



# South Dakota Democratic Party Platform

Adopted by the South Dakota Democratic Convention  
June 20th, 2020

## 1. Agriculture and Rural Life

The South Dakota Democratic Party recognizes the integral role of the agricultural sector and its contribution to the economy in our state and nation. Democrats are dedicated to keeping agrarian culture vibrant--from family farms, farmers market producers, Native Nations and all rural communities.

### **The South Dakota Democratic party advocates for:**

- The expansion of local food markets and regional ag-producing systems that focus on diverse and sustainable practices.
- Minimizing the impact of corporate control in order to protect producers from unfair practices or inequitable concentration of profit.
- Partnerships with native nations, tribal leaders, and individuals to develop new agricultural processes, including hemp and renewable energy.
- Research and economic development of value-added agricultural products including hemp, perennial grains, renewable energy, and other emerging ag-based technologies.
- Programs that support and educate emerging producers, to help establish the next generation of agriculturalists.
- The proper and full implementation of a production-based tax assessment system for agricultural land in South Dakota.
- Local control of planning and zoning as the right of individual counties. We support the people's right to a transparent initiated measure or referendum process at the state, county and local levels.
- Preservation and protection of farmland through soil conservation and sound sustainable ecological practices.
- Governmental programs that allow consumer support and creative agricultural solutions.
- Regional, national and international fair trade deals and Country of Origin Labeling for all food products.
- A voluntary, but not federally-mandated, national livestock identification program to improve animal disease control & traceability.
- Construction and maintenance of local infrastructure, including rural water, an enhanced railroad system and high-speed broadband access to make rural businesses more competitive.



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### **2. Economic Development & Tourism**

Economic development enhances the quality of life and standard of living of all South Dakota citizens. State policies should promote innovation and long-term growth in all sectors of the economy without diminishing our state's cultural and natural environments; a sustainable diversified economy benefits all the people of South Dakota.

#### **The South Dakota Democratic Party advocates for:**

- An educated and trained workforce that earns at least a living wage. Education is essential for economic development and the state has a responsibility to make it a financial priority.
- Expanded affordable housing that attracts people to the state and promotes community sustainability.
- Access to affordable healthcare for all people, including Medicaid expansion, which will also serve as an important economic driver to our health care industry and the entire state's economy.
- Improved cooperation with Native Americans/Tribal Nations, directed toward promoting a full range of their economic and tourism development.
- Expanded investment in infrastructure, including transportation, clean energy, and telecommunications.
- Innovative South Dakota-based research to improve the state economy, especially in smaller towns and rural regions.
- Promotion of year-round recreational, natural, historic, artistic, and cultural tourism in regional, national, and international markets.
- Development and expansion of international business and trade on behalf of South Dakota producers and exporters.
- Policies which enable small businesses and entrepreneurs to thrive.



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### **3. Education**

The people of South Dakota have the right to a quality public education. Investing in life-long education is crucial to our democracy and our state's economic development.

#### **The South Dakota Democratic Party advocates for:**

- A strong system of public education from early learning through adult education, with stable funding and equal educational opportunities which includes a broad curriculum of liberal arts, STEM, social issues, vocational and physical education.
- Improved funding for public education funding at all levels, with taxpayer dollars staying within the public education system.
- Strong public early childhood education programs across the state that create a solid foundation for life-long learning and success.
- High standards for teachers and education support professionals, ample opportunities for professional development, and fair compensation commensurate to the responsibilities entrusted to them.
- The right to academic freedom and collective bargaining with binding arbitration if an impasse occurs during negotiations for all employees of public education
- Equal rights and treatment regardless of race, ethnicity, native language, socioeconomic status, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation and ability levels for all students and employees.
- Respect all cultures, religions and languages across all levels of our public education system, including implementing the adoption of the Oceti Sakowin standards.
- Access to and funding of quality special services in South Dakota schools, including special education and other federally mandated programs to provide equitable education for all students.
- Access for all students in South Dakota to technology and the support necessary to ensure success.
- Professional mental and physical health services for faculty and students, including trauma informed practices across all levels of public education
- Excellent higher education institutions, including technical colleges, that are affordable, both in terms of tuition and other associated costs for all students regardless of socio-economic status.



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### **4. Health Care**

The health care of all South Dakotans is critical to the safety and economy of the state. Like clean air, water, and food security, access to health care is a fundamental right regardless of geography or financial means. South Dakotans should have access to high quality and evidence-based health care.

#### **The South Dakota Democratic Party advocates for:**

- Nationally funded, community-based comprehensive and affordable health care for all, with particular emphasis on underserved and vulnerable populations.
- Publicly led health initiatives throughout the life cycle including preventive medicine, health monitoring research and disease control and prevention.
- Adequate provision for the needs of physically, mentally or emotionally challenged persons, including in-home and institutional care services.
- Institutional and outpatient mental health and substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation programs and services that provide equal access, continuity of care, and protection of patient rights.
- Private and public funding for health care programs that include pregnancy care and comprehensive family planning services, regardless of age or income.
- Expedited research funding for infectious diseases and social factors that determine health, and care for the afflicted.
- Prescription services, including dental, vision, and hearing benefits.
- Support of infrastructure and workforce development and retention to meet healthcare needs, including inpatient, outpatient and ambulance and emergency services.
- Improvement and innovation in telehealth and web-based health care.



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### **5. Human Rights**

The South Dakota Democratic party believes in the inherent rights and dignity of each human and the equitable treatment of all.

#### **The South Dakota Democratic Party advocates for:**

- The equitable treatment of people regardless of age, culture, disability, education level, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, immigration, marital, native language, race, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic, or veteran status.
- The elimination of barriers that prevent people from participating in civic or social engagements.
- Every level of government working to meet the equitable needs of all.
- Efforts to eliminate the abuse of power at any level and all forms.
- The removal of systemic injustice and discrimination at any level.



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### **6. Labor & Employment**

The South Dakota Democratic Party is committed to improving the lives of South Dakota's workers and their families through policies that promote full employment, good wages & benefits, and equal treatment in the workplace.

#### **The South Dakota Democratic Party advocates for:**

- Improvement in wages and benefits, regardless of full-time, part-time, or seasonal employment status, with a living minimum wage indexed to inflation.
- Continued efforts towards equal pay for equal work for all workers, and eliminating wage collusion.
- The right of workers to organize and collectively bargain, eliminating "Right-to-Work" laws.
- Creation of a long-term infrastructure modernization plan to increase investment, productivity, living standards, and wages for all workers including women, people of color, the disabled, and LGBTQIA+ individuals.
- The rights of South Dakota employees/workers to participate in all aspects of the political process without employer intimidation or retribution.
- Legislation to ensure that pregnant and nursing mothers have appropriate workplace accommodations without fear of harassment or discrimination.
- Fair, impartial, and expeditious consideration of claims by the South Dakota Department of Labor and encourage progressive participation in state and local boards and commissions.
- The provision of hourly wage earners working more than 40 hours per week deserves time and one half pay.



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### **7. Natural Resources & Environment**

The South Dakota Democratic Party recognizes that protection of our water, air, land, and other natural resources is both essential and beneficial to responsible economic development and our quality of life. Our natural resources must be protected for present and future generations.

#### **The South Dakota Democratic Party advocates for:**

- Recognition of the effects of human caused climate change and a commitment to utilizing the United Nations IPPC report and findings.
- Effective recycling, waste reduction, and replacing single use plastics with biodegradable products.
- The protection of sacred sites designated by collaborative efforts of Tribal and State Historic Preservation Offices.
- Environmental education at all levels in our schools and communities to encourage transformation to a sustainable future.
- The production and distribution of safe, clean, renewable energy that effectively reduces the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions into our atmosphere.
- The protection of our ground and surface water.
- The development of electric vehicle infrastructure to include personal, agricultural and industrial applications.
- Enhanced outdoor recreational opportunities, including access to public hunting, fishing and wildlife preserves and preservation of our rich natural resources while protecting biodiversity.
- Conservation districts and the use of their services for the development of each community's natural resources.
- Reform of federal mining law to protect national forest lands and water resources.
- The elimination of all large-scale fossil fuel pipelines, fracking and industrial-scale mining.
- Full community participation in any public hearing concerning issues that might threaten landowners, environment or natural resources.
- Strengthening and strict enforcement of State and Federal environmental laws.
- The prevention of the use of eminent domain for the transport, extraction or disposal of fossil fuels.



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### **8. Senior Citizens**

South Dakota seniors deserve the right to live with dignity and be treated with respect. They experience unique circumstances that require specific solutions, such as addressing the cost of long term care, finding affordable housing that accommodates their needs, and ensuring a quality of life reflective of a lifetime of hard work and continued contribution to society.

#### **The South Dakota Democratic Party advocates for:**

- Contagious disease control testing, screening, and comprehensive contact tracing for South Dakotans, especially vulnerable populations.
- Re-establishment of the federal Global Health Security and Biodefense unit to develop pandemic preparedness plans, and expanded research and studies into potential viral threats that could harm vulnerable populations.
- Increased funding for Medicaid providers and expanded access to affordable prescription drugs.
- Establishment of a public long term care insurance system to guarantee all South Dakotans the right to receive long term care at an affordable cost, and the expansion of Medicare to cover long term care.
- Increased financial stability of nursing homes to end their closures and ensure that residents may receive care in their local communities.
- Development and expansion of flexible and affordable long term housing options such as independent living facilities with low-level medical and social supports, assisted living facilities, in-home care services, and community-based services.
- The fair and impartial treatment of seniors by state agencies charged with the duty of providing services to them, including the vigorous enforcement of ADA building codes.
- Laws and services that protect seniors from consumer fraud, identity theft, and elder abuse.
- Promotion of medical, government, and financial literacy programming and access to low- or no-cost educational programs for seniors.
- Support for affordable convenient transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities, especially for local and regional public transportation systems.
- Adequate funding for the senior nutrition program.
- A stronger program for property tax relief, including revising the current eligibility income levels.
- A living will and state advance directive registry available to all residents.
- The right to end-of-life decisions which includes a person's right to die.
- Establishment of a state-managed retirement fund with auto-enrollment available for employers and their employees that do not receive a retirement benefit as a part of their work.



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### **9. State & Local Government**

The South Dakota Democratic Party believes in equitable taxation, state budgets which reflect the priorities of South Dakota, and government operations that are open and participatory.

#### **The South Dakota Democratic Party advocates for:**

- A fair and equitable tax system for all South Dakotans.
- Oversight with the authority to keep government officials accountable.
- Ethical standards and conflict-of-interest rules.
- Transparency in all levels of government.
- Access to voting for all South Dakotans.
- An independent non-partisan redistricting commission.
- Local control for local units of government.
- Proper maintenance of state and local infrastructure.
- Adequate investment in cultural institutions and the arts in South Dakota.
- The protection of referral and initiated measure processes.
- The protection of free expression guaranteed by the First Amendment.



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### **10. Tribal & Native American**

The SDDP recognizes the inherent sovereignty of the people and Tribal Nations of the Oceti Sakowin, the original inhabitants of this land. The Lakota, Dakota, Nakota (LDN) people reside in nine tribal government nations, cities, and towns throughout South Dakota.

#### **The Democratic Party of South Dakota advocates for:**

- Tribal governments' authority to self-govern their lands and members.
- Regular meaningful and fair consultation between tribal, state and federal officials regarding culture, health, economics, education, and other issues; including protection of water, air, land, animals, people, and sacred sites.
- Native language and cultural practice preservation, use, and revitalization in all communities in South Dakota, including ceremonies.
- A treaty obligated, fully funded healthcare system in Tribal Nations that is respectful of culturally appropriate alternative medicines and practices and includes access to professional mental and substance abuse counseling and preventative and diagnostic health care.
- Food sovereignty for appropriate nutrition based on cultural identity among the Oceti Sakowin people.
- A vigorous education model for all students that teaches an accurate representation of the Oceti Sakowin people, language, culture, and practices, including the effects of historical trauma.
- Financial support for students graduating from Tribal schools and colleges and support for Native American student organizations.
- Training and hiring Native American faculty and staff at schools at all levels.
- Ease of access to voting, including registration, voting centers, and absentee ballots.
- Inclusion of tribal census/enrollment data in redistricting.
- Development and maintenance of infrastructure on Reservations, including WIFI, roads and bridges, affordable housing, and quality drinking water.
- Funding and education to minimize and eliminate domestic violence and to prevent missing and murdered indigenous women, girls, and people and to track those lost.
- Increased funding and training for public safety officers that patrol tribal lands, including Indian Law training for all South Dakota law enforcement, especially to reduce the use of force and racial profiling, and to reduce the proportion of Native Americans in the South Dakota prison system.
- High-quality, preventative and effective medical and mental health care for incarcerated Native American people.
- Economic development that promotes healthy and culturally appropriate lifestyles, including access to opportunity zones and grant resources, small businesses, tourism, and sustainable agricultural practices.
- Introduce a Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) Commission to examine the effects of slavery and racism against people of color, on American history, and its impact on laws and policies.



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### **11. Veterans Issues**

The South Dakota Democratic party is proud of our military as the best-trained and equipped force in the world. Members of our military must be ready to meet the new threats of the 21st century. As our veterans have met the threats of the past, we honor their service and sacrifice, and believe they deserve efficient and compassionate lifelong care. We advocate for their physical and emotional well-being as well as their economic security.

#### **The South Dakota Democratic party advocates for:**

- Outreach to all veterans concerning health care and educational services.
- Quality services for mental health treatment, suicide prevention, substance abuse, PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), and traumatic brain injury.
- Recognition and treatment for exposure to toxic chemicals (such as Agent Orange and Burn Pits).
- Funding transportation to medical services for veterans from rural and urban areas, in cooperation with Disabled American Veterans, Tribal services, or other options.
- Training for law enforcement and health care professionals on how to recognize and approach veterans with PTSD and/or traumatic brain injury.
- Educational and training benefits, such as reduced cost and tuition reimbursement.
- Education of employers and leaders on how veterans' skills can be transferred into civilian employment opportunities, leading to improved employment.
- Improved medical and mental health services for women veterans, particularly pertaining to gender.
- Funding for veteran support when funding is appropriated for conflicts or wars.
- The modernization of the Veterans Administration so that services can be provided quickly and alternative therapies can be included



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### **12. Women's Issues**

Women are people, and their rights are human rights, and we all prosper when we actively promote the principles of dignity, self-determination, equal opportunity, justice, and quality of life for all.

#### **The South Dakota Democratic party advocates for:**

- Women of all races, backgrounds, creeds and identities.
- Contraceptive research, family planning, comprehensive family life education, policies that support healthy child bearing and rearing, and the right for women to make medical decisions for their own bodies.
- Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment: equal pay, equal access, equal rights under the law.
- The right for women to live free from violence and harassment in their personal and professional lives, and the promotion of healing, justice, and safety.
- Candidates who reflect the diversity and breadth of experience of all South Dakotans.