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I. Preamble

The Michigan Democratic Party believes that government must be open, honest, responsive, and accountable to the people it serves. All citizens should have the freedom and the opportunity to rise as high as their talents and initiative will allow. This platform expresses our dedication to the belief that those who work hard should be assured the opportunity to achieve economic security, and that all should be able to live with basic human dignity. This platform embodies our core values of fairness and responsibility, and a commitment to the common good. This platform stands as a promise to the people of Michigan, based on our tradition and commitment to a better future for the people of our state and nation.

After almost eight years with a Democratic administration in the White House, our country as a whole is stronger at home and abroad, has made great strides in becoming a more equal society, and our nation's economy is doing better than it has since the 1990s. However, despite the pace of our nation's growth and improvement, the gains of the last 8 years have not been shared by all of the people in this state. That is because for the past six years, Michigan's government has been entirely controlled by the Republican Party and Gov. Rick Snyder, who have insisted on raising taxes on working people, senior citizens, and the poor, suspending democracy, all while slashing investments in public education and public health.

In Michigan, out-of-touch Republican politicians have implemented a litany of backward policies that have held back our economy and quality of life. The failure of leadership has resulted in families struggling to pay increased taxes, seniors being forced to choose between filling prescriptions and putting food on the table, veterans being abused, women's rights being assaulted, children not having textbooks because their school can't afford them, and thousands of individuals not being treated with the same rights and dignity as the majority. Worst of all, because of Republican policies of austerity, emergency management, and environmental racism, the city of Flint and its 100,000 residents were poisoned with lead, and other contaminants, and have not had clean drinking water for over two years.

Democratic leaders such as President Barack Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters, our Congressional delegation, and Democratic leaders in the legislature have the creativity, courage and conscience to find innovative and imaginative ways to help secure our future. As a Party, we will continue to demand that we move forward together within our shared Democratic values of hard work, community, diversity, faith, family, personal responsibility, and a commitment to serving our most vulnerable citizens. We are deeply committed to these values as the foundation and the future of our state and of our nation.

There was a time when Americans were challenged to ask not what their country could do for them, but what they could do for their country. However, in recent years, we seem to have become less interested in looking first to the needs of others - especially the needs of the most vulnerable - and more interested in meeting only the needs of ourselves. America is always at its best when we ask, "What can I do to give back?" rather than, "What is in it for me?"

The Michigan Democratic Party understands this basic principle. That is why Democrats in this state will fight for equality and opportunity for all citizens, not just those at the top. We believe that we are "Stronger Together." A society and system of government that benefits everyone, is better for everyone.

By adhering to the belief that we are "Stronger Together," Democrats have set a standard to guide us as we confront the challenges we face, take advantage of the opportunities before us, and seek to make a better state for all citizens in Michigan. As Democrats, we are committed to continuing our focus on the issues that matter most to working families in Michigan: creating good-paying jobs and prosperous, socially responsible companies; preparing children to succeed in life through our public education system; providing high quality, accessible and affordable health care to all; promoting financial security through economic growth and secure retirement benefits; stopping discrimination in all its forms; protecting voter rights; reforming government to be transparent and accountable; improving our state and local roads; improving public transportation; and protecting our priceless natural resources for future generations.

The key goals we must achieve together, as Democrats, in the 2016 election, include:

- Sending another Democrat – Secretary of State Hillary Clinton – to the White House to continue improving upon the great strides made by the Obama Administration and to protect those gains from a hostile, do-nothing Republican Congress;
- Retaking control of both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, so that Hillary Clinton can implement a bold, progressive agenda to move our country forward;
- Gaining a majority in the State House to stop Rick Snyder and the Michigan GOP’s destructive agenda and to begin to repair the damage they have done, while setting us up to hold the majority in 2020 when the time comes for redistricting;
- Getting Democrats elected to the State Board of Education, the three Michigan University Boards and all the way down ballot to county and local offices, so we can build a deeper Democratic bench to win at every level for the next decade.
- Electing progressive justices to the Michigan State Supreme Court, ensuring that the interests of the people are put over those of the wealthy and well-connected.

II. Investing in the People of Michigan

Education has long been the means of achieving a better quality of life. In our current, knowledge-based, technology-driven economy, the value of education is even greater. Michigan must provide affordable learning opportunities for everyone. We must support our public schools and help our universities and community colleges continue to be centers of research, thought, and knowledge. We must invest in post-secondary education and training for high-tech, green, and future jobs. By improving the job skills of individuals and increasing the marketability and diversity of our workforce, we will draw new investment to Michigan and encourage the companies already here to remain and expand.

Rick Snyder and Lansing Republicans have taken our state in the wrong direction. The first budget imposed by the current Republican-controlled government, led by Snyder, included over \$1 billion in cuts on our community public schools and massive cuts to higher education – all to pay for a tax cut for corporations, even when they ship jobs out of the state or out of the country.

Michigan families know that cutting education is not how you build a strong economy. They know that every child in Michigan deserves a world class education. Our state needs to invest in education, so our children are prepared at every level of learning and ready to compete in the 21st Century economy. Our goal is to make sure that no one is left behind, and to ensure the people our state can find the jobs and careers they want right here in Michigan.

A. Supporting a high quality of life

People examine quality of life issues when deciding where to live, start a business, or raise their children. These factors also drive economic development because they attract the best and the brightest, and talent attracts investment. Quality of life considerations, and the economic implications that go along with them, require us to redouble our efforts at making all individuals and groups feel welcome and part of our community, keeping our citizens safe, rebuilding all of our communities- especially our urban centers, protecting our environment, enriching our culture, improving our schools, and supporting our colleges and universities as diverse centers of opportunity and engagement.

B. Forging prosperous and diverse communities

In Michigan, and the nation as a whole, we must continue to promote our common bonds rather than artificial lines of division propagated by the Republican Party. Our diversity is our strength and Michigan should lead the way for the rest of the nation in building a successful pluralistic society that welcomes and accepts all who seek to make this state their home. However, strong forces are still at work that continue to separate us by race, gender, faith, and income. We have some of the most racially segregated cities, suburbs, schools, and housing markets in the nation. LGBTQ citizens are still not afforded the same de facto and de jure rights as those in the majority and intolerant legislation seeks to marginalize them further. There is a growing

effort to create a division between religious faiths, particularly against our Muslim brothers and sisters, driven by Donald Trump and other Republicans who support his hatred and division. Income inequality translates into a lack of opportunity in other areas and can take generations to overcome, if ever. Although we have a long way to go to rectify these problems fully, the Michigan Democratic Party is committed to ending racial discrimination, promoting tolerance, acceptance, and inclusion of all individuals and groups, and reducing income inequality. We also support affirmative action to help minority groups and women that have suffered from past oppression and discrimination.

C. Restoring confidence in our government

When the GOP holds power, our government is stacked in favor of wealthy and powerful special interests to the severe detriment of everyday citizens and working families. If we are to rebuild the public's trust in government after a nearly six year Republican majority in Lansing, we must be committed to strong ethics, fair and open elections, and campaign finance reform. The people of Michigan expect and deserve leadership, access, integrity, transparency, results and accountability from their elected officials and public institutions.

D. Standing with the People of Flint

The man-made environmental disaster known as the Flint Water Crisis is a tragic example of the dire consequences of Governor Snyder and Legislative Republicans' failed experiment in running government like a business. Under the undemocratic rule of un-elected and unaccountable Emergency Managers, the residents of the city of Flint have been forced to drink unsafe, lead contaminated water since 2014. The decision to switch Flint's drinking water source from the Detroit Water system was made by the Snyder Administration and a succession of Emergency Managers for the sole purpose of cutting the municipal budget. The consequences of these terrible decisions, borne of a philosophy of government that puts spreadsheets over people will be long lasting and in many cases irreversible for young children. Children exposed to lead are likely to experience cognitive, psychological and behavioral problems and are at higher risk for kidney and heart disease. Mitigating the damage to Flint children and families and preventing any more residents from being exposed to contaminated water should be the number one priority of every elected official in Michigan. The need to address the economic devastation wrought by this crisis also must not be ignored.

However, despite immediate complaints in the spring of 2014 from residents about the foul odor, taste and color of the water, rashes and a number of other health problems, Governor Snyder, the Republican Legislature and Attorney General Schuette dismissed the concerns of residents and continued to publicly maintain that the water in Flint was safe to drink until October of 2015. Even after evidence was presented by independent experts of severe lead contamination in the drinking water and a spike in the incidence of water borne Legionnaires disease resulting in the death of 12 people, Republicans continued to put the interests of cutting budgets over the health and well-being of Flint's 100,000 residents. Though their warnings fell on deaf ears, we applaud the efforts of community members in bringing these issues to the fore.

Michigan Democrats strongly support federal efforts to restore safe drinking water and provide long term nutrition, education and health supports to the children and families with elevated blood lead levels. We urge Congress to immediately pass the Families of Flint Act, sponsored by Representative Dan Kildee and release \$220 million in federal funding fought for in the Senate by both Senator Peters and Stabenow. In addition, immediate efforts must be undertaken to replace aging water mains.

At the state level, Democrats believe that we must provide more immediate funding to repair the damage caused by a negligent Republican controlled government and all officials responsible for the water crisis in Flint be held accountable. We demand that Republican legislators hold hearings to force Governor Snyder and top political appointees to testify under oath, immediately cut appropriations for Snyder's private criminal defense attorneys and pass strong legislation that would remove any exemptions that the Legislature and Governor have under the Freedom of Information Act.

Michigan Democrats stand in solidarity with the people of Flint and will never stop fighting until every resident has access to clean, safe water and every public official that caused this crisis, up to and including Governor Snyder is held morally and legally accountable.

III. Michigan Democratic Party Values and Core Policy Positions

The Michigan Democratic Party reaffirms its commitment to our core values of opportunity, community, security, and accountability. The Democratic Party is committed to closing the opportunity gap by investing in the people of our state and will fight to implement measures that will improve the lives of all citizens, not just those at the top. To further advance our goals, we will foster a greater sense of community and celebrate our rich diversity as a people and as a state. We must be secure as a state and nation. We will demand accountability from our government, leaders, and business community to ensure that the interests of our people are protected. We stand firm in our defense of constitutional liberties, particularly those which state that all citizens of this country have a right to equal protection under the law. This platform is our plan to advance these values through vigorous participatory political action, responsible public policy, and government that works with and on behalf of all of citizens, because, as we maintain, we are stronger together.

A. OPPORTUNITY

1. Education: Improving Public Education for Children and Adults

The key to opportunity in Michigan is high-quality public education. Public education is the cornerstone of our social, economic and political structure, and guides the development of our moral, ethical, and cultural values.

Michigan's public schools must successfully prepare citizens to be productive members of society and to be thoughtful and active participants in government. Our public schools are also crucial to developing a shared sense of community by providing common experiences and celebrating diversity & inclusion. These shared experiences allow us to teach our children to recognize and celebrate cultural, social, political and religious differences.

Rick Snyder and Lansing Republicans have unequivocally failed Michigan children, parents and teachers. In his first year in office, Snyder passed a budget that cut funding for Michigan's public schools by \$1 billion, causing nearly 50 districts to fall into deficit, and forcing children and parents to contend with increasing class sizes, textbook shortages, and deteriorating schools and classrooms. In his latest budget, Snyder has continued the trend of short-changing our public schools by appropriating \$2.5 million in aid to private schools, which violates the state constitution's ban on subsidizing private schools and sets a precedent for future funding requests which will further the shortfalls already damaging public education.

This is a state-wide problem but the most egregious failure of our public schools by Governor Snyder and the Republican-controlled legislature continues to take place in Detroit. Due the experience and performance of Snyder's Emergency Managers, the Educational Achievement Authority, and woefully inadequate state funding, students, parents and educators continue to struggle. Governor Snyder and Republicans in the legislature have also used the recent funding crisis for DPS, a response considered by many to be wholly inadequate to solve the systematic problems faced by the district, to weaken teachers' bargaining power and allow unqualified educators in the classroom.

The Democratic Party is committed to protecting and improving public education, because our future as a state depends on the ability of all Michigan citizens to have the opportunity only an equal education can provide. Democrats promote the following set of measures to protect and improve public education:

- Provide necessary and adequate educational funding. Providing a good education is critical to our way of life. We oppose the continued cuts to public education funding imposed by Rick Snyder and Lansing Republicans. Aid to private schools should be rescinded and funding to our public schools increased, based on the recommendations of the 2016 Michigan Education Finance Study.
- Strict accountability for results and strong incentives for success. Every school in Michigan must succeed at reaching high academic standards and be held accountable for results. Michigan created rigorous new high school curriculum standards to ensure that our children will be ready to succeed in the 21st Century economy. Teachers must be equipped with the necessary resources, including professional development, required to meet these higher standards.

- Expand preschool opportunities. The importance of early education is well proven. Michigan Democrats support quality preschool opportunities for children age three and four and adding to the existing network of early childhood development programs. We further insist that these opportunities be affordable and debt free for Michigan's middle class and working families.
- Supply schools with the latest technology, as well as basic supplies. Democrats will ensure that all students have access to new technology, which not only improves the ability to teach and learn, but is necessary to understand and use in the 21st century economy. In order to accomplish this goal, all of our schools must have ready access to high speed Internet. Teachers, support staff, students, and parents must be educated to use technology to facilitate enhanced learning opportunities, communications and collaborations. While it should be taken for granted that supplies, books, and technology are supplied by the school district, many teachers and staff now reach into their own pockets to provide for their classroom. Our educational budgets must adequately support these necessary expenditures rather than force educators to subtract from their income to subsidize their ability to teach.
- Michigan Democrats recognize that there are multiple post-secondary educational opportunities, including community colleges, vocational schools, trade schools, and apprenticeships. We support President Obama's American College Promise proposal and Hillary Clinton's workforce and skills agenda.
- Fully fund person-to-person contact in education, especially in K-12 education. Technology plays an increasing role in education and computer skills are necessary in today's world for both work and personal needs. However, Democrats do not view full-time, online learning as a substitute for the person-to-person contact classroom teachers give to young people in neighborhood schools.
- The rapid growth of the cyber school movement has been caused by the entrance of private companies into our education system, whose primary purpose is profit. The only bottom line that matters with our public school system is education of our young people and their ability to succeed. Subsidizing these for-profit schools with funds diverted from public education is an egregious misuse of taxpayer money.
- The Democratic Party is strongly opposed to funding cyber school educational programs as adequate replacements for the public school system. Though we acknowledge that cyber learning can serve as a viable means of providing supplementary courses for nontraditional students and life-long learning opportunities, we must not deprive our children of the educational and social environment they receive by learning alongside their peers.
- Maintain secure, safe, and orderly schools. We now have tough new laws to keep sex offenders away from our schools and child care centers. In addition, we must take steps to keep violent criminals and drug dealers away from our children. Democrats propose to train school personnel to identify potential violent behavior and to educate students in peer mediation and conflict resolution. The Michigan Democratic Party is committed to implementing comprehensive anti-bullying measures in all of our schools. Michigan was recently ranked as the worst state in the nation for bullying. Without serious legislative efforts to combat this issue, students will continue to be targets of victimization and abuse.
- Provide school modernization and repairs. Michigan Democrats believe that students need safe, updated classrooms and school facilities. We must address the serious need for renovation and/or replacement of many of our older school buildings and require regular inspection and improvements.
- Provide adequate pay and professional development for teachers and staff. Parents deserve to know that their children's teachers and administrators are well-trained and certified. To attract and retain talented, qualified educators, we must also make sure teachers and staff are well-paid, provided job security, and treated with the respect and dignity that they deserve. Democrats favor loans and dedicated scholarships to attract the best students to the teaching profession, plus the implementation of pay scales that retain dedicated teachers and staff. We also back strong certification standards at state and national levels and ongoing recertification and professional development requirements, while asking for public support of enhanced compensation for teachers and staff who are educating our children.
- Fully staff our schools. In the midst of budget worries that have generated teacher and staff layoffs, as well as retirement offers for our most experienced teachers, we must address the current teacher shortage. More teachers allow for smaller, more effective classrooms and better educational outcomes for students.

- Make higher education available for all. Higher education is vital to succeed in the 21st century economy. While President Obama and Democrats in Washington, D.C. fight for more funding and affordable student loans, the misplaced priorities of the Republicans in Lansing include unwise cuts to higher education funding. We must increase higher education funding, not cut it. With the crushing burden of rising tuition and student debt, and given that Michigan has the 6th highest in-state tuition in the nation, Michigan Democrats support proposals at the federal and state level to make public higher education tuition free for working and middle class families and debt free for all students.
- Hold charter schools accountable. Since 1993, school choice has included charter schools, which are schools financed with public dollars. Democrats believe our State Board of Education should have the authority and resources to hold charter school authorizers accountable. Charter schools must conform to the same communication, freedom of information, financial disclosure, academic, collective bargaining, teacher certification and evaluation, and accessibility requirements as traditional public schools. We believe an essential step in enhancing accountability is to limit the involvement of private, for-profit companies managing charter schools. Michigan Democrats strongly support a moratorium on the creation of new for-profit charter schools until legislation is passed to ensure they are transparent, accountable, and have strong performance standards.
- Avoid subsidizing private or religious schools with public dollars. We need improved public schools to bring us together. We do not need taxpayer money to underwrite schools that separate us by race or religious beliefs. While we put our resources and commitment into enhancing public school education and choice, we believe it to be inappropriate, counterproductive, and unconstitutional to allow public tax dollars to subsidize private and religious schools. Our state's Board of Education should base science class curriculums on current scientific knowledge, not religious beliefs.
- Textbooks should be written only by recognized experts in each subject. Teaching material for our public schools should not be subject to modification in order to appease or promote a political, religious, or social agenda.
- Promote smaller class sizes. Smaller class sizes contribute to improved academic success, especially in the early grades. Michigan Democrats have championed and funded smaller class size programs in selected schools. We will work to take the next step to make certain that this successful program is expanded to all school districts in Michigan.
- Improve under-achieving schools. Although many of our schools excel, we should focus on bringing all of Michigan's public schools up to world-class standards. In order to accomplish this goal, Michigan Democrats will focus on strengthening and improving education for our most at-risk students. A vital element in improving education is to have a fully qualified teacher in every classroom, teaching subjects in which she/he is proficient. It is also essential to support students outside the classroom.
- Fully fund special education. Our students with special needs have been too often short-changed. Michigan Democrats will ask Congress to pay the federal government's fair share of special education expenses.
- Support university and college faculty. The undermining of tenure-track and tenured faculty positions as well as the exploitation of adjunct faculty must end. We support the rights of all faculty and graduate research assistants to organize and bargain collectively. In addition, students who attend publicly funded colleges and universities should be offered courses with a class size that promotes student participation. We should increase the number of teachers and decrease the number of administrators.
- Support after-school programs. These programs enrich student learning and provide supervised recreation. Michigan Democrats support before and after school programs, summer tutoring, and year round use of schools for students and the community at large.
- Engage parents and families in their student's education. We believe that parents of students should also be encouraged and equipped to participate in their student's efforts. "Parent Universities" are one method used to teach parents how best to support their child's mastery of language, mathematics, science, history, and all the subjects of K-12. We must take the best of these programs and assist concerned parents in helping their struggling students. Engagement and synergy between families and teachers is an essential dynamic to a high-quality education.

- Develop training for personal financial skills. Public school curriculums should include training on the financial choices that will confront each individual, particularly when it comes to credit, debt, home ownership, auto loans, and so forth. Adult education programs should also offer this training. Educational brochures and online resources should be developed for people applying for credit or loans to ensure that the benefits and consequences of credit and debt are clear to the individual.
- Promote a diverse curriculum. While a strong, continuing STEM education is vital for students to compete in the 21st century economy, we also believe students should be exposed to a renewed emphasis on civics, life skills, music, and an appreciation for the arts. Students should be encouraged to pursue knowledge in all its forms, develop a well-balanced worldview, and an understanding of our social, political, and cultural institutions.
- Our party supports increased resources and support by schools, school boards, and school districts to address race-sensitive issues, through education and dialogue. These actions support students' development and their ability to recognize, understand, avoid, and respond to stereotypes, bigotry, racism, sexism, and other inequalities.

2. Economy: Using Aggressive and Comprehensive Economic Development Policies

President Obama and Democrats who supported the auto rescue, have successfully led our nation out of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. Under President Obama's leadership, the economy has added 15 million private-sector jobs over the last 77 months. Democrats are fighting to continue this positive trend and help speed along the economic recovery.

Companies that receive tax incentives to do business in Michigan should be held accountable for the number of jobs they promise to create and adhere to local residential requirements during their business activities in Michigan. Companies should be able to expect that tax breaks and benefits will continue to be available only when they meet these conditions. When corporations that receive tax breaks move operations out of Michigan or out of the country, they should be forced to pay back any tax incentives or direct public investment they have received.

America must revitalize its manufacturing sector, for the good of our workers, for the good of our economy, and for the strength of our national security. We cannot cede our manufacturing industry to other nations. Our country's economy and well-being are directly connected to the health of our manufacturing sector. Michigan Democrats strongly support Secretary Clinton's proposal to strengthen American manufacturing through a \$10 billion investment in "Make It In America" partnerships.

The rise and fall in the number of manufacturing jobs directly affects the rise and fall of median family income. Further, throughout our history, manufacturing has contributed significantly to American economic growth — even during the "tech boom" of the 1990s, manufacturing was responsible for 22 percent of economic growth.

We continue to support the American Manufacturing Initiative (AMI) championed by Senators Stabenow and Peters, along with the Michigan Democratic Congressional Delegation. The AMI is a comprehensive economic plan to revitalize our domestic manufacturing industry and reverse the loss of millions of U.S. manufacturing jobs. It provides for: research and development tax credits; advanced technology and flexible fuel vehicle tax credits; programs to support U.S. manufacturing; fair trade enforcement; health care tax incentives; initiatives for longer-term advanced technologies; environmental technology innovation; biofuel mandate and development of infrastructure; and Department of Defense manufacturing initiatives.

3. Job Training: Improving the Skills of our Workforce

Democrats support a system that promotes lifelong learning with job training and preparation that helps both those entering the workforce and those on the job, continually improving their marketability and skills to take advantage of new opportunities by:

- Improving literacy and expanding basic education. Basic literacy and education are requirements in today's economy. Democrats support enhancement of the adult education system to make sure all citizens get the basic tools necessary for success.
- Support Michigan workers. Democrats continue to support Hire Michigan First legislation.
- Building a system for continuous job training. The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) gives states unprecedented flexibility to design a system that prepares the workforce for tomorrow. We should use that freedom to bring employers, unions, workers, and educators together, decide on basic skills necessary for all adult entry-level workers, and then set up a training system that develops these skills. Workers should have access to in-person counseling and receive information on jobs and training providers.
- Democrats support augmenting resources for basic job skills training.
- Democrats also favor increasing unemployment benefits at the maximum benefit rate, increasing benefits for those receiving less than the maximum, restoring the indexing of benefits to inflation, and the restoration of benefits to 26 weeks.
- Democrats will work with key business sectors, including information technology, health sciences, auto-manufacturing, and plastics to ensure that the current business/labor roundtable groups drive and shape the standards and programming for occupations in the state's technical schools, community colleges, and vocational education systems.

4. Trade: Using an Approach Based on a Level Playing Field

Michigan workers can compete with workers in every corner of the globe. However, unbalanced trade agreements like the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) are unfair to American workers because they tilt the scales towards the interests of corporations at the expense of workers and communities. The TPP does not contain strong enough enforcement mechanisms to protect workers against exploitation, provisions to prevent currency manipulation, and standards to protect our environment. In addition, the presence of the Investor-State Dispute mechanism makes vulnerable our governmental regulations, allowing corporations to share equal status to sovereign governments. It is for these reasons that Michigan Democrats are opposed to the passage of the TPP.

Fair trade agreements benefit workers, communities and businesses. A fair trade agreement protects labor rights, human rights and the environment while creating opportunities for economic growth.

Michigan Democrats strongly support trade when it is fair trade. We look for trade agreements that open foreign markets to U.S. made goods and services, just as our market is open to foreign made goods and services. Although a fair trade agreement is important, our trading partners must also enforce the agreed upon standards for working conditions, including health and safety standards and the right to organize unions. Effective trade monitoring and enforcement processes must be in place to ensure that no violations go unpunished.

Finally, we support domestic policies that support jobs in the U.S. We believe the Bring Jobs Home Act, sponsored by Senator Debbie Stabenow, is an important part of leveling the playing field. This act is designed to reward companies that bring jobs back to the U.S. and close tax loopholes for companies that outsource.

Trade provides economic opportunities but it comes with many challenges. The Michigan Democratic Party wants trade to work for working people everywhere. Our trade agenda offers a way for workers around the world to enjoy a higher standard of living by insisting that our trading partners respect the civil, labor, and human rights of their workforces while protecting their health and the global environment we all share.

5. Economic Development: Improving Depressed Communities

We will develop our depressed communities, proceeding within a framework that protects the environment. Democrats will promote policies and programs that create jobs and healthy neighborhoods. We support investments in neighborhood essentials such as schools, health care, and infrastructure, including transportation options that help connect people with jobs. Democrats support the redevelopment of all neighborhoods, with a focus on our most depressed communities.

6. Agriculture: Protecting our Farms and Rural Communities

Agriculture, beginning with the family farm, has always been a bedrock of the Michigan Economy. Senator Stabenow has led the effort to enact a bipartisan, reform-minded Farm Bill. With exciting new developments in biofuels, from corn-based to cellulosic ethanol production, biodiesel, solar and wind power, and the development of new, bio-based materials, agriculture is providing new jobs and opportunity for thousands of Michigan families across our state. Agriculture is one of the largest industries in Michigan, contributing \$101.2 billion annually to the state's economy. Total employment resulting from the agriculture sector is 923,000 which accounts for about 22 percent of the state's employment. Agriculture is a growing industry. From potato and other specialty crop processing to meet local and global demand, to local farm markets and agri-tourism promoted by our burgeoning wine industry, the diversity of Michigan agriculture is our strength. The future of agriculture in our state is bright; Michigan produces over 300 commodities on a commercial basis including tart cherries, blueberries, dry beans, floriculture products, cucumbers for pickles, and much more.

As agriculture explores new opportunities, the innovation that Michigan agriculture has always shown will sustain the industry at all levels from the field to the fork, and Michigan's economy and citizens will benefit. Michigan Democrats strongly support farm to table initiatives which are good for farmers and communities alike. We believe that the federal prohibition on the growth of industrial hemp prohibits substantial opportunities for Michigan farmers to produce, manufacture, and sell a versatile industrial and agricultural product. While Michigan has of the most lax laws on Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), Democrats believe stronger regulations are needed to protect water and air quality.

7. Transportation: Providing Access to Opportunities

In the fall of 2015, Michigan Republicans passed a "roads" bill that does little to fix our crumbling infrastructure or promote alternative forms of transportation. What it did do was saddle Michigan taxpayers with higher costs at the pump and a new "birthday tax" that significantly increased annual vehicle registration fees.

Democrats continue to call for legislation that addresses the immediate issues we face concerning our crumbling roads and bridges. We also believe that the cost of these repairs and improvements should be shared by all those who benefit from the use of our state's infrastructure, including corporations, not just the working men and women already struggling to make ends meet and who have had their taxes raised consistently by the Republican legislature and Gov. Snyder.

A diverse and accessible transportation system, including regional transportation and public transit, is also essential for the overall economic growth of the state, particularly in connecting people with jobs and opportunity. Not everyone is able to own a car or drive one.

An adequate local transit system is necessary to enable people to be gainfully employed or pursue their education. Democrats will continue to focus transportation dollar spending on regional transportation and metropolitan needs and options, including local roads, bridges, and public transportation, and identify new opportunities to expand public transit options.

The Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan must be adequately funded to encourage greater collaboration with other transit systems throughout the state and region. Fostering statewide public transit will attract new economic development and jobs into Michigan. An efficient intermodal system should consist of a combination of passenger rail, including traditional, high speed, and light rail, as well as bus rapid transit and existing fixed route and connector service bus systems. Funding should be regionalized, without exemption for opt-out communities, since all communities will benefit from a regionalized plan.

We support increased implementation of Complete Streets programs, which would increase safety for both pedestrians and cyclists, as well as promote increased accessibility of bicycle transportation on other modes of public transit systems.

8. Information Technology: Expanding Access to Information

Information technology (IT) is fundamentally changing our lives. Democrats want everyone to learn about and have access to IT resources, and be able to use those resources to learn, communicate, and improve the workings of government, business, and society. To achieve these goals, Democrats believe that:

- All state residents must have access to the same modern technology. In today's information economy, "red-lining" technology can be as destructive as red-lining mortgages were in the mid-20th Century. Democrats want to make secure, high-speed Internet access universally available, in part by making it more readily available at public facilities -- libraries, schools, community centers, employment centers, and public agencies -- particularly those in low-income and rural areas where families are less likely to own computers. We support the passage of Net Neutrality legislation in Michigan and at the federal level. Public and private sectors should increase efforts to expand high-speed wireless communications, and provide computers and Internet access to more workers, students, and communities.
- Michigan should continue to be a leader in providing information and services online. Digitizing government cuts costs and improves performance, making government functions easier to use for the citizen. We can deliver services and information that help the public make informed decisions, and perform more transactions with the government online. The benefit will be lower costs to both government and taxpayers.
- Municipal public broadband deployments are broadband Internet access services provided either fully or partially by local governments. The Michigan Democratic Party supports the ability of local townships and cities to vote in and deploy municipal public internet initiatives.
- We want to provide better information for citizens. With public monitoring and oversight, strong incentives for improvements in public and private services will be created. That is why Michigan Democrats support the following:
 - The ratings of health care organizations should be posted to inform the public and motivate improvement in health care services. For example, we support mandatory public ratings of health plans by the state and the posting of nursing home inspection results.
 - Online data about all schools, job training providers, and their performance should be provided and easily accessible.
 - Government budget information should be available online.
 - Information about elected officials should be reported online, such as assets, income, political contributions, voting records, and contact information.
 - We should develop an available online childcare service report, in order to share the results of state monitoring of childcare facilities.
 - The right to privacy should be protected on the Internet. The expansion of information available via the Internet should proceed with sensitivity to personal information being made public or accessed by identity thieves.

9. Small Business: Nurturing Entrepreneurship and Self-employment

We must nurture a culture of innovation that will expand Michigan's economy. Owners of small businesses, the self-employed, and their families have much more in common with the working people of Michigan than with those who run large corporations. They share the financial struggles, demands of long hours, and uncertainty about the future. The Democratic Party understands the contribution of small employers to our economy. The vast majority of businesses in the state have fewer than 500 employees and they employ more than half the workers. These business owners have taken risks that benefit us all. The hundreds of thousands of self-employed people also make a substantial contribution.

10. Income: Rewarding Work

Our policies make work pay, encourage participation in the work force and make sure lower and middle income people are paying only their fair share of tax, not subsidizing millionaires and billionaires like Donald Trump, the Koch brothers, and the DeVos family. That is why Democrats want to:

- Increase the minimum wage. If we want people to work, poverty shouldn't be the reward for holding a full-time job. A minimum wage that keeps up with inflation has never had the negative effects predicted by critics, and has always served to boost the overall standard of living and economy. While Michigan has taken steps to gradually increase the minimum wage over time, and indexed increases to inflation, it is not enough. We support the adoption of a minimum wage that allows Michigan's working families to meet their basic financial needs. We support efforts at the federal level to move towards an indexed \$15 federal minimum wage and also believe that the wage for tipped workers should be restored to 50% of the full minimum wage. Michigan Democrats strongly condemn the proposal from Donald Trump to eliminate the minimum wage altogether. We also oppose a separate lower minimum wage for young workers and people with disabilities.
- Protect Michigan's prevailing wage law. Michigan Democrats oppose any effort to weaken these laws and will continue to fight to make sure that skilled trade workers will be paid what they are worth.
- Restore and expand the Michigan earned income tax credit. The federal earned income tax credit allows families who work, but still require some public assistance, extra credits for working. In 2006, Michigan added to this credit, which proved to be effective incentive to work and avoid the need for public assistance. The Michigan credit should be expanded, not cut as Rick Snyder and Republicans in Lansing have done.
- Promote pay equity. On the average, women in Michigan are paid substantially less than men for performing the same work. Michigan Democrats continue to support equal access to employment and pay. We applaud the successful effort of President Obama and Democrats in Congress to change the statute of limitations on pay discrimination lawsuits from six months from the time the discrimination starts to six months from the time the discrimination ends.

11. Taxes: Providing a Sufficient, Stable and Fair Tax System

We must restore fairness to the tax system, while ensuring that revenue is adequate to meet society's requirements. The state needs sufficient revenue to meet the needs of its citizens. Democrats support a system of fair taxation, one where corporations and wealthy individuals pay their fair share, because we recognize that all the citizens have the responsibility to pay for our shared needs and expenses. The labor of working families is the reason for the long-term success of the American economy. Nowhere is that more evident than here in Michigan. The people who work to build our great economy have a right to expect that their hard work will afford them basic needs and opportunity to fulfill their dreams and those of their children, enable them to buy a home, save for a secure retirement, and fund a college education. Workers should not be burdened with disproportionate taxes that infringe on their ability to live a quality life, while adding to the bank accounts and bottom lines of Michigan's wealthiest citizens and corporations.

The disparity of wealth in the United States between the wealthiest Americans and the rest of us has rapidly increased over the last several decades. This disparity causes tremendous hardship on those with limited income and assets. Their health, their life expectancy, and even the future economic status of their children are adversely affected. We must stop this trend and restore fairness to our economy and tax system.

We support the adoption of a tax structure that is fair to everyone - unlike the current tax structure in Michigan. With Republican economics, workers take home less money in their paychecks, because the burden of paying taxes falls disproportionately upon working families. With billions in corporate welfare, subsidies, tax shelters and tax cuts, large corporations and the wealthiest individuals pay less than their fair share of the tax burden. This forces working people and small businesses to pay more than their fair share. We endorse the "Buffett Rule," where the secretary does not have to pay a higher percentage of wages than the boss. Our tax system should be one where the burdens are shared proportionately and benefits everyone, not just those at the top. In Michigan, the overall tax burden for corporations is less than zero. This is not only unjust, this is economically unsustainable.

Some U.S. citizens use offshore tax havens and avoidance scams to avoid paying an estimated \$100 billion in federal taxes each year. Ending offshore tax abuses would crack down on tax dodgers who offload their tax burden onto the backs of honest taxpaying Americans, and we could recover unpaid taxes needed for health care, education, manufacturing support and more. We support efforts to stop U.S. financial institutions from using swaps, stock loans, and other financial mechanisms to enable foreign clients – primarily offshore hedge funds,

tax haven banks, and other sophisticated foreign financial instruments – to dodge U.S. taxes owed on U.S. stock dividends.

About 50 tax havens operate in the world today. A tax haven is a jurisdiction with low or no taxes and secrecy laws and practices that make it hard for other countries to discover if their taxpayers are concealing assets there. Tax havens have, in effect, declared war on honest taxpayers, by giving tax dodgers the means to avoid their tax bills and leave them for others to pay.

The federal government should take a leadership role in international efforts to end tax haven secrecy and strengthen tax information exchange. Congress should also enact legislation that ends tax haven abuses and recovers unpaid taxes.

12. Health Care: Providing Health Security for Families and Individuals

Consistent with the Democratic Party's National Platform, Michigan Democrats believe that health care is a right, not a privilege, and our health care system should put people before profits. Thanks to the hard work of President Obama and Democrats in Congress, we took a critically important step toward the goal of universal health care by passing the Affordable Care Act, which has covered 20 million more Americans and ensured millions more will never be denied coverage because of a preexisting condition. As Democrats, we will never waver in our decades-long battle to guarantee healthcare as a fundamental right for every American. As part of that guarantee, Americans should be able to access coverage through a public option, and those over 55 should be able to opt in to Medicare. By contrast, Donald Trump and his Republican allies in Michigan want to repeal the ACA, leaving tens of millions of Americans without coverage.

We oppose these Republican efforts, at the federal and state levels, by lawsuit or legislation to block or repeal the many benefits of the Affordable Care Act, which has twice been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court and has withstood dozen of Republican attempts to repeal or weaken it.

In addition to the creation of a public option, as further steps toward improving healthcare coverage, Democrats support the following actions:

- Protect the state expansion of Medicaid under the ACA. In Michigan, nearly 600,000 have been covered under the expansion and are able to receive care through primary care doctors, not the emergency room.
- Reform HMO practices. We will reform HMOs so doctors are not prevented from prescribing medically appropriate treatment, and patients can get redress that includes the right to sue HMOs for wrongdoing or negligence. The Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) should be amended to permit state legislatures to establish remedies to hold HMO's accountable.
- Support Embryonic Stem Cell Research. Passage of the 2008 ballot proposal has opened the way for this promising research. We must make sure those Lansing Republicans who oppose this research do not encumber the researchers with excessive and unreasonable paperwork designed to impede its progress.
- Improve childcare and nursing home conditions. The safety and quality of Michigan's child care facilities and nursing homes have not been sufficiently addressed. Democrats will ensure conformance to appropriate safety standards, good hygiene practices, and appropriate caregiver training. Corporations that profit from the care of children, the elderly, or the incapacitated must be held accountable for the safety and quality of their service through appropriate regulation.
- Improve services to the children, adolescents, and adults struggling with mental illness. The closure of many mental health facilities and continued discrimination against the mentally ill by health plans and insurers have compounded the challenges faced by those needing these services and their families. Many in our prison system suffer from mental illnesses. A significant percentage of homeless individuals also suffer from mental illness. All the citizens of Michigan are hurt by these problems. Michigan Democrats do not believe the solution to these issues is privatization of mental health services, but rather the strengthening of our public commitment to mental health.
- Improve services to returning veterans. Michigan's brave veterans, both U.S. soldiers and sailors, and members of the Michigan National Guard, often return from active duty with severe medical conditions. Many have failed to receive needed care, both for their physical injuries and psychological problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder. Democrats believe that we must take care of our injured veterans, not

abandon them or ignore them. They have our pledge to provide health care and good-paying jobs, and to help them rejoin civilian life in Michigan.

13. Children and Families: Providing Help for Working Parents with Children

Michigan's families with children have suffered devastating state budget reductions in education, childcare, school food programs, and many other areas needed for positive child development. All Michigan families and their children should have basic healthcare and access safe, affordable childcare. Many parents worry about whether their schools and daycare facilities are safe and providing a positive learning environment. Democrats support:

- Ensuring quality, affordable childcare. Because of excessive costs, many Michigan parents are forced to turn to unlicensed, unregulated child care providers. Democrats will ensure all childcare providers are properly licensed and regularly inspected. We must close down unsafe and unhealthy centers and end the fall-off in oversight of childcare services.
- Providing school-based healthcare. Children need to be in good health to get the most from their education. Democrats support school-based health centers to ensure all children get the medical attention they need.
- Providing breakfast and lunch to hungry children. We should do our best to identify and provide meals for children in need. Learning becomes much more difficult for a child when their attention is distracted by the pains of hunger.
- Creating family friendly workplaces. Democrats, who brought the Family and Medical Leave Act into existence, applaud and encourage voluntary measures that many employers are making to create "family friendly" workplaces, including flexible hours, telecommuting, and onsite daycare facilities. We support efforts to find ways to underwrite family leave opportunities.
- Michigan Democrats strongly support policies allowing individuals to earn paid sick leave. Paid sick leave is not only beneficial to workers and their families, it is critical to maintaining overall health and productivity in the workplace.

14. Coping With Misfortune: Bankruptcy, Foreclosure and Homelessness

Too many Michigan families still face economic hardship. Many families are one health care emergency away from bankruptcy. Illness and medical bills are the leading causes of personal bankruptcies. Meanwhile, CEOs leave major corporations and collect millions in golden parachute payouts, while the corporations they led use bankruptcy laws to avoid paying the pension and retiree health benefits workers earned. Big businesses can get a fresh start following insolvency, but current bankruptcy laws offer no such relief to working people. Democrats support legislation to restore the protections of the bankruptcy laws for working people. Democrats favor:

- Reducing high home foreclosure rate. Foreclosures deprive families of their largest and most important asset, produce neighborhood blight, undermine banks and other financial institutions, and cast doubt on the assets underpinning the financial system.
- We oppose robo-foreclosures, which have enriched Republican Congressman David Trott. We encourage lenders and homeowners to work together modifying mortgages by cutting the loan principal when the property value has fallen to less than the mortgage amount. This restores some equity to borrowers while lowering payments. Offering the bankrupted family the opportunity to rent their foreclosed home at market rates would assist both the family and the local economy.
- Enforcing the Michigan law that requires a court proceeding before a foreclosure. The practice of sending a trash-out squad to remove any portion of a home or the property prior to a court proceeding is a vile practice in violation of the law that should be condemned and prevented, with serious penalties for violations.
- Addressing the increasing problem of homelessness. Eighty percent of the homeless families had never been homeless before. This shows the homeless problem is growing, and affecting a wider range of people. In the continuing difficult job market, many adults with children cannot get full-time work or enough work to pay the rent. We need to provide shelter and transitional support for these devastated families to return to a normal life. Children of homeless families particularly require services and assistance. We can help homeless persons who require medication by trying to contact their families and getting them proper

medical attention. In tough economic times, government can take a positive role in stimulating the economy and helping people re-enter the workforce. With progressive legislation, we can revitalize our communities and help people remove themselves from their homeless situation.

B. COMMUNITY

A core value for Democrats is strengthening our sense of community. Michigan Democrats believe we are strongest when we work together, and that includes working hand-in-hand with neighbors and fellow members of our respective communities. The Democratic Party was built on the willingness to help those who need a hand and the belief that our country is strongest when we work together to solve our common issues and stand up for those whose rights are being infringed upon or denied.

Key building blocks of a vibrant, prosperous community include:

- Promoting active and vigorous participation in civic life -- voting, debating, compromising.
- Being good stewards of Michigan's natural resources.
- Keeping our air, water, and neighborhoods clean and safe.
- Respecting others as people and individuals, not as stereotypes and strangers.
- Tackling common problems, from what our children have to do after school to what we want our streets and communities to look like.
- Enhancing our arts, cultural resources, and the quality of life in our communities.
- Caring about each other and reaching out to those who have no one to care for them.

In improving our community, Michigan Democrats embrace a unified vision of environmental protection, shared benefits and sacrifice, and economic development. We reject the notion that protecting our environment is in conflict with fostering economic growth and thriving communities. To achieve our vision for Michigan communities, we place a priority on the following key concerns:

1. The Environment: Protecting Our Land, Water, Air and Open Space

To generations who have moved here and generations yet to come, Michigan's appealing beauty and natural resources offer wonderful benefits. Our woods and fields, the Great Lakes, over 11,000 inland lakes, and 50,000 miles of rivers and streams provide an important outdoor life to Michigan families. Democrats will fight to protect this shared heritage. Our resources are life-sustaining and a source of economic benefit. We want our drinking water, where our children play, and where we live to be clean and safe. Use of Michigan's natural resources must be planned and carried out so that the commercial benefits to business are not accompanied by costly and possibly permanent health and environmental damage. In addition, safe disposal of the waste products of any power source should be figured into the cost/benefit study.

We recognize that our rich natural environment has long been enjoyed by visitors to our state, especially those who appreciate recreation connected with an abundance of water. Fishing, boating, and beach-going are extremely popular activities. Democrats recognize that protecting our environment will also have economic benefits. Tourism is an important commercial activity connected to the beauty and variety of environments in Michigan. Democrats want to encourage tourism and have supported increased tourism promotion efforts such as Pure Michigan as an important part of our overall economic development plan.

We have expanded public access for hunting and fishing and worked hard to protect woodlands. We support the interests of bow hunters and those who legally and responsibly use firearms for hunting and shooting. Sportspeople who use the outdoors are ardent conservationists, and we value their support.

Michigan has the intellectual, industrial, and political resources to become a leader in environmental planning, development, and conservation for decades to come. We must encourage manufacturers, suppliers, retailers, and consumers to reduce the amount of waste in our environment and encourage waste reclamation. Democrats support:

- Michigan Democrats support efforts to maintain the hundreds of millions of acres of federal lands and oppose Republican efforts to transfer them for profit. The opportunity for regular American citizens to

have shared ownership and access to public landscapes and is uniquely an American experience that transcends political, social, and economic divides.

- With respect to the Great Lakes, our water is a treasure belonging to all citizens in our state. Michigan citizens should expect an environmental policy that prevents contamination, rather than allowing it to occur and then forcing taxpayers to cover the costs of an expensive cleanup. Michigan has passed legislation to keep toxic waste and invasive species out of the Great Lakes. These regulations must be vigorously enforced.
- Protecting against damage caused by pursuing mineral wealth and obtaining energy fuels. Actions that might damage the environment require close governmental supervision, particularly when it comes to the fracking industry. Democrats demand that, at a minimum, companies which utilize hydraulic fracturing be forced to disclose the chemicals they use. Democrats also believe that local communities should determine whether or not a company is allowed to employ this method or store toxic fracking waste from other states within their boundaries. With a strong focus on clean, renewable energy Michigan Democrats believe we must move away from the use of fracking in favor of safer forms of energy production.
- Safety precautions for workers require regular inspections and strong penalties for failing to remedy identified deficiencies. We demand that our aquifers retain their purity and our animals, birds, and fish have their habitats preserved. The public interest must be protected from those people and corporations who put their bottom line first and ignore the possible harmful consequences of their actions.
- Protecting the Great Lakes. Great Lakes water has been diverted by Illinois since the 1800s, and coveted by Sunbelt states and entrepreneurs since the 1980s. As the state with the most to gain or lose in protecting the Lakes, Michigan must protect this world-class public resource from water raids and oil spills. We applaud the efforts of Democrats to approve the Great Lakes Compact and related legislation which will help protect Great Lakes water from diversion. Michigan must vigorously enforce these laws. Senator Debbie Stabenow wrote the first-ever federal law banning oil and gas drilling in the Great Lakes, supplementing the Michigan ban. We support her efforts to get Canada to stop drilling operations in the Great Lakes, and will continue to oppose Republican efforts to allow drilling in the Great Lakes.

Despite these achievements, the Great Lakes still face many challenges. Michigan Democrats are opposed to the recent Waukesha water diversion deal supported by Governor Snyder. Allowing Great Lakes water to be diverted outside of the Great Lakes Watershed is a dangerous precedent that Democrats will continue to oppose. Over many years, the Great Lakes and their tributaries have been polluted by industrial discharges, PCBs, heavy metals, and other toxic substances. Contaminated sediments that have settled at the bottom of harbors and tributaries must be cleaned up quickly, before they move into the open waters of the Great Lakes. Furthermore, any efforts to store toxic pet coke from Canadian tar sands in any way that threatens our precious natural resources must be stopped.

Adding to the challenges facing the Great Lakes, over 160 non-native species, including the zebra mussel, Eurasian ruffe, and lamprey eel, have invaded the Great Lakes watershed and disrupted the native wildlife, competing with native species for food and habitat. The Asian carp must be kept out of the Great Lakes, where it would produce a multibillion dollar disaster. Fighting these invasive species has proven to be a significant economic drain — every year, the Great Lakes region spends millions of dollars to keep water pipes from becoming clogged with zebra mussels. Michigan Democrats support the Great Lakes Collaboration Implementation Act to reduce the threat of invasive species, restore fish and wildlife, clean up contaminated sediments in the lakes, and coordinate water quality management.

- Polluter pay. Michigan law should make polluters responsible for the costs of cleaning up their pollution.
- Protect Children: We are especially eager to prevent pollution and contamination that threatens the health of our children, so we support:
 - Launching an all-out effort to prevent and treat lead poisoning in children, particularly in light of the unspeakable damage done to the children of Flint.
 - Investing in our underground infrastructure to remove all lead service lines in Michigan and replace dangerously aging water mains.
 - Cleaning up industrial emissions that cause levels of ozone unsafe for children and supporting energy efficient technologies and mass transit that reduce such emissions.
 - Requiring businesses using hazardous chemicals to develop pollution prevention plans.

- Banning the establishment or relocation of new sources of toxic pollution close to schools, daycare centers, and other places where children live and play.
- Smart Growth: Michigan Democrats propose smart growth strategies and better land use that foster livable communities, protect our farms and open space, and support reinvestment in our great cities. Our smart growth agenda will focus development where our infrastructure of roads, sewers, and utilities already exist, saving the taxpayer money while encouraging urban redevelopment. Projects such as these may also be suitable for creating jobs for the unemployed or homeless.
- Strongly regulate the oil and gas pipeline industry so that companies such as Enbridge, owner of the decrepit pipeline that runs between the U.P. and Lower Peninsula, are held accountable. While we recognize that Line 5 carries propane used in home heating to some residents in the Upper Peninsula and Northern Lower Michigan, a breach of the 63 year old pipeline could cause an environmental disaster, negatively impacting both our Great lakes and our economy. Michigan Democrats support the Safe Pipes Act sponsored by United States Senator Gary Peters and agree that Line 5 should be reclassified as an "off shore" pipeline to ensure that Enbridge, not taxpayers, would be responsible for all clean-up costs in the event of a spill. Because of the potential for unprecedented environmental damage, Michigan Democrats believe that Line 5 should undergo an immediate and thorough inspection by independent experts to determine if it should be shutdown, repaired or replaced.
- Renewable energy: The state must do more to encourage the use of solar, wind, agricultural, and other renewable energy sources. Any energy plan for the state of Michigan must include an aggressive mandate to require energy producers to generate a higher percentage of total energy from clean renewable sources and conservation.
- Connecting communities: New development focuses attention on the need for roads, sewers, new schools and communications connections, as well as concerns over pollution, sprawl, traffic, and the costs of growth. These issues increasingly spill over the boundaries of our individual 2,000 units of government. Furthermore, thanks to urban sprawl and economic polarization, Michigan is becoming even more separated by race, income, and ethnicity. Michigan's housing markets have the highest indicators of racial segregation in the nation and our schools are among the most segregated in the country. Binding our communities together with respect for one another and an acceptance of our diversity is the Democratic goal in order to create a successful pluralistic society.
- Regional solutions to regional problems: The transportation, economic development, environmental, and related issues of the metro regions of Detroit, Grand Rapids, Traverse City, Flint, Kalamazoo, and Lansing are regional in nature and require regional solutions. Democrats will encourage planning and decision-making that transcend traditional political boundaries and solve problems effectively on a regional basis by working together. Part of our strategy will be the encouragement of regional land management plans and tools that help local government's growth, such as transfer of development rights program, regional impact coordination, regional revenue sharing, impact fees, urban growth boundaries, land banks, and urban service districts.
- Equal and affordable housing: Democrats affirm a commitment to equal access to decent and affordable housing for every person regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation and gender identification or expression. We support aggressive enforcement of current fair housing laws to ensure an equal share in the American dream to all Michigan citizens. We encourage policies that make housing affordable and encourage more integrated communities, including the expanded use of housing subsidies and mixed income housing developments.
- Regional transportation solutions: Transportation systems that help people commute and connect the community are essential. Michigan Democrats will continue to advocate for enhanced funding and better planning and coordination of transportation investments in our metropolitan regions.

2. Social Justice: Achieving Equal and Humane Treatment Under the Law

A community is based on the principle that all are treated equally. In America, all are supposed to be equal before the law. Democrats celebrate the fact that our society is increasingly diverse. We maintain our longstanding commitment to social justice, freeing individuals to pursue their dreams. In order to reap the benefits of diversity, we must continue to fight discrimination by breaking down barriers based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, philosophy, language, marital status, sexual orientation and gender identification or expression, age, height, weight, physical or mental disability -- or any other characteristic irrelevant to ability. We must instill a spirit of cooperation between cities, suburbs, and rural communities to build an inclusive society at all levels.

- We will champion the cause of civil rights for all citizens. We will not stand for the trampling of civil rights by individuals, employers, companies, or government. We believe in affirmative action and seek the repeal of 2006 Proposition 2. We seek more than merely tolerance; we work to eliminate all forms of discrimination.
- Freedom from torture is an important human right that is firmly recognized by international law. We condemn the use of any action that is designed to inflict intense pain or extreme discomfort on a person under one's physical control, no matter what the purpose of that cruelty may be.
- We oppose the insurance industry's unfair practice of redlining and credit scoring when setting insurance premiums. This discrimination disproportionately and unfairly exploits the working poor and people of color in our urban communities.
- We believe collective bargaining is a basic right of all employees and has brought greater economic security, job safety, and dignity for Michigan workers. To spread these benefits, pioneered in Michigan, the Democrats of our state fully support organizing and collective bargaining throughout the private and public sectors to facilitate these rights and benefits. Michigan Democrats seek to outlaw the use of permanent replacement workers in economic strikes; promote automatic card check recognition in organizing campaigns and mandatory arbitration in first contracts that don't reach agreement; establish severe penalties against employers who illegally discharge workers or close facilities for union activity; ensure equal time and place access to workers for union organizers; and prevent bankruptcy courts from canceling collective bargaining agreements.
- We support a federal Employee Free Choice Act.
- Democrats support legislation to impose penalties on companies that engage in wage theft.
- We support the repeal of Michigan's so-called "right to work" law. This law is actually an attempt to weaken the bargaining power of workers, and should more aptly be named "right to work for less" laws. By any measure, residents of so-called "right to work" states are less well-off than residents of states which encourage collective bargaining.
- We will vigorously promote measures that ensure the full civil rights of Michigan's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTQ) citizens.
- We strongly support the inclusion of LGBTQ persons in the protection given by the Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act and Michigan's Ethnic Intimidation Act. We favor the addition of sexual orientation and gender identity to the equal protection and non-discrimination provisions of Article I, Section 2 of the Michigan Constitution.
- We support full inclusion of LGBTQ families in the life of our state and seek equal responsibilities, benefits and protections for those families, including the right to adopt and raise children. We believe Michigan citizens have the right to personal safety and security in their homes, workplaces, and communities, including protection from sexual harassment. We will fight age discrimination in all its forms.
- We seek to ensure justice before the bench. The State Bar of Michigan has recognized that the courts today are stacked against the people, particularly minorities and women. As the Party that has worked to turn the civil rights revolution into a living reality for all people, Michigan Democrats pledge to continue our commitment to maintain the gains won, and maintain our fight for equality. We condemn the underrepresentation of African-Americans and low-income citizens on all juries. The law says people have the right to be tried by a jury of their peers. Discrimination in jury selection prejudices the right to a fair trial. The system for providing legal counsel to indigent people accused of a crime must be improved.
- We stand for the rights of legal immigrants and will work to bring about their acceptance as citizens and part of the Michigan family. We support the federal DREAM Act. We applaud efforts by the Open Justice Commission to provide language interpreters in court and to take other steps to make the legal process more user friendly to those unaccustomed to English. In the strongest terms, we condemn the hateful rhetoric and un-American policies of Donald Trump towards Mexicans, Muslims, and all people that seek to be part of the American family.
- We continue our commitment to Native American tribes and their sovereignty, self-governance, and self-determination.
- We support the development of constructive government-to-government and person-to-person relationships. We believe the time has come to pass an "Economic Bill of Rights," which includes:
 - The right of workers to a decent job and to bargain collectively for fair wages and safe working conditions.

- The right of non-represented workers to have a bill of rights in use.
- The right to decent and affordable housing and medical care.
- The right to social services sufficient to meet basic human needs.
- The right to clean air, water, and renewable energy sources, and to be free from discriminatory invasion of toxic pollutants into our communities and workplaces.
- The right to economic and social security for older Americans.
- A shareholder's bill of rights empowering individuals to protect and properly manage their investments.

3. Women: Protecting the Rights of Women

As over half of the population, women deserve to be treated as equals in our society. From the women's suffragist movement to the women's liberation movement, women have had to fight for their rights every step of the way. And while progress has undoubtedly been made, the rights of women are under constant threat. As Democrats, we stand against Donald Trump and all Republicans who seek to set women back, place value on them based upon their appearance, restrict their rights to make choices regarding their own health, and even threaten to punish them for taking ownership of their own body. As a party we support the following:

- Pay equity for women. Women are still often paid substantially less than men for performing the same work. Michigan Democrats continue to support equal access to employment and pay. We applaud the successful effort of President Obama and Democrats in Congress to broaden the statute of limitations on pay discrimination lawsuits and on passage of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.
- Passage of a modern Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution.
- We support the right of a woman to make decisions concerning her time allocation between work and family. Whether to work full-time, stay at home to raise a family full-time, or some mixing of these roles is a personal decision that every mother is entitled to make.
- We support the right of a woman to make reproductive medical decisions about her own body in consultation with her doctor, without governmental prohibitions or burdensome restrictions. Women in America have in recent years been subjected to excessive state regulations restricting their medical options and choices. We also will fight to protect a woman's right and a family's right to seek medical care wherever they wish. However, we respect each individual's conscience on reproductive rights and strongly support measures to reduce unwanted pregnancies, increase child care services, and improve adoption programs.
- We support the right of a woman to obtain birth control by purchasing it at any facility that does direct business with the public.
- We support the addition of gender to the equal protection and non-discrimination provisions in Article I, Section II of the Michigan Constitution.
- We support passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act.
- We support immediate repeal of Michigan's so-called "Abortion Insurance Opt-Out Act." This law was passed by Lansing Republicans and forces women to purchase rape insurance, which on Michigan's individual market is totally unavailable. The measure banned basic insurance coverage for abortions, with no exceptions for rape or incest, and was passed under dishonest, offensive pretenses.

4. Veterans: Respect and Help for Those Who Serve Our Country

Those who have served our nation are worthy of the highest respect and deserve the deepest gratitude of our people. And despite the promises made to them, too many of our veterans struggle with reentry into civilian life. They struggle to find stable employment, to get proper medical and mental care and, most embarrassingly, thousands are left to live on the street. Democrats understand that we have a moral obligation to provide for and protect our veterans. That obligation includes taking the following action:

- Improving services for returning veterans. Michigan's brave veterans often return from active duty with severe medical conditions. Many have failed to receive needed care, both for their physical injuries and psychological problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder. Michigan Democrats share in the nation's outrage at the state of VA hospitals across the nation. Further, we have been shocked and dismayed by Gov. Snyder, Attorney General Schuette, and Republican legislative efforts to cover up the abuse of veterans at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans, created by privatizing direct care workers at the facility.

- Addressing the plight of veteran homelessness. Michigan Democrats applaud President Obama's efforts to end homelessness under Opening Doors and will support future efforts to banish this scourge.
- Providing educational funding by a 21st century GI Bill for all veterans who seek a higher education. We support the troops who defend our nation. We support financial help to further their education when they get home.
- Provide good-paying jobs for veterans. We support the Joining Forces initiative which has already helped employ nearly 900,000 veterans and their families.
- Fully fund retraining of veterans with disabilities. The special needs of disabled veterans, especially our Michigan Guard veterans, should be met in terms of educational methods, locations, transportation, and other considerations to create real opportunities for our disabled veterans to reenter the workforce.
- Support programs assisting families who have deployed service members with counseling, debt service delays, tax deferrals, and basic needs assistance.
- Support legislation that would make Michigan a member state in the interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. This is an agreement intended "to remove barriers to educational success imposed on children of military families because of frequent moves and deployment of their parents." We oppose the inclusion of vouchers in the Compact.
- Michigan Democrats oppose Republican efforts to dismantle the VA and privatize critical veterans healthcare services.

5. Youth: Building Citizens Who Will Brighten Our Future

Follow through on the commitment to education contained in the 2010 Affordable Care Act. The Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 includes larger and more stable funding for Pell Grants, greater investment in community colleges, expanded income-based repayment, and guaranteed federal student loans.

Make higher education available for all. Higher education is vital to success in the new economy. Funding should be increased, not cut as Lansing Republicans have done. Not only has tuition increased dramatically, but the cost of textbooks and other fees, have risen at alarming rate.

Democrats want higher education to be affordable. The rising cost of higher education is burdening many college and university students with excessive debt. Over seven million students now have taken out federal student loans. Getting out from under a massive debt load can take place many years after graduation. Michigan Democrats support efforts at the state and federal level to make Michigan public universities tuition free for working and middle class families and debt free for all students.

We would like our state to incentivize students receiving state financial aid to stay in Michigan, especially those in technical fields that are badly needed in our state.

Students should not have to return home in order to vote. Student voting turnout has been deliberately lowered because Republican legislation makes a student vote only at their legal residence. This effectively makes them go home from college if they wish to vote. Linked to one's legal residence are important items such as educational funding fees and health policy qualifications, making it impractical for students to change their legal residence to being near or at a school of higher learning.

6. Seniors: Providing Retirement Security and Needed Services

Michigan seniors deserve dignity and security in retirement. Michigan should have affordable health care, public services, and accommodations to help provide ease and comfort for seniors.

We must recognize the growing age of our population. From 2000 to 2020, the population of citizens over 65 will increase over 30%, and the number of people aged 85 and older in Michigan will rise over 28%. Caring for our elders is an increasing concern and financial challenge for Michigan families. Only one percent of state citizens have long-term care insurance, and the cost of this insurance is skyrocketing. Seniors deserve the opportunity to live independently and the availability of a wide range of quality options for living when they need assistance.

Michigan Democrats promote new options for home care, independent living tax credits for dependent care for Michigan families, and additional protections for seniors' homes and property, allowing them to keep their homes and still get quality care where possible. We must:

- Protect Retirement. Millions of Michigan citizens depend upon pensions for their primary or sole source of income. Recent economic circumstances, and in some cases corporate malfeasance, have had a drastic negative effect upon many pensions and other retirement benefits. The Michigan Democratic Party is committed to ensuring that companies that benefit from the investment of pension funds adhere to strict independent accounting standards. These companies should provide for prompt resolution of accounting discrepancies; auditor independence; strong prohibitions against companies improperly influencing or misleading an auditor; audit committee oversight; shareholder proposals and participation; shareholder approval of stock options; and strict limits on preferential treatment, loans and gifts to management and directors. Bankruptcy courts should not be able to threaten or impair pension rights.
- Restore the full value of the Homestead Property Tax Credit to pre-2011 levels.
- Repeal the Republican retirement tax. Thousands of Michigan seniors are now contending with increased expenses because of Michigan Republican's retirement tax. Too many seniors have been forced to decide between paying for their prescriptions and putting food on the table.
- Keep Social Security and Medicare solid. Democrats support plans at the federal level to keep Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid fully funded and dependable for future generations, without cutting benefits for recipients. We oppose privatization of Social Security.
- Provide home healthcare. Seniors and persons with disabilities should have the choice to direct their own care in their own homes and not be forced into nursing homes. Home care providers should be adequately screened and trained.
- Improve nursing home conditions. Michigan's nursing homes are an important resource for our ailing senior citizens. These facilities and their residents have too often been neglected. Minimum staffing standards have been ignored and training for staff is inadequate. There have been incidents of physical and mental abuse. Democrats will make sure staffing is adequate, inspections are frequent, that training and incentives are provided for nursing home workers, and that costs stay low for patients and their families. This must include both incentives to reward quality nursing homes and sanctions to ensure that irresponsible facilities and their operators do not betray the important responsibilities placed in the nursing home industry.
- Monitor the reverse mortgage industry more closely. A reverse mortgage is a financial tool available to people of age 62 and older that own their own home. We support requiring all lenders to meet acceptable standards for protecting reverse mortgage customers, mandating independent pre-loan counseling for all reverse mortgage applicants, and limiting lending fees. Predatory and exploitative practices must be stopped.

7. Voting: Nurturing Democracy and Promoting Civic Participation

Voting is the most important way we make our voice heard in a democracy. Michigan Democrats propose bold action to improve public participation and voting. We intend to make voting easier, oppose infringements on the democratic process, make sure every vote counts, and ensure that all eligible voters are able to make their voices heard. We support the traditional Michigan method of voter ID that does not require photo and allows the voter to sign a sworn statement of personal identification. Voter fraud has not been a problem in Michigan. The main purpose of these photo ID laws is to erect barriers that will reduce the number of voters. These barriers will reduce the turnout among seniors, poor people, and other groups that may have difficulty getting to a government office or procuring proper documentation. As a party we support the following:

- Provide new voting options. Democrats will foster increased voter participation by enacting a Voters Bill of Rights to protect straight party voting, no reason absentee voting, facilitate electronic voter registration, allow election day registration, allow weekend voting, establish early voting, automatic voter registration, and work to require employers to accommodate employee voting rights. All voting devices must have a verifiable and recountable paper trail.
- Make Election Day for federal offices a national holiday. People who do not vote on Election Day give "insufficient free time" as their most frequent explanation. Many people work two jobs. Making Election Day a holiday would increase voter turnout and give more people the opportunity to participate in the democratic process.

- Enforce and improve voting rights laws. The federal Voting Rights Act makes it clear that it is the job of state election officials to encourage participation and make it easier for citizens to exercise their rights – not harder. Voter intimidation and harassment are unacceptable. Republicans try to suppress Democratic turnout by cloaking legislation as fraud prevention, placing photo identification requirements on the right to vote and adding onerous requirements on efforts to register people to vote. The Board of State Canvassers provides an important safeguard against a partisan Secretary of State; the Board should not be weakened. Fraud in petition signature gathering, such as occurred in the 2006 effort to ban affirmative action, must be made illegal. The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) and Help America Vote Act (HAVA) must be strengthened, such as by establishing national election standards. Further, Congress must replace Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. We deplore Republican efforts to weaken voter rights protection standards, as well as efforts to restrict the rights of citizens to gather petitions and place items on the ballot for consideration.
- Reform the redistricting process to end partisan gerrymanders. Reapportionment redraws legislative districts every ten years based on population changes reflected in the census. Michigan is one of the states that has the Legislature perform redistricting. Our 2011 redistricting was done by a Republican Legislature and signed into law by a Republican governor—and the resulting gerrymander shows it. The general election should be more important than the primary election.
- Inform Voters about the Party Affiliation of Supreme Court Candidates. Up to 40 percent of Michigan’s voters fail to cast a vote for any candidate for Michigan Supreme Court on the nonpartisan portion of the ballot. Most observers conclude the “drop-off” in voting for Supreme Court candidates is because voters are denied the most basic information needed when casting a ballot, i.e., whether the core values and sense of justice of a Supreme Court candidate and the party nominating him/her are similar to the voter’s. Most voters identify with the core values of their chosen party and its candidates. Political parties nominate candidates for the Michigan Supreme Court. Unlike other offices, Michigan law deprives voters of information on the ballot as to the party affiliation, and, hence, the values, of each Supreme Court candidate. We support laws to restore the requirement of full disclosure, printed on the ballot, of the identity of each political party together with the name of its chosen nominee for Supreme Court.
- Democrats strongly support Michigan’s public universities facilitating efforts to register students to vote.

8. Faith: Connecting Our Party with People of Faith

Throughout our country’s history, people of faith have played a major role in many of the great reforms of American society, such as the abolition of slavery and the Civil Rights movement. Leaders of those reform movements — people like Abraham Lincoln and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. — were inspired by faith and used religious terminology in advocating their causes, allowing them to appeal to the best aspects of our nature and to call our nation to the better futures they envisioned.

The voices of the faithful have been an important part of our past, and they remain important as we confront new problems and challenges in the future. At times, Democrats have struggled to strike the difficult balance between abiding by the Constitutional mandate to protect freedom of religion while also preventing the establishment of state-supported religion.

The central role that faith plays in the lives of millions of Americans, and millions of Democrats, cannot be ignored. Democrats recognize the important contributions the faith community has made throughout American history in caring for the least and last among us and helping to keep our country’s moral compass true. As Democrats, we welcome and encourage the involvement of people of faith in shaping the values, priorities, and policies of the Michigan Democratic Party, our state, and our nation as we seek the common good.

C. SECURITY

The Democratic Party believes that our nation, state, and communities can only be secure when individuals and families are secure. We want to prevent people from “falling through the cracks” or being driven to antisocial behavior from preventable causes. Democrats believe in personal responsibility; we hold individuals accountable for their criminal or terrorist acts. When adults or juveniles have been released from incarceration, Democrats believe that we must help to reintegrate the person returning to society. Security also entails the economic security of our nation; Democrats will be proactive in planning for our nation’s future energy sources.

We need green energy sources to prevent climate change, maintain pure air and water, become more self-sufficient, and provide new jobs.

1. Public Safety: Creating Safer Communities for All

Democrats believe that every American, regardless of where they were born or where they reside, has a right to live in peace and security. Too many communities are held hostage by violent crime, too many of our citizens are routinely gunned down and slaughtered in mass shootings, and mass incarceration is an ever-worsening plague upon our nation. As a nation in permanent pursuit of justice, we understand that the challenges we are confronted with can be overcome if we face them together.

As a party, we stand resolute in our belief that everyone must be held accountable for their actions. But we also understand that smart reforms to deal with many of those convicted will go a long way to ensuring rehabilitation and successful reentry into society. We continue to support measures to punish violent offenders, fugitive felons, and those who prey upon the most vulnerable among us. However, increasing numbers of non-violent offenders and those suffering from addiction and mental illness are incarcerated reflexively by the state, leading to a costly overburdening of our justice system and inevitable recidivism.

Michigan Democrats support the following measures to create safer communities for all:

- Stopping prison privatization. Turning incarceration into a big business is a betrayal of the values we, as Americans, hold dear. In their never ending pursuit of big business giveaways and cash for campaign coffers, Gov. Snyder and Lansing Republicans have disastrously supported outsourcing work in our prisons previously done by state employees. In doing so, they have jeopardized the safety of corrections officers and subjected inmates to conditions that should not be tolerated in our state.
- Supporting the Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative (MPRI) and similar legislation, which has been proven to reduce crime and enhance public safety through rehabilitation. The MPRI provides a system of services for offenders from the time of their entry to prison to their return to society, which is designed to assist them in successfully completing parole and becoming productive citizens.
- Implementing prison reform. Democrats strongly support efforts to educate and train prisoners, offer counseling for substance & alcohol abuse and treatment of mental illness, and reentry programs which connect ex-convicts with family & friends and other valuable post incarceration resources.
- Police officers put their lives on the line for our safety every day. For that, they deserve the respect and gratitude of our citizens. They also deserve to be fairly compensated for the dangerous work they do. The vast majority of public safety officers care deeply about the people and communities they serve and it shows through in the work they do each day. But the negative experience of many Americans, particularly those of color, with the police cannot be ignored. Groups like Black Lives Matter (BLM) and others deserve respect for the work they have done to highlight the inequities that exist in our criminal justice system. That is why we must honestly confront issues of police brutality and stop it before it happens. Too many mothers have experienced their sons and daughters being killed by law enforcement officials. Michigan Democrats support the widespread implementation of community policing, so that officers build relationships and trust in communities, thereby decreasing instances of violence and encouraging community members to work with police to stop, prevent, and solve crimes. We support national standards on the use of force, standardized tracking of crime data and police use of force, greater training in de-escalation, and universal use of body cameras to protect the police and citizens alike. Finally, we support efforts within police departments to create an internal environment of integrity, professionalism, and accountability.
- Rethinking drug policy. Democrats understand that the War on Drugs has failed to end drug use and has disproportionately led to the mass incarceration of our fellow citizens. We support prevention and treatment as a means of dealing with those struggling with addiction. Drug courts and diversionary programs should be prioritized in preventing and treating our nation's drug problem. Michigan Democrats support efforts to remove marijuana from the list of Schedule 1 controlled substances and believe that citizens should have the right to vote on the regulation and taxation of marijuana.
- Enact common sense gun safety measures. Democrats recognize the Constitutional right of Americans to keep and bear arms under the 2nd Amendment. The vast majority of Michigan gun owners are responsible citizens and sportsman that value the strong Michigan tradition of hunting and safe use of firearms. Democrats, along with vast majorities of the American public, support common sense gun safety

proposals like closing the gun show loophole and preventing potential terrorists from purchasing firearms. If an individual is deemed too dangerous to fly, they should be too dangerous to buy a gun. Democrats also support banning military style weapons, like the AR-15, which has been used in mass shootings in Sandy Hook, Dallas, Orlando, and across the nation.

- Stopping the cycle before it begins. Early intervention in the lives of juveniles must be a priority everywhere. Expulsion from school, and even successive suspension, has an adverse and profound effect on the life of any young person. We should be skeptical of zero tolerance policies that push children out of our school system and feeds the school to prison pipeline. We support judicial discretion in the adjudication and sentencing of juveniles, including the use of restorative justice principles. We also support the resentencing of juveniles who have been sentenced to mandatory life without parole consistent with the 2012 *Miller v Alabama* case.
- Michigan Democrats support legislative efforts to reclassify 17 year olds as juveniles in the criminal justice system.
- The Michigan Democratic Party also supports efforts to “Ban the Box”, recognizing that once an individual has served their time, they cannot return to self-sufficiency and lawful living without employment.
- Providing greater resources to our most distressed neighborhoods. Democrats propose more grants and incentive programs for after school and in-school peer mediation programs that are proven to reduce juvenile violence and delinquency. Democrats will expand local Safe Haven before and after school programs, pass truancy legislation to notify parents of a child’s absence, and expand school readiness programs to provide additional preschool learning to at-risk children.

2. Energy: Providing Power to the People

Reducing dependency on foreign energy and becoming energy self-sufficient, both as a nation and a state, are paramount to maintaining our security, freedom, and standard of living. With the crisis of climate change, our energy policies must also take into account our responsibilities towards our planet and our future generations. Scientific opinion is settled and unequivocally supports the conclusion that man-made climate change is occurring and is causing irreparable harm to our planet. We, therefore, support the following measures:

- Passing a federal comprehensive energy bill. Passing such a bill would help the economy by creating new green jobs, help the environment by reducing emissions, and help national security by reducing our dependence on oil-producing countries. Such a bill must include very strong regulations on the practice of fracking.
- Supporting research and development of renewable energy sources. The threat of climate change and the growing scarcity of petroleum mandate that other forms of energy be found and developed with immediate attention. The world’s largest manufacturer of crystals used for solar energy, Hemlock Semiconductor, is located in Saginaw County. Wind energy use in Michigan is rapidly increasing. We must keep our state on the cutting edge of renewable energy.
- Removing the excessive subsidies to oil companies, who are making record profits, yet continue to get subsidized by the government. Maintaining these subsidies impacts our taxes, taking money from the vast majority of taxpayers, and adding to already astronomical corporate profits of oil and gas companies
- Supporting renewable energy standards. Michigan Democrats join the DNC in the belief that 50% of our national energy should come from renewable sources within the next decade.
- Enacting legislation with adequate procedures and safety measures to protect us when we allow drilling for oil under the seabed, especially when deep-water drilling. Regulatory agencies should not be taking the word of an oil company, especially one with a troubled history like BP, that deep-water wells can be quickly capped if there is trouble.
- Instituting energy-saving and conservation measures for both families and industry, reducing the need for energy. People should be given incentives to use better insulation and energy-conserving appliances for their homes.
- Creating incentives for families and small businesses to invest in pollution-free solar or wind renewable energy solutions by requiring utility companies to purchase, at a reasonable price, the surplus power produced by their residential and business customers. These measures will help make renewable energy systems more affordable to families and business, promote a cleaner, carbon-free environment and reduce dependency on foreign oil.

- Using the most modern technology for protecting human health and the environment in our power plants.
- Passing legislation to prevent price-gouging and ensure that Michigan citizens are paying a fair price for energy. The oil companies are making record profits, yet continue to get subsidized by the government.
- Assisting those who need help in paying their energy bills.

D. ACCOUNTABILITY & ENDING PUBLIC CORRUPTION

Democrats believe government and corporations must be accountable to the people. Yet in 2015, under Republican leadership in Lansing, Michigan was ranked as the worst state in the nation for government accountability and transparency, key measures in the prevention of public corruption. In the last four years alone, Republican leadership allowed corrupt state contracts involving Republican mega donors to take the place of competitive bidding, allowed Gov. Snyder to give sweetheart deals to his cousin and sanctioned the use of public tax dollars to fund Gov. Snyder’s criminal legal defense while blocking Democratic efforts to apply the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to the legislature and executive office.

Democrats believe we must take strong measures to improve the connection between the public and our government, and help the public hold those that deal with them, including corporations, clearly accountable for mistreatment and misdeeds. Regulatory agencies must put service to the people first. We must forge a culture that encourages individuals to take responsibility for their lives and for how they interact with others.

1. Judicial System: Serving the People, not Special Interests

Justice is the foundation of democracy. When the administration of justice is influenced by money, as has been the case with the current Republican majority on the Michigan Supreme Court, our most treasured values suffer. Democrats want to restore balance to a judicial system that has become the handmaiden of the powerful and rich.

Special interests have provided millions of dollars in political support for the Republican justices who rule in their favor and for laws that benefit corporate interests. The ultra-conservative, activist and extremist Republican judges have used their positions on the Michigan Supreme Court to attack long-standing civil rights laws, consumer protection laws, labor laws and environmental regulations. When conscientious lawyers complained about the Supreme Court’s transparent pandering to big money, the Court tried to silence their critics. Michigan needs a Supreme Court that will protect and defend the Constitution and the individual.

2. Government: Freeing Politics from Money Influence and Special Interests

Democrats want to make sure government is not for sale to the highest bidder and that the people’s voice is heard. Democrats will relentlessly push for reforms that diminish the role of special interests and make government more accountable and comprehensible. We insist on openness and integrity from our elected officials.

We believe the 2010 U.S. Supreme Court Citizens United decision permitting unlimited corporate political spending runs counter to a century of precedents in election law and is unhealthy for our political system. Michigan Democrats support efforts to enact legislation or amend the Constitution to protect our democracy from the corrupting influence of unaccountable corporate money. We deplore the decision in *McCutcheon v. FEC*, which will open the floodgates for even more money in our political system. We support federal and state legislation to prevent corporate and foreign money from corrupting the integrity of the political process, which this decision has now threatened. The huge influx of money into our political system resulting from this decision has greatly increased the need to see where this money is coming from.

Michigan Democrats’ campaign and governmental reform agenda includes:

- Institute new contribution limits. Limit contributions from all sources to all political committees (PACs) and parties each year as well as keep limits on contributions to candidate campaigns. Right now, some rich individuals and organizations can give unlimited amounts to a variety of groups to buy influence in

elections and government. The rich should not have more voice than others in getting government attention and action.

- Provide full disclosure of political contributions to candidates, parties, political foundations, and independent groups. Currently many campaign donors and sources of money aren't disclosed. Democrats would extend reporting requirements to the new political foundations, contributions to parties, independent expenditure organizations, and other groups used to evade disclosure requirements. We support the Michigan Corporate Accountability Amendment for disclosing the actual source of political and lobbying expenditures.
- Require politicians to disclose their personal finances. Candidates and officeholders need to reveal their income and personal wealth when they seek and hold office. Federal elected officials already do so. State and local elected officials should as well, using the federal disclosure model. We further call on Congress to enact legislation to require Presidential candidates to disclose their income tax returns.
- Put in place stronger ethics legislation requiring candidates and elected and appointed officials to reveal and avoid conflicts of interest, prohibit the payment of honoraria to state officials, ban the solicitation or receipt of political contributions in state buildings, and require public disclosure of legal defense fund contributions and expenditures.
- Use a voluntary public financing program for all statewide elected officials. A program now operating in several states and in Michigan for gubernatorial elections allows candidates for office to voluntarily limit their spending on campaigns in return for a share of a public financing pool. Without the need for non-stop fundraising, candidates and elected officials can avoid being beholden to interest groups. They can devote their time to getting to know the voters they will represent and then do their job. Democrats encourage a statewide system that includes many of the above measures and a public financing component as a first step. The Michigan gubernatorial system should be expanded to include all statewide-elected officials, including judges.
- End the contractor-contributor merry-go-round. Campaign contributions from recipients of state and local funds present an obvious conflict of interest. Contractors should not be able to buy consideration from elected officials. Democrats will ban such donations at the state level and encourage local communities to do the same.
- Close the lobbyist revolving door. Prohibit former state officials from lobbying their former agencies for at least one year after their government service ends.

3. Corporations: Insisting on Corporate Accountability

Democrats believe corporations must be held accountable for their behavior when they step over the line. We pledge to have our government committed to holding corporations, their accountants, boards, and executives accountable for their actions, and fighting for the public interest. In many areas, the state should take up its proper role as the guardian of the health, safety, and public interest against greed and negligence in the private sector. This responsibility particularly applies to corporations who receive government research funds or operate under a government contract. Democrats believe it is necessary to:

- Staff and fund regulatory agencies. Michigan and the United States both have many good laws, enforced by regulatory agencies. Unfortunately, in many cases, we do not have fully staffed and impartial regulatory agencies who actually enforce those laws and regulations. We must close the gap between the laws and their enforcement to ensure the safety and prosperity of our state. There is no greater example of so-called regulatory agencies abdicating their responsibility to protect the public than the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. Under Republican control, the MDEQ ignored its regulatory function instead opting to ensure minimal compliance for corporations and polluters. The Flint Water Crisis is a direct and tragic result of this failed experiment in government.
- Improve workplace safety. Workers should not risk death, illness or injury on the job. The Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) must protect the safety of workers. When workers are injured on the job, they need a reasonable safety net provided by worker compensation, with predictable benefits to tide them over until they can return to work.
- Increase corporate responsibility. The current economic and corporate environment has resulted in significant losses for those who invested their money in public companies. Their expectation was that their interests would be protected, and that companies would act with integrity in safeguarding those investments. The Michigan Democratic Party supports strong investor protections, including a shareholder's bill of rights; public company oversight board; inspections, investigations and disciplinary

actions; auditor independence; strong federal regulation of the accounting industry; corporate responsibility on the part of CEOs, CFOs and other executive officers; and enhanced financial disclosure.

- Enact corporate bankruptcy reform. We must protect American workers, not the wealth of comen like Donald Trump. Too often, corporations reward executives for the company's failure, while using current bankruptcy laws to hide offshore assets and cut wages and benefits for workers and retirees. Workers must retain solid pension plans so in the event of a corporate bankruptcy, they are first among creditors.
- Respect employees. Democrats recognize that employees are also customers of companies doing business in our state. Without appropriate compensation for their efforts, these workers will be unable to purchase products and services. We understand that the majority of individuals inherently want to use their skills and talents to contribute to the good of society, and we can tap into this reservoir in our efforts to promote the common good. Democrats are committed to protect and defend employee constitutional rights and freedoms, both in and away from the workplace.
- Preserve food safety. We support food safety legislation to ensure adequate inspection, testing, and comprehensive and informative labeling of all domestic and imported food, including organic food.
- Repeal Michigan's drug immunity law.

4. Consumer Protection: Protecting People in the Marketplace

Consumer rights can too easily be trampled by the unscrupulous. Reasonable and effective consumer safeguards are essential to holding corporations, insurers, financial institutions, and all those who operate in the marketplace accountable. We propose to elect officials, such as an Attorney General, who will actually be an advocate for the people and do the following:

- End the practices of redlining and credit scoring.
- Make the Michigan Consumer Protection Act applicable to insurance companies.
- Make the Michigan Insurance Commissioner directly accountable to the voters and provide for direct election of the Insurance Commissioner.
- Give the Insurance Commissioner stronger enforcement authority to hold health, disability, and auto insurance companies accountable.
- Restore accountability for negligent product design and manufacturing defects.
- Restore joint and several liability so that the innocent victim is not penalized, but that all the wrongdoers are punished.
- Allow for punitive damages.
- Allow aggrieved consumers the right to obtain a legal remedy for "bad faith" against insurance companies who do not negotiate claims in good faith. We would include a provision for recovery of the consumers' cost and attorney fees.
- Amend Michigan's Constitution to protect a person's right to a trial by jury in all civil actions to determine the amount of damages which are appropriate to be awarded in a case free from any legislative restrictions.

Many Michigan motorists are injured in automobile accidents, losing the ability to earn an income and incurring massive medical expenses. Too often, these accident victims suffer further when their No-Fault insurance carrier fails to honor a promise in their insurance contract. To give Michigan drivers and passengers proper protection, we must:

- Require auto insurance companies to advise claimants -- in plain English -- of the personal injury protection benefits to which they are entitled if they are involved in a covered auto accident.
- Require No-Fault insurance carriers to justify the rates they charge to consumers by opening up their books to public scrutiny.
- Require auto insurers to notify drivers that Uninsured Motorists and Underinsured Motorists coverage exists and to disclose whether they offer these coverages.
- Amend the government immunity statute so that state and county governments and their employees are held accountable for serious injuries and death suffered by victims of defective signage and design of public roads.
- Ensure that doctors with a history of malpractice errors are no longer protected by the silence of their accrediting institutions or employers.

Today's e-commerce world is providing new opportunities to deceive the public. These schemes must be exposed and stopped. New legislation to deal with Internet fraud and other new forms of fraud are needed in these areas:

- Unsafe & defective products, counterfeit drugs
- Internet privacy protection against companies that illegally resell information about consumers and their personal and buying habits to third parties.
- Unscrupulous investment schemes preying on the elderly.
- Bogus estate tax and tax shelter operators.
- Insurance companies failing to pay valid claims submitted in good faith.
- Excessive ATM fees and other padded credit and service charges levied by financial institutions.
- Phone and cable bills that obscure charges, services, and costs.
- Pricing and contract terms cloaked in opaque or misleading language.

5. Financial Services: Protecting People in Credit and Banking Transactions

Abusive practices by credit card companies are widespread, well-entrenched, and unlikely to end without stronger legislative action. Additional credit card regulations are needed:

- Prevention of an excessive initial charge for opening a new credit card account.
- Requiring a warning notice when consumers are about to engage in a debit transaction that exceeds the amount in their checking account.
- Restriction on the amount of overdraft charges so the charge cannot be completely out of proportion to the amount of the overdraft.
- Forbidding banks from automatically reordering the cashing of checks in a way that results in multiple overcharges.
- Stricter state regulation of pay day loan services.

6. Providing Proper Oversight of Our Financial System

Democrats are more resolved than ever not to repeat the mistakes of the past. Under the leadership of President Obama, our nation has recovered from the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. But we understand that the next crash is just around the corner if we turn the keys over to the same big banks and corporations that crashed the economy in 2008.

Dodd-Frank has done much to regulate Wall Street, restoring confidence in our system and calming global economic fears. Regulators keeping an eye on our economy must be supported. And for all the good that has been done, there is still much more work to do to make sure America continues to prosper. Future reform must include:

- The implementation of a 21st Century Glass-Steagall Act to ensure our savings will not be used to gamble on Wall Street.
- Creating tough new rules to protect the economy against the reckless, casino-style investments that led to the financial meltdown.
- Stopping taxpayer-funded bailouts of big banks and financial institutions and creating a means to shut down failing institutions.
- Reining in excessive pay and bonus schemes for CEOs, creating new safeguards against reckless investing.
- Fully funding and supporting the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which develops and enforces tough new protections for consumers using financial products such as credit cards, car loans, student loans or mortgages, including cracking down on the predatory mortgage lending that helped create the housing bubble.
- Tighten mortgage lending and investment requirements.
- Increase transparency of financial markets.
- Create a council of regulators to identify threats to the financial system.
- Regulate financial derivatives and require them to be traded openly.
- Regulatory agencies that monitor the banking system must be funded sufficiently to do their assigned job.

7. Local Government: Defending Our Democracy

The most accountable government is the government closest to the people. The Michigan Democratic Party supports local control of decision-making functions, and opposes efforts by Lansing Republicans to dictate all local environmental, civil rights, and employment decisions. We reject attempts at the state level to override locally established ordinances designed to protect the civil rights of all people. We condemn the installation of Emergency Managers across the state, and particularly in communities of color, despite a wholesale rejection by the people. Unaccountable bureaucrats cannot and must not be allowed to override the clear will of the people. Within a community, overlapping units of government, including public universities and the state, should abide by the standards established in the community by ordinance, especially those that relate to character of the community. Such ordinances include community master planning, zoning, and those that define the community's quality of life, such as living wage ordinances or noise regulations.

The Michigan Democratic Party recognizes the strain placed upon local governments as excess revenues are withheld by the state. We are committed to full funding for revenue sharing and to protecting the safety and fiscal integrity of every Michigan community.

Conclusion

The Michigan Democratic Party puts people first. The policy positions in this Platform address the needs and concerns of ordinary people in our state. Democrats ask for your support so we can change our country, our state, and improve our quality of life.