

DRAFT MAINE DEMOCRATIC PARTY 2022 PLATFORM

Strike and replace the platform language with the following:

We dedicate this platform to the men and women of the US Capitol and Metropolitan Police who defended the Capitol on January 6th, 2021.

Through our Democracy, we mutually pledge ourselves to one another to “establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.” Today, our Democracy is under attack by enemies, foreign and domestic. Fringe political factions offer false promises of a return to an idealized past while peddling lies and intolerance, pitting neighbor against neighbor.

Together, Maine people can overcome any challenge. Diversity is our heritage and our strength. Success in governance is measured not by what we oppose, but by how our service nurtures our people and their potential. Maine Democrats believe in a government that lives up to its constitutional promises and responsibilities. We will battle to ensure that our state protects, values, and serves the dignity of every individual. We are the trustees of our children’s future. We will fight to leave them a thriving, livable planet. We, the Maine Democratic Party, pledge ourselves to you, the Maine People.

Every person deserves adequate food, housing, health care, education, and reproductive freedom. It is a moral failure in such a rich and powerful nation that many people do not enjoy such basic human rights. Only through protecting and advancing these rights will we realize our full potential as individuals, as a state, and as a nation.

In our healthcare system, no one should profit from the death or suffering of others. Healthcare reform must be structured so that all people receive high-quality comprehensive physical and mental health services when and where they need them, including in the home. Systemic health disparities across populations and third-party interference in clinician-patient decisions must be eliminated to achieve universal health care. The mental and physical well-being of Maine people is critical to our quality of life.

Promoting health, preventing disease, and eliminating the causes of poor health are essential functions of the government. An effective public health system is based on science, requires stable investment of resources, and is necessary to protect the well-being of all people in Maine.

Education prepares people to be active, engaged citizens – an essential component of a thriving democracy. We support full funding of public education, including special education, the arts, and other historically underfunded areas. Our educators deserve compensation consistent with their experience, qualifications, and importance to society. Our students deserve an honest treatment of all subjects, with a curriculum guided by educators, not corrupted by political agendas rooted in prejudice or unhinged from reality. Universal access to and full funding for quality childcare, early education, and higher education – including apprenticeships and other technical training – ensures the opportunity for all people to learn, grow, provide for themselves and their families, contribute to their communities, and thrive in an increasingly multicultural, multilingual, and connected world.

People have the right to safety, bodily autonomy, and reproductive justice. These encompass the entire spectrum of reproductive care, including abortion. Due to recent decisions by the Supreme Court, we must assert that people's reproductive rights shall not be abridged and shall be preserved and protected according to long-standing law and the constitutional right to privacy. Everyone deserves a safe workplace that is free from gender discrimination and harassment. We also recognize the lack of protection outside of the workplace in personal relationships. In support of these rights, we support Maine legislation that strengthens our laws on discrimination, harassment, stalking, domestic violence, and reproductive rights.

The core American ideal that all are created equal will always be worth fighting for against any who think themselves superior to those who are different from them. Our fight will not end until every person enjoys social justice and full equality under the law in all aspects of society, regardless of their race, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, socioeconomic status, or national origin.

Women comprise more than half of the population yet are treated as second-class citizens. The State of Maine ratified the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) of the U.S. Constitution in 1974. It is well past time to pass the Maine ERA and to incorporate it into the Maine Constitution. The Maine ERA states that the equality of rights under law may not be denied or abridged by the state or by any political subdivision of the state based on the sex of an individual. Maine's government shall have the power to enforce the amendment by appropriate legislation. Passage of this amendment will ensure the protection of women's rights in critical areas such as divorce, property, employment, self-determination, and health care.

We acknowledge that all of us live on ancestral homelands of Maine Indigenous Peoples. We must recognize, honor, and uphold the sovereignty and self-governance of all tribes in Maine, through state and federal recognition as codified in the U.S. Constitution. To accomplish this, we must actively support and build strong relationships with tribes through partnerships and community service.

Veterans, Active Duty, National Guard and Reserve Servicemembers comprise more than 12 percent of Maine adults, making Maine one of the top five states per capita they call “Home.” Their selfless service and sacrifice to the nation in placing the U.S. Constitution ahead of personal gain serve as an example for all. Individual Veterans, Servicemembers, and their Families can face significant challenges. These circumstances demand we fulfill our obligation to them by ensuring continuity of comprehensive health care during transitions from active/reserve status to veteran and civilian health services and a pathway for a successful, timely shift to civilian life through training, education, housing, and employment commensurate with their abilities and experience. At all times, Veterans, Servicemembers, and their Families must be treated with dignity and respect and protected from discrimination. These actions demonstrate our honor and gratitude to those who serve this great nation.

We honor the immigrant heritage of our nation by welcoming new Mainers. We support laws, policies, and practices that protect the human rights of immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees. We advocate comprehensive policies – administered in culturally competent ways – that allow all immigrants to work, support themselves and their families, provide a structural pathway toward citizenship, and enable them to participate fully in their new communities. We champion an expedited process to citizenship for those who serve or have served honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces. We support Maine’s Federal Refugee Resettlement Program, which for more than 40 years has assisted more than 10,000 people from more than 30 countries with the hope of finding peace, safety, and work for themselves and their families, to reside here, thereby enriching the diversity and culture of our communities.

Every individual has the right to equal pay for equal work, a living wage, a safe workplace, and freedom from discrimination and harassment. Workers deserve conditions and benefits that enable them to thrive, including paid vacation, family, and medical leave. All employees have the right to organize, form unions without interference, and bargain collectively.

The unjust influence of powerful elites concentrates too much wealth in too few hands and threatens our democracy and the health of our economy. To remedy this inequity, we will fight for progressive taxation of all income, including capital gains, so everyone pays their fair share of taxes. We will fight for fair wages and policies that support small businesses. We will defend the right of individuals to exercise their economic liberty, whether working for a wage or pursuing entrepreneurial success. We support a social safety net to end poverty and affirm the inherent dignity of each person because we are all stronger when we help each other succeed.

When government fails to serve the interests of all people, the people must be able to correct its course through voting. This is the foundation of our Democracy and depends upon the right to vote. Democracy dies when people are denied equal ability to vote or equal power for their vote. Democracy thrives when election laws guarantee equal access to the ballot box, ensure that every vote is counted and the outcome honored, and safeguard election security and integrity. It is essential that we enact federal election law to restore the full intent of the Voting Rights Act, thus ensuring all states have fair and unbiased voting laws. We support nonpartisan apportionment of legislative districts in all states, an auditable paper trail for transparent verification of election results, expansion of ranked-choice voting, and elimination of barriers in underrepresented communities, including among people of color, the poor, immigrants, seniors, and people with disabilities.

Officials at the highest level of government – fueled by social media and entertainment outlets posing as news media – have spread disinformation, misinformation, and other false claims that have very nearly destroyed our democracy and threaten it still. They must be exposed and renounced. The preservation of democracy requires an informed electorate, an independent and responsible press, and a public sphere dominated by indisputable facts. Legitimate political discourse depends upon truth and good faith action by all parties, and repudiation of hate speech and violent imagery. Those who take an oath to protect the U.S. Constitution yet actively work to weaken its foundation and betray our country must be held accountable under the law.

Our nation is experiencing a proliferation of factional political violence, hate speech, and verbal aggression. Systemic inequities which betray the spirit of our Democracy have left it vulnerable to propagandists and ideologues. This weaponizes fear and uncertainty into a toxic nationalism which seeks to take power by employing bigotry, violence, intimidation, and a breakdown of truth. The Maine Democratic Party rejects the use and acceptance of violence and intimidation as legitimate political discourse. We disavow the ideologies these fringe political factions promote. We pledge to act in truth and good faith to preserve our Democracy against the attacks of violent extremists.

A government of the people must protect and defend individual rights of all people – citizens and non-citizens. Systemic inequities and abuses by law enforcement, the courts, or other government officials will continue to weaken our communities and our nation until everyone can rely on their constitutionally guaranteed rights to privacy, equal justice before the law, a free press, and freedoms of speech, peaceable assembly, and religion, among others. Government institutions can only earn the trust of the people through accountability, transparency, oversight, and consequences for those who violate the public trust.

A just society constructs and implements its laws without bias. The unjust consequences of the racist War on Drugs, mass incarceration, harsh minimum sentencing, overburdened courts, and tacit empowerment of vigilantes disproportionately harm marginalized people. We need fundamental criminal justice reform that emphasizes elements such as rehabilitation, assures adequate and competent counsel, structures a bail system that does not push the poor further into poverty, and provides appropriate evidence-based alternatives to incarceration for those with mental illness or substance use disorder. We must proactively address societal problems through a system that places equal emphasis on the roles of professionals in social work, mental health, and law enforcement. This will increase public safety, decrease crime, and achieve a criminal justice system that is fair, just, and equitable.

We support an independent court system, unhindered by a nomination process vulnerable to political agendas. The constitutional guarantee of a fair and speedy trial demands court reform that addresses overburdened courts, places greater emphasis on incarceration diversion and reentry programs, and ensures access to affordable justice in civil and criminal court to limit the ability of wealthy individuals and companies to prevail by outlasting the financial resources of those seeking justice.

Climate change is a clear and present threat to our society. Without bold action to stabilize climate, none of our visions for a better world will be achievable. To preserve a livable planet, we must act now. We need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in all sectors through rapid deployment of green technologies and practices and by increasing energy efficiency. We need to preserve and improve the health of natural and agricultural ecosystems that already store carbon or are capable of absorbing more.

Maine's natural and agricultural resources, both land-based and marine, are among our most important assets. They are vital to Maine's economic sustainability, quality of life, and the well-being of future generations. We must conserve and protect our air, water, and land while supporting biodiversity, healthy ecosystems, and greenhouse gas mitigation. Economic and environmental justice compel us to address how the economic benefits of resource extraction and the social harm of environmental degradation impact communities unequally.

Mainers deserve to live and work with dignity within healthy ecosystems that rejuvenate and support us. We will build a resilient, environmentally sustainable economy in which all Mainers – rural and urban – are respected and have equitable access to the infrastructure and capital that enable us to develop new businesses from sustainable agriculture and green energy to artificial intelligence. We will create new jobs in keeping with Maine's legacy of trades, crafts, working waterfronts, small farms, and tourism, bringing a revitalization of local communities.

We believe in preserving our outdoor heritage and in maintaining responsible and accountable gun ownership, including universal background checks, while protecting the safety of all Maine people. We believe that gun safety measures are compatible with Maine's long-standing tradition of hunting and firearm ownership.

Maine is an active participant in the global economic community. From state-of-the-art semiconductors to wood and paper products to seafood, Maine's exports help to drive its economic growth and maintain economic stability. Our international trade supports more than 175,000 Maine jobs. Through its natural resources and its people, Maine is well-positioned to welcome the innovation that drives productivity and that contributes to global climate solutions. We support national and international partnerships that honor workers' rights and fair trade and that benefit Maine workers and our economy while protecting the environment and addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation.

International relations and diplomacy must support freedom, peace, and justice while enhancing security, upholding self-determination for all peoples, and striving to limit military action. We oppose the development, use, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and support international agreements prohibiting them. We support Maine's initiatives to advance cultural and diplomatic ties with other nations, including the Sister Cities International Program, the Maine National Guard's collaborative military-to-military program with U.S. allies, and Maine's Federal Refugee Resettlement Program.

American Democracy faces an existential threat. The values and rights espoused in the U.S. Constitution are under attack. Maine Democrats are pledged to protect them and to ensure they endure. We invite the Maine People to join us in our efforts and in working to become a more perfect Union.