

# Platform of the O‘ahu County Democrats

## O‘ahu County Convention, May 11, 2013, Aloha Stadium

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### PREAMBLE

O‘ahu County Democrats reaffirm our core values of liberty, equality and justice. These values compel us to incorporate democratic ideals in all aspects of the economic, social, educational, and cultural life in our communities, O‘ahu, and our nation.

### AGRICULTURE

Agriculture in our state must be preserved and its future strengthened. Sufficient agricultural lands must be maintained for the health, economic well-being and sustenance of the people. We believe in an integrated approach of agricultural innovation and sustainability. We encourage the responsible development of ocean resources in order to achieve sustainability in our state.

This approach includes, but is not limited to, the adoption of the native Hawaiian concept of *ahupua‘a*, an integrated approach to land management. This could also include development of economic, land and ocean use policies that foster sustainable crops both for local consumption and for export, policies to foster infrastructure such as coolers and freezers at our harbors, and better inspection to protect against invasive species and speed up time in port holding. We need to ensure food safety, strive towards food security and strive to set the highest standards for food quality and nutrition.

We will promote efficiency with feed mills and safe production of livestock, dairy products, poultry and eggs. Recognizing the importance of the ocean as a life-

sustaining resource, we must protect its ecological balance while promoting the cultivation of ocean resources as a step toward greater self-sufficiency.

Fresh water free of pollutants shall be available to all. To ensure wise use and equitable distribution of precious fresh water, we must stress water conservation and alternative patterns of water treatment and consumption such as the use of recycled water for irrigation, water storage reservoirs, and the use of rain barrels by the public.

#### ARTS & CULTURE

Our community is enriched by the encouragement of diverse arts and cultural activities that communicate both a regional and universal vision. Through multi-cultural and multi-generational participation in the arts, we strengthen our 'ohana, promote tolerance, and add vitality to the economy through cultural tourism. To this end, we support adequate funding for the arts, individual artists, arts and cultural organizations, and educational enterprises.

#### ECONOMICS & COMMERCE

Availability of financial support and a capable educated people are critical to our economic expansion and diversification. To encourage our entrepreneurs and prevent them from leaving Hawai'i, we must create incentives for small investors of startup businesses, and we need to encourage a private system of venture capital business loans to small businesses and companies so that they can grow to the next level. The management of businesses should be ethical and responsive to the community with transparency for investors and shareholders guaranteeing sound, healthy management. Innovation through the generation of intellectual property should be the goal of our economic diversification.

We must simplify government processes to encourage beneficial business development. We must give priority to the development of "green" sustainable industries, diversification of our tourism market, and local business ownership. Green commerce includes but is not limited to biodegradable and recycled packaging. We must promote financial literacy and asset building programs to strengthen our 'ohana. We must pursue relationships with the information technology industry. We must invest in world class higher education to stimulate our economic resources, and we must reduce our dependence on tourism, real estate development, and the military. A truly diversified economy will help to create a diversified jobs market.

#### EDUCATION

We believe that the future of our State as well as our country depends upon an educated and knowledgeable citizenry. We must re-think the structure of our educational system. We must reform and upgrade our public schools and create a flexible education system. We support the prioritization of our resources towards providing quality education and library services to every student regardless of learning capacity in an environment conducive to the learning process. These resources should be made available at every level, from pre-school through higher education, including life-long learning, and should provide autonomy of the relevant educational institutions and competitive compensation for teachers, administrators, and professors. Educational

policies should also include cultural learning, the arts and physical education so that we may preserve our health and rich cultural history. We must ensure that our students are safe in our schools and free from violence, bullying and discrimination. This includes, gender bias, weight, ethnicity, sexual orientation and/or religion. Effective communication, respect, and language skills could be taught with group projects, cooperative learning, discussion and games.

We support the strengthening of our early childhood educational programs and the establishment of life skills education throughout our academic careers.

We support a dedicated source of funding for the Department of Education.

We support the growth of well-managed and innovative schools.

Education shall be respected as a valuable resource and those pursuing a profession in education shall be compensated with a competitive wage based on national standards while taking into consideration the state's cost of living

We cannot support the practice of unfunded mandates from the federal government such as the "No Child Left Behind Act".

## ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY

The conservation, preservation and restoration of Hawai'i's natural resources are connected to the health and welfare of our people; therefore, we support the conservation and protection of our natural environment, which includes reducing our carbon footprint. We believe in integrated approaches, practices, and support for public policies that create and maintain a sustainable way of life in Hawai'i. Specifically, we must support policies that foster on O'ahu and between our neighbor islands the development of energy production methods that deemphasize carbon based fuels and promote renewable sources such as wind, solar, wave, geothermal and OTEC. It is of paramount importance that we protect our fragile environment from further damage due to residential overdevelopment and the depletion of prime agricultural land.

Electricity rates in Hawai'i are among the highest in the nation despite the fact we enjoy an abundance of sunshine year round. The electric utility companies must open the grid to alternative power sources including solar panels and geothermal energy.

We support the protection of our 'āina against destruction by corporate, government, or military usage and expect full restoration and reparation of environmental damage. To handle current and future demands for water, we must assess the current condition of our aquifers and take appropriate actions to secure our fresh water resources.

We support democratic participation of citizens and residents to protect (i) valuable coastal ecosystems and reefs from disruption and (ii) beaches for public use and recreation. The Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management (CZM) law, HRS Chapter 205A, currently provides for public participation in management of coastal resources.

## FOREIGN POLICY

We support a strong foreign policy that promotes peace, human rights, international cooperation and the rule of law. We believe that war should be a last resort but, when deemed necessary, should occur only within the confines of international law and international cooperation.

## GOVERNMENT & POLITICAL REFORM

We believe that a government based on the will of the people, but respecting the rights of all is a potential solution to its citizens' needs and should not be denigrated as an option to a completely *laissez-faire* society. Thus, fair and equitable taxation is essential for good government, as providing services to society is worthy of financial support. We believe that this will adequately, efficiently, courteously, openly and fairly administer to the needs of the people. We support the incorporation of *ho'oponopono*, ethics in government, and a fair, voter-verifiable, fully transparent and auditable voting system. We support and expect ethics in government, with a fair, voter-verifiable, fully transparent and auditable voting system. We also support enforcement of all sunshine laws and transparency in sessions and meetings that discuss and make policy.

This includes the protection of funding for the televising of public hearings at the State and County levels, as well as the funding of the Public Access Room at the legislature.

We do not support the Supreme Court opinion that allows corporations unlimited campaign donations under the guise of "free speech". We support all efforts to change this corporate-interest manipulation of the Constitution. To that end, we will promote the practice of public financing for all elections.

We must ensure the security of our electoral process with regards to electronic infiltration and manipulation.

We support the separation of State and Church as set forth in the Constitution of the United States of America in the First Amendment as well as Article VI, which is vital to guarantee freedom of religion and conscience. We also oppose any legislation that weakens that wall. Separation of State and Church is meant to insure that no single religion can impose its particular beliefs on members of the general population.

We believe in the constant renewal of both the Democratic Party and electoral reform in Hawai'i state government through the re-institution of multi-member legislative districts. The result would provide opportunities for both experienced as well as new candidates for elective office to serve, thus reflecting the changing demographics of Hawai'i.

Notwithstanding claims of national security, the policy of the O'ahu County Democratic Party is to demand that the President and Congress of the United States, in order to uphold the prescribed due process provision and its application to any place "subject to [United States'] jurisdiction", remove all prisoners at Guantanamo to the mainland United States, provide them with a fair civilian trial, and forthwith close the facilities at Guantanamo that offer such unconstitutionally cruel and unusual incarceration.

## HEALTHCARE

Access to quality health care is a basic human right. We support the development of long-term care, better pay and working conditions for all healthcare providers, parity of mental and physical health coverage, and appropriate regulation of healthcare delivery systems. We also support the development of empirically validated prevention programs targeted at major public health issues.

We support state and national healthcare reform via single payer universal healthcare as the optimum way to provide health care services. We also support the addition of a public option into the current system.

We cannot support the provisions that continue the practice of denying women coverage for abortion services. All women's health care decisions should be made by the patients and their doctors, and not restricted by the government. Contraceptive and preventative cancer screening should be easily available to all women.

## HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL RIGHTS & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

The inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all human beings are the foundations of freedom, justice, and peace. We are committed to ending institutionalized discrimination in all aspects. We support affirmative action, the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the rights of senior citizens. We support full equality, benefits and responsibilities regardless of sexual identity, orientation, or expression.

We believe in the equality of women and their right to privacy. This includes the rights of women to access birth control, the right to coverage of pregnancy services, the right to shelter and counseling for victims of domestic violence and the right of rape victims to emergency contraception in the emergency room to name a few.

We support the rights of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) community to full equality before the law, including, but not limited to, Marriage Equality both at the State and Federal level. We oppose discriminatory federal and state constitutional amendments and other attempts to deny equal protection of the laws to committed same-sex couples who seek the same respect and responsibilities as other married couples. We support the full repeal of the so-called Defense of Marriage Act and the passage of the Respect for Marriage Act.

We support the full implementation of a law that allows members of the transgender community to amend their birth certificate to accurately reflect their identified gender.

We support restorative justice which repairs the harms caused by criminal behaviors as well as reintegrates the offenders as contributing members of society.

We deplore human trafficking and support legislative and judicial efforts to stamp it out.

## HOUSING

Housing is a basic human right. Affordable housing that is fair in proportion to individual income is the basis of prosperity for our citizens and stability in our economy. Recent and past real estate bubbles have fueled disproportionate rent increases, a key contributor to homelessness. Therefore, we support efforts to promote truly affordable housing for all citizens who rent. We need economically affordable housing and encourage increased support that leads to this end. To this end, we support policies which re-think the current formula to determine "affordability" as this formula puts both rentals and sales out of the reach of most working families in Hawai'i.

We support dedicated social services for Hawai'i's homeless youth population, to get them off the streets and reintegrated into society, with specific devoted services for disenfranchised groups including but not limited to the Hawaiian community and gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender homeless youth population.

## IMMIGRATION

We believe that our nation should have a fair immigration policy that recognizes the diversity of our country and the contribution that immigrants make and have made to the sciences, arts and culture. We support an immigration policy that provides a reasonable path to citizenship for immigrants who follow the rule of law. We encourage policies that avoid the militarization of our borders. We abhor policies that would deny education and health and human services to immigrant children. We must ensure that immigrant children are treated with fairness and respect in our schools and in our healthcare system. Immigration laws should not discriminate based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

## LABOR

As the party of working men and women in Hawai'i, we work to protect labor rights and social security; to institute fair labor practices, a living wage for all workers, and fair taxation; to protect employees' rights to organize and bargain collectively with their employers; to oppose the outsourcing of Hawai'i's jobs; to promote employment opportunities and sustainable growth; to assist the economically disadvantaged; to advocate for sound trade and economic policies; to train our workforce in green industries, in renovation and green construction so that their jobs are not dependent on ever-expanding real estate development. In order to rapidly move returning veterans, students, and the unemployed into jobs, we urge the creation of paid internship programs for students.

## NATIVE HAWAIIAN PEOPLE

The Native Hawaiian people are the indigenous people of the state of Hawai'i and deserve a just relationship with the state and federal governments. We support Native Hawaiian self-determination, consistent with federal policy for native self-determination extended to other indigenous peoples of the United States. We support the growth of Native Hawaiian farming, agricultural and healing practices. We value and wish to foster the preservation of our host culture. We deplore any attempt to exploit or export Hawaiian bio products without the consent of the Native Hawaiian community.

## SAFETY & SECURITY

We support safety and security in all dimensions as a basic right of all residents of the state of Hawai'i. We support just law enforcement and enhancement of crime prevention, without compromising civil liberties. This includes the full protection of the law against domestic violence and appropriate training for all law enforcement officers-agencies as well as full enforcement of the State of Hawai'i's hate crimes statute.

## TECHNOLOGY

We recognize that the responsible use and development of technology in all its manifestations offer unlimited potential for our community. We encourage research, development and educational programs to promote technological proficiency and innovation. In particular, we support Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) initiatives in our schools as these prepare the next generation to address the needs of our state.

We maintain that state and local government databases should be integrated to promote efficiency in government.

## TRANSPORTATION

We support county, state and federal efforts to provide more efficient and punctual convenient methods of public transportation. We endorse efforts to promote less reliance on the automobile by employing private and public use of alternative modes of travel. We encourage efforts to provide better vehicle and pedestrian safety. In particular, we support initiatives that will provide our state with more fuel-efficient vehicles, affordable mass transit and well-identified bike lanes. In order to be best served by mass transit, we must recognize the importance of the integration in an urban setting of any new modes of mass transportation with existing and future public streets and highways, bike lanes, retail establishments and services, and truly-affordable housing — while maintaining a high degree of open space at ground level in current and all future high-density developments.

## U.S. MILITARY

The Armed Forces in Hawai'i and their families sacrifice to serve and defend our country and help us in time of need. We encourage the continuation of efforts to coordinate military activities with affected communities. Hawai'i should honor their service by strongly supporting the best possible care of wounded and disabled veterans.

We oppose war profiteering and the privatization of combat through employment of paramilitary contractors.

We support the protection of our 'aina against destruction by military usage.

We support our Veterans and our Veterans organizations and efforts to keep our Veteran's Hospitals fully funded.

We support the efforts of our Congressional Delegation to extend benefits for our Reservists and National Guard who have suffered brain injury and/or PTSD.

We support efforts to protect our troops from sexual predators within their service branches and support specialized treatment for victims of such crimes.