

The Champaign County Democratic Central Committee Platform

On January 23, 2007, the Central Committee approved this Platform and recommended that it be presented for passage at the County Convention on March 5, 2008.

The Champaign County Democratic Central Committee believes that in order to fulfill our democracy's greatest promise, our government must work for the social and economic equity of all people. As the elected leaders of the Champaign County Democratic Party, we endorse the following platform and will urge our representatives in government to work to advance these goals.

Health Care and Human Services

We support:

- an affordable, quality universal health care system as a basic right for all.
- comprehensive health care that includes a woman's right to reproductive choice regardless of ability to pay.
- programs in the county that enable aging in place for seniors and the disabled.
- increased funding for mental health care, especially for veterans and our most vulnerable populations.
- increased funding for agencies that serve the developmentally disabled.
- affirming the decision of Champaign County voters to provide quality nursing care for the elderly through a county-owned nursing home.

Education

We support:

- high quality public education because it is the foundation of an enlightened society.
- a system for financing public education which is less reliant on property taxes.
- universal preschool education, including Head Start and preschool day care centers.
- a balanced curriculum that must include health education, comprehensive sex education, and vocational training programs.
- competitive salaries for public school teachers.
- affordable higher education, achieved by increased state funding for public universities and community colleges.
- the continuation of English as a Second Language and a bilingual education program.

Economic Opportunity

We support:

- the right of all citizens to have safe, affordable housing and programs that encourage low income home ownership.
- scattered site, affordable housing and laws that prohibit housing and employment discrimination on the basis of gender, race, religious affiliation, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and source of income or payment.
- a minimum wage tied to cost of living increases and we encourage all employers to pay a living wage, because good wages are essential to economic security.

- the fundamental right of workers to organize, join unions, and engage in collective bargaining for improved wages, benefits and working conditions.
- programs that foster small businesses, minority-owned businesses and actively promote participation by minority contractors in public construction projects.
- the tax levy needed to fund the state-mandated township assistance programs and programs that provide shelter for the homeless and abused, because a society is judged by how it treats its most vulnerable citizens.

Criminal Justice and Public Safety

We support:

- county funding of programs for at-risk youth to deter juvenile delinquency and prevent crime.
- establishing citizen police review boards as a fair and impartial way to build public confidence in law enforcement.
- reform of mandatory minimum sentencing guidelines and increased opportunities for nonviolent offenders to participate in alternative programs, such as Drug Court, in-home incarceration, and work release programs, in order to reduce the jail population.
- a criminal justice system which provides equal treatment of defendants regardless of their race or financial circumstances.
- diversion programs that provide appropriate medical and mental health services as an alternative to prison for the mentally ill and those suffering from addiction.
- the City of Urbana and the City of Champaign in their bans on the use of tasers by their police departments, and we urge the County and all law enforcement agencies in the County to ban the use of tasers.
- eliminating all forms of racial profiling.
- victims' rights.

Environment and Land Use

We support:

- the sustainable use of local natural resources, considering long-term consequences of current and future practices relating to land use: preserving prime farmland; controlling urban sprawl; advancing mass transit; increasing coordinated recycling efforts; promoting sustainable alternative and renewable energy sources; and conserving and expanding parks, walking and biking trails, and recreational green spaces.
- County Board actions to exercise its full authority to protect the natural environment in Champaign County.
- appointments to the Forest Preserve District, drainage districts, MTD, and Public Health boards that balance commercial, private, and agricultural usage with protection of the broader public interest to conserve the quality and quantity of ground and surface water, healthy ecosystems, and adequate public access to these resources.
- full extension of the MTD to the entire Champaign-Urbana urban area and will consider the outer County's future need for inter-urban mass transit.

- restructuring drainage districts so that each coincides with an entire major drainage basin in order to balance broader public environmental concerns with the need to maintain clean water discharge from the basin, prevent erosion in the watershed, and preserve each system's native wildlife and vegetation.

Participatory Government

We support these goals:

- To urge county committees and all government bodies to publicly post meeting minutes no later than one month following the meeting and to allow everyone, including public officials, to speak during public participation at all public meetings.
- To establish more conveniently located sites for early voting in Champaign County and to promote greater access and participation in elections among all voters, including minorities and students.
- Public financing of political campaigns and campaign finance reform which prohibits elected officials/candidates to accept contributions from individuals and agencies with whom they do business or regulate.
- To eliminate at-large seats on Champaign City Council and redistrict the existing five districts to eight districts.

Democratic Party Principles

- We expect Democratic candidates to recognize that the Democratic Primary Election is the Party's nomination election and is for voters affiliated with the Democratic Party. We oppose any campaign efforts made by Democratic candidates to ask large numbers of established Republican voters to cross over and vote in the Democratic Primary Election in order to determine the outcome of the Democratic Party's nomination.
- Democratic elected officials are expected to honor the principle of majority rule within the Democratic caucus in the election of Democratic leaders.
- Unity of action within the Democratic caucus is encouraged to achieve the goals of the Democratic platform.

National Priorities

- We oppose the occupation of Iraq and call for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops. We support full funding of veterans' medical health care, mental health care, and benefits.
- We oppose the deprivation of privacy, civil liberties, and due process authorized by the Patriot Act.
- We can and will end poverty.
- We support comprehensive immigration reform that will protect and secure our borders, reform our broken immigration and naturalization system, and facilitate full participation of the under-represented in the American political process, from citizenship to civic integration.
- We oppose English Only legislation.
- We support the legislation co-sponsored by Illinois Senator Dick Durbin which enables U.S. raised, undocumented immigrants who are high school graduates to apply for up to six years conditional legal residence in order to attend college or serve in the U.S. military for at least two years as a path to permanent legal residence.
- We support total equality in marriage, adoption and other family issues regardless of race or gender.
- We support the complete reform of No Child Left Behind legislation.