2020
LARAMIE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY
PLATFORM

As approved by the Laramie County Democratic Party Convention
this 2nd day of May, 2020 via Electronic Convention
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREAMBLE</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. HEALTHCARE</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. EDUCATION</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ECONOMY</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. CIVIL AND SOCIAL RIGHTS</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ENVIRONMENT</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHORS</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PREAMBLE

The Laramie County Democratic Party prepared this platform in the midst of a global pandemic, the onset of an economic recession, and during the largest wave of unemployment claims since the Great Depression. These larger forces compelled Wyoming citizens to reflect on what really matters in our lives. We see the value of labor. We see the value of a strong safety net. We see that we are stronger when we stick together. And we see how essential healthcare is to every single person, now more than ever. These are just some of our values. Here in Laramie County, we prepared this platform to make them known. And it’s in these most difficult times that values are most essential to guiding our collective path forward. As our lives are disrupted by social distancing caused by COVID-19, we are reminded of the unprecedented solidarity we now share. When we bring our collective resources to bear on a shared problem--any shared problem--we can solve it and make manifest our values in Laramie County, in Wyoming, and in the United States. In that spirit, we have outlined these shared principles to light the way forward.
1.HEALTHCARE

Healthcare is a basic human right. Laramie County Democrats believe all Laramie County residents should have comprehensive mental and physical healthcare services, with access to healthcare education, prevention, and treatment, regardless of ability to pay. We support all women making their own healthcare decisions. Public Health services should be accessible and available to everyone. Children, the sick, the disabled, the elderly, and other vulnerable members of society must be protected, such as communities of color and those who earn lower incomes. We believe in reducing healthcare disparities across race, income, education level, and other markers. With these principles in mind, the Laramie County Democratic Party supports the following positions:

1.01 Achieving high-quality, universal healthcare, accessible for all residents in the United States, irrespective of ability to pay, including comprehensive behavioral and physical health services, that may be achieved by public means. This position reflects our universally-held belief that healthcare is a human right.

1.02 Prioritizing health and coverage over profits in our healthcare system, giving everyone a chance to live a healthy life. Policies should ensure no one is required to forfeit their assets for long term or short term healthcare. We believe in a greater emphasis on preventive medicine in order to improve health and reduce costs of healthcare for all Laramie County residents.

1.03 Basing health policies on empirical data and best practices. We believe public funding should support research and education to promote health and prevent disease, so that in times of crisis, Laramie County residents are informed, protected, and appropriately treated by medical professionals.

1.04 Expanding mental health education, prevention, and treatment, including increased substance abuse services for Laramie County residents of all ages and socioeconomic status. Residents should have access to inpatient and outpatient mental health services within Laramie County. We denounce poor access to and quality of services, rights violations, and stigmatizing behaviors.

1.05 Fully funding public health programs that increase awareness and understanding of health issues which can adversely affect Wyoming citizens of any age, e.g., pandemics, suicide, domestic violence, intolerance, depression, anger, and bullying.

1.06 All women making their own decisions about their reproductive and healthcare decisions. Healthcare for women should include access to the full range of reproductive healthcare options, regardless of socioeconomic status. We strongly support free and equal access to confidential family planning as a vital component of healthcare, which includes fact-based, age-appropriate comprehensive sex education and pregnancy prevention services. We believe that a woman’s fundamental right to choose must be maintained.
2. EDUCATION

The Laramie County Democratic Party believes that a quality, safe education based on child-informed practices and evidenced-based curriculums is necessary for any child to succeed in life, and is a crucial function of government supported by a conscientious society. As supporters of education needed for a functional democracy and an educated citizenry, and with these principles in mind, the Laramie County Democratic Party supports the following positions:

2.01 Forming a statewide, state-funded, pre-Kindergarten program to equally make ready for Kindergarten all of Wyoming’s children.

2.02 Funding K-12 public education which enables and fosters small class size, state-of-the-art classroom facilities that promote excellence in learning, quality teachers and other education professionals and leaders, as prescribed in the Wyoming Constitution.

2.03 Education in our schools which includes and promotes the Humanities, Creative Arts, Social Sciences, Natural Science, Technology, Mathematics and formal Sciences, including evidence-based and science-based research, inside and outside of the classroom.

2.04 Diversity through the presence of different races, ethnicities, genders and sexual orientation in quality teachers and administrators, plus the board members in our primary through post-secondary education system.

2.05 Creating and maintaining a safe educational environment for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental disability or physical disability, including, but not limited to, the implementation of anti-bullying measures to protect the rights of our marginalized students to a quality education.

2.06 Offering after-school and enrichment activities that support the educational environment and working families.

2.07 Alternative discipline methods, including diversion programs, that reduce the need for methods such as suspension and expulsion, which can lessen educational opportunities and may lead to education inequality.

2.08 Policies that improve high school graduation rates for all students and facilitate higher post-secondary education attainment, including technical certificates or academic degrees.

2.09 Affordability for post-secondary education and the investment in our community college system, including technical certificates and academic degrees, as vehicles for job growth, economic development, life-long learning, an educated citizenry, and the future of our state and its families.

2.10 Investment in the University of Wyoming as an affordable and accessible vehicle for scientific-based research, job growth, and economic development.

2.11 Policies and programs that can increase the percentage of Wyoming’s population with a bachelor’s degree or higher.
3. ECONOMY

The Laramie County Democratic Party is committed to creating jobs, building the county GDP, and investing in sustainable business practices. From investing in diversified energy generation to protecting the hard workers, building our economy responsibly is significantly important so that everybody can feel proud to work and live here. We believe in utilizing the wealth earned in each sector to help defend against boom and bust cycles which makes our economy more robust. With these principles in mind, the Laramie County Democratic Party supports the following positions:

3.01 An economy that facilitates (i) collective bargaining as one of many tools to empower workers; and (ii) competitive compensation packages that incentivize more workers to come live and work in our county.

3.02 Fair-market housing prices for both buying and renting and measures to encourage first time home buyers and helping low-income renters.

3.03 Giving our residents a variety of economic options for housing to reduce the significant housing disparity between what is available and what is in demand.

3.04 Creation of new jobs across sectors, especially STEM fields to promote a diverse and competitive job market in which the gender pay gap dissipates rapidly.

3.05 Creating a living wage that replaces the minimum wage and ensures that it stays a living wage by being subject to annual cost of living adjustments.

3.06 Increasing opportunities for women and people of color in the Laramie County business and entrepreneurship communities.

3.07 That prosperity generated is shared among multiple sectors of the economy and not just limited to the regions in which the prosperity is built. By diversifying the economy sectors, we can promote a more resilient economy that does not depend so heavily on just tourism and the crude oil prices.

3.08 A more egalitarian society and increased living standards in future generations to help invigorate a larger, more diverse workforce.

3.09 Create or continue existing incentives for companies to either expand or relocate to our county and refocusing on attracting those businesses is a priority; we want to ensure that companies that do come here operate in such a way that they help drive supporting businesses and enable fair market competition.

3.10 Taking steps to create a sustainable economy where the benefits of that growth are distributed to the workers who helped drive the growth.

3.11 Expansion of social programs to continue to reduce homelessness that exists and work to build a transitional path from government supported housing solutions to independence.
The Laramie County Democratic Party believes we must strengthen and expand programs to protect the social well-being of all Wyoming citizens. We emphasize egalitarianism, social equality, protecting the environment, and strengthening the social safety net through liberalism. We support voting rights and minority rights, including LGBT rights, multiculturalism, and religious secularism. With these principles in mind, the Laramie County Democratic Party supports the following positions:

4.01 Funding of programs for research, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation, including victim shelters for domestic violence and promotion of domestic violence courts.

4.02 The sovereignty and Rights of Native Americans to ensure oversight of their resources and equal access to the voting process.

4.03 The right of families to have equal respect, responsibilities, and protections under the law. We support marriage equality and support the movement to secure equal treatment under law for same sex couples. We support legislation designed to deter bias-motivated violence.

4.04 Funding for affordable licensed childcare for all Wyoming families. We support funding for programs for prenatal and early childhood intervention and development practices that promote meaningful lifestyle changes and minimize delays in life skills development.

4.05 Client-centered programs to ameliorate serious problems facing children and families including poverty, mental health needs, violence, inadequate healthcare, alcohol and substances abuse, and weapons.

4.06 Programs to address Wyoming’s significant problem with pre-adolescent, adolescent, teen and youth suicide and provide outreach and psychiatric care with ongoing treatment to all Wyoming children, particularly lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth who are disproportionately affected. We are strongly supportive of transgender inclusive policies at the state, municipal and school district levels.

4.07 The pursuit of legalizing marijuana for both medical and recreational use, the growth of the industrialized hemp products market, and the appropriate taxation of those products.

4.08 Affordable housing in Laramie County, advocating for the building of these homes, and equitable access to them.

4.08 Opposition to using private facility companies to house or detain inmates, including undocumented immigrants, and the transfer of inmates out of state.

4.09 Recognizing both the quality of life and economic impact the arts have on Wyoming citizens, we strongly support funding for public media, the visual, performing, and liberty arts, and encourage the Wyoming Arts Council to develop additional public/private initiatives to fund and develop local artists.
5. ENVIRONMENT

The Laramie County Democratic Party is committed to protecting our natural resources while creating jobs, preserving habitats, and ensuring that future generations can enjoy our nation’s outdoor heritage. From investing in clean energy to protecting our air, land, and water, protecting the environment is a top priority. With these principles in mind, the Laramie County Democratic Party supports the following positions:

5.01 Climate change poses a real and urgent threat to our economy, our national security, and exacerbates systemic racial, regional, social, environmental, and economic injustices by disproportionately affecting vulnerable communities (e.g. indigenous peoples, communities of color, depopulated rural communities, low-income workers, the elderly, and youth).

5.02 The responsible development of our natural resources to create clean energy jobs while encouraging conservation, reducing energy waste, and protecting the environment.

5.03 A diversified portfolio of energy production systems through clean technologies that aggressively support the transition to clean renewable resources.

5.04 Continued improvements in existing energy setups that continue to make them cleaner and more competitive with renewable resources with subsidies only going to domestic energy producers that utilize the most efficient pollution reducing measures.

5.05 Public stewardship of the land ensures the mountains, streams, and other places we love will not only endure, but flourish.

5.06 We strongly support retaining public ownership of public lands for multiple uses and oppose transfer of federal lands to the state.

5.07 Our protected spaces provide important recreation areas for hunters, anglers, hikers, campers, and other recreationists as well as provide important habitat for Wyoming’s flora and fauna.

5.08 The enforcement of state and federal environmental laws and other efforts to prevent pollution and protect and enhance Wyoming’s valuable natural resources of clean air, water and unspoiled landscape.

5.09 Efforts to reconnect children with nature including incorporating outdoor education into the public school curriculum.

5.10 Decreasing the amount of waste going to the Laramie County Landfill by following the principles of reduce, reuse, and recycle and expanding the acceptable range of recycled materials.
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