

PLATFORM 2010 – JACKSON COUNTY DEMOCRATS

PREAMBLE

The Democratic Party of Jackson County stands for accountable and transparent representative democracy that protects individual rights, provides educational opportunities, expands health care, ensures public safety, protects the environment, promotes economic opportunity and supports job creation.

I. Human Rights

Jackson County Democrats believe that government support of our basic human rights is a fundamental cornerstone of our democracy and that our elected government representatives should keep that principle foremost in mind when considering actions on matters that may affect Oregonians.

1. We support a constitutional guarantee of equal legal status and equal treatment to all committed-relationship partners in State and Federal Constitutional law and legislation; we urge passage of federal legislation that mirrors the Oregon Equality Act's prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in four key areas: employment, housing, education and accommodations.
 2. We support the rights of Oregonians to form families legally, without gender discrimination or prejudice. We advocate the repeal of Article 15, Section 5a of the Oregon Constitution which limits the definition of marriage to opposite-sex couples.
 3. We support ending the "Don't ask, don't tell" policy in the U.S. armed forces.
 4. We support free speech as guaranteed by the Constitution. We oppose the advocacy of hate, intolerance and vigilantism by any individual, group or other entity and oppose the use of any form of public media by such entities for publicity or promotion in any form.
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II. Fairness in Government

Jackson County Democrats believe government should serve the needs of all citizens and not special interest groups who can buy access to secure favors. We support measures that will ensure continuing improvement of efficiency in government, including fiscal accountability. We should strive to elect candidates who will work for the good of our communities and state and who will sustain an open exchange of ideas with their constituents.

1. We support honesty in public service, including government appointments based on expertise rather than political ideology.
2. We advocate enforceable controls on lobbyists in the State Legislature and in Congress, including full disclosure of campaign contributions made to legislators by recipients of "earmarks".

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3. As pertains to the election process, we support:
 - a. Reform of the presidential primary system by establishing sequential, regional primaries
 - b. Campaign-finance reform that favors adequate public financing of elections and enforceable limits on expenditures
 - c. Nation-wide standards for verifiable voting that include hard copy verification, open-source software for vote-tabulating equipment and random hand audits at all voting levels
 - d. Legislative and congressional districting that fairly and accurately represents the populace without gerrymandering for political gain
 - e. Requiring licensed commercial media outlets to provide free air time equitably, during normal viewing hours, for political candidates.
4. We oppose national security policies that limit or seek to limit individual freedoms as defined in our Constitution. We support continuance of a clear separation between church and state.

III. Education for a Better Future

Jackson County Democrats believe that public education is fundamental to economic prosperity, to a good quality of life, and to an informed, responsible populace. We support the improvement of public school education standards and support the right of Oregonians to pursue their own vision of educational opportunity regardless of age, gender, race or religious preference.

1. We advocate adequate, stable funding for reading and writing, literature, mathematics and science, music, the arts, and athletics programs for public schools K–12.
2. We advocate finding ways to reduce tuition fees so that any Oregon student who qualifies scholastically will be financially able to attend college, university, or vocational school without incurring excessive debt.
3. We support efforts to improve and enhance performance of teachers and students.
4. We support educational and vocational programs that enhance student opportunities for success, such as
 - a. Public funding of pre-school programs developed by using a “Head-Start”-type program as the model
 - b. Public funding of full-day kindergarten
 - c. Providing the opportunity for all elementary school-level students to learn a second language
 - d. Providing after-school recreation and education enrichment programs

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- e. Providing quality in-school substance abuse and sex-education programs
 - f. Increasing the number of vocational/technical courses for secondary students
 - g. Improving the availability and breadth of adult and post-secondary school programs such as “English-as-a-Second-Language” courses.
5. We oppose the sharing of student records with credit-card companies and military recruiters without written consent.
 6. We support increased education in our county pertaining to cultural/ethnic identity to combat racial inequality and ethnic bias, and we support schools' efforts to encourage under-represented minority groups to get involved in the process of guiding school practices and procedures.
 7. We advocate that our public schools provide effective bi-lingual education whenever possible, and urge that reasonable efforts be made to ensure that school/parent communication be carried out in a language that parents understand.

IV. Health Care

Jackson County Democrats regard healthcare as a right, and believe everyone should have access to comprehensive care that is affordable, and that emphasizes life-long good health practices and injury and disease prevention.

1. We support continued improvement to the delivery of health care through the Oregon healthcare reform process enacted into law in 2009 and we support seeking a Federal waiver allowing Oregon to provide a state-sponsored “public option” for all Oregonians.
2. We urge prompt implementation of the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and its accompanying Reconciliation Act. We also urge Congress to adopt a provision allowing a “government option” that does not involve private insurance companies.
3. We Support:
 - a. An individual’s right to make end-of-life decisions free of government interference
 - b. A woman’s right to make her own reproductive choices without government interference
 - c. Adequate funding for programs dealing with service-induced health needs of military veterans, and for outreach programs to help veterans access their benefits
 - d. Adequate coverage of mental health care by all health insurance plans
 - e. The provision for interpreters at health-care and other public-service agencies
 - f. Programs that encourage individuals to attain and maintain their own good health.

V. Our Natural and Cultural Heritage

Jackson County Democrats stand for stewardship of our environment based on the best science available. Oregon is uniquely endowed with natural beauty and resources; we have a particular responsibility to maintain its irreplaceable farmlands, open spaces, natural areas, clean air and water, and to develop our economy in ways that protect our natural environment. Likewise, Oregon's unique historic and cultural heritage should be preserved.

1. We oppose the construction of liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities in Oregon, including the terminal proposed for Coos Bay and its associated pipeline that would traverse southern Oregon, because such facilities would pose long-term safety, environmental and economic problems.
2. Recognizing global climate change as a dire threat, we advocate statewide energy conservation measures such as urban mass transit, "green" building codes, consideration of new-generation nuclear power plants and continuing the development of "green" energy sources such as solar, wind and wave.
3. We support the development of technologies that reduce the negative ecological impacts of fossil fuel extraction and use, while simultaneously reducing our dependence on imported oil.
4. We advocate comprehensive state-wide planning to protect valuable farmland, encourage self-contained communities, and respect the integrity of existing neighborhoods. Eminent domain should be used only when there is a clear public benefit.
5. We advocate continued protection of public lands in Oregon.
6. We support increased funding for the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to add to its mandate evaluations that examine effects on human health and that permits it to respond effectively to ecological problems.
7. We support formation of the Rogue Valley Heritage District as a means to restore funding for our historical societies and museums.
8. We support our public library system and urge that funding, staffing and hours of operation be restored to previous levels.
9. We advocate full implementation of HB 3013 by creating 2 initial sites as marine reserves and further studying the other 4 sites identified in the Ocean Policy Advisory Council recommendations.

VI. Safety and Social Services

Jackson County Democrats believe government should provide safety and social services that individuals cannot reasonably provide. Safeguarding and promoting healthy communities requires adequate funding for law enforcement, drug education and rehabilitation, job training, and other vital social service programs. We believe that public institutions should help parents cope with the demands of parenthood.

1. We advocate closer integration of social and public safety services, and encourage cooperative strategies while addressing crime prevention and law enforcement.
2. We advocate regular review of rules and policies relating to criminal sentencing. We support flexible sentencing and an emphasis on rehabilitation in correctional institutions.
3. We support legislation and programs that protect children from weapons, dangerous drugs, and abuse by peers or adults. We support:
 - a. Quality child-care for working parents
 - b. Emergency residential shelters for children
 - c. Adequate security measures in public schools
 - d. Adequate staffing for human-service and public-safety activities.
4. We advocate programs that support low-income and disadvantaged workers, and include support for child care, transportation, health care, job training and affordable housing.
5. We support a safe food supply, with requirements for humane treatment of animals, and for truth in labeling food content and origins. We urge careful monitoring of genetically-engineered organisms in Oregon agricultural practices and strict standards for research procedures to maintain isolation of those organisms from natural systems.
6. We advocate improved communications between local citizens' Emergency Response Teams and the federal Department of Homeland Security, including FEMA.

VII. Economic Opportunity for All

Jackson County Democrats support the creation of jobs paying a living wage. We believe the right of workers to organize and bargain with their employers is fundamental to our way of life. We support measures that foster and protect small businesses, that encourage employee ownership and that discourage unfair competition from large multinational corporations.

1. We support growth and development of sustainable businesses in areas such as alternative energy, mass transportation, and energy conservation.

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2. We support measures that outlaw efforts by businesses and government to undermine organized labor.
3. We support federal comprehensive immigration reform that provides fair treatment to documented and undocumented immigrants. Reform should include an affordable path to citizenship.
4. We support reforms that help to prevent illegal entry into the United States.
5. We support the right of immigrants to consult local, state, and federal authorities regarding their personal and family safety, their educational pursuits, and their medical needs, without repercussion, detention, or deportation.

VIII. Fiscal Accountability

Jackson County Democrats support measures to ensure efficiency in government, including strict fiscal accountability. Taxes on individuals and businesses should be fair and progressive, and tax revenues should provide adequate funding of appropriate government services.

1. We support improved enforcement of the tax code to ensure adequate funding of local, state, and federal government.
2. We urge enactment of alternative taxes in Oregon, such as a sales tax or “value added” tax, to reduce dependency on state income tax and property taxes.
3. We support repeal of the Oregon constitutional provision for the “kicker”, with those funds to be used to finance a “rainy day” reserve fund.

IX. Our Nation and the World

Jackson County Democrats expect the leaders of our country to regularly present the American people with candid realistic assessments of national issues and to work on restoring commity to the legislative process. We should use our national power to make common cause with others who would act with us for the well-being of present and future generations world-wide. We believe that our country needs to reestablish its international image as a beacon of freedom, justice, and opportunity.

1. We urge the U.S. Senate to modify its rules at the beginning of the 2011 session so as to limit the use of the filibuster.
2. We oppose national security policies that operate outside the law.
3. We advocate restoration of state review of rulings by FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission), including final site approval.

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4. We support international efforts that respond firmly and intelligently to terrorism. We believe that our government should engage the world primarily through diplomacy, cooperation, and non-military initiatives as they may arise.
5. We support planned, orderly withdrawal of American combat troops from Iraq.
6. We support President Obama's policy in Afghanistan and expect him to honor our commitment to begin withdrawing American troops by July 2011. We support efforts to protect the safety of the troops and the civilian population.
7. We applaud President Obama's successful negotiations towards elimination of nuclear armaments worldwide.
8. We support efforts to ensure that the American diplomatic corps are conversant in their host country's culture and language.
9. We support international programs that promote human rights, gender equity, universal education, toleration of religious differences, and freedom from poverty.
10. We believe that international corporations should adhere to international law, stringent environmental standards and human-rights guarantees.
11. We support the TRADE Act (Trade Reform, Accountability, Development and Employment Act) that would create a new trade and globalization model, and Fair Trade Agreements that guarantee the rights of foreign and domestic workers.
12. We support measures that aid the economies of Third World countries such as provision of low-interest loans and debt forgiveness in extreme cases.

- End of 2010 Platform -