and ranch production.
- 50 ● Effective federal and state land conservation and stewardship programs.

51 52 **We oppose:**

- 53 ● A centralized, globalized, industrialized, vertically integrated model of agricultural production.
- 54 ● The concentration and control of U.S. agricultural production, processing and marketing by multi-
55 national corporations.

- Introduction of genetically modified wheat varieties.

AMERICAN INDIANS

We believe in the equality of all people, but as Montanans we have a particular obligation to Montana's first people. We recognize that Montana's American Indians are not only Montanans, but also members of their own tribal nations with the sovereignty to govern themselves and the right to preserve their cultural integrity.

We support:

- The sovereignty since time immemorial of Montana's American Indian tribes acknowledged by the treaties and the validity of all court decisions, contracts, and agreements of the federal and state government with all Indian nations.
- Montana's constitutional commitment to preserve the cultural integrity of American Indians.
- Recruitment and/or appointment of American Indians to leadership positions within the party and at all levels of government to ensure their representation in policy discussions and decision-making.
- Policies and programs to help Montana's urban Indians overcome barriers.
- The religious freedom of American Indians and the protection of their sacred, cultural and religious properties.
- Equitable, accessible, and culturally sensitive delivery of effective social services and high-quality, affordable healthcare to American Indians, including mental health services and suicide prevention programs.
- Tribal jurisdiction over all Indian children, in compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act.
- The right of tribal governments to develop, manage, and regulate their natural resources while protecting water and air quality and the integrity of their sacred and cultural sites.
- Proactive and equitable efforts to increase economic development, employment opportunities, and the prosperity of all tribal nations and of all American Indians, on and off the reservations.
- Good-faith negotiation on tribal-state compacts, including gaming, revenue-sharing, and water compacts.
- Equitable allocation and distribution of state and federal funds to ensure that American Indians in Montana receive their fair share of appropriated funds.
- Inter-governmental agreements that allow tax revenues generated on Indian reservations to be used to support reservation economies and fund essential services.
- Organized outreach as a party to Montana's American Indians and to all Montanans on issues central to the advancement of American Indians in Montana.
- Equitable access for American Indians registering to vote and voting.

We oppose:

- Hate crimes, including sexual violence, targeting American Indians.

CULTURAL ENRICHMENT

Montana Democrats believe that access to the arts, libraries, museums, and cultural experiences is an essential component of the quality of life and the strength of the economy in Montana. We are committed to ensuring that those who create and provide this access are encouraged to prompt us to imagine, marvel, reflect and learn.

We support:

- Programs within and beyond Montana's education institutions that develop Montanans' artistic talents and stimulate our appreciation of the arts and our awareness of diverse cultures.
- Efforts to preserve and interpret historic sites.
- Public funding sufficient to provide affordable access to public libraries and museums.
- Diverse, broadly available, and inclusive public art, performances, and cultural events.

- Inclusion of artists and cultural organization professionals in the design and creation of artistic and cultural elements in public buildings and spaces.
- Continual emphasis on honest portrayals of our diverse cultures and histories.
- Multi-media public broadcasting, including community-based public radio and public access television.

We oppose:

- Intrusions on the freedom of expression and inquiry guaranteed by the First Amendment.
- Unauthorized use of artists' intellectual property.
- Reduction or elimination of educational programs in the arts and humanities or funding for public libraries, museums, and cultural centers.

ENERGY

As we confront global climate change, Montana Democrats believe that we must reduce reliance on fossil fuels through a combination of energy conservation, energy efficiency, and the development of clean, renewable energy sources. We believe that we can achieve this goal AND create or provide transitions into good Montana jobs.

We support:

- A utility regulation model that ensures Montana energy consumers are encouraged to take advantage of Montana's plentiful and affordable clean energy resources.
- Demand-side management methods and integrated power grids that reduce energy consumption and costs for homeowners and businesses and speed the transfer from reliance on fossil fuels to clean energy power.
- Programs to train or retrain workers of Montana for tomorrow's energy jobs.
- Incentives for Montana's entrepreneurs, businesses, university system and government agencies to develop clean, reliable, and affordable energy sources that attract high-wage, high-tech jobs.
- Universal services programs that address the issues of affordability, efficiency, conservation, and renewability in energy consumption.
- Reduced reliance on petroleum markets that drive up costs for the citizens and businesses in this transportation-dependent, northern-climate state.
- A comprehensive plan to explore technologies for coal gasification, advanced biofuels, and a sustainable biofuels industry in Montana.
- The establishment of strategies and protocols for capture, transportation, sequestration and liability for disposal of CO₂, with a priority to create and conserve sustainable jobs.

GOOD GOVERNMENT

We view government as the means by which individuals work together to solve mutual problems, balance competing interests, and accomplish common goals. Good government meets its constitutional obligations to protect health and safety and to promote community, commerce, and culture. At every level, good government is open, accountable, and responsive to the people.

We support:

- Local control, along with the local discretion and flexibility needed for responsive, efficient, and effective provision of services to the public.
- Open, transparent government so that Montanans can exercise vigilance in holding our federal, state and local officials accountable and take part in government decision-making.
- Cooperative and mutually respectful efforts among local, state, tribal and federal levels of government to provide services and to respond to emerging needs.
- Collaborative efforts between government bodies and private entities to create a robust and modern infrastructure that meets needs and expands opportunities for all communities and all Montanans.
- Open, free, fair, and transparent elections, including Montana's open primary election, which

1 encourage participation by all citizens.

- 2 • Campaign finance reform to ensure that Montana elections will not be bought by out-of-state
- 3 interests.
- 4 • Civic literacy programs designed to provide for educated, informed, and active citizens who
- 5 understand the specific role of government.

6
7 **We oppose:**

- 8 • The diversion of public funding to private entities for the provision of public services.
- 9 • All efforts to suppress lawful voting through repeal of current practices, the imposition of
- 10 unnecessary barriers to voting, and intimidation and disinformation schemes.
- 11 • Legislation or other governmental intervention on decisions reserved to the privacy of any
- 12 individual.
- 13 • Cost-shifting or unfunded mandates that burden one level of government with the obligations of
- 14 another.

15
16
17 **HEALTH CARE and HUMAN SERVICES**

18 *We are dedicated to ensuring quality of life and equality of opportunity for all individuals and all families,*
19 *regardless of their socio-economic status. Fundamental to such quality and equality is access to the basic*
20 *necessities of life, including, at a minimum, health care, education, shelter, adequate nutrition, human*
21 *dignity, and lives free of violence.*

22
23 **Health Care**

24 **We support:**

- 25 • Affordable and accessible health care for all Montanans.
- 26 • Montanans' right to choose their health care providers.
- 27 • Montanans' right to keep their personal medical information private.
- 28 • Patient-centered approaches to prevent and treat chronic disease.
- 29 • Effective responses to mental illness, substance abuse disorders, and gambling addiction.
- 30 • Health insurance programs that encourage preventative care, provide coverage parity for mental
- 31 health services and substance abuse disorders, and preserve adequate coverage for low-income
- 32 Montanans.
- 33 • Active and proactive measures to address the needs of Montana's aging population.
- 34 • Efforts to maintain and improve funding for rural health care.
- 35 • Community-based mental illness and addiction crisis intervention and recovery as the preferred
- 36 approach.

37
38 **We oppose:**

- 39 • Laws and other government actions that interfere with the privacy rights of individuals to make
- 40 their own health decisions, including decisions about contraception, child-bearing, and dying.
- 41 • Limiting access to legal health care services associated with individuals' private decisions.
- 42 • Privatizing Medicare or changing to a voucher system.

43
44 **Human Services**

45 **We support:**

- 46 • Collaboration and cooperation between public, private, non-profit, and faith-based organizations
- 47 in adopting policies and services that strengthen all families and communities.
- 48 • Funding to prevent, diminish, and respond effectively to domestic violence and child abuse
- 49 through education, early intervention, more resources for shelters, adequate staffing, and
- 50 treatment, including residential treatment.
- 51 • Holding those found guilty of assault or abuse accountable and prioritizing the protection of the
- 52 victim.
- 53 • Effective and accessible senior services, including ombudsman and advocacy services in all
- 54 facets of senior living experiences.

- 1 • Developing and assessing effective measures to protect the health and safety of Montana's
- 2 seniors.
- 3 • Full inclusion of people with disabilities and Montana's senior citizens in our communities through
- 4 a well-funded network of community-based services.
- 5 • Full compliance with the philosophy and requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act
- 6 (ADA) to allow everyone to lead a productive, dignified life.
- 7 • Safe, affordable, and accessible housing for all Montanans; respect for the rights of renters.
- 8 • Efforts to help the homeless and housing-insecure to obtain decent shelter, social services,
- 9 medical services, educational programs, and other support services that will help them maintain
- 10 stable living circumstances.
- 11 • Strengthening programs that feed those who are hungry.

12
13 **We oppose:**

- 14 • Any privatization of Social Security.

15
16
17 **HUMAN RIGHTS and CIVIL RIGHTS**

18 *We believe that neither a peaceful planet nor a democratic society can survive without appreciation for*
19 *the diversity of all people and respect for the unique value of each person. We embrace the rights*
20 *guaranteed by the constitutions of our state and nation, recognizing that the meaning and application of*
21 *those rights evolve as our knowledge and understanding as human beings in a democratic republic*
22 *evolve.*

23
24 **We support:**

- 25 • A state, nation, and world free of want, fear, harassment, discrimination, torture, and bullying.
- 26 • Equal treatment of all individuals before the law, regardless of race, gender, religion, age, sexual
- 27 orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical or intellectual ability, physical or mental
- 28 health status, language of origin, national origin, or marital status.
- 29 • Equal opportunities for housing, employment, and education available to all individuals.
- 30 • Federal, state, local, tribal, and private efforts that recognize our shared responsibility to respond
- 31 to every individual's right to human dignity and life's basic necessities.
- 32 • Affirmative action to provide opportunities for members of historically marginalized groups to
- 33 pursue meaningful, substantial, and gainful activity.
- 34 • Every individual's right to hold personal beliefs without interference from those with different
- 35 beliefs and the right to make private decisions without government restriction or intervention.
- 36 • The right of all persons with special needs to live and to be served in the least restrictive
- 37 environment appropriate to those needs.

38
39
40 **HUNTING, FISHING, and OUTDOOR RECREATION**

41 *We recognize that the opportunity for Montanans to enjoy our spectacular landscapes, clean waters, and*
42 *abundant fish and wildlife is an integral part of our heritage, identity, and lifestyle. We believe in public*
43 *ownership of the fish, wildlife, streams and rivers of our state and rely on our government to hold these*
44 *resources in trust for the beneficial use of our citizens and future generations.*

45
46 **We support:**

- 47 • The right to keep and bear arms as defined in both the Montana and the U.S. Constitutions.
- 48 • Montanans' right to participate in fair chase hunting, fishing, trapping, and outdoor recreation on
- 49 our public lands, consistent with private property rights.
- 50 • Montana's Stream Access Law, including the public's right to access streams at public bridges.
- 51 • Federal ownership and management of current federal public lands in Montana and agency
- 52 budget levels sufficient to meet management challenges.
- 53 • Appropriate incentives to compensate landowners for the impacts of hunting and fishing, as well
- 54 as the maintenance of wildlife habitat on private land.

- License fee levels adequate to fund the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks' proper management of the public's wildlife and fish and their habitat as public trust resources.
- Diversity in the interests and perspectives of members of commissions and boards charged with influencing public policy on natural resources and outdoor recreation.
- Efforts to reduce chronic wasting disease, whirling disease, and other wildlife afflictions, as well as noxious weeds and invasive aquatic species.
- Public hunting as an appropriate tool for managing game populations.
- Science-based decision-making for managing fish and wildlife.
- Adequate funding for Montana State Parks to provide recreational opportunities and to preserve Montana's heritage within Montana State Parks.

We oppose:

- Any net loss of publicly owned lands, including any proposal to sell off federal public lands or transfer authority of federal public lands to state governments.
- The private sale of wildlife or any tags or permits intended to authorize the harvest of wildlife by any source other than the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.
- The increasing trend toward privatization and commercialization of public fish and wildlife resources in Montana.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

In the spirit of the late Senator Mike Mansfield, we believe that America should treat all nations and peoples with the same dignity and respect we expect of one another. While we must maintain the military strength to be secure as a nation, we believe our greatest strength and our greatest security lie in our effective use of commerce, aid, diplomacy and collaboration to improve the well-being and good will of all peoples and all nations.

We support:

- Democratic policies and collaborative approaches that lead to global stability; multilateral solutions to global problems; and nuclear, chemical, and biological disarmament.
- Policies that promote human and civil rights, including the right to political and economic self-determination, for all peoples of the world.
- Fair trade practices and the promotion of Montana products and services in the global marketplace.
- Foreign aid that emphasizes meeting basic human needs, rather than supplying military equipment.
- Abiding by our international treaties (especially the Geneva Conventions), combatting terrorism, and promoting peace, while continually re-assessing our global military policy.
- Debt forgiveness for impoverished nations.
- Global environmental and energy initiatives that protect and encourage environmental health as a foundation for a sustainable world.
- Global food security and health initiatives that move our world toward a time when people no longer face the agony and injustice of extreme poverty, undernutrition, and hunger.
- Opening our doors as Montanans to an appropriate number of thoroughly vetted refugees.
- Vigilant monitoring and enforcement of all bilateral and multilateral trade agreements to which the United States is party.

We oppose:

- Responses to terrorism that suspend or ignore the constitutional right of every United States citizen to be protected from warrantless surveillance, suspension of *habeas corpus*, indefinite detention without trial, and arbitrary deprivation of life without due process.
- Any normalization of trade relations with a country that engages in religious persecution, child labor, forced prison labor, environmental degradation, or prohibitions against the rights of workers to form unions.

1 **JOBS AND THE ECONOMY**

2 *We know that it requires both government and private business to create the quality jobs necessary to*
3 *sustain a healthy economy. Government at both federal and state levels is responsible for funding*
4 *infrastructure, programs and policies that create good jobs and lay the foundation necessary for future*
5 *economic growth and stability in both private and public sectors.*

6
7 **We support:**

- 8 ● Increasing the number of jobs in Montana that provide good salaries, benefits, and a healthy, safe
9 workplace.
 - 10 ● A comprehensive statewide infrastructure modernization program that creates good jobs while
11 strengthening communities and producing a robust foundation for future economic growth,
12 including critical water, sewer, transportation, and high-speed internet systems.
 - 13 ● Access to affordable capital for small businesses.
 - 14 ● Increasing state and federal funding to support highway and bridge improvements, public
15 education, and university research that creates jobs in the private sector.
 - 16 ● State and federal funding for development of science and technology centers of excellence
17 sharing facilities and faculty with Montana’s universities and colleges.
 - 18 ● Efforts to attract diverse and innovative businesses to Montana, especially in rural Montana and
19 Indian Country.
 - 20 ● The development of business/university partnerships and other collaborative efforts to assist
21 existing business and attract quality employers.
 - 22 ● Fair trade agreements that improve the export value of Montana products, thus protecting
23 Montana jobs.
 - 24 ● Promotion of Montana tourism and Montana-made goods and services in the global marketplace.
 - 25 ● Workforce training programs that prepare our workers for dynamic, rapidly changing economies
26 and that enable current and future generations of workers to find jobs that allow them to continue
27 living in Montana.
- 28

29 **JUSTICE**

30 **Access to Justice**

31 *We expect our justice system to operate impartially and efficiently to protect and enforce the rights of all*
32 *citizens equally, to provide every citizen with a venue to seek redress of grievances, and to ensure the*
33 *safety and well-being of our communities.*

34
35 **We support:**

- 36 ● Judicial campaigns and elections that ensure the judiciary is independent and uninfluenced by
37 political, religious, or ideological biases or agendas.
 - 38 ● The right of all people, regardless of socio-economic status, to assert their rights and to seek
39 redress of their grievances in court.
 - 40 ● Protection of all Montanans against predatory, fraudulent, or negligent business practices and
41 corporate accountability for such practices.
 - 42 ● The independence and authority that tribal sovereignty ensures for the tribal court system.
 - 43 ● Adequate resources to ensure speedy due process for all those appearing before Montana
44 courts.
- 45

46 **We oppose:**

- 47 ● Any laws or policies, including campaign contribution laws, which could have the effect of
48 compromising the independence of the judiciary.
 - 49 ● Actions of our justice systems that lead to disparities among Montana citizens.
 - 50 ● State courts’ jurisdiction over disputes on tribal land.
- 51

52 **Crime and Punishment**

1 *We believe that the best approach to reducing crime is providing the education, opportunities, and social*
2 *services that prevent crime. When crime does occur, we believe in a fair, balanced approach that seeks*
3 *to restore the victim, safeguard the public, and rehabilitate the offender.*

4
5 **We support:**

- 6 ● The assurance of public safety through effective and efficient responses to criminal acts.
- 7 ● The assurance of the safety of marginalized groups through effective and efficient responses to
- 8 hate crimes, accountability for perpetrators, and services for victims.
- 9 ● Responsible ownership of firearms, including gun safety practices and the education and
- 10 supervision of children in the use of firearms.
- 11 ● Personal responsibility and accountability of the convicted for restitution to victims and
- 12 communities.
- 13 ● Legislation, law enforcement and judicial practices that protect potential and actual victims of
- 14 human trafficking, assault, and abuse.
- 15 ● Crime prevention through government and community efforts to fight domestic violence, human
- 16 trafficking, sexual assault, youth violence, child abuse and neglect, and addictive disorders.
- 17 ● Evidence-based programs for crime prevention and rehabilitation that emphasize education and
- 18 treatment and that address developmental differences of the young and the needs of those with
- 19 mental illnesses.
- 20 ● Concerted and coordinated efforts to reduce the disproportionate number of American Indians
- 21 incarcerated in Montana's correctional system.
- 22 ● Addressing substance abuse as a public health issue, rather than a criminal issue.

23
24 **We oppose:**

- 25 ● The use of incarceration for any purpose other than the protection of the public and the
- 26 rehabilitation of offenders.
- 27 ● The use of prison dollars outside Montana.
- 28 ● Outsourcing prisons to for-profit enterprises.

29
30
31 **LABOR**

32 *We believe that stable jobs with livable wages are another cornerstone of a stable economy and a healthy*
33 *society. Because the vast majority of Montanans make their living as wage-earners, we seek fair*
34 *compensation for their labor so that they can provide for their families and sustain their communities.*
35 *Montana workers deserve safety, security, and dignity as conditions of their employment, as well as*
36 *conditions of their retirement after a lifetime of hard work.*

37
38 **We support:**

- 39 ● The right of workers to establish democracy in the workplace by forming or joining independent
- 40 unions for the purpose of bargaining and advocating collectively.
- 41 ● The right of workers to withhold their labor in the resolution of labor/management disputes.
- 42 ● Fair and adequate compensation that allows Montana wage-earners to sustain themselves, their
- 43 families, and their communities.
- 44 ● Equal pay for equal work.
- 45 ● Prevailing wage levels for workers on any project funded with taxpayer dollars.
- 46 ● Family-friendly workplace practices, including paid family and medical leave and employer-
- 47 assisted child and elder care programs.
- 48 ● Strong protections against child labor and appropriate employment conditions for young adult
- 49 workers.
- 50 ● Safe and healthy workplaces with just compensation for job-related injuries and unemployment
- 51 benefits when workers lose their jobs.
- 52 ● Training programs that enable prisoners to obtain employment upon release.
- 53 ● Congressional involvement in and approval of trade agreements and amendments to those
- 54 agreements.

- Strengthening federal, state, and private programs to provide for and protect our seniors in retirement.

We oppose:

- Privatizing employment in areas that belong in the public sector.
- “Right to work” legislation and other initiatives that interfere with workers’ right to organize, to bargain collectively, and to advocate on issues they deem important.
- The use of “permanent replacements” to undermine the right to strike.
- Discriminatory practices in hiring, promotions, working conditions, or compensation and the use of distinctions in employment that have no bearing on a worker’s ability to fulfill the duties of a job.
- The practice of hiring part-time or leased employees in order to avoid or reduce payments for fringe benefits, including health insurance and retirement benefits.
- The use of prison labor to replace workers on jobs normally performed by public or private sector workers.
- Foreign trade agreements that disadvantage U.S. workers and allow corporations to offshore their operations in an effort to reduce corporate tax rates, circumvent federal safety, environmental, and labor regulations.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

We believe that public education not only acts as the primary catalyst for a strong economy, upward mobility, and the quality of life in Montana, but also fosters the lasting bonds of understanding, acceptance, and community that make Montana such a desirable place to live. We are therefore committed to a continuum of high-quality public education opportunities that develop the potential of every Montanan and of Montana itself.

We support:

- An adequately funded system of public schools, colleges, and universities that promote a higher quality of life for children, families and communities and that foster employment opportunities, a strong economy, and social justice.
- Local control of neighborhood and community schools accountable for meeting high, clear standards for quality, safety, and equality.
- K-12 and college programs that meet our constitutional commitment to preserve the cultural heritage of Montana’s American Indians, as well as close the American Indian achievement gap.
- Public school curriculum that serves the full range of age groups, abilities, and disabilities in learners and responds to a broad range of learner gifts and interests.
- Standards, compensation, and benefits that attract and retain high-quality professionals in Montana’s public education settings, from Head Start through adult education and from pre-school through graduate school.
- Opportunities for lifelong learning, including online learning, that will keep America competitive in a global economy, help break the cycle of illiteracy, and enrich democracy.
- Preserving the varied options for affordable, accessible, high-quality public higher education in Montana.
- The role of tribal colleges in providing higher education services to both Indian and non-Indian students.
- State and federal funding for grants, loans, scholarships and other financial aid for students, as well as for the research and scholarship missions of our universities.
- High-quality early childhood education programs, including Head Start, that prepare young children to succeed in school and become better citizens.

We oppose:

- Any use of public funds for private education initiatives.
- Shifting the state’s responsibility for funding public K-12 education to local taxpayers.
- Shifting the state’s responsibility for funding higher education to Montana students.
- Programs or policies that increase or encourage unrealistic levels of student debt.

1
2 **STEWARDING OUR NATURAL RESOURCES**

3 *The teeming bounty of our natural resources has always been at the heart of our prosperity, our heritage,*
4 *and our lifestyle as Montanans. We believe that we must work together to ensure that our use of these*
5 *resources continues to contribute to the strong economy needed to sustain families and communities in*
6 *the 21st century while it protects the clean and healthful environment that is our constitutional right.*

7
8 **We support:**

- 9
- 10 ● Far-sighted, cost-effective public policy to protect our environment and steward our natural
 - 11 resources for good jobs now and a clean and healthful environment for future generations.
 - 12 ● Legal protections for the care of Montana's natural environment.
 - 13 ● The promotion of tourism as a thriving Montana industry centered on the beauty and abundance
 - 14 of our natural resources.
 - 15 ● Sufficient government oversight of Montana's extractive industries to ensure the preservation of
 - 16 Montana's environment and sustain the health of Montana's lands, forests, wildlife, and streams.
 - 17 ● Collaboration among all levels of government, private property owners, stakeholder groups, and
 - 18 citizens to manage Montana's natural resources effectively.
 - 19 ● Citizen involvement at all levels in the environmental regulatory process.
 - 20 ● Local growth policies and land use planning that maintain open space; protect our rivers and
 - 21 streams; and maintain or enhance critical fish and wildlife habitat, reasonable population density,
 - 22 private forestry, family agriculture, and economically and environmentally sustainable, fire-wise
 - 23 communities.
 - 24 ● The protection, conservation and improvement of the quality and quantity of our ground and
 - 25 surface water.
 - 26 ● The protection and improvement of our air quality, considering all sources of degradation.
 - 27 ● Reclamation of environmentally disturbed areas and disposal of hazardous and toxic waste so as
 - 28 to ensure public health and safety, as well as environmental integrity.
 - 29 ● Forest management practices that ensure the ecological health of our forests and allow for the
 - 30 types of outdoor recreation that constitute an increasingly important part of our economy.
 - 31 ● Sustainable agricultural practices that protect rangelands, riparian areas and wetlands habitats;
 - 32 inhibit soil erosion; reduce dependency on hazardous chemicals; and maintain and enhance soil
 - 33 fertility.
 - 34 ● Planning and protection of wetlands, wildlife corridors, and riparian areas as an integral part of
 - 35 land-use planning and protection of water resources and related habitats.

36 **We oppose:**

- 37
- 38 ● The sale, transfer, or marketing of Montana's water for use in other states.
 - 39 ● Privatization of public water systems.

40
41 **TAXATION**

42 *We seek a progressive, broad-based, and equitable tax system that reflects and enhances our changing*
43 *economy and adequately supports a full range of quality public services and public education. We believe*
44 *in being fiscally responsible while promoting quality of life in Montana and equality of opportunity for all*
45 *our citizens.*

46
47 **We support:**

- 48
- 49 ● Public disclosure of how public funds are currently used, how proposed new taxes will be used to
 - 50 improve programs and services, and how proposed tax cuts will affect existing programs and
 - 51 services.

52 **We oppose:**

- 53
- 54 ● Preferential tax treatment for distinct special interests or corporations that undermines fair and
 - 55 equitable taxation and diminishes funding for necessary public services.
 - Efforts to bust the Constitutional Coal Tax Trust or to lower that tax.

1
2
3 **VETERANS and ACTIVE MILITARY**

4 *We ask Americans in the military to risk their lives and disrupt their families' lives to serve our country. In*
5 *gratitude for their sacrifice, Montana Democrats regard as sacred our obligation to care for America's*
6 *military – during active duty and for the rest of their lives.*

7
8 **We support:**

- 9
- 10 • Timely and effective medical, educational, and social services that meet the needs of Montana's
11 active military and their families.
 - 12 • Timely and effective services to ensure that Montana service members, including members of the
13 National Guard and Reserve, have a successful readjustment when they return to their families,
14 communities, and workplaces.
 - 15 • Funding and resources for a wide array of services to ensure that Montana's veterans have timely
16 and effective access to healthcare, especially mental health care; disability compensation;
17 housing; and meaningful employment, job training, and/or small business assistance.
 - 18 • Higher education practices and policies that address the financial, psychological, social, and
19 academic challenges of Montana's active military, as well as Montana's veterans.
 - 20 • Urgent development of a comprehensive program to address active duty and veteran suicides in
21 Montana.

22 **We oppose:**

- 23 • Privatization of veterans' homes and hospitals in Montana.

24
25 **WOMEN**

26 *We are the party of trail-blazing women. We are committed to securing equal opportunities in education,*
27 *employment, and leadership for every woman and to ensuring safe, healthy, and nurturing environments*
28 *for all women. To achieve these goals, women must have an equitable role, not only in determining local,*
29 *state, and national policies, but also in allocating resources to meet the needs of families and*
30 *communities.*

31
32 **We support:**

- 33
- 34 • The equal application to women of the inalienable rights delineated in the constitutions of our
35 state and nation.
 - 36 • A woman's right and ability to make personal decisions regarding contraception and reproduction,
37 as well as the right to provide or receive services related to those choices in a safe, accessible
38 environment.
 - 39 • Funding for reproductive and family planning education and STD/AIDS prevention for men and
40 women.
 - 41 • Active recruitment of women for leadership roles in public office and in the Democratic Party.
 - 42 • Equal access for women of all ages to training, jobs, and promotions and efforts to ensure equal
43 pay for equal work.
 - 44 • Programs and services to address the unique needs of women as primary caregivers for children
45 and the elderly in regard to health care, housing, child support, child care, job training, education,
46 and other public benefits.
 - 47 • Efforts to address and end violence against women -- including domestic violence, sexual
48 assault, sex trafficking, bullying, stalking, and sexual harassment -- through education, early and
49 ongoing intervention, and funding for direct services.
 - 50 • Paid family leave.
 - 51 • Adequate funding for victim advocate programs in every community.

52 **We oppose:**

- 53 • Efforts to restrict or eliminate a woman's right to make decisions about reproduction and
54 childbirth.
- 55 • Efforts to restrict access to services related to such decisions.

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- Efforts to fund crisis pregnancy centers engaging in deceptive practices or disseminating false and misleading medical information.

ACTION AGENDAS 2014-2016

Agriculture and Rural Development ACTION Agenda

- Require COOL (country of origin labeling) for meat products and GMO labeling on food products.
- Promote and aggressively market Montana agricultural commodities.
- Develop and promote community-based and regional co-ops.
- Provide sufficient funding for the state hail and grain labs.
- Improve and expand USDA all-risk crop insurance program.
- Develop measures to protect family farmers from liability resulting from the introduction of genetically engineered crops.
- Investigate and conduct field hearings on commodity prices and market manipulation.
- Investigate and rigorously enforce federal antitrust laws that affect agriculture.
- Require that railroads offer fair shipping rates to Montana farmers or be subject to regulation as a rail monopoly.
- Develop a long-term solution to eradicate brucellosis in livestock and wildlife.
- Improve Montana's capacity to produce, package and distribute a wider range of locally grown food, such as Farm to School, Farm to Table programs.
- Incorporate locally grown, locally sourced food, fiber, and beverages at all official functions of the Montana Democratic Party.
- Renew the Federal Estate Tax provisions and maintain current federal estate tax exemption levels.
- Prevent the closure of Montana's rural and frontier post offices.
- Allow Montana farmers to grow industrial hemp.
- Provide educational programming to prepare current and future producers for the economic challenges agriculture faces as a result of the dramatic changes caused by emerging technologies and climate change.

American Indians ACTION Agenda

- Recognize the Little Shell Tribe of the Chippewa Indians.
- Provide adequate, ongoing funding for the continued implementation of Indian Education for All.
- Increase state funding for non-beneficiary students and additional resources for all students who attend Montana's tribal colleges.
- Continue funding and provide due diligence in the use of funds for Closing the Achievement Gap for American Indian Students.
- Expand efforts to preserve American Indian languages.
- Increase block grants for American Indian entities and direct tribal funding.
- Provide adequate ongoing funding for the Montana Advisory Council for Indian Education (MACIE).
- Investigate and provide necessary change to Indian Health Services to provide adequate health care to Montana's American Indians.
- Expand efforts to encourage voter registration and enhance voting opportunities on reservations.
- Support youth suicide prevention programs, including culture-based services.

Cultural Enrichment ACTION Agenda

- Provide adequate funding for museums, libraries, art institutions, theaters, and performing arts centers.
- Continue state and local support for public broadcasting, public radio, and public access television.
- Restore arts and humanities programs at all educational levels through adequate local, state, and national funding.
- Secure funding to establish the Montana Heritage Center in Helena, MT.

Energy ACTION Agenda

- Create state and local government revolving loan funds and other public financial instruments to foster private energy efficiency improvements in Montana homes and businesses.

- 1 • Terminate the 18-month tax holiday for horizontal drilling for oil and gas production.
- 2 • Create an Oil and Gas Trust Fund.

3 4 **Government ACTION Agenda**

- 5 • Expand and enhance a statewide high-speed Internet infrastructure that is both affordable and
6 accessible to all.
- 7 • Provide transportation options accessible to all Montanans and “complete street” provisions that
8 allow for all forms of transportation.
- 9 • Adequate funding and staffing for the office of the Commissioner of Political Practices.
- 10 • Pursue options for publicly funding electoral campaigns at local and state levels.
- 11 • Preserve election-day registration.
- 12 • Support a Constitutional remedy to the *Citizens United* decision.
- 13 • Designate general election day as a state holiday.
- 14 • Enact and establish online voter registration.
- 15 • Enact and implement automatic voter registration.

16 17 **Health and Human Services ACTION Agenda**

18 19 Health Care

- 20 • Continue efforts to expand Medicaid to all low-income Montanans, as allowed by federal law.
- 21 • Establish affordable and comprehensive prescription drug benefit opportunities for all Montanans.
- 22 • Replicate programs like Insure Montana that help small businesses provide health insurance to
23 their employees.
- 24 • Adequately fund the Healthy Montana Kids Plan.
- 25 • Dedicate all proceeds from tobacco industry litigation to fund public health programs, including
26 health care for children, smoking cessation and prevention, health-related research, health
27 education and CHIP.
- 28 • Provide state and federal funding for stem cell research.
- 29 • Pursue strategies to continue health care reform.
- 30 • Preserve state regulation of health insurance.
- 31 • Give the Montana Commissioner of Insurance the authority to take action against insurance
32 companies that unreasonably raise health insurance rates.
- 33 • Implement programs and coordinate efforts among health care teams to improve outreach,
34 diagnosis, prevention and treatment of individuals with diabetes.
- 35 • Implement policies and procedures to expand options other than nursing homes for low- and
36 moderate-income seniors in need of elder care services and long-term care insurance.
- 37 • Provide safe and legal access to medical marijuana.
- 38 • Accelerate the transition to integrated health care, including integrated care for co-occurring
39 mental health and addiction services.

40 41 Human Services

- 42 • Fully fund DPHHS to support Title X for family planning services.
- 43 • Continue commitments to Social Security and Medicare programs, railroad and all federal
44 retirement programs, and the Federal Older Americans Act.
- 45 • Increase awareness of the need to provide full ADA accessibility in workplaces, parking areas,
46 theaters, courthouses, schools, and other public facilities.
- 47 • Ensure availability of low-rent housing and availability of low-interest loans to help Montanans
48 with low incomes acquire housing.

49 50 **Human and Civil Rights ACTION Agenda**

- 51 • Include sexual orientation, gender identity, and **gender** expression as protected classes in the
52 Montana Human Rights Act and in the Montana Hate Crimes Act.
- 53 • Comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to allow everyone to lead a
54 productive, dignified life.
- 55 • Make affordable housing available without discrimination.

- Repeal Section 7, Article 13 of the Montana Constitution to provide an explicit right to marriage equality in Montana.
- Prevent human trafficking, provide support and treatment for its victims, and bring perpetrators to justice.
- Pass local nondiscrimination ordinances to prevent discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Pass federal legislation to prohibit discrimination against any student, especially because of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Hunting, Fishing, and Outdoor Recreation ACTION Agenda

- Resist the movement to transfer or sell federal lands to the states.
- Aggressively pursue research and development programs to eliminate chronic wasting disease, whirling disease, and other wildlife afflictions, as well as noxious weeds and invasive aquatic species.
- Evaluate opportunities and need to provide adequate funding for Montana State Parks in order to meet the increasing demand for outdoor recreation facilities and protect Montana's historic sites.

International Relations ACTION Agenda

- Improve relations with Cuba.
- Request the re-evaluation of the Authorization for Use of Military Force enacted on 9/18/2001.

Jobs, Business and the Economy ACTION Agenda

- Raise the minimum wage to a living wage standard so that Montanans do not have to exist on inadequate wages or seek publicly funded assistance while employed.
- Continue AMTRAK passenger rail service along the Hi-Line and reintroduce passenger rail service through southern Montana.
- Continue or expand critical infrastructure programs such as State Revolving Loan Fund, Treasure State Endowment Program, Community Development Block Grants, and Community Transportation Enhancement Program.
- Support the Build Montana initiative.

Justice ACTION Agenda

Access to Justice:

- Reform campaign finance laws, including amending the Constitution to ensure citizens' voices are not drowned out by special interests and highly financed corporate interests.
- Provide vigorous prosecution of investment scams and embezzlement.
- Provide public funding for Montana's judicial races.
- Adequately fund the public defender system.

Crime and Punishment:

- Increase resources for training, investigation, prosecution, and coordinated community responses to sexual assault.
- Adequately fund the crime victim's compensation fund.

Labor ACTION Agenda

- Increase the federal minimum wage and index it annually to increases in the cost of living to offer some protection to those workers at the lowest end of the economic scale.
- Raise the minimum wage to a living wage standard so that Montanans do not have to exist on inadequate wages or need to access publicly funded assistance while employed.
- Employ union workers for Montana's reclamation and restoration projects, as well as workforce development initiatives.
- Using partnerships between government and labor, develop programs to train and retrain workers of Montana for tomorrow's jobs.
- Eliminate the practice of worker misclassification in order to reduce compensation and benefits for employees.

- 1 • Remove the maximum wage limit to the OASDI Tax Rate.
- 2 • Strengthen Social Security and Medicare.
- 3 • Establish and/or protect defined benefit plans for both public and private pensions.
- 4 • Support Senator Jon Tester’s work requiring AMTRAK to perform a study to reinstate the former
- 5 North Coast Hiawatha passenger train to operate with direct connection with the Empire Builder
- 6 at Fargo, ND, and Spokane, WA; and to consider the rail routes traversing BNSF track and
- 7 Montana Rail Link routes.

9 **Public Education ACTION Agenda**

- 10 • Provide funding to ensure competitive salaries and benefits for school and university employees.
- 11 • Invest in high-quality online learning and technology and the broadband capacity to support it.
- 12 • Invest in the research component of the university mission.
- 13 • Provide adequate, ongoing funding for the continued implementation of Indian Education for All.
- 14 • Increase state funding for non-beneficiary students and additional resources for all students who
- 15 attend Montana’s tribal colleges.
- 16 • Continue funding and provide due diligence in the use of funds for Closing the Achievement Gap
- 17 for American Indian Students.
- 18 • Expand efforts to preserve American Indian languages.
- 19 • Establish a 50-50 student/state split on the cost of higher education and implement other
- 20 measures to reduce students’ higher education costs and indebtedness, such as loan forgiveness
- 21 programs for public service and allowing students to refinance college loans.
- 22 • Continue to invest in Graduation Matters Montana.
- 23 • Provide adequate funding for educating the gifted and talented and special needs students.
- 24 • Support the clear, rigorous, and relevant standards embodied in Montana’s College and Career
- 25 Ready Standards.
- 26 • A statewide comprehensive infrastructure plan to address health and safety needs of schools and
- 27 to correct out-of-date deficiencies and technology delivery needs.

29 **Stewarding Our Natural Resources ACTION Agenda**

- 30 • Develop standards and infrastructure for use and reuse of water.
- 31 • Require the coal bed methane industry to recharge as much water as possible into the aquifer
- 32 from which it was removed.
- 33 • Prohibit the disposal in Montana of hazardous and toxic waste generated outside Montana, and
- 34 improve the standards and practices of disposing such waste produced in Montana.
- 35 • Provide state and federal funding for research and development by public universities and
- 36 affiliated private institutes in order to advance technologies for best practices in forestry,
- 37 agriculture, extractive industries, and energy production.
- 38 • Require the total disclosure of the contents of potentially life-threatening fracking fluids; support
- 39 notification of neighbors when a well has been contaminated; and fully fund state monitoring of
- 40 land, air, and water resources affected by hydraulic fracturing.
- 41 • Eliminate the manufacture and use of plastic shopping bags.
- 42 • Require sufficient, well-enforced financial bonding of extraction companies to provide for thorough
- 43 environmental remediation.

45 **Taxation ACTION Agenda**

- 46 • Terminate the 18-month tax holiday for horizontal drilling for oil and gas production.
- 47 • Create an Oil and Gas Trust Fund.
- 48 • Enact an earned income tax credit in Montana.

50 **Veterans and Active Military ACTION Agenda**

- 51 • Maximize coordination between Federal Veterans’ Services and the State of Montana.
- 52 • Provide funding for the construction and continued support of the Montana Southwestern
- 53 Veterans’ Home and other facilities across the state.
- 54 • Encourage integration of returning veterans into the rural economy by providing training and
- 55 financial support.

- 1 • Continue federal programs supporting state and local groups that help veterans who are
- 2 homeless find employment.
- 3 • Implement programs that bring more accountability and transparency to the VA, enhance benefits
- 4 and care to more veterans and their families, and fund the VA sufficiently to ensure all veterans
- 5 have affordable and timely access to care.
- 6

7 **Women's ACTION Agenda**

- 8 • Enact the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution.