

# O'AHU COUNTY DEMOCRATS 2023 PLATFORM

## PREAMBLE

We, the members of the O'ahu County Democrats, united in common purpose, dedicate ourselves to the core principles of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i.

As the people's party, it is our mission to create opportunities for free and open political dialogue in regional and district communities to promote civic engagement, political action, and community solidarity. And, as a servant of the dreams and aspirations of Hawai'i's people, we acknowledge that if we wish to lead, we must listen and be open to being transformed by what we hear. Moreover, if we ask for the people's trust, we must in turn trust the wisdom of the people.

To do this effectively, we understand that we need to activate, mobilize, and empower party members, and revitalize our county organization for the challenges ahead in the 21st century. Through a re-energized county organization, we will endeavor to bring together members of the party, elected officials, interested citizens, and community leaders to build a cosmopolitan society that will manifest the Aloha Spirit at its core and in every facet of community life.

As O'ahu Democrats we will strive to create a better society by providing equal opportunity for all, by honoring the wisdom and courage of our elders, by cherishing our children above ourselves, and by intelligently anticipating the opportunities and perils of the future. We resolve to steer a course into the uncertain future to secure a better society guided by the traditional values of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i.

## AGRICULTURE

Agriculture in our state must be preserved and strengthened in order to support future sustainability and a diversified economy. We believe in an integrated approach of agricultural innovation and sustainability. As an island state, securing affordable food for all is a priority. We support healthy, sustainable, and diversified local food production, and "Buy Local" strategies to assure greater food security and food safety. We support the food sustainability goal of 30% local food production by 2030.

Agricultural land must be effectively managed. Therefore adequate resources must be made available, including business development and community gardens, to support all of Hawai'i's farmers and to mitigate the impacts of invasive species and other harmful organisms.

Recognizing the importance of the ocean as a life-sustaining resource, we must protect its ecological balance while promoting the responsible development of ocean resources and aquaculture as a step toward greater self-sufficiency. To ensure efficient use and equitable distribution of precious fresh water, we must prioritize water conservation and alternative

patterns of water treatment and consumption such as the use of recycled water for irrigation, water storage reservoirs, and rain barrels.

## **ARTS AND CULTURE**

Through multicultural and multigenerational participation in the arts, we strengthen our 'ohana, preserve our culture, promote tolerance, and add vitality to that economy through culturally informed, sustainable tourism. Investments in the arts strengthen our communities and contribute to Hawai'i's rich cultural heritage. We support funding for the arts and humanities, individual artists and cultural organizations, and programs providing art and music Native Hawaiian and multicultural education in schools, including but not limited to art, music, history, and cultural practices. Hawai'i prospers when we protect and promote the unique artistic and cultural contributions of the artists who create and preserve Hawai'i's multicultural heritage.

## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

We embrace O'ahu County Democrats' historical commitment to the principles of full participation, equal opportunity, representation, and rights for the diverse peoples of Hawai'i. We commit to the goal of full representation and participation in O'ahu County Democrats' leadership, programs, and activities regardless of color, race, ethnic origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, age, disability, education level, ancestry, religion, arrest and court record, or socioeconomic status.

We celebrate not only the physical aspects of diversity amongst our members and leaders, but also the diverse experiences and worldviews which result from their different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. We believe that such comprehensive diversity empowers us to remain a party of, by, and for the people.

We benefit greatly from the synergy of new members combined with the wisdom and experience of longtime members. We actively pursue diversity, equity, and inclusion by teaching and mentoring new leaders and creating new leadership opportunities. We respect and build on the work of our kūpuna and the history and values that are our foundation.

We have a responsibility to eliminate significant barriers to full representation and participation as O'ahu County Democrats.

## **DISASTER AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

We support safety and security in all dimensions as a basic right of all residents of the State of Hawai'i. We believe in prioritizing proactive mitigation measures and recovery support for the people of O'ahu and their property against natural and man-made disasters. We also believe that access to clean water, public restrooms, and dependable hygiene supplies is a basic human right. We recognize and support community-based preparedness groups and mutual aid organizations. We believe in the science of climate change, affirm human activity as its primary

cause and main driver, and support emergency preparedness and planning efforts to mitigate its impacts. This includes investment in early warning systems, emergency management and response systems, and adequate emergency sheltering. We support improving telecommuting and broadband infrastructure, enacting employment policies that allow for a more flexible work-life balance, and ensuring access to economic and social services during natural disasters.

## **ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY**

Availability of financial support and a skilled, educated workforce are critical to Hawai'i's economic sustainability and diversification. We support strong, locally owned businesses that provide jobs and services to the people of O'ahu. We support the creation of new jobs with an increased emphasis on technology, clean energy, diverse local agriculture, healthcare, and other industries that promote a diversified economy and retain our youth on O'ahu.

## **EDUCATION**

Education is the foundation for the future of Hawai'i. We support providing quality education and library services to every student at every level, from preschool to higher education, regardless of learning capacity, academic performance, age, incarceration, or ability to pay, in an environment conducive to the learning process. We also support providing quality library services, not only to every student but to the entire public through O'ahu's school and public libraries, the facilities of which should be well funded and well maintained. We believe that Hawai'i's history and future are best served by teaching Hawaiian values and the ethnic histories of groups that have become part of the greater Hawai'i community.

We believe that early childhood education and universal preschool are essential to lifelong success and should be accessible to all. Hawai'i's education system and academic programs should support the development of critical and creative thinkers who are knowledgeable about issues and able to evaluate and solve real-world problems.

All students need and deserve access to nutritious foods, whether free of charge or at affordable, low and reduced prices. We support healthy, sustainable food programs at all O'ahu schools, including school gardens and farm-to-school partnerships.

Educational facilities must be maintained, renovated, and built to 21st century standards so that our students learn in well-designed, safe environments. We must ensure that our students are safe in schools and free from violence, bullying, and all forms of discrimination and bias. We support school policies that protect, honor, and address the needs of all our students.

## **ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY**

O'ahu's natural and cultural resources must be preserved, protected, and sustained for the benefit of present and future generations. We believe in integrated approaches, practices, and support for public policies that create and maintain a sustainable way of life on O'ahu.

O'ahu County Democrats advocate policies and projects that prioritize environmental and climate justice, created with the participation and direct input of impacted communities that have too often been marginalized and underrepresented in our institutions and decision-making processes.

We support efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and sequester atmospheric carbon, to make O'ahu carbon negative as soon as practicable. We support programs that encourage sustainable clean modes of transportation that reduce traffic congestion and air pollution. We also support programs that encourage waste reduction and recycling, environmental education, and green infrastructure including clean, sustainable, and equitable energy production. Other climate change adaptation solutions should include such strategies as coastal retreat mitigation, invasive species control, and protections for our coral reefs and sea life from human generated activities which have proven to be harmful.

We encourage the remediation of land that has been exposed to hazardous materials, waste and chemicals. We support conversions of outdated cesspool systems, the independent monitoring of wells and aquifers by State or County departments, and the closing or relocating of landfills located above aquifers. We advocate strong regulation of institutional and industrial polluters.

## **GOVERNMENT**

We believe that the role of government is to adequately, efficiently, courteously, openly, and fairly administer to the needs of the people. To this end, we support the incorporation of ho'oponopono and ethics in government to create accountable systems, sound fiscal policies, and programs that instill confidence in the residents they are meant to serve. Whenever possible, legislative and government agencies should implement policies and procedures focused on transparency in discussion and creation of public policy.

A robust democracy requires active participation by all members of the community and requires a fair, voter-verifiable, fully transparent, and auditable voting system. To ensure all members are able to engage in this process, it is necessary to continuously review and adopt voter participation reforms that create easy, simple, accessible registration and voting programs.

## **HEALTH**

We believe that healthcare is a right, not a privilege, and support a healthcare system that ensures accessible, affordable, quality services and coverage for all O'ahu residents. We are committed to protecting and advancing reproductive health rights and affirmative choice. We also encourage the establishment of preventive healthcare, early intervention initiatives, and support to provide safety-net systems for vulnerable populations, facing challenges including mental health issues and addiction, malnutrition, food insecurity, disability, poverty, homelessness, and health conditions associated with the military including but not limited to the

harmful effects caused by the Red Hill toxic chemical spills and PFAS contamination in drinking water.

## **HOUSING**

We believe that 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. New market-rate homes are out of reach to most local people, so we believe the state and counties have a responsibility to produce housing specifically targeted to meet the needs of local people. Therefore, we support policies and efforts to promote truly affordable homeownership for all persons living on O‘ahu, prevent homes from being speculative investments, that make home ownership possible for local families, and promote high-density, mixed-use planning to maximize walkability and minimize car usage and traffic impacts. We encourage preserving and increasing the supply of affordable rental housing by expanding incentives to ease local barriers to building new affordable rental housing developments in areas of economic opportunity. We also advocate to increase the number of subsidized affordable housing for low-income families, government workers, people with disabilities, veterans, and kūpuna.

We prioritize providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness through funding to prevent and end homelessness on O‘ahu combined with services that support their needs and improve their quality of life. We support compassionate treatment and implementing alternative responses that prioritize health services and follow-up care.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND 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 and racism in all aspects and we advocate for equal rights, individual freedoms, and economic opportunity for all regardless of sexual identity, orientation, or expression.

We believe that the concepts of "‘ohana" and "family" include people regardless of sexual orientation, blood relation, marital status, gender, gender identity or gender expression, who choose to join together to offer one another moral, spiritual, and economic support.

We support initiatives that prioritize access and equity to education, employment, healthcare, and economic opportunities to lift families out of poverty and remove existing barriers that create disparities in our communities. We support a strong social safety net that creates opportunity for all people. We must protect our children, our future, from violence and neglect and provide them with a safe and healthy environment in which to grow and thrive.

We believe in equal rights for women and value and support women’s full, equal, and essential role in all aspects of life. We advocate to end pay inequality, sexual assault, domestic abuse, and other acts of violence against women, including the epidemics of violence against indigenous women and transgender women of color. We support the full implementation of Title

IX and the equal participation of women in education, employment, and leadership without fear of sexual harassment or assault.

We believe our justice system should be transformed to focus on root causes of crime and alternatives to imprisonment. We support community programs, to reduce recidivism, promote wellness, vocational training, and substance abuse treatment, and to support culturally relevant and appropriate intervention programs and services for reintegration into society. We support the strategic use of unarmed, trained emergency responders, such as social workers and mental health professionals, to substitute or supplement and improve police interactions. We recognize that this approach, known in some areas as the “co-responder model,” can improve public safety while also increasing the efficiency, efficacy, and fiscal sustainability of our police force.

We affirm the dignity and civil and human rights of all documented and undocumented persons, recognize the unique contributions that people of all racial identities make to our party and society, and believe in holding government accountable in ensuring that all individuals, documented or undocumented, have the opportunities to thrive in the communities where they live, work, and play.

## **KŪPUNA AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

We face a long-term care crisis that prevents many seniors and people with disabilities from being able to live with dignity at home or in their communities. Most people who are aging or living with a disability want to do so at home, but face challenges finding and affording the support they need to do so. Programs that emphasize independence rather than institutionalization must be better structured to support them. We support strengthening and expanding the home care workforce, giving seniors and people with disabilities access to quality, affordable long-term care, services, and supports, and ensuring that all of these resources are readily available at home or in the community. We support policies and programs that promote "aging-in-place" and support "active aging" for kūpuna.

## **LABOR AND WORKERS' RIGHTS**

We support policies and programs that support families during times of both economic prosperity and distress. We require that all employment positions to guarantee at a minimum: retirement and health benefits, equal pay for equal work, safe working conditions, workplaces free from harassment, paid sick leave, paid vacation leave, paid family leave, workplace accommodations for child nursing, and payment of prevailing wages for public projects. We support a minimum wage that is a livable wage, indexed to inflation. We oppose proposals that outsource Hawai'i's jobs or harm the environment. We must ensure that the unemployment insurance system and safety net services are accessible, reliable, and efficient for O'ahu workers, especially in times of economic emergencies.

We support protecting the right of all employees to form or join a union and bargain collectively with their employer for fair wages and benefits, and workers' rights. We defend the right to strike. We believe in eliminating all forms of forced and coerced labor, including human trafficking, sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and the exploitation of migrant labor. We support a judicial system that protects the civil rights of labor organizers and those seeking to improve workers' rights.

## **NATIVE HAWAIIANS AND HAWAIIAN CULTURE**

We support recognition of Native Hawaiians as indigenous people of Hawai'i that deserve a just relationship with the county, state and federal governments. We continue to support Native Hawaiian rights to self-determination to freely determine their political status and to pursue their economic, social, and cultural development.

We support policies and programs that embrace and enrich Native Hawaiian traditions and values. These traditional and customary cultural practices are at the core of our island values. We believe in the empowerment of Native Hawaiians and their representation in county and state affairs to ensure that policy decisions are designed to protect and preserve the culture, resources, and practices of the Native Hawaiian community. We support efforts to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians and to fully fund programs and agencies that support Native Hawaiian health, education, language, housing, and agriculture and to ensure that no Hawaiian is homeless in their homeland. We support the protection of the Public Land Trust so as to ensure that public lands are used in the best interest of the public and that ceded lands are not alienated from the Public Land Trust by long leases, or reduced so as to impact upon the amount of funds intended for the purposes outlined in the Hawaii State Admissions Act.

## **TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL EQUITY**

We believe that digital access is a critical and essential service necessary for the functioning of and participation in many aspects of our economy and community life. We support achieving digital equity to ensure that all of Hawai'i's residents, from keiki to kūpuna, have the information technology capacity needed to participate fully in our society, democracy, and economy, including civics, social and cultural activities, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.

We support access to high-quality internet and training to use technology for all of Hawai'i's residents, and support efforts to ensure their ability to use digital resources to be connected and successful in their lives. We support efforts in government and industries to achieve digital access and the availability of services and resources to all residents and communities, as these efforts are beneficial to our people and communities, and the future of our economy and state.

We support both net neutrality to ensure free, open access to the internet and the protection of personal data as a personal right. We recognize that technological innovation may have unintended consequences and believe in practices that promote technology ethics among

creators and developers as well as ethical uses of their products by the public. We support legislative action and regulation in pursuit of that same goal.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

We recognize the necessity of providing safe, sustainable, and efficient transportation infrastructure for all users of our roadways, including users who have impaired mobility. We believe everyone should be safe while traveling by foot, bicycle, vehicle, or transit, and that well-lit and well-developed road conditions for all users helps to uplift community health. We believe in enacting an equitable way to adequately pay for and situate green transportation infrastructure on O‘ahu with public support and potential for matching federal funds. We support transportation projects and planning to reduce traffic congestion, promote mass transit, and reduce our reliance on automobiles by employing private and public use of alternative modes of travel. As such, we support energy and fuel-efficient methods of transportation and efforts to provide more efficient, affordable, and convenient methods of public transportation.

## **U.S. MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

We recognize the Armed Forces on O‘ahu and their families sacrifice to serve and defend our country and help us in time of need. We welcome, honor, and support all Americans who want to serve our military is strongest when we support and embrace our nation’s diversity and we will continue to fight for their equal rights and recognition. We believe people of all races, religions, sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions should be honored for their service our country. We support efforts to protect our troops from sexual predators within service branches.

We further recognize that our country has a sacred, moral responsibility to keep faith with all our veterans and wounded warriors. Therefore, we support programs that provide free or affordable, responsive and timely healthcare, with particular focus on mental health, post-traumatic stress, substance abuse issues, and health conditions associated with service. Additionally, we support efforts to assist veterans in their reintegration to society through educational benefits and job training, ending chronic homelessness, and combating suicide.

The military controls nearly one quarter of the land on O‘ahu,we have strong concerns regarding the containment and reduction of both active military land holdings and personnel presence. We support the protection of our *‘āina* and encourage the continuation of efforts to coordinate military activities with impacted communities, advocating for the military to restore any damaged *‘āina* and limit destruction by military usage, weapons testing, training and “war games’ to prevent long-term degradation and harm to our cultural and community assets. We encourage state agencies to take these factors into consideration when creating lease agreements.