

DA PLATFORM 2016 FINAL DRAFT FOR DEBATE AND VOTE AT DA CONGRESS.

submitted by Susan Vaillant, chair, platform committee 2016, May 8m 2016.

PREAMBLE

Democrats Abroad is made up of members from the eight million United States citizens who live around the world. We cast absentee ballots from every place where Americans vote. Some of us reside abroad permanently, while others plan to return after completing their work, study, overseas adventure or U.S. Government assignments. We mirror the great diversity of American society. We pay taxes where we live and we also file annual income tax returns in the U.S.

We care about fairness in all facets of public policy from tax reporting to the visa application process, to Social Security, to elections, to keeping families together.

We care about the future of our planet, the future of our children, and the life quality of the elderly. We share the anger, frustration and suffering of our fellow citizens when they don't see politicians and policy makers moving decisively to address economic inequality.

How America resolves its problems affects all who reside abroad. Good solutions to ecological and climate problems are renewable and sustainable. Good solutions are equitable and promote opportunities for all. Good solutions promote peace and security. Good solutions fight corruption.

Our strength as a nation depends on upholding our civic values of fairness, equality and democracy so that we can solve our problems and contribute to a world that offers the benefits of peace and cooperation.

As Democrats Abroad, we stand united to protect the good solutions achieved in the past eight years and to promote good solutions to unsolved problems described below.

I - ISSUES AFFECTING AMERICANS ABROAD

Americans living outside the United States face distinctive challenges that should be resolved by the administration and Congress. Democrats Abroad seek constructive solutions to the following:

Voting from Abroad

As Americans abroad, we are proud of our citizenship and vigilant in guarding our right to help elect our President and members of Congress. Our right to vote in federal elections is the primary means available to us to participate in the American democratic process. In close elections our absentee votes from abroad have made, and can make, the difference between Democratic victory and defeat.

The Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act of 2009 (MOVE) successfully addressed many issues raised over the years by Democrats Abroad. One key element of the MOVE Act requires election officials to report the number of votes received from overseas. This has not been implemented by numerous states.

We:

CALL ON all election officials of the fifty states to implement the provision of the MOVE Act requiring election officials to report the vote of all absentee voters abroad, in order to document an accurate count of overseas votes received and counted in their jurisdictions.

SUPPORT an amendment to the MOVE Act to require election officials at the beginning of each federal election year to mail to citizens who reside abroad and who have voted in the previous election, those documents that enable them to re-register by mail.

CALL ON all states and territories to pass the Uniform Law Commission's model statute known as the Military and Overseas Voters Act, to simplify absentee voting for U.S. military and overseas civilians, to enfranchise U.S. citizens born overseas who have reached voting age without having resided in the U.S., to align states' voter registration requirements, voter registration deadlines and ballot deadlines with those for federal offices, to allow the right of all military and overseas voters to vote for all offices on the ballot, even if the voter is living abroad indefinitely.

CALL ON Congress to mandate that all states allow citizens living abroad, who have previously been registered as overseas voters, to use a single nationwide online system to re-confirm they are still living abroad and request ballots for the current election cycle entirely online.

Public Policy-making and Americans Abroad

Americans vote from abroad via their respective state's absentee ballots, and are thus represented within Congress and as individuals. However there is little recognition of overseas Americans as a constituency group with unique and pressing concerns in areas such as taxation, voting, citizenship transmission, family visas and more. In 2007, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney established the Americans Abroad Caucus, which numbers 25 out of a possible 435 House members. She further sponsors HR3078, a Bill to establish a commission to undertake an in-depth study of these critical issues and report findings to Congress.

We:

URGE members of Congress to recognize and prioritize overseas Americans as an important constituency by joining the Americans Abroad Caucus and becoming active co-sponsors of legislation crucial to us.

URGE the Senate to establish a Special Committee on Overseas Americans that would represent our constituency within their chamber, and further move for a Senate Bill parallel to HR3078.

Citizenship Transmission

The right for Americans abroad to transmit their citizenship to their children born abroad is severely restricted and unfair in its application to specific instances. As a result, each year several thousand children of Americans abroad are denied U.S. citizenship, and some are born "stateless," that is, without any nationality or citizenship.

We:

FAVOR legislation enabling every American parent to transmit U.S. citizenship to his or her children born abroad without any prior U.S. residency requirement.

FAVOR making the above change retroactive to include children under the age of 18 who were born abroad to a U.S.-citizen parent.

FAVOR a provision in such legislation guaranteeing that no child born abroad of a U.S. citizen parent will ever again be stateless at birth.

FAVOR restoring U.S. citizenship to persons born abroad who lost it by failing to meet residency requirements in a section of the Immigration and Naturalization Act that was repealed in 1978.

URGE the recognition of the 14th Amendment's provision of birthright citizenship and designation as "natural born citizens" for all persons born in U.S. territories, including American Samoa.

Social Security, Medicare and Healthcare

Several important laws and regulations relating to U.S. Social Security either unintentionally discriminate against Americans abroad or are simply inequitable. Americans abroad can be subjected to higher taxes than their U.S.-based compatriots for services such as Medicare that they are not allowed to access outside of the U.S. This denial of benefits is not only unfair but can cause real hardship for individuals and unnecessarily high costs for the Medicare system and ultimately for the U.S. federal government. In addition, the denial of Medicare coverage may result in the U.S. being put in a competitive disadvantage if it results in highly qualified retirees not taking foreign work or volunteer positions because of a lack of Medicare coverage.

We:

FAVOR extending provisions of the ACA to allow voluntary access to affordable health care to Americans living and traveling abroad.

FAVOR an amendment to the Medicare law that extends Medicare benefits to all eligible U.S. citizens residing overseas to ensure provision of health care in selected hospitals which meet U.S. medical standards in their country of residence.

FAVOR initiating demonstration projects in at least seven countries to determine the feasibility and cost-savings of providing Medicare benefits to eligible U.S. citizens resident abroad.

FAVOR the amendment of Section 202 (t) of the Social Security Act to permit foreign citizens who are surviving spouses of American citizens and residing in any country, to receive derivative social security benefits in the same manner as any other Surviving Spouse without the requirement of being an American Citizen or living in the U.S.

FAVOR examination of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) to establish a remedy that preserves the social security benefits fairly earned by Americans abroad through their working life.

FAVOR elimination of the provision that now cuts off Supplemental Social Security Income for persons who live outside the United States for more than 30 consecutive days.

FAVOR negotiation and implementation of totalization agreements with all countries that have social security programs and where no such agreement is in place.

FAVOR providing easy to access, affordable, quality medical care for our veterans living overseas who do not have access to regular VA hospitals

FAVOR establishing provisions to allow for compassionate waiver of the Medicare waiting period for vulnerable overseas resident Americans who wish to return to the United States but whose need for assisted living or other high levels of care precludes their return.

Taxation

A long-standing system of Citizenship-Based Taxation (CBT) requires U.S. citizens to file annual U.S. tax returns in addition to meeting tax requirements in their countries of residence. With very few and extremely limited exceptions, all nations apply the alternative system of Residence-Based Taxation (RBT) in which individuals are taxed only on income and for goods and services provided in their countries of residence.

CBT creates unnecessary and unfair costs, stress, and hardship on the estimated 6+ million tax-liable Americans living abroad, some of whom have never resided in the U.S. The complex tax codes of two separate jurisdictions are only partially, and inadequately, addressed by *IRS Section 911 Earned Income Exemption* and various foreign tax treaties. Duplicated filing requirements impact all income types, and standards are often more stringent for overseas filers than for their domestic counterparts. Competing tax treatments result in double taxation for certain income types.

The adoption of Residence-Based Taxation would recognize the legitimate participation of U.S.

citizens in other economies, while not impacting the taxation of their U.S.-sourced income and would provide positive outcomes for the U.S. economy.

We:

URGE the Senate Finance Committee and relevant U.S. tax bodies to include an in-depth focus on overseas Americans in the ongoing bi-partisan discussion of U.S. tax code reform.

URGE the adoption of Residence-Based Taxation on the foreign-sourced income and assets of U.S. citizens who are bona fide residents of a foreign country.

If such a policy change cannot be adopted immediately, we:

FAVOR the retention of Section 911 of the Internal Revenue Code and the implementation of the following changes to reduce existing tax discrimination against Americans abroad:

- Allow pensions earned from work abroad to qualify as foreign earned income (as was the case prior to 1963).
- Simplify the calculation of the foreign tax credit by allowing individual taxpayers to group all foreign income together.
- Require Americans abroad to pay U.S. income tax only on income derived from U.S. sources.
- Exempt US citizens living abroad who meet physical presence or residency requirements under section 911 from reporting on and paying the Net Investment Income Tax.
- Greater flexibility for non-resident taxpayers for meeting the terms of the Foreign Earned Income Exclusion.

FAVOR maintaining the Foreign Earned Income Exclusion (FEIE), merging it with the Foreign Housing Exclusion, and eliminating the ceiling, as Americans residing abroad are required to pay and benefit from paying taxes in their country of residence.

FAVOR harmonization of provisions in international tax treaties to align them with the United States Model Income Tax Convention of November 15, 2006 as they apply to private pensions, social security benefits, annuities, alimony, child support and pension plans.

FAVOR provision for tax-free transfer of assets from foreign retirement plans deemed as qualified plans by international tax treaty provisions to qualified retirement plans in the U.S. when citizens residing abroad relocate to the U.S. or another foreign country.

FAVOR simplified reporting provisions for foreign long-term savings plans that do not require declaration of income until money is withdrawn from the plan.

FAVOR revision of Passive Foreign Investment Company rules and reporting requirements as they apply to non-U.S. pension plans, foreign mutual funds and other investment savings vehicles for citizens residing abroad to enable them to save for retirement and to promote U.S. international competitiveness in the global economy.

FAVOR amendment to Internal Revenue Code to allow foreign income tax credits for Americans residing abroad when calculating Net Investment Income Tax (NIIT).

FAVOR optional provisions for submission of a one-sentence, handwritten or printed declaration – accessible from the IRS website and every U.S. embassy and consulate – accompanied by a tax return or tax assessment from the country of residence for Americans abroad who owe no U.S. federal or state income tax.

FAVOR provision of translated versions of IRS publications and tax forms commonly used by non-resident non-English speaking U.S. citizens to enable them to complete their tax returns.

FAVOR implementation of a simplified reporting structure for non-U.S. non-qualified pension plans that would alleviate the need for Form 3520 filings for non-employer funded pension schemes.

FAVOR reinstating the marital deduction for bequests to foreign spouses of American citizens, which was eliminated in 1988.

FAVOR taxation of foreign government invalidity, unemployment and social welfare payments to disabled and disadvantaged Americans overseas only by the country of residence making the payments.

FAVOR elimination of U.S. capital gains tax on the sale of the principal place of residence of non-resident U.S. citizens who are bona fide residents of the country in which the residence is located.

FAVOR elimination of artificial capital gains and losses for tax reporting purposes when no currency has been exchanged by allowing the currency of the country of residence to be the functional currency.

APPLAUD the introduction of the Streamline Filing Compliance (Offshore) Procedures, a tax amnesty program introduced in June 2014 for Americans who non-willfully are not compliant with their tax filing and reporting obligations, enabling them to file 3 years of back tax returns, 6 years of back Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts Reports, meet any outstanding liabilities to the IRS and face no civil or criminal fines or charges.

SUPPORT the U.S. government's serious attempts to root out fraud, money laundering and tax evasion.

CALL for the reform of the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) through the introduction by the U.S. Treasury and the IRS of a change to the FATCA implementation rules that would exempt from FATCA reporting, by both the U.S. citizen abroad and their financial account provider, the financial accounts of overseas resident U.S. citizens in their bona fide country of residence.

CALL for the following reforms to the Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts Report (FBAR):

- Redress the enormous, out of proportion penalties – civil and criminal - imposed by the IRS for non-wilfully neglecting to file forms;
- Adjust for inflation the \$10,000 aggregate threshold amount that triggers a FBAR filing requirement, which has not been adjusted since the Bank Secrecy Act was enacted in 1970;
- Eliminate the duplication of information disclosed on the FBAR and FATCA reports;
- Exempt US citizens from reporting foreign financial accounts that are not reportable by financial institutions in their country of residence;
- Address the vulnerability of FBAR data security inherent in electronic filing; and
- Remove the burden imposed on filers who are computer illiterate or with no access to computers by eliminating recently introduced mandatory electronic FBAR reporting.

SUPPORT recent efforts by the IRS to remedy its poor level of communications with Americans living abroad but CALL for the re-opening of its overseas offices and the restoration of offshore services lost due to cuts in its funding.

Freedom of Movement

Americans abroad face undue restrictions in returning, or simply traveling, to the U.S. with their foreign-citizen spouses, partners and family members. We:

FAVOR simplifying and expediting procedures for obtaining U.S. permanent residence and citizenship for non-American spouses and close family members of U.S. citizens.

DEPLORE changes to the I-130 procedure for obtaining immigrant visas for close relatives, which adversely impact the ability for a U.S. citizen to visit the U.S. with his/her spouse and children, separate currently intact families, and constitute a restriction of the citizen's right to freedom of movement.

FAVOR providing all U.S. citizens living abroad with equal immigration naturalization, and Legal Permanent Residence status retention opportunities for their immediate families, without regard for the nature of their employer.

FAVOR providing the immediate family members of U.S. citizens living abroad who are seeking

U.S. visitor visas (B-1 and B-2) the maximum visa validity (currently 10 years) irrespective of the reciprocity tables applicable to the family members' country of residence.

CALL FOR ceasing the judicial doctrine of Consular Non-Reviewability/Absolutism in visa matters that allows for the virtual limitless exercise of consular discretion.

APPLAUD President Obama's November 21, 2014 Presidential Memorandum, "Modernizing and Streamlining the U.S. Immigrant Visa System for the 21st Century", the dialogue created with stakeholders, the clear-eyed review of the issues, and other actions to fix our broken immigration system.

SUPPORT continuing efforts to create fundamental fairness in the visa system. Specifically, reviewing and implementing changes in visa procedures for visa adjudications at United States consulates and embassies, and at all ports of entry into the U.S. The recommended changes include:

- permitting in-person assistance by U.S. licensed attorneys and Accredited Representatives at U.S. embassies and consulates and U.S. ports of entry;
- increased explanation of the factual and legal basis for visa denials and refusals of entry;
- the standardization and transparency of legal authority, procedure, and guidance in all immigration matters between all agencies involved in the immigration process; and
- the creation of an administrative appeal and review process in visa and U.S. boarder matters.

FAVOR expanding Section 212(h) of the Immigration and Nationality Act to allow the possibility of a Waiver for immigrating close family relatives of U.S. citizens or Permanent Residents that have convictions for controlled substances. The possibility of a waiver would end the extreme consequences of a permanent bar to immigration for family members who have made a mistake or have a medical issue, and would equalize the treatment of all criminal convictions.

CALL for an amnesty program for foreign nationals who are citizens of the U.S. in name only, with no nexus to the U.S. other than their birth on U.S. soil or birth abroad to a U.S. citizen parent, to allow them to shed their unwanted U.S. citizenship on a no fees, no penalty and no tax filing or reporting basis.

SUPPORT a fast-track for visas for same-sex partners of U.S. citizens from countries that do not have same-sex marriage.

SUPPORT establishing channels for expat Americans returning permanently or temporarily to the United States to reactive their former credit rating after a long period abroad, and/or establish an expat-friendly process for expats to apply for loans to build a new credit rating. Currently American citizens living abroad who do not use their American credit cards for purchases return home to find that their credit rating at zero prevents them from leasing a car or purchasing a home or otherwise re-starting their life in their own country.

Other Governmental Services and Benefits

The interests and concerns of Americans abroad are rarely considered when American laws and regulations that provide essential governmental services are adopted or changed. We:

FAVOR consultation by the State Department with the affected local American community abroad before deciding whether or not to close a consulate or to change hours or services at consular sections.

CALL for notice and public consultation for all Department of State changes of local policy, procedure, rules, and reciprocity schedules effecting American citizens overseas.

CALL for the establishment by the Department of State of an independent American Citizen Services citizen advisory group to confer with American Citizen Services on matters that come under their auspices and CALL for online resources that help the American Citizen Services to better fulfill their mission.

CALL FOR recognizing and affirming American Citizens' and U.S. Legal Permanent Residents' right to in-person representation by U.S. licensed attorneys at all U.S. government facilities abroad and U.S. boarder points of entry just as such representation would be allowed if the person was in the U.S.

FAVOR making all U.S. government facilities abroad barrier-free for those with disabilities.

FAVOR the renegotiation of Status of Forces Agreements that restrict the use of military facilities to those residing within the host country, with a view to permitting military retirees living in other countries to use all facilities allowed by military regulations.

FAVOR an increase in weight limit on packages that may be sent or received through the U.S. military postal service by military retirees abroad through the military postal system.

CALL FOR these safeguards in the implementation of the Fixing America's Surface Transport Act, the highway re-authorization act of 2015, in relation to the provisions that empower the IRS to request that the State Department revoke, or deny the renewal of, the passport of U.S. citizens with a tax debt in excess of \$50,000. The taxpayer will receive:

- verified notification of the tax debt;
- an opportunity to appeal the tax decision prior to any denial or revocation of the passport;
- information on his or her rights and the opportunity to remedy the situation prior to the denial or revocation of the passport; and
- the discretion of the State Department to deny/revoke the passport in view of the State Department's in-depth knowledge of potentially dangerous in-country events or circumstances that might arise for the individual U.S. citizen from the revocation or denial of a U.S. passport.

II - AMERICAN FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICY

We applaud our President for reopening America to the world and the world to America.

CELEBRATE the sharp improvement of the world's opinion of the United States, under the leadership of President Barack Obama and Secretaries of State Hillary Clinton and John Kerry.

A Global Good Neighbor Policy

We:

APPLAUD President Obama's frequent and meaningful visits to countries and world leaders.

APPLAUD the Obama Administration for finding a diplomatic solution as a basis for future peaceful relations with Iran.

FAVOR expanded US leadership in the realm of developing a clean energy economy and combatting pollution.

FAVOR cooperation, negotiation, diplomacy, reciprocity and mutual respect that will widen contact and interaction with other nations.

DEPLORE rhetoric from candidates for office and members of Congress that impedes negotiation with legally elected leaders of countries with which the U.S. has differences.

DEPLORE nativist and jingoistic rhetoric and favor civility in discussion of foreign affairs to model respect for the shared humanity of all the people of the world.

FAVOR U.S. approval of and participation in the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

SUPPORT continuous economic and strategic re-evaluation of the continued operation of US military bases.

FAVOR expansion of foreign aid for health and humanitarian purposes, enhancement of institutions combating world poverty and promoting sustainable development.

FAVOR U.S. participation in UN peacekeeping missions.

SUPPORT military and political intervention, conditional on securing a formal UN mandate.
SUPPORT the US extending its current Cuban immigration policy to cover other Caribbean and Central American nations.

U.S. State Department

As the U.S. representative to the world, the State Department must have the resources necessary to fulfill its mandate in the development, and implementation of U.S. foreign policy. The Department of State and foreign operations activities are integral to our national security and essential for the support of Americans resident abroad.

We:

SUPPORT full funding of the State Department, including embassies and consulates (including security measures), and American Citizen's Services, including an IRS advisory office in each region to help Americans comply without unreasonable expenditure, with their often complex duty to meet tax obligations while abroad.

URGE the U.S. State Department to protect LGBT residents living abroad from harm through diplomatic and economic pressure.

International Agreements, Treaties and Obligations

It is incumbent upon the U.S. to sign and implement important treaties fostering human rights, protection of the environment, and global cooperation.

We:

APPLAUD the Obama Administration in endeavoring to honor past treaty commitments.

FAVOR U.S. support of the United Nations, including payment of all dues and assessments.

OPPOSE imposition of trade barriers, tariffs, sanctions or other trade-distorting measures that contravene relevant trade agreements.

FAVOR repeal of the American Service Personnel Protection Act of 2002, popularly known as the "Hague Invasion Act", with the exception of those provisions that ensure the best possible legal defense for a U.S. service member charged by the International Criminal Court established by the Rome Statute.

APPLAUD President Obama's establishment of a working relationship with the International Criminal Court through Presidential waivers to the Hague Invasion Act and by sending a delegation to the 2010 Review Conference.

URGE the signature and ratification of the International Criminal Court established by the Rome Statute.

SUPPORT the U.S. joining

- the Forced Labour Convention (CO29), and negotiating its expansion to prohibit forced labor as a civil or criminal penalty
- the Freedom of Association and Right to Organise Convention (CO87)
- the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (CO98).

SUPPORT THE U.S. ratifying the UN Conventions on

- the Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS)
- the Rights of the Child
- the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

Debts

The inequality in the distribution of the wealth and produce of the world has resulted in a large

group of impoverished nations that are burdened by debt and frequently suffer under sanctions.

We:

FAVOR debt relief to enable debtor countries to start genuine social and economic development and to help address the massive inequalities that currently distort U.S. global relationships.

FAVOR development by the U.S. government, in cooperation with multilateral and bilateral partners, of appropriate mechanisms to ensure that debt relief translates into social, economic and health improvements for citizens rather than serving to sustain corrupt regimes.

Sanctions

Conditionality as an instrument is club-fisted and prone to hurt the people that the policy is meant to assist.

We:

OPPOSE the use of trade and economic sanctions whenever they may be counterproductive politically, or would result in inhumane and widespread suffering among the citizens of the affected nation.

SUPPORT the use of sanctions and conditionalities in conjunction with international partners in a collaborative, well-planned and considered way that avoid harming the innocent and with specific goals and aims that target wrong-doers, such as human rights abusers and those guilty of genocide.

Foreign Aid

America's long-term security depends on a world where poverty is eradicated and the innate dignity of individuals is protected. U.S. foreign aid also plays a critical role in securing good will for the United States in the global community. We encourage stability, not by force or threat, but by reaching out to the vulnerable, striving to relieve suffering, and promoting social and economic development, education, health, family planning, democracy and human rights. Where democratic values thrive, the global community is more secure and the international economy more robust.

We:

SUPPORT full funding and increase funding of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and other international agencies including the United Nations for programs to eliminate hunger, disease and civil war, to create judicial remedy and reparations to women who have been victims of sexual violence during war, to support infrastructure development, electoral reform, judicial capacity building, education and more generally to advance the civil and human rights of all citizens.

APPLAUD President Obama's cancellation of the "Global Gag Rule" which caused untold amounts of harm to children, women, and communities around the world by withholding U.S. foreign aid from effective and beneficial NGO programs, and OPPOSE efforts to reinstate barriers to family planning and maternal health care.

RECOGNIZE our moral obligation to continue to help the 10% of the global population living in extreme poverty, by enacting policies that provide aid based on their needs, in a manner that is neutral, impartial and will serve to end bias in the provision of foreign aid.

APPLAUD the generosity of the American people and their desire to end extreme poverty in the world and FAVOR joining the international community's support for the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015 and to reach allocation of 0.7% of GNP devoted to global poverty reduction.

FAVOR assisting nations that seek funding for civilian uses, social and economic infrastructure development, income generation, democratic reform, institutional strengthening, and human rights improvements, particularly those that apply to women, tackle corruption and target health, climate change, water development, family planning and education.

FAVOR compliance with the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, which stipulates that "no

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security assistance may be provided to any country, the government of which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights agreements and treaties,” with reasonable exceptions for aid to vulnerable children.

FAVOR expansion of foreign aid for health and humanitarian purposes, enhancement of institutions combating world poverty and promoting sustainable development

Control of WMDs and Similar Weaponry

Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) continue to endanger the world, as do cluster bombs, land mines, various types of missiles, and chemical/biological/radiological/nuclear (CBRN) weapons materials. The danger lies not only the possibility that terrorist groups and rogue states obtain such weapons or weapons materials, but also in their use by “ordinary” states. Currently, eight “nuclear” countries around the world possess some 19,000 nuclear warheads, while many other states have the technology and the fuel cycle to develop nuclear weapons on short order. Our survival on this planet depends not on winning WMD wars but on avoiding them.

We:

SUPPORT President Obama’s long-term vision of “a world without nuclear weapons,” and the significant steps in that direction he proposed in his landmark 2009 speech in Prague.

APPLAUD the signing of the new START treaty and President Obama’s 2010 challenge, agreed to by 47 countries, to four years of non-proliferation efforts,

APPLAUD the creation of a rapid response fund for emerging democracies.

FAVOR continued U.S. leadership in developing an international plan for phased reduction of nuclear weapons that will lead to their complete abolition, building on the progress made at the 2010 Nuclear Security Summit, the largest gathering of Heads of State called by a United States President since the 1945, and the follow-up 2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit.

FAVOR U.S. agreement to routine international inspections of nuclear arsenals, weapons programs and enrichment facilities of all states, including international monitoring and policing of sales and supply of CBRN weapons materials and APPLAUD the U.S. government’s progress towards this goal through the passage of the Nuclear Forensics and Attribution Act.

FAVOR full funding and implementation of the 1992 Nunn-Lugar Act, also known as the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program, to safeguard nuclear weapons of the former Soviet Union from falling into the hands of others.

URGE a U.S. call to ratify and enforce the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty to stop further development and testing of all nuclear weapons, including their introduction into outer space, as indicated in the U.S.-ratified 1967 Outer Space Treaty prohibiting nuclear and other WMD in outer space.

FAVOR establishment of the International Nuclear Fuel Bank under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for supplying enriched fuel for peaceful nuclear purposes, as guaranteed under Article IV of the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

URGE passage of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, a treaty to ban the manufacture, stockpile and sale of cluster bombs, agreed to by over 100 countries, with the notable exceptions of the U.S., China, Russia and Israel.

SUPPORT the U.S.’s leading role in the clearing of anti-personnel land mines in all areas of past conflicts, and URGE the release by Israel of maps of land mines in southern Lebanon and the completion of the U.S. government’s review, which began in 2009, of the Mine Ban Treaty.

CALL on the Obama Administration to reverse its shift of arms export control from the Department of State to the Department of Commerce

Supporting Our Military

Democrats Abroad fully supports the men and women of our armed forces whose extraordinary service receives our deepest respect and gratitude. Future initiatives and policy should be closely analyzed and critiqued on its ability to provide security to the U.S. and its interests.

We:

FAVOR providing our military personnel with the training and resources needed to meet the challenges they are most likely to face in today's world: peacekeeping missions, anti-terrorist operations and emergency humanitarian actions.

FAVOR military policies that minimize civilian casualties, which endanger relations essential to our goals, to the maximum extent consistent with the safety of our troops.

APPLAUD President Obama for cutting or eliminating wasteful military spending as well as his recommendations to Congress to increase pay and benefits for military.

URGE a review of U.S. military bases worldwide in order to determine current and foreseeable utility, bearing in mind that closing some bases may affect U.S. veterans in the area, which must be considered in all its aspects.

URGE a review of the nuclear missile sites and the nuclear sharing program in which the U.S. is a key player. NATO's nuclear sharing violates Articles I and II of the NPT (Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty) which prohibit the transfer and acceptance, respectively, of direct or indirect control over nuclear weapons.

FAVOR a strict restriction of the policy of outsourcing critical security and military functions to private contractors as a default mechanism for conflict.

URGE the enforcement of ITAR (International Traffic in Arms Regulations) on U.S. private military contractors who must first seek the approval of the (DDTC) Directorate of Defense Trade Controls within the State Department before defense services are provided.

FAVOR a policy that awards the Purple Heart, along with relevant additional care and benefits, 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.

PROMOTE initiatives of gender equality such as those that have led to opening the Army Infantry, Armor, and Spec Ops Units in 2016 to women.

APPLAUD setting the example for wellness and dynamism by allowing active duty members to participate in the 2016 Rio Olympic Games.

SUPPORT non-discriminatory appearance codes that suit all troops regardless of race, religion, gender expression, or other innate characteristics.

PRAISE Obama's Administration decision to raise funding for the prevention of sexual assault and harassment within the military and SUPPORT the Military Justice Improvement Act to reform the handling of sexual assault in the military.

Honoring Our Veterans

FAVOR permanent statutory funding of the Department of Veterans Affairs and OPPOSE all efforts to privatize the Veterans Administration.

FAVOR linking the Department of Veterans Affairs future medical requirements to U.S. Military Combatant Commands Contingency Plans.

FAVOR full healthcare for veterans, their domestic partners and children and VIEW as a sign of progress in this area the efforts to expand CHAMPVA Children's Protection Act of 2015 coverage by House and Senate bills.

FAVOR facilitating and expediting citizenship for immigrants who have honorably completed their

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U.S. military service.

APPLAUD the continued success of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill to extend educational benefits to more veterans and active-service members of the military including the military spouse and family education accessibility, transferability and support services for military spouse career advancement.

FAVOR the non-recognition by the U.S. Government of undergraduate and graduate degrees granted by some for-profit colleges and universities, in support of President Obama's 2012 Executive Order to stop predatory abuses of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill program.

APPLAUD extensions to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act by the Tax Increase Prevention Act of 2014, allowing the continuation of extra funding to the VA to strengthen and expand its network of medical centers, state-supported nursing homes and national cemeteries.

SUPPORT increased funding to the Veterans Administration, particularly for mental healthcare for returning soldiers and SUPPORT continued efforts to address veteran homelessness, unemployment and mental illness.

APPLAUD the initiative of the Obama White House in collaboration with the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Labor in continuing the Veterans Employment Center, Job Bank and National Resource Directory.

DEPLORE the suppression of the *VOW to Hire Heroes Act* and also the VRAP (Veterans Retraining Assistance Program)

URGE the U.S. Congress to refrain from sequestering funds from the budget of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, which led to the shutdown of military cemeteries throughout the world in 2013.

FAVOR the right of every veteran to an appropriate military funeral.

CALL on the Veterans Administration, Congress, and Obama Administration to:

- Improve significantly the provision of health care services for U.S. veterans living abroad and their dependents,
- Permit highly qualified hospitals and medical facilities located abroad to supplement the services provided by VA health care facilities at low cost, and
- Require each U.S. embassy to assist U.S. veterans and their dependents living abroad by posting a list of qualified consultants available in the embassy host country who can assist veterans in preparing their claims for health care benefits

The U.S. and the Middle East

The Middle East and North Africa are in turmoil today, much of which results from the disastrous prosecution of the war in Iraq. The development of Daesh (ISIS/ISIL) is a direct result of Bush-Cheney actions. Despite continued obstruction from the GOP in Congress, President Obama has made substantial progress with the Nuclear Agreement with Iran. The next president will face many complex problems in ending the war in Syria, finally bringing peace between Israel and Palestine, improving economic conditions throughout the region, and bringing governance to Libya, South Sudan, Somalia and Afghanistan.

We:

APPLAUD President Obama's persistence, in conjunction with our allies, in achieving the Nuclear Agreement with Iran.

APPLAUD President Obama's foresight and strength to keep American troops out of the war in Syria and ending the war in Iraq.

FAVOR the continued efforts by the US and its allies to combat the radical extremists that continue to disrupt legitimate governments in Syria (Daesh), Somalia (Shebab), Niger (Boko Haram) and Afghanistan (Taliban)

FAVOR the continued US leadership in bringing peace to Syria, South Sudan, Libya, Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia.

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DEPLORE the efforts by Republican members of Congress, including former Speaker John Boehner, to undermine President Obama's efforts to reach an accommodation with Iran by inviting the leader of Israel to speak to a joint session of Congress without coordination with the White House.

SUPPORT the majority of Israelis and Palestinians in their longing for peace and belief in justice, and view the conclusion of a just resolution to the long conflict between the two parties as a necessary condition for world peace and stability.

FAVOR the U.S. serving as an honest, independent broker in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict while maintaining a single standard when condemning violence, pressing Israel to stop expansion of settlements and the separation wall and pressing both parties to adhere to international law.

FAVOR linking U.S. military aid to Middle Eastern countries to their respect for human rights.

Latin America

We:

APPLAUD President Obama's re-instatement of the rights of Americans to visit and assist their families in Cuba.

APPLAUD President Obama's normalizing relations with Cuba, and call for the immediate lifting of all trade and economic sanctions and the ban on U.S. citizens traveling to and from Cuba, which inhibits American citizens' ability to travel to and conduct business in all countries throughout the region.

FAVOR making changes to the Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) and Department of Commerce regulations governing exports to Cuba and imports from Cuba..

FAVOR directing the Attorney General to end preferential treatment for Cuban migrants arriving at U.S. borders, ordering the same field interview for asylum eligibility determinations that Central Americans and other migrants receive.

OPPOSE the proposal to erect a wall along the border between the U.S. and Mexico,

APPLAUD the passage of the Free Trade Agreement with Colombia, which will continue to open new markets for U.S. companies while offering alternatives to the illegal drug industry for Colombians.

FAVOR strong enforcement of existing laws pertaining to the exportation of firearms into all Latin America countries.

FAVOR the Economic Support Fund (ESF) that would support democratic institutions that administer justice, ensure due process, protect human rights, and support regional economic growth and assistance to improve income opportunities.

APPLAUD President Obama for his commitment, announced during his visit to Argentina on the 40th anniversary of the military coup, to declassify additional American military and intelligence records related to the suppression of human rights, and for recognizing the "incredible heroism and courage of those who stood up against these human rights violations", expressing his hope that this gesture will help to rebuild trust between the U.S. and Argentina.

FAVOR the legalization of soft drugs throughout the United States, in order to facilitate the end of a costly war on drugs that has cost thousands of lives, not only in the United States, but also in many other countries.

FAVOR strongly encouraging U.S. government to implement a policy of not intervening in the politics of any Latin America country unless said country has committed hostile acts against the U.S.

FAVOR the re-examination of the NAFTA Treaty and the renegotiation or amendments thereto.

FAVOR humanitarian treatment of all refugees fleeing violence from their country of origin to the U.S., including the Central American Minor Refugees; and strongly urge rapid decisions as to

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whether these individuals meet the legal requirements of amnesty offered by the U.S. OPPOSE blanket amnesty of undocumented aliens into the U.S. unless there is a need for political asylum, after required background checks.

Africa

We:

APPLAUD President Obama's efforts at reaching out to the people of the African continent. FAVOR the continued Diplomatic and Military efforts to curtail the influence of the Peoples Republic of China on the politics and economies of the nations on the African continent unless China complies with the Rule of Law and acts in the interests, as defined by Africans, of the African nation concerned..

APPLAUD the Paris COP 21, recognizing the current tragedy of climate change in Africa among other locations abroad.

FAVOR aid to Africa, as determined by the local communities, that builds infrastructure such as health and education that will reduce poverty,, and strengthens democratic institutions in civil society, particularly an independent press, a free internet and an independent judiciary.

FAVOR continued support of democratic and transparent elections, judicial capacity building, civil society, health infrastructure, education, women's rights, and more generally human rights of all citizens of African countries.

SUPPORT removal of African visa caps and reduction of the immigration backlog.

SUPPORT restoration of democracy in Uganda and Burundi and FAVOR the U. S. taking a stronger stance with the use of sanctions, cessation of military aid and other non-military supports against regimes that do not support democracy, human rights and the rule of law

APPLAUD eradication of the guinea worm and SUPPORT increased investment in eradication of tropical diseases, like malaria.

SUPPORT all initiatives that favor local agricultural and small industry development including regulation to prevent multinational enterprises from dominating African economies.

Terrorism

Terrorism is a worldwide scourge, and attacks upon the United States must have a vigorous and unrelenting response. While recognizing this threat, it should nonetheless not be used as a cover for aggression and curtailment of civil liberties.

We:

FAVOR U.S. actions against the occurrence and spread of terrorism that use "soft power" to regain the support of citizens and nations around the world.

FAVOR efforts to combat terrorism that not only address actual occurrences of terrorism, but also address conditions that terrorists exploit to spread fear, chaos and confusion.

APPLAUD President Obama's efforts to close the military detention facility at Naval Station Guantanamo, Cuba.

FAVOR U.S. policy that promotes self-determination, peace and human rights in the Middle East and in other regions that are sources of terrorism.

FAVOR U.S. policy based on internationally recognized legal processes to investigate and prosecute terrorists in national and international courts.

DEPLORE irresponsible rhetoric that links the words "Middle East" and "terrorism," as terrorism also originates in many non-Arab and non-Muslim contexts; this linkage obscures the role of many progressive actors in the Middle East.

DEPLORE the anti-Muslim rhetoric from GOP presidential candidates and the attempts to equate American citizens who are Muslims with terrorists, as un-American statements that serve as a

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propaganda gain for extremists around the world.

URGE the U.S. Government to publicly release the entire 9/11 commission report that discloses the financial supporters of terrorism against the U.S.

FAVOR active US support for immigrants and refugees, especially from war-torn countries, to increase global stability, security and welfare. And address youth unemployment on the global scale--an immediate reduction of potential terrorists will occur.

III - AMERICAN DOMESTIC ISSUES

We applaud our Administration's accomplishments and encourage greater efforts to ensure equality of opportunity through public support

Education, Arts and Sciences

Education is a basic human right according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and a public responsibility. We must pro-actively develop a population that is globally aware, globally sensitive, globally responsible and globally engaged.

We:

SUPPORT strengthening quality public education for all American young people based on enduring American values and internationally-recognized best practices.

URGE that all levels of government view teachers and their organizations as equal partners, independent but committed to the common endeavor of achieving successful education systems.

FAVOR policies that require that personnel in school leadership, governance and management have professional knowledge, specific to public service in education, and OPPOSE the outsourcing of any aspect of educational leadership.

SUPPORT the strengthening of education professionals' collective bargaining rights, acquired over many years, and DEPLORE the threats to those rights that are currently posed by well-funded and irresponsible special interests.

FAVOR a concerted effort by national and state governments to undertake urgent rehabilitation and upgrades of our school infrastructure, to ensure that our nation's educational facilities have quality construction, are safe and environmentally friendly.

FAVOR Federal assistance to states for the creation of free, universal, voluntary pre-kindergarten programs, integrated into the public education system, while ensuring that states require the licensing and certification of all preschool instructors. Early childhood care and education are intended to meet the needs of the whole child.

URGE the reform and renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, based on the principle that the Federal government's first responsibility is to set the bar higher than it has ever been in terms of equality of access and service, rather than lowering it to enable 'market' forces into play.

APPLAUD President Obama's efforts to provide more federal funding for higher education and his support of community colleges,

FAVOR further action be taken to improve equal access to all forms of tertiary education and to reduce the cost of higher education and the burden of high interest student debt.

FAVOR making public colleges and universities tuition free.

SUPPORT the exploration of opportunities for students in higher education to volunteer in their communities or work in government agencies for a period of time in return for free or greatly reduced tuition.

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SUPPORT reversing the adjunctification of college faculty.

FAVOR Internet access and training in new computer-based technologies in all public schools, to allow students from all background to engage critically in the information revolution and knowledge economy.

FAVOR more rapid integration of immigrant workers and students in tax-supported educational programs and schemes, and OPPOSE the attempts of some states, such as Arizona, to eliminate English Language Learner programs.

OPPOSE any Constitutional Amendment mandating or permitting organized prayer in public schools.

OPPOSE the teaching of creationism, intelligent design or any other programs understood to comprise the notions of creationism, within the science curriculum in public schools.

FAVOR the inclusion and strengthening of civics education so that students are well prepared to exercise their citizenship rights and responsibilities.

FAVOR the expansion of high school counseling services to provide students with information about filling out applications for college, university and vocational programs and applying for and securing financial aid for which they are qualified.

FAVOR the adoption of education policies, curricula and international exchange programs for students and professionals that promote stronger awareness and appreciation of current events, global affairs, geography, foreign cultures, international understanding and foreign languages in order to help the U.S. in the increasingly globalized world.

OPPOSE ineffective "choice" measures such as school vouchers, tax-credit programs and semi-public or for-profit charter schools that divert public funds to private initiatives. Parents in disadvantaged areas, and indeed most parents, prefer the improvement of existing neighborhood public schools to re-locating their children outside local communities.

FAVOR increased funding for music education in primary and secondary schools. Exposure to music has been shown to increase brain activity, stimulating parts of the brain not otherwise stimulated by other activities.

SUPPORT maintaining (adjusted for inflation) or increasing the current amount of funding for America's space program and the cultural, scientific, educational, economic, and national security benefits it provides, with the goal of crewed missions to Mars being the primary objective.

FAVOR increased support and publicity to the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities.

Exposure to the arts and humanities has been shown to have a strong positive effect on all students, but especially those in lower income and disadvantaged communities.

FAVOR increased funding for U.S. State Department programs in American art and culture around the world, including tours of orchestras to promote classic, non-commercial American music, introducing people of other cultures to the best of what we have to offer. FAVOR increased funding for the National Endowment for the Arts to support artistic endeavor as an essential element of American culture.

SUPPORT freedom of expression in the arts, within the U.S. and through our foreign policy.

FAVOR increased funding for the National Science Foundation and additional grants and tax credits for universities and businesses for specialized training programs. These programs, in particular the National Science Foundation funding programs, have a substantial impact on the formation of scientific thinking and research of students at all educational levels and have contributed immeasurably to advances in all fields of science, engineering and mathematics.

Economy and Tax Issues.

As Democrats, we believe the federal government must guide and manage the economy in ways that protect and provide for the public good. The federal government should (A) manage the budget in a fiscally prudent manner, (B) preserve and improve our country's material infrastructure upon which our lives and our economy depend, and (C) provide the means essential for every citizen to

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pursue opportunities for lifelong success and happiness. The federal government must also (D) encourage corporations operate ethically and pay their fair share of taxes and, (E) respect the longstanding commitments of our country to free and fair trade, and provide regulatory oversight to avoid financial crisis.

A. Managing the Nation's Budget. President Obama repeatedly offered sensible compromises and innovative programs to cynically obstructionist Republican members of Congress.

We:

FAVOR the immediate repeal of fiscally unsound tax cuts, including the capital gains and dividend tax cuts, which have unfairly transferred a greater share of the tax burden to lower-income workers.

APPLAUD President Obama's reasonable and economically sound proposals to gradually reduce the Federal budget deficit, without eliminating key programs that benefit millions of Americans.

FAVOR reducing the military budget, excluding veteran retirement benefits, and investing the resulting dividends in education, job-retraining, and job-creation programs, thereby enabling American workers to compete more effectively in the new global labor market.

APPLAUD President Obama's support for a new Customer Due Diligence rule that will require banks to collect the names of customers opening accounts in the names of anonymous shell companies for the purpose of thwarting tax evasion.

FAVOR the mandatory collection by all U.S. states of information on persons who hold the beneficial interest in companies, trusts and other legal entities that are registered within their borders and the listing of the information in publicly available central registers to eliminate the secrecy that facilitates fraud, money laundering and tax evasion.

APPLAUD the IRS's newly published Inversions and Related Transactions rules and legislation that imposes an "exit tax" on expatriating companies, to contain 1) transactions structured to avoid taxation by moving a company's tax home into a foreign country through a domestic parent or larger company being absorbed by a foreign subsidiary or merger partner and 2) certain post-inversion U.S. tax avoidance mechanisms.

FAVOR reforms closing the loopholes in laws meant to limit CEO pay so that no forms of performance-based pay are tax deductible.

FAVOR reforms closing corporate tax loopholes which drain the nation's budget and provide no business incentives for protecting people or the environment.

FAVOR the introduction of a Financial Transactions Tax, a small tax on all sales of securities (currently not taxed) to raise much needed federal revenue and to curb high frequency trading which can endanger share market stability.

B. Maintaining the Nation's Infrastructure.

The U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics and many independent organizations say that our nation's infrastructure is dangerously under-maintained. Our transport networks, cities, water supplies and housing stock, are vital to our economic well-being and urgently require renovation.

We:

APPLAUD the passage in 2015 of the FAST Act ("Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act"), the first law enacted in over ten years that provides long-term funding certainty for surface transportation, meaning States and local governments can move forward with critical transportation projects.

SUPPORT President Obama's proposals for a comprehensive expansion and modernization of the national rail network, as well as the integration of Amtrak passenger and freight services, with a view towards cost reduction of rail-based transport and attracting road and air travelers to travel by trains.

SUPPORT President Obama's plans for expansion of light-rail transport and high-speed rail as

means of reducing the use of cars and DEPLORE the ideological refusal by Republican governors of federal funds for that.

SUPPORT Federal support for research into alternative fuel use in integrated mass transit systems and incentives to adopt green transport technologies at the state and local levels, to improve energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

FAVOR creating a nationwide infrastructure development and rehabilitation program to repair the nation's public roads, rails, bridges, sewers, schools, health, recreational and other infrastructure to restore public assets and create jobs.

FAVOR requiring that all infrastructure programs prioritize public and mass transportation in areas that are economically disadvantaged, employ workers displaced from fossil fuel industries and industries adversely impacted by trade agreements, and meet long-term environmental sustainability goals.

C. Ensuring Economic Opportunity for All.

At the height of Recession of 2007-2010, nearly 50 million Americans were living in poverty. Despite progress since, about one quarter of African American and Hispanic Americans lived in poverty in 2014 and one in five children live in poverty. The reduction of poverty, income inequality, unemployment and underemployment must be high priorities for the next presidential administration and Congress.

We:

FAVOR the passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act of 2015, to help close the gap between women and men.

FAVOR raising the basic federal minimum to \$15/hour by 2020 and indexing the federal minimum wage to inflation.

FAVOR the passage of a Basic Income Act, which would provide a minimum guaranteed income level to unemployed men and women who, due to age, lack of skills, and related inadequacies have dropped out of the labor force entirely.

FAVOR reforms to the carried interest loophole that currently allows hedge fund managers to pay tax on all their income at preferential capital gains tax rates.

FAVOR resources to ensure that no child lives below the poverty line, to ensure adequate child support for single-parent families, including childcare from properly trained childcare providers.

FAVOR providing tax incentives to businesses that provide on-site child care centers for working parents, compensated healthcare coverage, flexible work schedules, job sharing and on-the-job training with internship and apprenticeship programs.

OPPOSE all forms of sexual and gender harassment in the workplace.

OPPOSE the hiring of workers in place of lawful strikers and all attempts by employers to reduce or deny overtime pay or other benefits to workers who are in negotiations concerning their terms and conditions of employment.

FAVOR the award of tax concessions or credits to small businesses, especially those owned by women and individuals from economically disadvantaged groups, including disabled persons.

FAVOR federally supported job training and job-creation schemes for workers of all ages to protect and strengthen the national labor force as it attempts to meet the challenges of globalization and emerging new markets for goods, services and labor.

APPLAUD the recent judicial decision in Wisconsin that ruled legislation to eliminate workers' rights through such anti-democratic means as undermining collective bargaining for unions was unconstitutional.

SUPPORT continuing the effort to overturn and prevent legislation that deters the rights of workers through anti-democratic means.

SUPPORT efforts to ensure that future generations will be afforded the opportunity to invest in their

retirements, and that Social Security and pensions will continue to safeguard the retirements of employees well into the future.

SUPPORT granting carefully targeted, developmental incentives by state governments and the federal government to manufacturing companies that agree to redirect company investments (physical and material) to the continental United States while striving for significant advances in productivity.

SUPPORT increased federal investment in research, engineering and technical innovation designed to facilitate the creation of more efficient, carbon-neutral industries and products, including cars.

SUPPORT efforts to develop a fairer, more progressive system of personal income taxation, including support for a "Buffett tax" which would set minimum tax thresholds for the wealthiest Americans and the elimination of the Bush tax cuts for highest income earners.

SUPPORT legislation to protect the American worker from the rise of the automated workplace in a globalized economy and the prospect of greater levels of American joblessness. This includes investing in job re-training and educational opportunities to ensure that well-paying jobs are filled by skilled American workers.

FAVOR the passage of legislation to support community institutions like quality child care, libraries, parks, athletic leagues, and youth organizations, creating full and part-time employment for youth and adults in communities where social capital and community bonds have withered away due to economic decline.

SUPPORT efforts to end residential segregation, which strongly influences upward mobility in a given community. Isolating low-income households perpetuates a cycle of poverty.

SUPPORT closing the carried-interest loophole in the U.S. tax code that currently allows for significant rate differentials between capital gains and ordinary income, thus enabling private equity firm managers to benefit from a favorable tax rate denied to the vast majority of ordinary American workers who pay a higher rate on their earned income.

FAVOR tax credits to assist families that budget for retirement by expanding access to tax-deferred IRAs or 401(k) retirement savings accounts.

FAVOR federally supported programs to protect our labor force and enhance their skills base by providing employment retraining, especially in communities facing chronically high unemployment and hardship due to closures of factories and other business enterprises. Among such program is Federal Trade Adjustment Assistance, which provides opportunities for employees whose jobs are lost when facilities move from the U.S. to foreign locations.

SUPPORT residential racial and socioeconomic integration, particularly as in the Moving to Opportunity model.

SUPPORT strengthening tribal sovereignty, as abrogated in the Dollar General case which removed all jurisdiction over non-Indians on Indian lands, giving perpetrators and corporate bad actors an exemption for crimes they commit on Indian lands.

SUPPORT extensive Federal works and jobs creation programs, and, insofar as possible, incentives or requirements to train and employ recently jobless workers, preferably in full-time jobs with rights to unionization.

D. Strengthening Corporate Transparency and Accountability.

Certain American businesses increasingly decrease and/or deny their corporate responsibilities to employees, workers and shareholders, and also to the nation's taxpayers.

We:

FAVOR full funding of company pensions, and legal sanctions against firms that undermine retirement security through mismanagement or fraudulent use of pension funds.

FAVOR fully portable pensions.

FAVOR the reinstatement of the Glass-Steagall Act requiring the separation of commercial and

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investment banking.

FAVOR initiatives to make it easier for small businesses to provide private pensions.

SUPPORT the Stop Corporate Inversions Act which would make it more difficult for large U.S. companies to merge with foreign companies for the purpose of shifting their corporate headquarters overseas and avoiding US corporate taxes.

SUPPORT changes to Treasury rules in order to block companies from shifting profits earned in the U.S. to their overseas partner by taking out huge loans from their foreign parent company and then claiming a whopping tax deduction for interest on the loans.

DEPLORE accounting gimmickry, including but not limited to “trade mispricing”, that enables U.S. companies to shift profits into offshore companies registered in low-tax or no-tax jurisdictions (tax havens).

APPLAUD legislative and regulatory initiatives that force international corporations to assume and honor their tax obligations in the countries from which they derive their profits and in which they benefit from taxpayer expenditures on all aspects of the nation's life.

DEPLORE influence peddling, nepotism, conflicts of interest and other forms of non-transparent business practice and the damaging influence of corporate lobbyists in blocking reforms to stop corporate inversion mergers, curb the use of tax havens and tax overseas corporate earnings.

APPLAUD the Obama Administration’s implementation of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, a program in which oil, mining and gas companies disclose what they have paid the government in tax and other payments for the extraction of natural resources while governments disclose what they have received, for the purpose of promoting open and accountable exploitation of natural resources and avoiding corruption and conflict.

SUPPORT Country by Country Reporting and applauds the U.S. Treasury’s introduction of regulations for how multinational enterprises will report income generated and taxes paid in each jurisdiction of operation to ensure that corporate profits are reported where economic activities are carried out and value is created.

SUPPORT focus by the Justice Department on prosecuting the individuals who commit and enable corporate crimes rather than the corporations so that those individuals who are responsible pay the price, rather than the workers of the company.

SUPPORT the Stop Tax Haven Abuse Act to tighten offshore tax rules and enforcement and therefore significantly curb rampant tax avoidance by many multinational corporations, and generate an estimated \$278 billion over the next decade in much-needed revenue.

SUPPORT the expansion of funding and authority to the IRS to pursue companies and wealthy individuals evading tax by hiding assessable earnings in offshore accounts.

SUPPORT the Incorporation Transparency and Law Enforcement Assistance Act that require U.S. Department of Treasury and states to collect, maintain and update beneficial ownership information on legal entities for law enforcement purposes to fight shell company anonymity that facilitates domestic and foreign corruption and other criminal activity by allowing individuals to hide their identities and their illicit assets behind the façade of a U.S. corporation.

SUPPORT the break-up of large, “too big to fail” financial institutions that put the nation's economy at risk.

SUPPORT corporate and government whistleblower protections.

SUPPORT sanctions for companies that fail to remove child and forced labor from the global supply chain and FAVOR holding US companies profiting from child or forced labor legally culpable and requiring treble compensation of back wages to victims.

FAVOR sanctions against U.S. companies whose overseas operations violate U.S. standards for human rights, civil liberties, indigenous rights to self-determination, gender rights and labor rights or harm the environment or public health and general well-being.

E. Supporting Free and Fair Trade. The United States has long been committed to the ideals of free and fair trade as a means to stimulate worldwide economic growth and improve production and consumption of goods domestically and in foreign lands. Democrats Abroad is sensitive to the appeal that trade barriers and other restrictions on free trade might stem the short-term loss of jobs at home but also recognizes that protectionist measures often cause consumer prices for goods and services to rise substantially and also dampen and preclude job gains.

We:

APPLAUD the fact that Democratic Presidents of the United States Presidents from the 1800's to Barack Obama have negotiated trade agreements with other nations, including the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) which substantially reduced tariffs after World War II and led to the foundation of the World Trade Organization (WTO);

FAVOR a federally funded review of NAFTA's impact on manufacturing in the U.S. and overall employment and support efforts to dismantle or renegotiate areas of the agreement that harm workers in the signatory countries. This review would identify competitive and uncompetitive industries along with commercial trends, including patterns in capital investment, debt, outsourcing of work to other countries and re-exporting of goods.

FAVOR trade agreements that promote the well-being and interests of American workers, take into account our shared environment and our commitment to a livable world for future generations, and given the fact that our party, the President and numerous members of Congress have voiced definitive support for a green future, we BELIEVE that any measure to increase trade can and should take that voiced support into account.

FAVOR transparent negotiations of all future international trade agreements.

FAVOR trade agreements that encourage adoption of labor and environmental protection best practices.

FAVOR sanctions against U.S. companies shifting production lines and other types of investments overseas to evade fair, reasonable and safe standards of employment and which do not respect the human, civil and gender rights of employees and neighboring communities.

SUPPORT legal and economic incentives to increase export opportunities for small- and medium-sized U.S. businesses in order to stimulate (i) their economic growth, (ii) the employment of more laborers in well-paying jobs, and (iii) their social responsibility in matters of labor rights and fair trade.

FAVOR ongoing attempts by the federal government, especially in the area of foreign trade, to insure stronger and more effective protection of intellectual property rights, labor rights, broad e-commerce access, and foreign investment overseas, especially in nations that do not respect these rights.

OPPOSE the inclusion in free trade agreements entered into with other nations of investor-state dispute settlement mechanisms that (i) do not afford robust due process protections to the citizens of the contracting states that make those investments; (ii) do not provide for resolutions of these disputes between foreign investors and contracting states; and (iii) do not impose sanctions, including monetary sanctions, against litigants who assert frivolous claims or defenses in these proceedings;

OPPOSE trade agreements like TTIP, CETA and TPP if they undermine democratic processes, make it difficult or impossible for the signatory nations to pass new laws to protect human rights, civil liberties, the environment, indigenous rights, gender rights, labor rights, and public health, and benefit large international corporations to the detriment of small startups and local businesses.

DEPLORE trade agreements that expand restrictive IP laws and restrict internet freedom.

FAVOR respecting the rules and regulations of the WTO, including those that prohibit trade discrimination in all of its forms.

OPPOSE the imposition of new trade barriers, increased tariffs on goods and services, and other

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price- and trade-distorting measures while at the same time recognizing and respecting the human rights, civil rights, labor rights, indigenous rights of foreign laborers

URGE the expansion of redistributive programs such as Trade Adjustment Assistance so that all Americans can receive their fair share of the gains from trade.

HEALTHCARE

Healthcare is a human right and a core element of the Democratic Party's compact with the American people. More than fifty years after Harry S. Truman inserted "Universal Health Insurance" into the platform of the Democratic Party, the United States is duty-bound to continue its progress towards what every other advanced, industrial nation has achieved.

We:

FAVOR the provision of Universal Health Care for every American man, woman and child wherever they live.

CELEBRATE that the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has permitted millions of Americans to enjoy health care coverage

URGE the states to fully implement the Affordable Care Act, including the expansion of Medicaid to permit citizens everywhere in the U.S. to benefit from adequate, health care at little cost to the states.

APPLAUD the decreasing cost of prescription drugs for Medicare recipients and the progress towards eliminating the gap ("donut hole") in the plan's coverage.

REGRET that the United States spends a significantly higher percentage of its GDP on healthcare than any other affluent democracy, but still lags behind on such crucially important social development indicators as life expectancy and infant mortality.

FAVOR the repeal of the initial steps toward privatization included in the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003.

FAVOR nationwide regulation, already adopted in several states, of pharmaceutical company marketing campaigns, which restrict such unethical practices as the giving of gifts and promotional incentives to healthcare practitioners and the manipulation of scientific data and publication in medical journals.

FAVOR quality assurance and cost-control measures in the administration of universal healthcare, with a view to containing overall health costs and, if possible, gradually reducing costs per capita.

APPLAUD the implementation, by the Obama administration, of a Patient's Bill of Rights that eliminates many health insurers' abuses that plagued the American health care system.

FAVOR the extension of patients' right to include legal guarantees to protect the rights of patients to confidentiality in relation to medical treatment, health status and genetic predisposition.

FAVOR Federal healthcare coverage for contraception, sex education and pre- as well as post-natal care. DEPLORE recent attempts in Congress to reduce coverage for such care by holding hostage unrelated and sensible programs, such as college tuition assistance.

APPLAUD President Obama's leadership of the Democratic Party against Republicans' repeated attempts to defund Planned Parenthood, the largest provider of women's health care in the country

FAVOR development of a national program to combat Alzheimer's disease, which would increase funding for research into treatment, allow access to care for Alzheimer's patients under the age of 65 and provide financial assistance to families struggling to care for family members afflicted with Alzheimer's.

FAVOR the expansion of research and services to persons affected by autism.

FAVOR Federal funding of stem-cell research.

OPPOSE the attempts of state governors, corporate-funded lobbyists, and doctrinaire legislators to halt or radically change the structure and implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) by drastic measures not in the interest of ordinary Americans.

Electoral and Legal Systems

A. Elections and Representation.

Campaign Finance

Free, fair and verifiable elections are necessary for a vibrant and truly representative democracy. Since the 2012 Supreme Court decision *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* eliminated decades of campaign finance regulation American citizens have become concerned that the democratic basis of the U.S. government is threatened by the influence of partisan politics and massive amounts of money. The U.S. needs a coherent and transparent system of campaign finance. A constitutional amendment ratified by 38 states may be necessary to accomplish this absolute prerequisite for democratic elections that have the confidence of the American people.

We:

DEPLORE the 5-4 decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* and URGE the states to ratify an amendment to the United States Constitution to clarify that corporations are not entitled to the constitutional rights of natural people, and to reinstate limits on political campaign spending.

FAVOR overturning the 5-4 decision of the Supreme Court in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* by any legal means, including supporting a new challenge to the Supreme Court and ratifying a constitutional amendment.

FAVOR the passage of comprehensive campaign reform by the U.S. Congress and, ultimately, full public financing of all presidential, senatorial and congressional elections.

FAVOR adoption of legislation regulating the length of campaigns for Federal office together with regulated, equitable access to free advertising and debate in the national media.

SUPPORT measures to bring Congress closer to the concerns of American citizens, by setting reasonable term limits for members of both Houses of Congress, with the objective of closing the gaps between ordinary citizens and what has become an aristocracy that by voting its own salaries and guaranteeing its own healthcare coverage, acts against the public interest, ignores its role as "public servants" (as de Tocqueville described), while blithely blocking legislation that would benefit everyday Americans.

Voter Suppression

Too many state officials engage in cynical and sometimes illegal "purges" that are clearly intended to disenfranchise legitimate voters. Some state legislatures and executives regularly flout the spirit of our democracy by passing laws and instituting practices that impose unreasonable burdens on Americans who want nothing more than to cast a ballot and be counted. Our country is approaching a crisis at the foundation of our democratic ideals. Democrats Abroad vigorously defends the principle of "one person, one vote."

We:

FAVOR an amendment to the Constitution to guarantee the right to vote of a US citizen, 18 years of age or older.

URGE the passing of legislation to restore overturned provisions of and strengthen the Voter Rights Act.

URGE Congress to pass legislation to make voter registration automatic for all when they reach the age of 18 and to strengthen voter rights. Propose to support motor voter laws and electronic voter registration.

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SUPPORT federal regulation allowing same day registration in all states and allowing non-affiliated voters to cast ballot in both republican and Democratic primaries.

SUPPORT the reinstatement of voting rights to felons who have completed their sentences.

CALL on the Democratic National Committee and the Democratic National Convention to propose guidelines that would be adhered to by all state Democratic parties. These guidelines would require an open caucus or open primary in every state, with adequate polling locations for the population of that state.

Call on the Democratic National Committee to eliminate all caucuses in favor of presidential primaries. Caucuses appeal to a severely limited number of voters, are essentially undemocratic and subject to manipulation by interest groups and small segments of the voting age population.

CALL for the Uniform Law Commission to create a model statute that brings states' voter registration requirements and timetables into alignment for the purpose of fighting state-based voter suppression initiatives.

APPLAUD the appointment in January 2015 of a third Commissioner to the Electoral Assistance Commission (EAC), enabling the Commission to have the quorum it needs to fulfill its mission of implementing the Help America Vote Act.

SUPPORT the work of the EAC and the Federal Voter Assistance Program in collaboration with the U.S. Postal Service to resolve problems related to postal ballot delivery, return and postmarking which has particularly disenfranchised military and overseas voters.

SUPPORT the enactment of legislation to provide all voters with cost-free identification documents valid in all states and for all elections.

FAVOR legislation and an amendment to the Constitution allowing residents of the District of Columbia to be represented by voting member(s) of the House of Representatives and two voting Senators (with no commensurate loss of representation to the existing states).

FAVOR the right of residents of the U.S. Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to vote for president without prejudice to their future independence or statehood.

SUPPORT the enfranchisement of the more than four million Americans living in the U.S. territories in the General Election of the President of the U.S.

SUPPORT the ongoing work to make voting for Congressional representation available as a democratically chosen possibility for Americans living in U.S. territories.

DEPLORE the Insular Cases that ruled that full constitutional rights do not automatically extend to places under American control and STAND in solidarity 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.

FAVOR national requirements for statewide, computerized databases of registered voters, including that databases be subjected to testing under Election Day conditions prior to Election Day, and paper backup of these electronic databases.

FAVOR legislation requiring U.S. citizens whose names have been deleted from voting rolls be notified in writing at least 45 days before the state's registration deadline to ensure that such voters have an opportunity to re-register.

APPLAUD AND FAVOR the initiatives taken in some states to allow same-day registration, Party-run Internet voting, simplified postal voting and early/weekend voting in elections.

FAVOR legislation making Election Day a national holiday, at least in every Federal election year (even-numbered years).

Election Integrity

FAVOR an amendment to the Constitution to abolish the Electoral College and to allow the direct election of the president and vice president..

FAVOR abolishing superdelegates in the Democratic Party.

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FAVOR legislation mandating transparent, statistically significant, verifiable federal election audits. DEPLORE political gerrymandering and APPEAL to States to put a stop to this practice, SUPPORT a constitutional amendment to protect the rights of citizens from political gerrymanders that result in a minority of voters electing a majority of representatives to the House of Representatives.

SUPPORT the principle that the responsibility for defining constituency boundaries should be established by non-partisan methods.

FAVOR more delegate positions for Democrats Abroad at the Democratic National Convention and the awarding of one full vote for each delegate.

FAVOR suspending the use of all electronic “touch screen” voting machines until security and technical problems are resolved and a paper audit trail accompanies their use.

FAVOR investment in research to develop a secure, electronic online voting system available to all voters, just as secure, online payments systems are available to online shoppers, and until then favor paper ballots.

FAVOR open-source software for electronic voting machines so that outside experts can independently verify its security.

SUPPORT research into the adoption of universal vote by mail/postal ballot.

DEPLORE all regulations and practices that suppress voter participation and SUPPORT the enforcement of laws aimed at ending campaign finance violations, voting machine and polling place irregularities.

FAVOR expansion of days and times for voting.

FAVOR efforts to certify that polling places are accessible for Americans with disabilities and supportive of the enfranchisement of Native Americans, migrants and other groups that have traditionally been marginalized.

Good Governance

URGE the U.S. Senate to reform the Senate Standing Rules, including the rule for unanimous consent, to prevent obstruction of consideration of important legislation, thus limiting or inhibiting the functioning of government agencies, sections of the government, businesses and individual citizens.

SUPPORT Supreme Court Justices being subject to the same rules as all lower court justices, concerning ethics and conflicts of interest.

B. Lobbyists. Roughly 13,000 registered lobbyists worked in Washington, D.C., in 2009, with nearly \$3.5 billion spent annually on lobbying.

We:

DEPLORE anti-democratic influence of enormous and obscene amounts of money thrown at office-seekers in order to gain influence.

SUPPORT expansion of opportunities for ordinary citizens to provide testimony at Congressional hearings in order to counterbalance the influence of professional lobbyists.

SUPPORT prohibiting former Congressional staffers from lobbying Congress for two years after they leave the Congressional service.

SUPPORT extending the current one-year moratorium on former Congressional members lobbying other members of Congress to a full five years and applying the same rule to Federal appointees.

SUPPORT former members of both Houses of Congress and high ranking Federal officers being prohibited for life from becoming lobbyists, unless they agree to renounce all public pensions and benefits, and make a public statement to that affect.

SUPPORT making illegal the acceptance of all gifts, services, money, or things of value to any elected or appointed official from any entity that the official is charged with regulating, and for a

minimum of two years after the official has left office.

C. Criminal Justice. A criminal justice system with overcrowded prisons, that exists to punish criminals rather than to rehabilitate, holds little promise for crime and reduction of recidivism.

We:

APPLAUD the abolition of the death penalty in 32 states.

FAVOR abolition of the death sentence everywhere in the United States. Life imprisonment without parole is not only more humane, it is less costly to taxpayers because of high cost of numerous appeals that customarily accompany a death sentence.

FAVOR AN overhaul the criminal justice system to eliminate racial bias and the disproportionate level of incarceration of African Americans.

SUPPORT the development of a national federal standard for prosecutors that requires mandatory disclosure of exculpatory evidence to a criminal defendant, the failure to provide such evidence being subject to violation of a federal crime, subjecting a prosecutor to criminal sanctions for a knowing failure to disclose.

URGE the appointment of independent prosecutors for all cases involving unarmed civilians killed by law enforcement, by executive order or preferably by legislation.

FAVOR the establishment and maintenance of a national public database of American deaths in police custody and police shootings.

URGE the US Department of Justice to update and strength national guidelines and uniform standards for the use of force by law enforcement agents.

FAVOR community-controlled and community-based policing practices.

URGE State legislatures to pass laws requiring the appointment of independent prosecutors for all cases involving unarmed civilians killed by police.

SUPPORT local police forces to consider equipping all law enforcement agents with complete video surveillance equipment and rules making agents accountable for their full-time use.

SUPPORT increased funding for the Department of Justice's Office for Civil Rights.

OPPOSE privatization of any prison or any other correctional institution.

OPPOSE mandatory minimum sentences that curtail judicial discretion.

OPPOSE the transfer of military equipment to local law enforcement except under extraordinary circumstances with strict limits, training, and monitoring.

OPPOSE the incarceration of juveniles with adults and note with concern the understaffing and closing of juvenile correctional institutions in Texas and elsewhere.

FAVOR job training during incarceration, and job placement and comprehensive re-entry programs for incarcerated people upon release.

FAVOR the immediate repeal of "three strikes, you're out" laws, which result in excessively long sentences for nonviolent offenders.

FAVOR the creation of Federal and state programs for economic planning, and development in local neighborhoods with high incidences of delinquency and criminal activity, as well as research on recidivism, improved training for high-crime area police forces, community policing, and training programs for nonviolent offenders recently released from prison or on parole.

APPLAUD the passage of the Fair Sentencing Act, which eliminated the sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine.

SUPPORT compassionate release of aging prisoners.

FAVOR Legalizing and decriminalizing marijuana for both medical and recreational use on a federal level.

FAVOR relaxed penalization on minor infractions.

URGE the U.S. Congress and the US Department of Defense to set strict limits on the transfer of any military equipment to local law enforcement under the 1033 program, including eliminating the requirement that military weaponry be used within a year.

CIRCULATION**D. Gun Violence**

Gun violence is a serious AMERICAN problem. Every year 30,000 people are killed by guns. The reputation of the US around the world is damaged by the killing by guns in our homes, on our streets, in our businesses, but especially in our schools.

We:

DEPLORE systemic gun violence in America, and the failure to address these issues, especially the presence of guns in educational institutions.

CALL FOR people and governments at all levels to put a stop to the senseless gun violence in the U.S.

SUPPORT the CDC and other epidemiologists reporting on this terrible epidemic and to suggest solutions.

SUPPORT tougher gun control laws, including background checks, waiting periods and mandatory gun safety training.

URGE the Department of Homeland Security, in cooperation with the Government of Mexico, to focus resources on dismantling the operations of 'coyotes' and human traffickers who prey on the vulnerable, and on disrupting drug smuggling from Mexico.

FAVOR the abolition of all "Stand Your Ground" laws.

CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS**Women's Issues**

About half of the world's population is female, with issues that transcend nationality, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Democrats Abroad affirms the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women around the world, including the right to education, healthcare, legal protection and legal standing before the law, the right to physical and psychological safety, self-determination of reproductive rights and equality of opportunity and remuneration.

We:

CALL FOR the ratification by the United States of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), an international bill of rights for women that has been ratified by 165 countries around the world, and which the United States signed in 1980 but the Senate has failed to ratify.

APPLAUD the establishment of the White House Council on Women and Girls to ensure that women's rights receive the coordinated, serious attention they deserve, continuing the work of the White House Office for Women's Initiatives and Outreach. The Council has continued its work to date inspiring young girls and women to recognize their potential for leadership.

APPLAUD Present Obama's inclusion of women at all levels of his Administration, including the nomination of two women, Sonia Sotomayor, the first Latina, and Elena Kagan to the Supreme Court, to join Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and the appointment of eight women to cabinet-rank positions.

CALL ON the United States government to support international efforts to define rape as a war crime and bring prosecution in appropriate cases, particularly but not solely through the signing and ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

APPLAUD the United States Congress's 2013 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.

CALL for efficient and effective enforcement of laws protecting women and girls, such as those prohibiting forced child marriages, those providing effective HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programs, and those protecting women's and girls' safety and reproductive rights.

ENDORSE the creation of a comprehensive Federal program to support women and men in the areas of family and medical leave, and access to family planning and contraception including the

continued support under Obamacare for contraceptive insurance coverage.

FAVOR welfare reform that does not penalize women with children and women who become pregnant while receiving public assistance, including a commitment to include family planning, emergency contraception and abortion for women in all national healthcare plans and a commitment to provide high-quality sex education and confidential reproductive healthcare for adolescents.

DEPLORE the serious erosion in the U.S. of a woman's right to choose as guaranteed by *Roe v. Wade*, and condemn any and all attempts to restrict a woman's right to safe, legal, affordable abortion procedures.

ENDORSE unequivocally the right of women in the U.S. to bear children, practice birth control and obtain safe, legal abortions regardless of economic, religious or racial status. We believe that a decision to terminate a pregnancy is a private matter outside the scope of government intervention. We further believe that all women should have unfettered, free access to quality information from doctors and others regarding reproductive choices.

ENDORSE the principle of Equal Pay for Equal Work and favor the adoption of Federal legislation establishing and implementing this principle.

ENDORSE the enactment of Federal legislation criminalizing the practice of genital mutilation.

SUPPORT the revival of the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution.

The Rule of Law at Home and Abroad

Democrats Abroad believes that the United States during the presidency of Barack Obama has restored its moral authority and credibility abroad, in part by upholding the U.S. Constitution and its honored principles as well as the internationally accepted principles of the Rule of Law. We must consistently apply our commitment to universal human rights abroad and at home.

We:

URGE the U.S. Congress to pass legislation which would authorize the indictment in the U.S. of persons who may have committed acts constituting torture anywhere in the world and would grant, through legislation, jurisdiction to the U.S. Federal Courts over those who may have violated U.S. law, the applicable international conventions concerning torture and who have been involved in violations of human rights and civil liberties as defined under international treaties, the U.S.

Constitution and under U.S. Federal Law.

URGE Congress to reject the role of religion or "faith-based" institutions of any kind in the forming of national policy, in keeping with the First Amendment's ban on the establishment of state religion.

APPLAUD President Obama's Executive Order 13199, allowing federal funding to faith-based institutions only according to the values established in the First Amendment.

URGE the United States to deepen its commitment to human rights and justice at home and abroad by signing and ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

APPLAUD the decision by the United States Government to support and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

URGE the United States Government to develop a National Action Plan to implement the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

ENDORSE the United Nations Charter on Human Rights and in particular, Article 18 which sets for the principle of freedom of religion or belief for all.

Promoting Equal Rights

Democrats Abroad affirms the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of equal protection under the law and abhors discrimination based on race, ethnic or national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation. Racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of

discrimination continue to be forces that undermine equal opportunity, safety, health and well being of U.S. individuals, families and communities. Where such discrimination exists in laws it must be addressed forcefully and decisively.

We:

SUPPORT the passage of the Equality Act, which would amend and extend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and sex in employment, housing, public accommodations, public education, federal funding, credit, and the jury system.

CELEBRATE the 2013 Windsor and 2015 Obergefell Supreme Court rulings, which affirm the dignity of LGBT people and their families, fully eliminating DOMA, the discriminatory federal law that barred recognition of LGBT married couples and denied them federal benefits; these rulings establish fundamental human rights for LGBT people to form a family and protect their families through marriage.

APPLAUD the Obama Administration's efforts to quickly and effectively implement the 2013 Windsor and 2015 Obergefell rulings,.

CONDEMN so-called Religious Freedom laws, which enshrine discrimination in local and state laws; target lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people for unfair treatment

CONDEMN state and local laws that allow any business or person to choose to deny services, including critical services such as health care, to LGBT people, same-sex couples and their children and to any other person on the basis of race, gender or sexual orientation.

Support the Disability Integration Act sponsored by Senator Schumer, which would require states and other public bodies that provide institutional care for the disabled (and insurance companies that provide policies covering such services) to include the provision that such funds would be available for homecare (rather than institutional) services, if available and if that is the choice of the disabled person concerned.

CALL FOR a strong and renewed commitment to the development and implementation of policies and programs that facilitate and ensure full participation of people with physical disabilities into society, including all levels of education and the workplace.

CALL FOR passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), which would prohibit discrimination against employees on the basis of sexual orientation.

FAVOR the legal recognition in all 50 states of civil unions that extend state-based marriage rights and responsibilities, such as inheritance and tax benefits, to any two consenting adults in a committed relationship, whether gay, lesbian heterosexual or otherwise.

OPPOSE the use of Constitutional amendments to remove civil rights rather than affirm them, as the framers of our Constitution intended in the Bill of Rights.

CONDEMN efforts to amend the Constitution to deny any state the authority to grant legal rights to same-sex couples and, in particular, strongly oppose the Federal Marriage Amendment, which seeks to amend the Constitution to legally define marriage as a "union between a man and a woman."

Children and Family Rights

Democrats Abroad affirms the right of all children to legal protection that guarantees their health, welfare, education and safety and believes that America has a moral obligation to support these rights internationally as well as at home.

We:

URGE the Congress to pass the Parental Bereavement Act (H.R. 2260 introduced on May 12, 2015) , which would amend the Family and Medical Leave Act to guarantee leave for parents, spouses, siblings, caregiver children, or committed partners in case of the death of a son or daughter.

URGE the Congress to amend the 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act to provide employees with

CIRCULATION

24 hours of unpaid leave per year to participate in school activities directly related to the educational development of their children, or to take or accompany their children, or elderly relatives, to medical and dental appointments.

URGE the Senate to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which obliges its signatories to ensure adequate protection of children within their borders and recognizes the principles of the child's best interest, of equality before the law, of the rights and responsibilities of parents, of the child's right to be protected from economic exploitation and from work likely to be hazardous or to interfere with a child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development, and of state assistance to families.

SUPPORT legislation giving paid maternity and paternity leave to parents during the first months of their children's lives.

Human Trafficking

We:

SUPPORT enactment of new Federal legislation and the implementation and enforcement of existing State legislation to stop slavery and human trafficking cross national borders and within the United States especially with regard to human soldiers, migrant and foreign born workers, in the sex trade, aboard fishing vessels and cargo ships and in prisons.

SUPPORT humanitarian refugee visas for all victims of human trafficking.

DEPLORE effort to punish the victims of trafficking, including women forced into prostitution and undocumented workers who have their documents confiscated by traffickers and SUPPORT laws that punish the perpetrators.

SUPPORT legislation facilitating the private sector and nongovernmental organizations to stop human trafficking and slavery practices by monitoring the supply chain from sources of goods and services to their delivery to consumers.

URGE the full implementation of International Labor Organization Conventions on Children's Rights to meet the 2016 goals of ILO Convention No. 182 related to eliminating the worst forms of child labor.

FAVOR the ratification and implementation of ILO Convention No. 138, which calls for the abolition of egregious forms of child labor through domestic policies, and which has been ratified by 161 countries.

FAVOR, when a child must work from economic necessity anywhere in the world, the enactment and enforcement of effective measures to ensure safe working conditions, healthcare and compulsory quality education.

Refugees and Migrants

We:

FAVOR the passage of the DREAM Act to provide green cards and then citizenship to immigrant children – brought to this country before age 16 and who are under the age of 30 and have lived in the U.S. for five years – if they go to college or provide military service.

The U.S. has been shaped fundamentally and positively by immigration. New migrants and refugees will continue to strengthen our country. Democrats Abroad, with "temporary visa holders," and "resident workers" (in other countries) prominent among our membership, favor clear, coherent, and fair policies with regard to those who are not citizens of our great country. We also wish to act in solidarity with people in need and with our allies overwhelmed by those seeking asylum.

REFUGEES:

We:

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DEPLORE as unconstitutional the decision by 27 states of the U.S., to refuse compliance with national policy with regard to refugees by blocking the resettlement of Syrian refugees within their borders.

URGE that the U.S. recognize its responsibility in connection with military interventions and subsequent regional instabilities and that it increase its resettlement quota for Iraqi, Libyan and Syrian refugees.

REQUEST the expedited processing of refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan who have close ties to the United States (e.g., NGO workers, interpreters, people affiliated with U.S. businesses).

APPLAUD President Obama's initiative to increase the number of refugees admitted to the U.S. in 2016.

MIGRANTS:

We:

DEPLORE the use of language that dehumanizes immigrants to the U.S. and refugees, and the use of refugees and immigrants as a political tool to incite fear of terrorism, economic displacement or displacement of others generally.

APPLAUD President Obama's DREAM Act

CALL FOR of the modification of immigration regulations so that all currently undocumented foreign-born residents of the United States, who wish to, can take steps to become permanent residents with the possibility of eventually earning citizenship.

SUPPORT increased funding and resources allocated for determining the status of migrants/refugees and for the protection of, the legal defense of, and the servicing of these migrants/refugees.

SUPPORT facilitation of reunification of children with their families in the U.S. through amending elements of U.S. law. (i.e. the law on Temporary Protected Status can extend legal status to people for many years but does not allow them to bring their children to join them) .

APPLAUD efforts of UNHCR in helping to determine refugee and migrant status in Central America prior to arrival in the U.S.

FAVOR policies that direct the Border Patrol to deal with undocumented border crossers humanely, taking all reasonable steps to avoid suffering, indignity and loss of life.

SUPPORT making it easier to send remittances and working with allies to reduce remittance fees via appropriate reforms to anti-terrorism banking regulations that have complicated innocent remittances.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Democrats demand spirited international cooperation and bold action from our government to achieve mission-critical goals of environmental protection and sustainable development. The economy and the environment should work together in harmony, each strengthening the other. The crisis posed by climate change is an opportunity for America's 'can do' spirit to take hold, and to innovate.

We:

SUPPORT a strong EPA that vigorously enforces the environmental laws of the U.S.

SUPPORT progressive policies that simultaneously protect the environment and improve quality of life, while stimulating economic development.

Climate Change

This issue is a top priority. The time for a scientific debate is over and we must take action and immediately address climate change by eliminating our greenhouse gas output, and taking leadership in helping other nations do the same.

We:

URGE efforts to drastically cut carbon emissions **immediately** by putting a tax on carbon pollution, repealing fossil fuel subsidies and making massive investments in energy efficiency and clean, sustainable energy such as geothermal, wind and solar power.

FAVOR working with other nations to not only meet but **exceed** the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

SUPPORT efforts to aid other nations in reaching their climate goals.

SUPPORT aggressive exploration of climate change related disaster mitigation technologies and policies, including those focusing on water conservation, drought, sea level rise and extreme weather events.

Energy Security & Reduced Dependence on Oil

We:

FAVOR moving boldly and aggressively towards an economy based on renewable energy and energy efficiency.

SUPPORT the American Energy Innovation Act of 2015, as a step towards creating a carbon free energy ecosystem.

FAVOR heavily reducing consumption of all fossil fuels, including coal, oil and natural gas, in favor of renewable energies.

OPPOSE fracking. Period.

CALL for stricter regulations on the more than 300,000 existing fracking wells

SUPPORT any effort to regulate and reduce methane and natural gas leaks.

FAVOR a ban on Arctic drilling and offshore drilling.

OPPOSE fossil fuel drilling and pipelines in National Parks & Forests, National Wildlife Refuges, and on native lands.

OPPOSE mountain top removal mining practices.

FAVOR a ban on exports of liquefied natural gas and crude oil.

SUPPORT further national energy policies that provide major funding and sound fiscal incentives for clean energy research and development, including new materials, energy grid improvements, solar power, wind power, hydrogen, fuel cells, batteries and other electricity storage devices.

FAVOR increase of Renewable Energy Investment Tax Credits and Renewable Energy Production Tax Credits.

FAVOR a Federal Renewable Portfolio Standard which takes into account the variations in different states' abilities to produce renewable energy.

FAVOR strict auto and airline emission requirements.

FAVOR decoupling energy utility profits from energy sales volume, so that utilities have an incentive to use energy more wisely; .

SUPPORT urban sustainability measures including improved and diversified transportation choices through investment in public transportation, including light rail, bus, bike lanes, pedestrian walkways, and other transportation infrastructure and urban design which reduces energy use.

SUPPORT the development and improvement of high-speed rail systems in dense travel corridors to replace commuter air travel, a major source of carbon emissions.

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SUPPORT the Clean Energy Workers Just Transition Act.

America's National Parks, Forests, Grasslands, and Wildlife Refuges and Marine Areas are important to our natural ecosystems, protecting wildlife and the environment while preserving our cultural legacy. We have a responsibility to manage and protect these areas with all available resources.

We:

SUPPORT the retention of the Endangered Species Act.

OPPOSE deforestation.

OPPOSE any more desecration of national parks, reserves and forests by banning the construction of logging roads for use by mineral exploiters.

OPPOSE the exploitation of natural resources from public lands for commercial interests.

FAVOR a ban on destructive fishing practices, including those which harm coral reef systems such as bottom trawling and bottom-contact fishing gear.

FAVOR a ban on coral harvesting.

FAVOR policies which reduce and limit the use of disposable plastics, such as plastic bags, which are non-biodegradable and dangerous to marine life.

APPLAUD the passing of the Microbead-Free Waters Act.

Clean Air, Water and Land

We support the existence and the power of the EPA to implement and enforce environmental laws protecting human health and the environment.

We:

SUPPORT the strengthening and enforcement of the Clean Water Act, in all sectors, including agriculture, and efforts like the Clean Water Rule, finalized in May 2015, which protects a variety of streams, ponds, and wetlands, including those streams that one in three Americans relies on for drinking water.

FAVOR stronger standards that will reduce water used in power plants and limit the amount of toxic pollutants discharged, which will then better protect aquatic habitat and curb water pollution.

SUPPORT all U.S. Government efforts to require polluters to pay for restoring any environment they degrade; this should include passing laws which prevent corporations from avoiding such payment through bankruptcy.

SUPPORT the enforcement of the Safe Drinking Water Act and any measures which help assess and treat public water systems for lead and other contaminants.

OPPOSE the privatization of water resources.

SUPPORT efforts to remove existing environmental toxins from the environment, including chemicals, plastics and waste.

SUPPORT all efforts towards lead remediation to remove lead from homes, buildings and infrastructure, such as that found in lead based paints or pipes.

FAVOR policies that will sustain long-term soil health, protect biodiversity of seed stocks, and curtail the use of toxic substances and genetically engineered biological products. This includes support for organic farming practices and those which increase carbon sequestration in our soil.

FAVOR significant restrictions on the use of growth and other hormones, antibiotics, and artificial food additives that introduce harmful and potentially harmful biochemical agents into the food and water supply.

URGE an end to subsidies for animal agriculture in order to limit its negative impacts on the environment, including a significant fraction of green house gas emissions, excess air and water pollution and heavy consumption of freshwater resources.

FAVOR policies that encourage reductions in meat consumption, as animal agriculture is one of the

major sources of the greenhouse gas emissions which threaten our climate and environment.

Consumer Goods

We:

FAVOR a nation-wide ban on the disposal of electronic waste in solid waste landfills and efforts towards increasing electronic waste recycling.

FAVOR the adoption of electronic waste recycling initiatives similar to those already in place in Europe (WEEE, or Waste of Electronic and Electrical Equipment Directive).

FAVOR adoption and enforcement of legislation similar to the European REACH Act (Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals); FAVOR research and development of non-toxic chemicals and chemical processes to replace toxic chemicals and processes used in the creation of every day products.

*For further information contact Democrats Abroad, 430 S Capitol St SE, Washington, DC, 20003-0130 +1 (202) 863 8109 * ED@democratsabroad.org * www.democratsabroad.org*