

## Resolutions submitted to the DPCA for votes to adopt, October 2015

*Electronic voting in accordance with DA Charter Section 3.8, beginning October 5*

### Resolution for simplified tax filing for Americans abroad who simply don't owe any U.S. income tax

*Proposed by Ed Ungar (DA-Canada) and supported by Giles Hoga, Julie Buchanan, Adrienne Jones, Marc Seltzer, and Steve Nardi, all of DA-Canada.*

*Amended by the DPCA Resolutions Committee as suggested by Rick Wicks (DA-Sweden).*

WHEREAS compliance with U.S. tax filing requirements is complicated, requiring specialized accounting services that can cost thousands of dollars, thus discouraging many Americans from filing even when, as is usually the case, they owe no U.S. federal or state tax;

BE IT RESOLVED that Americans abroad who owe no U.S. federal or state tax should have the option of simply submitting a one-sentence declaration to the IRS to that effect, accompanied by a tax return or tax assessment from their country of residence confirming their income and taxes paid; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this declaration can be handwritten or printed and should be easily accessible both on the IRS website and at every U.S. embassy and consulate.

### Resolution in favor of equal civil rights for Americans living in territories of the United States

*Proposed by Katie Solon (International Chair), Orlando Vidal (International Counsel), and Will Bakker (DA-Luxembourg).*

WHEREAS Democrats Abroad consistently stands in favor of easily accessible voting for all, fair representation of U.S. citizens, and equal treatment before the law; and

WHEREAS the 2012 Platform of Democrats Abroad recognizes the implications of our ideals through our support of Congressional representation for the residents of the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS the 2012 Platform of Democrats Abroad already recognizes the implications of our ideals through our support of the right of residents of the U.S. Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to vote for president without prejudice to their future independence or statehood; and

WHEREAS the We The People Project calls for the 5 million Americans living in U.S. territories and the District of Columbia to be treated as full and equal citizens through equal representation; and

WHEREAS the legal basis for continued discrimination against Americans in U.S. territories relies on outmoded and shameful precedents like the *Insular Cases*; and

WHEREAS the lack of Federal representation has documented and profound effects on the Americans living in U.S. territories, particularly in the provisioning of services like medical care for veterans.

BE IT RESOLVED, that Democrats Abroad supports:

- the recognition of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment’s provision of birthright citizenship and designation as “natural born citizens” for all persons born in U.S. territories, including American Samoa; and
- the enfranchisement of the more than four million Americans living in U.S. territories in the General Election of the President of the United States; and
- the ongoing work to make voting Congressional representation available as a democratically chosen possibility for Americans living in U.S. Territories.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Democrats Abroad will stand together with our fellow Americans residing in U.S. territories to promote fair representation, voting rights, and equal treatment under U.S. law for citizens in every U.S. state and territory, and all over the world.

## **Resolution to increase opportunities and reduce confusion in bidding for Global Meetings**

*Proposed by Katie Solon (International Chair), Ken Sherman (International Vice-Chair), and Will Bakker (DA-Luxembourg).*

WHEREAS the attendance of Global Meetings has been expanded and enhanced by the use of videoconferencing technology over the past eight years; and

WHEREAS the costs of travel remain high while our leadership continues to develop more diversity in lifestyles, career commitments, and economic means; and

WHEREAS the commitment to host a Global Meeting is ever more challenging due to increasing attendance, technological requirements, and the imperative to keep meetings as affordable as possible to all Democrats living abroad; and

WHEREAS the 2008 *Standing Resolution on Global Meetings of the Democratic Party Committee Abroad in Every Region* has created confusion in the bidding process and unnecessarily limited the options available for Global Meetings; and

WHEREAS the benefits of holding Global Meetings frequently in Washington, DC have become more clear over the past eight years;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Democratic Party Committee Abroad (DPCA) rescinds the *Standing Resolution on Global Meetings of the Democratic Party Committee Abroad in Every Region* of November 2008; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the DPCA re-affirms the original statement “that DPCA members from every region share in the commitment to attend all global meetings”; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the DPCA sets itself a non-binding goal to hold at least one global meeting in each region during the course of each eight-year cycle, beginning with 2016.

## Resolution in support of making Election Day a nation-wide public holiday

*Proposed by John Boyd (DA-Philippines) and Carmelan Polce (DA Lion City).*

WHEREAS every U.S. citizen should exercise his or her responsibility to vote in federal elections;

WHEREAS many of those who work on federal election days are unable to vote because of employment obligations;

WHEREAS Constitutional amendments dealing with the right to vote including the 15th (right of citizens to vote), 19th (women's right to vote), 24th (no poll tax), and 26th (citizens 18 years or older have the right to vote) support legislation that facilitates this right to vote;

BE IT RESOLVED that Democrats Abroad recommends that Congress enact legislation that federal general election day be designated a national holiday.

## Resolution in support of efforts to minimise and challenge political gerrymanders

*Proposed by John Boyd (DA-Philippines) and Carmelan Polce (DA Lion City).*

WHEREAS the long tradition of open, wide-spread and unchallenged use of political gerrymanders has been shown to skew the democratic process in many states;

WHEREAS, in some states, political parties control redistricting after each national census;

WHEREAS, the political party in power in these states can use its position to draw the boundaries of congressional districts to enhance its majority and/or ensure favorable election returns so that certain politicians can hang on to office;

WHEREAS, without a proper basis for striking down political gerrymanders structured in the naked pursuit of partisan strength, we enable and condone the violation of a state's duty to govern impartially;

BE IT RESOLVED that Democrats Abroad deplores all political gerrymandering, appeals to such states to put a stop to this practice and supports a Constitutional amendment to protect the rights of citizens to challenge political gerrymanders that result in a minority of voters electing a majority of representatives to the House of Representatives.

## Resolution to Establish a Residence-Based Taxation Task Force

*Proposed by Maureen Harwood (DA-Canada), Ken Sherman (DA-Canada), and Steve Nardi (DA-Canada).*

*Amended by DPCA Resolutions Committee in accordance with a revision authored by Maureen Harwood (DA-Canada) with the consent of the other original authors.*

WHEREAS, the United States is the world's only nation (besides Eritrea) that imposes **Citizenship-Based Taxation (CBT)**, requiring Americans residing abroad to file two annual tax returns that attempt to reconcile complex tax codes of differing nations; and

WHEREAS, these problems are only partially and inadequately addressed by the *IRS Tax Code Earned Income Exemption*, and various tax treaties; and

WHEREAS, discontent among overseas Americans with the onerous, excessive, and unfair demands of **Citizenship-Based Taxation** has worsened exponentially in recent years to the point where **taxation** is now the hot button issue for Americans residing abroad; and

WHEREAS, support for **Residence-based Taxation (RBT)** has been enshrined in the DPCA Party Platform since 2004 (expanded under the umbrella of **Fairness in Taxation** in 2008 and 2012); and

WHEREAS, other overseas US citizens groups - American Citizens Abroad (ACA), Association of Americans Resident Overseas (AARO), Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas (FAWCO), and FAWCO Alumni (FAUSA) - are actively and publicly lobbying for **Residence-Based Taxation**; and

WHEREAS, **Residence-Based Taxation** figures in the discussion on US Tax Code reform currently taking place in the Senate Finance Committee and other Congressional bodies; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that Democrats Abroad establish a **Residence-Based Taxation Task Force** to develop strategies for lobbying Congress in support thereof, and further that the **RBT Task Force** work in coordination with related DA Task Forces.

## Resolution to Strengthen Diplomacy

*Proposed by Merrill Oates on behalf of DA-Hungary.*

Whereas, the United States is currently faced with significant global diplomatic challenges as we seek to strengthen America's leadership in the world;

Whereas, there are specific countries where the insidious erosion of human rights are a constant threat to liberty and international peace and which demand the highest level of diplomatic expertise;

Whereas, Democrats Abroad recognizes that the best interests of diplomacy are served by Presidential appointees who have had direct experience with the country and with its leadership, people, and cultures in which they have been asked to serve;

Now, therefore, BE IT RESOLVED that Democrats Abroad urges the Obama Administration and all future Administrations to ensure that only the most qualified candidates for diplomatic assignments will be considered for critical posts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Democrats Abroad considers the appointment of the most qualified Presidential appointees to the diplomatic corps to be crucial in order to advance persuasively our message of democracy, security, respect for human rights, freedom, and economic opportunity for all.