

The Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party Platform

Ongoing Platform

This portion of the platform embodies the beliefs and principles of the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party. Plank numbers are for reference purposes only and do not reflect rank or priority.

Agriculture

The family farm is the keystone of our society and must be preserved.

We support:

1. Preservation and protection of farmland through soil conservation and sound sustainable ecological practices.
2. The economic well-being of rural communities through the preservation of small business and family farms and fair prices for agricultural products.
3. Access to farm credit at reasonable terms and interest rates, including temporary relief during economic emergencies.
4. Educational research and development programs, including sustainable agriculture.
5. Cooperative and marketing systems structured for the financial security of producers and improvement of products.
6. Use of agricultural surpluses to alleviate hunger in the United States and all other nations.

Business and Community Development

We believe American business, properly encouraged and regulated, can bring economic prosperity to all, but if it does not, we believe government should take appropriate actions to bring about that prosperity.

We support:

7. Reasonable regulations that encourage fair competition, ensure safety, environmental and labor standards, and prevent price discrimination.
8. Community reinvestment to promote local business and home ownership.
9. Small business development, especially ownership by members of economically disadvantaged groups.
10. Regulation of interstate businesses, especially banks, to prevent adverse effects on locally owned businesses and banks.
11. Economic investment in troubled regions or industries.
12. Responsible use of economic development funds.
13. Businesses that build, employ and invest in the United States.
14. Affordable housing for all Minnesotans, including assistance to local governments that promote mixed-income housing opportunities.

Civil, Human, and Constitutional Rights

We recognize that when the rights of any citizen are threatened, the rights of all are endangered. We therefore pledge to preserve our constitutional and civil rights.

We support:

15. Separation of church and state and the right to privacy.
16. Only voluntary enlistment in the armed services.

We oppose:

17. Discrimination against any person on the basis of race, creed, religion, sex, sexual or affectional orientation, HIV status, marital or homemaker status, disability or age.
18. Government interference in all matters related to the control of one's own body, including protection of the rights of women to bear children, practice birth control and obtain safe and legal abortions, and the rights of patients and their families, guardians, and physicians to honor a decision not to extend life by artificial means.

19. Barriers to participation in society.

Consumer Issues

We believe consumers have a right to safe and reasonably priced products, fair treatment in the marketplace, and complete and accurate information about products and services.

We support:

20. Fully-funded consumer education and public enforcement to protect consumers from fraudulent practices.
21. Equally available and affordable goods and services that meet consumer needs such as public utilities, transportation, consumer credit, insurance, telecommunications access and housing.
22. Food quality and labeling standards that protect the public from unsafe food products and deceptive labeling.
23. Licensing of health care professionals and counselors and establishment of health care data collection systems to inform the public about costs and quality of health care.
24. Requiring housing inspection when government-backed mortgage loans are involved, with liability for failure to notice defects.

Education

We believe a vigorous and universally available system of public education is basic to a productive, democratic society.

We support:

25. A strong system of public education at all levels, with stable funding and equal educational opportunities.
26. Academic freedom, student and faculty rights, and church-state separation in public school curriculum and educational funding.
27. Moderate class sizes and a safe, suitable environment for both students and teachers.
28. A broad curriculum of liberal arts, technology, and social issues.
29. High standards for teachers and compensation that reflects the responsibilities society places on them.
30. Effective services in the areas of health, counseling, careers, and nutrition.
31. Publicly accessible, high quality libraries and information systems.
32. High quality, well-funded post-secondary education, affordable for everyone.
33. Continuing education and adult literacy programs.

Energy

We believe in safe, sustainable and secure energy sources that offer coming generations access to fuels and power.

We support:

34. Increased use of renewable energy sources.
35. Aggressive energy conservation in transportation, commercial, industrial, residential and governmental sectors.
36. Decreasing dependence on nuclear power.

Government Accountability to the Public

We pledge to ensure the political rights of all citizens through fair elections and responsible government.

We support:

37. Campaign finance reform, including:
 - a. Fair public financing of presidential and congressional elections.
 - b. A ban on gifts from lobbyists to elected officials.
 - c. Disclosure of financial political campaign support.

38. Enforcement of standards of ethical conduct and accountability for elected officials.
39. Ensuring public availability of government information.
40. Policies that enforce honest conduct by government officials and contractors who provide services to government agencies.
41. Adequate government funding for research and development in areas of humanitarian and scientific significance.
42. Government agency actions that ensure citizen safety and fair treatment.
43. Providing veterans and military personnel with the appreciation, respect, and benefits deserved because of honorable service to our country.
44. Efforts to locate and bring home service personnel who are prisoners of war or missing in action.
45. Native American tribes' rights to self-government and the generation of revenue to serve their people.

We oppose:

46. Unnecessary government regulations.
47. Using government agencies for political purposes.
48. Laws and policies that restrict government employees' right to participate in the political process.

Health and Human Services

We believe that all people should have the opportunity to be self-sufficient, secure and healthy. Cost-effective and adequately funded programs can help ensure these basic needs.

We support:

49. Nationally funded, community –based comprehensive and affordable health care for all.
50. Services to children to ensure their healthy start in life.
51. Adequate provision for the needs of physically, mentally or emotionally challenged persons, including in-home and institutional care services.
52. Institutional and outpatient mental health programs and services that provide equal access, continuity of care, and protection of patient rights.
53. Private and public funding for health care programs that include pregnancy care, family planning and abortions, regardless of age or income.
54. Expedited funding for AIDS and HIV research, and care for the afflicted.
55. Programs to assist displaced persons, including refugees, displaced homemakers, and the homeless.

Labor and Employment

We promote the American labor movement and the rights of all workers.

We support:

56. The right of workers to organize and bargain collectively.
57. Comparable wage standards and pay equity.
58. A minimum wage that keeps pace with inflation and provides full time workers with an income above the poverty level.
59. Adequate compensation for injured workers.
60. Programs to promote full employment.
61. Hiring Minnesotans for jobs created when state/local tax incentives are involved in development projects.

We oppose:

62. The permanent replacement of striking workers.
63. Sexual harassment in the workplace.

National Security and International Policy

We recognize the intertwined relationship between national security and international policy. We believe in a foreign policy that strives for international cooperation, supports human rights, and respects international justice. Such a policy will have the effect of restoring American leadership in world affairs and thereby greatly enhancing the security of our borders as well as the safety of our citizens at home and abroad

We support:

64. Free elections and democracy.
65. Foreign aid that helps people achieve economic self-sufficiency.
66. Fair trade policies based on mutual understanding of each country's problems and culture.
67. The protection and promotion of women's rights, including comprehensive, adequately funded international family planning programs. Countries receiving foreign aid must be required to protect and promote women's rights.
68. United Nations mediation of international conflicts and global reduction in armed forces and nuclear and conventional weapons.
69. Israel's right to exist within secure borders, Palestinian rights to self-determination, and continued peace efforts in the Middle East.
70. Marine life conservation and prohibition of drift netting.
71. International cooperation to protect the global environment in areas such as preventing acid rain, preserving the rainforests, preserving the ozone layer, and preventing global warming.

We oppose:

72. Terrorism, and dictatorial and exploitative international policies.
73. All forms of United States exploitation in foreign countries, and any attempts to dictate their political systems.

Natural Resources and the Environment

We believe in leaving the world in better condition than we found it.

We support:

74. Preservation of biodiversity and wilderness.
75. Strong environmental programs with provisions for strong enforcement that provide for healthy surroundings for all citizens and for sustainable, long term use of natural use of natural resources and a strong role for government in environmental protection.
76. Living and working conditions free from significant exposure to poisons and radioactivity in air, water and soil.
77. Responsibility of individuals, businesses and government to notify others of possible environmental hazards, to clean up those they have created, and compensate others for any resulting damages.
78. Industry incentives, public education and collection programs to reduce consumption of resources and production of hazardous waste.

We oppose:

79. Disposal of hazardous wastes below ground.
80. Nuclear power, as it is not a viable energy source.

Public Safety and Crime Prevention

We advocate strong law enforcement policies combined with vigorous crime prevention programs that emphasize education, treatment and rehabilitation.

We support:

81. Protection of victims of crime through the mandatory arrest of domestic abusers and mandatory sentences for convicted rapists, as well as government-funded programs to house, treat, counsel and educate victims of abuse, rape or other violence.

82. Protection of children exposed to abuse or violence, with stiff penalties for child abusers.
83. Reasonable firearm policies that promote public safety and crime prevention without infringing on the rights of hunters and other sports enthusiasts.
84. Enforcement of traffic safety laws, particularly against chemically-impaired drivers.
85. Mandatory sentencing of drug dealers.
86. Abolition of capital punishment, and freedom from unreasonable searches, seizures and surveillance contrary to our constitutional rights.

Retirement Security

We believe all Americans have a right to a secure retirement.

We support:

87. The independent status of Social Security, with funds invested and used solely for payment of benefits.
88. Full funding of Medicare and Medicaid.
89. Full funding and protection of retirement programs.

Tax and Budget Policy

We believe government budgets must be based on sound fiscal policies and fair taxation aimed at achieving economic growth, conservation of resources and full employment.

We support:

90. A progressive tax structure with minimal reliance on sales and excise taxes.
91. Taxing all income producing property owned by tax-exempt organizations, at the same rate as other income producing property.
92. Establishing a lower tax base for industry in rural areas of Minnesota as an aid to the economic well-being of those areas.
93. Taxing agricultural lands on the basis of production value rather than market value.
94. Providing tax incentives for equity investment in small businesses.
95. Reducing the military budget and using the savings to fund social, scientific and environmental programs and research and development.
96. Exempting senior citizens from paying property taxes if their income does not exceed 125% of the poverty level and they live in single-family homes.
97. Denying tax exemptions for schools that practice or advocate racial segregation.

Transportation

We believe that in order to prosper, all residents and businesses must have access to efficient and affordable transportation.

We support:

98. Multi-modal, environmentally sensitive solutions that use natural resources efficiently.
99. Well-designed and maintained roads and bridges throughout the state.
100. Increased investment in Minnesota's transportation and infrastructure, on a regional and statewide basis, including public transportation, mass transit, commuter rail corridor, light rail, buses, pedestrians and bicycles.

DFL Action Agenda for 2004-2006

This portion of the platform lists the legislative priorities of the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party. Planks numbered between 101 and 200 were introduced at the precinct caucus level and passed by at least 60% of the delegates attending the 2004 Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party convention. This DFL Action Agenda will sunset at the 2006 state convention. Plank numbers do not reflect rank or priority.

Agriculture

101. Maintain the right of townships to do planning and zoning which is more stringent than the county in regard to large development projects, including animal feedlots.
102. Support "Country of Origin" labeling of foods including meat, fish and poultry.
103. Strengthen USDA meat inspection requirements to ensure that a higher percentage of cattle are tested for BSE (mad cow disease) and prevent downer cattle from entering the food supply.
104. Strengthen environmental review of large development projects, including livestock feedlots, before they are built.
105. Prohibit the routine use of antibiotics in animal feed or feed supplements. Veterinary antibiotics shall be used only to treat bacterial infection in order to reduce emergence of resistant bacteria.
106. Fully fund the Conservation Security Program to help farmers implement conservation and sustainable agriculture practices on their land.
107. Break up agricultural monopolies in order to restore a strong, independent family farm system with fair prices for farmers and healthful food for consumers.

Business and Community Development

108. Provide affordable housing for all Minnesotans, including assistance to local governments that promote mixed income housing opportunities.
109. Enable small businesses to group together to afford health insurance for employees.
110. Limit ownership of media markets, stations and newspapers by any corporation or individual.

Civil, Human and Constitutional Rights

111. Oppose federal legislation that limits or violates fundamental rights or liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.
112. Repeal the Patriot Act.
113. Repeal the Homeland Security Act and prohibit any efforts by law enforcement agencies to discriminately enforce laws on any ethnic and religious groups or by socio-economic status.
114. Oppose any state or federal constitutional amendments banning same sex marriage or limiting access to social institutions, such as marriage, civil unions, etc.
115. Prohibit any efforts to subpoena personal medical records, including records of abortions and HIV test results, excluding convicted sex offenders.
116. Increase funding to state public defenders and legal aid programs to ensure equal justice under the law regardless of ability to pay.

Consumer Protection

117. Reduce the corporate concentration (oligopoly) of the media, including but not limited to TV, radio, print journalism and the motion picture industry and return to the "equal time rule" in news coverage.
118. Protect public ownership of the airwaves, and prohibit private subleasing of airwaves.

119. Allow importation of prescription drugs from foreign countries that follow the same high level of safety for importing other goods, including listing of the ingredients on the label, expiration date, and that the drug has been approved for human consumption by the FDA.
120. Prohibit interference with asbestos victims' rights to recover from manufacturers any claim for injuries or death.

Education

121. Reaffirm our commitment to Minnesota's public education system that includes strong support for uniform and equal educational opportunities for all students, professional salaries and benefits for education employees, and appropriate state funding for all education programs in early childhood, K-12, special education and higher education.
122. Amend the "No Child Left Behind Act" so it provides excellent learning opportunities for all children and full funding for implementation.
123. Oppose voucher proposals that provide public funds to private or parochial schools.
124. Fully fund special needs and special education; require the federal government to meet its more than 25-year-old commitment to fund 40% of the cost.
125. Adequately fund the University of Minnesota and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) to keep tuition costs affordable, increase levels of financial aid, provide for the upkeep of buildings, and allow the upgrading and expansion of technology on all campuses.
126. Provide sufficient funding to Minnesota's public higher education system so the state meets its legally stipulated 67% share of college instructional costs.
127. Support the State of Minnesota's right not to adhere to un-funded federal mandates for education or policy programming.
128. Fully fund all federal and state mandated educational programs.
129. Increase funding for all day, every day Kindergarten, Early Childhood Family Education, School Readiness and Head Start programs to maintain and improve school readiness for young children.

Energy

130. The State of Minnesota support additional research and development of renewable energy including biodiesel, ethanol, and wind energy.
131. Increase federal fuel efficiency standards for new cars and extend them to light trucks (up to 8,000 lb.) and SUVs and create incentives to purchase energy efficient vehicles.
132. Increase production of renewable energy fuels (ethanol & biodiesel) to reduce dependence on foreign oil.
133. Aggressively develop renewable clean energy sources including wind, solar, hydroelectric, and biomass together with conservation to reduce our reliance on fossil and nuclear fuels.
134. Support Federal investment in research and development of energy alternatives and new technologies that would reduce polluting fossil fuel emissions, reduce world dependence on oil, and increase the amount of renewable energy which utilities produce or purchase, and export these technologies.
135. Provide incentives for the construction of energy-efficient buildings and increase energy efficiency in appliances, existing homes, factories and other structures.
136. Mandate environmental impact studies for power generating facilities using nonrenewable energy sources.

Government Accountability to the Public

137. Ensure any electronic voting machines meet the following conditions:
 - Generates a voter-verifiable paper ballot
 - Provides a method for the voter to correct mistakes

- Preserves the paper ballots for recounts and audits
 - Mandates a minimum percentage of random surprise audits
138. Ensure that congressional and legislative redistricting is done without regard to partisanship or incumbency and that the resulting districts are contiguous and compact.

Health and Human Services

139. Negotiate reduced drug prices for all Minnesotans who lack prescription drug coverage.
140. Enact a Universal Single-Payer Health Insurance plan, which includes adequate prescription drug coverage for all Americans.
141. Ensure accessible, affordable, high-quality, comprehensive health care, including prescription drug medications, for every Minnesotan.
142. Enact the Paul Wellstone Mental Health Insurance Parity Act, which provides for mental health parity in insurance policies.
143. Allow the use of embryonic stem cells in conducting medical research for curing diseases.
144. Support state and federal funding for reproductive health services, including access to comprehensive family planning, HIV/STI (Sexually Transmitted Diseases) prevention and for age-appropriate, medically accurate, comprehensive sexuality education.
145. Fully fund Veterans Hospitals, Veteran's Affairs and Veterans medical benefits
146. Provide home and community-based programs for senior citizens and vulnerable adults, including non-institutional options for those who choose to remain living in their homes.
147. Restore funding to the Minnesota departments of Health and Human Services and their programs.
148. Restore Minnesota Care to its original intent and purpose.

Labor and Employment

149. Require all employers to comply with workers' rights to unionize, provide unions access to workers on the job, support card checks of the majority's chosen union; cease forcing workers into anti-union meetings; and pay prevailing wages on all publicly funded projects.
150. Protect public service employees from outsourcing and privatization.
151. Support policies that create high paying jobs and oppose all efforts and trade policies that result in outsourcing of American jobs to foreign countries.
152. Support PELRA (Public Employee Labor Relations Act) in its present form and strongly oppose any legislative proposal to weaken PELRA and any of its provisions for collective bargaining rights and protections for public employees.
153. Strengthen enforcement of Federal and Minnesota prevailing wage laws and oppose any effort to repeal or weaken such laws.
154. Abolish all exemptions to the minimum wage, including counting tip income as a part of the minimum wage.
155. Strengthen Minnesota's dislocated worker program so that people who lose their jobs can retrain and find new ones that pay as well or better than their previous positions.
156. Oppose all efforts to reduce overtime pay for millions of American workers.
157. Provide a cost of living pay increase for personnel working in long-term care, day care and related health and human service work.
158. Fully fund Sliding Fee Day Care Assistance so waiting lists do not prevent people from working.
159. Oppose all legislation for a "Right to Work" state.
160. Prohibit use of public funds to block union organizing, require employers to maintain neutrality, support passage of the Employee Free Choice Act, and require binding arbitration for first contracts.

National Security and International Policy

161. Lead the world in reducing and eliminating the threat of nuclear war by reaffirming and implementing all treaties supporting nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and nonnuclearizing of space.
162. Work to eliminate land mines.
163. Renounce the doctrine of preemptive war.
164. Obey all treaties to which the United States is a signatory and work towards international treaties that protect human rights and promote justice, peace and freedom across the globe.
165. Refuse financial and military aid to countries that abuse human rights but aid the efforts of peoples working toward self-determination.
166. Pay United Nations dues promptly and actively participate in the United Nations to achieve world peace.
167. Turn over the Iraq occupation to the United Nations as soon as possible.
168. Ratify the Kyoto Protocol to reduce greenhouse gases that contribute to global climate change.
169. Repeal the “Authorization for Use of Military Force against Iraq Resolution of 2002” and reserve the exclusive power to declare and wage war to Congress.
170. Support funding for AmeriCorps, VISTA and the Peace Corps.
171. Immediately stop all funding for the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHISC, previously called the School of the Americas) and establish an independent commission to assess the school and its graduates’ involvement in human rights atrocities and military coups in the world.

Natural Resources and the Environment

172. Strengthen Off Road Vehicle/All Terrain Vehicle/Snowmobile regulations to protect public lands and wildlife from damage, restricting them to trails posted for their use, and provide sufficient resources to the DNR to enforce the regulations, and reserve some areas of public land for non-motorized use.
173. Adopt a comprehensive trail plan that separates motorized and non-motorized use areas, protects sensitive lands and waters, sets enforcement standards, and establishes source funding.
174. Protect for future generations the approximately 89,000 acres of roadless area adjacent to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.
175. Prohibit any economic exploitation of our national parks, forests, and public lands with critical habitat or endangered species, including drilling for gas and oil, clear cutting timber, and logging old growth forests, with special attention to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the Tongass National Forest (Alaska).
176. Require installation of state-of-the-art mercury control technologies at all coal-fired power plants, and enforce a state mercury reduction goal of 90% by 2010, and elimination by 2020.
177. Strengthen and enforce the Clean Air, Clean Water, Endangered Species Acts and the Roadless Initiative.

Public Safety and Crime Prevention

178. Maximize the sentence of repeated sex offenders and enforce strict release requirements that protect our neighborhoods.
179. Repeal the “Minnesota Personal Protection Act of 2003” otherwise known as “Conceal and Carry”.
180. Reject immunity from lawsuits for the firearms industry.
181. Subject gun show transactions to the same rules and regulations as those of licensed gun dealers.

182. Extend and strengthen the “assault weapons” ban.
183. Develop and enhance community-based treatment systems in Minnesota to divert low-level drug/alcohol offenders into treatment.
184. Restore funding to the battered women’s sexual assault, abused children’s, and general crime victim program and develop resources for them in all 87 Minnesota counties.
185. Mandate that all licensed Public Safety Officers in Minnesota receive a minimum of 40 hours of training in recognizing the signs of mental illness, skills for de-escalation of situations involving mental illness, and applying the use of non-lethal intervention strategies.
186. Oppose reinstatement of the death penalty in Minnesota, and abolish capital punishment elsewhere in the United States.

Retirement Security

187. Oppose any efforts to use the funds in the Public Employee Retirement Systems (PERA) for any purpose other than providing retirement benefits to the eligible employees and retirees.
188. Oppose privatizing Social Security.
189. Social Security benefits shall not be reduced as a way to balance the federal budget.
190. Separate Social Security funds from the general budget and protect them from being used for other government purposes.
191. Require corporations who verbally or in writing promise their employees retirement medical benefits to honor those promises.
192. Fully fund Medicare and Medicaid.
193. Amend 2003 Medicare bill to require the federal government to negotiate lower drug prices for participants.

Tax and Budget

194. Repeal fiscally unsound tax cuts that benefit the top 1% of taxpayers.
195. Close tax loopholes that allow companies to headquarter offshore, thereby not paying US taxes, and prohibit such corporations from receiving government contracts.
196. Restore cuts in state “Local Government Aid” (LGA) so that local property taxes are not increased to balance the state budget.
197. Balance the federal budget and eliminate the deficit.
198. Oppose tax schemes that limit state, local taxes, and expenditures which undermine the ability of local and state governments to set their own budget to meet the needs of the people and to respond in times of crisis.

Transportation

199. Provide steady, reliable, and adequate state and federal funding to research and develop a multi-modal transportation system that balances roads with transit alternatives.
200. Support the state share of financing for the Northstar Commuter Rail Corridor.