



# DEMOCRATS ABROAD

## DPCA Meeting Spring 2009 April 24-26, Washington, DC

### Resolutions adopted

<b>Resolution Honoring Governor Howard Dean, M.D.</b>
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adopted by the Democratic Party Committee Abroad, April 25, 2009, in Washington
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WHEREAS, Governor Howard Dean, M.D. showed great foresight in pursuing a strategy of growing the Democratic Party in traditionally "red" states; and,

WHEREAS, Governor Dean rewarded the hard work of grassroots activists; and,

WHEREAS, Governor Dean aggressively pursued a 50-state strategy and emphasized a more people-focused approach; and,

WHEREAS, Governor Dean also actively supported the work of Democrats Abroad and traveled to visit many of our Country Committees; and,

WHEREAS, Governor Dean's approach motivated people to participate more actively in the democratic process at all levels of the Democratic Party, revitalizing the party from the ground up; and,

WHEREAS, Governor Dean reminded us of the importance of not only the federal elections, but those of the state, county and local elections as well; and,

WHEREAS, Governor Dean led the Democratic Party to a convincing victory from the local to the federal level in 2006; and,

WHEREAS, Governor Dean's model was successfully executed by the Obama campaign and led to country-wide Democratic Party victories in 2008;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of Democrats Abroad recognize and honor Governor Howard Dean, M.D. for his courage and foresight; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the members of Democrats Abroad strongly recommend that the Democratic Party honor Governor Howard Dean, M.D. for the success of our Party in 2008 by pledging to continue and build upon his wisdom and vision, which have led to a revitalization of the Democratic Party.

**Resolution on Obama Bridges Project**

adopted by the Democratic Party Committee Abroad, April 25, 2009, in Washington

WHEREAS the Obama Bridges Project started in southwest France and then spread around the world to include photo shoots at over 80 bridges in more than 40 nations, including at the longest and the highest bridges in the world;

WHEREAS the project was begun to encourage, illustrate and celebrate Barack Obama as a president who would bridge gaps and unite communities within the U.S. and around the world, including among Democrats Abroad committees;

WHEREAS thousands of Democrats Abroad members participated in the project, taking group photos or videos on, under or near bridges from Denmark to Australia, South Africa to Canada to Indonesia, Hungary to Brazil. Late in the campaign, the Obama Bridge Project was continued by groups in the U.S., with photo shoots and marches in Hawaii, Ohio, California, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Florida;

WHEREAS the three global and many local Obama Bridges Project videos posted on YouTube were viewed by tens of thousands;

WHEREAS the events themselves as well as the films garnered massive free positive media for our candidate as well as for Democrats Abroad and Vote from Abroad.org;

WHEREAS the Obama Bridges Project was the brainchild of Democrats Abroad Southwest France Chapter Chair, Meredith Wheeler;

WHEREAS, while many took on global pieces of the project and even more organized locally, Meredith Wheeler continuously guided the effort as it expanded geometrically – providing photography tips, press releases, internet networking and open communication among participants;

LET IT BE RESOLVED that Democrats Abroad expresses its gratitude to the makers of the four global Obama Bridges Project films: Meredith Wheeler, Samantha Timmerman of DA France Riviera Chapter, Terri MacMillan of DA Japan, and Steven Martin of DA Germany in Berlin;

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED that Democrats Abroad congratulates and thanks Meredith Wheeler for her sustained creative grassroots efforts and global success with the Obama Bridges Project.

**Resolution Favoring the Awarding of the Purple Heart for Mental Disorders**  
adopted by the Democratic Party Committee Abroad, April 26, 2009, in Washington

WHEREAS,

According to a recent Rand Corporation study, 300,000 service members suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and many thousands of service members and veterans suffer from other mental health injuries incurred as a direct result of their military service.

These mental injuries can cause lifelong suffering, destroy careers, and affect families as well as the afflicted service men and women.

Numerous US service members have been subjected to multiple tours of duty in Iraq and/or Afghanistan, involving traumatic situations.

Suicides among service men and women in 2008 were reported to be at a record high.

The US should honor the bravery, valor, service and sacrifice of all military personnel who fight for our country.

The US government has so far failed to give service-related mental injuries such as PTSD the same recognition (i.e. the honor and benefits of the Purple Heart) as physical war wounds.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,

That Democrats Abroad recommends that the Purple Heart, along with relevant additional care and benefits, be awarded to all injured military personnel and veterans suffering from properly verified mental injury incurred during military service (notably PTSD) so that mental and physical war injuries have appropriate recognition, honor and compensation.

**Resolution on the Convention on the Elimination of  
all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**

adopted by the Democratic Party Committee Abroad, April 25, 2009, in Washington

WHEREAS the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is an international bill of rights for women that prescribes the necessary steps to end all forms of discrimination – political, economic, social, cultural or civic – against women;

WHEREAS CEDAW was drafted in 1979 with the active support of the United States and signed by President Carter in 1980;

WHEREAS CEDAW was reported out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 2002 but was not examined by the Bush administration;

WHEREAS CEDAW has become the law in 185 countries including all of the Western democracies except the United States, leaving Iran, Sudan, Somalia, Qatar, Nauru, Palau, Tonga and the United States as the only countries in the world not having ratified this fundamental human rights treaty;

WHEREAS there are 71 million women in the workforce of the United States and although equal pay for equal work has been the law of our country since 1963, full-time year-round women workers still earn on the average only 78 per cent of what men earn for equal work;

WHEREAS the Democratic Party supports parity, fairness and equal opportunity for all and believes in a society in which women's equal rights are guaranteed:

WHEREAS American women living abroad in the 185 countries having ratified CEDAW enjoy the protection afforded by CEDAW;

WHEREAS the United States has to regain its place as an international human rights leader;

BE IT RESOLVED that Democrats Abroad urges the US Senate to ratify CEDAW without delay.

**Resolution to Support a Demonstration Project for  
Medicare Benefits for Eligible Americans Resident in Mexico**

adopted by the Democratic Party Committee Abroad, April 25, 2009, in Washington

WHEREAS,

American citizens over the age of 65 have paid into the Medicare program throughout their working lives, and they continue to pay for Medicare services through deductions from monthly Social Security checks.

Under current law seniors living outside of the United States and its territories have no access to Medicare benefits unless they travel back to the United States for medical care.

Based on reasonable estimates, Mexico is home to the largest population of retired U.S. citizens at or near eligibility for Medicare benefits of any non-U.S. country where U.S. citizens reside, who often urgently need medical care close to where they live.

A small but growing number of Mexican healthcare providers is seeking or has obtained accreditation from the Joint Commission International (JCI), which sets equal or higher standards for medical care providers than those required by Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

Title XI of the Social Security Act permits CMS and the Secretary of Health & Human Services (HHS) to authorize cooperative and demonstration projects with state and other actors, in the interest of simplifying procedures or reducing program costs.

Mexico would be the most logical country to develop and implement a demonstration project to verify the feasibility and cost savings of providing Medicare-eligible U.S. citizens living abroad with the benefits to which they are entitled and have paid for,

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED to urge Congress, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and key individuals and agencies within the Obama Administration to support the immediate development and implementation of a demonstration project that extends Medicare services to Medicare-eligible U.S. citizens living in Mexico.

**Resolution in Support of the Separation of Church and State**

adopted by the Democratic Party Committee Abroad, April 26, 2009, in Washington

WHEREAS, the First Amendment of the Constitution bans the establishment of a State religion;

WHEREAS, the administration of President George W Bush funded faith-based initiatives, contrary to the First Amendment;

WHEREAS, President Obama has, in contrast, issued an Executive Order 13199 that states that only faith-based organizations which do not proselytize, do not discriminate on the basis of religion and do adhere to US law and the US Constitution will receive federal funding.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Democrats Abroad applauds President Obama's Executive Order on faith-based institutions upholding the values established in the First Amendment.

## **Resolution on Regulation of the Use of Marijuana**

adopted by the Democratic Party Committee Abroad, April 25, 2009, in Washington

WHEREAS,

The Obama Administration has wisely stopped Federal prosecution of marijuana sold for medical purposes in a manner compliant with state regulation, thus alleviating the suffering of cancer patients and others who would benefit from medical marijuana.

Only thirteen states regulate the sale of marijuana for medical purposes.

Criminalization of non-medical uses of marijuana continues to contribute needlessly to organized crime at home and abroad, illicit drug trade, overburdening of the criminal justice system, and diverts valuable criminal justice resources away from more serious crimes.

The Latin American Commission on Drugs and Democracy heavily criticized U.S. drug policy and called on the U.S. to decriminalize marijuana in a report coinciding with increased drug-trade violence in Mexico;

The dominant argument against liberalized marijuana regulation, the gateway theory, has been consistently disproven, most recently by a RAND Corporation study commissioned by the British Parliament;

According to a World Health Organization survey conducted in 2008, the United States of America has the highest rates of marijuana use in the world.

In the Netherlands, where adult possession and purchase of small amounts of marijuana are allowed under a regulated system, the rate of marijuana use by both teenagers and adults is lower than in the U.S.

55% of Americans believe possession of small amounts of marijuana should not be a criminal offense, according to a 2005 Gallup poll.

In the U.S., almost 90% of more than 9.5 million marijuana-related arrests since 1995 were for simple possession – not manufacture or distribution.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT

We praise the Obama administration for its bold step to make marijuana available for medical purposes,

We call upon states that do not yet provide the reasonable regulation of medical marijuana to do so as soon as possible, to alleviate suffering wherever possible.

We recommend replacing the current policy of marijuana prohibition with a taxed and regulated system modeled on how alcohol is treated in the U.S.