



Moving Florida Forward: 2012 Florida Democratic Party Platform

Florida Democrats believe in Florida values. We, the people of the great State of Florida, believe in standing for effective and efficient government that is aimed at providing the quality public safety, education, and healthcare the people of this state deserve. Ours is the party that champions the middle class and the basic principle of fairness to ensure all Floridians are treated equally. And we believe in protecting the state's precious land, water, and air for our children and grandchildren. It is our purpose to place before the residents of Florida a document that states the position of the Democratic Party for the future direction of our state. The following Platform makes that statement, and offers a promise of a strong and fruitful future for all Floridians.

FLORIDA'S JOBS TRIPLE PLAY

We, as Florida Democrats, believe jobs and the economy are our first priority. Therefore we pledge to:

- Support the creation of jobs for hard-working Floridians, with wage parity between women and men.
Democrats are committed to preserving and expanding Florida's middle class by creating good paying jobs, by investing in Florida's crumbling infrastructure, and by strengthening demand for Florida products both here and abroad.
- Empower small business owners to create new jobs.
We will lead the way by expanding small business job creation through incentives for employers, and by reducing unnecessary government interference.
- Increase training and apprenticeship opportunities by working with our Florida labor unions and public school systems:
We will endeavor to achieve our goals by expanding training and retraining initiatives for every Florida worker and returning veteran, and strengthening public education for our children.

EDUCATION...THE FOUNDATION OF FLORIDA'S FUTURE

We, as Democrats, subscribe to Article IX, Section 1, of the Florida State Constitution, which requires the state to "...**provide a uniform, efficient, safe, secure and high quality system of free public schools which allows students to obtain a high quality education.**" To fulfill that promise, we support:

- Ensuring full funding by the state for our public schools, with no unfunded mandates placed upon local school districts. Education funding should not be subject to legislative bargaining.
- Establishing evaluation measures which embrace the total educational experience and paying our teachers the wages they deserve.
- Providing universal access to high quality early childhood education.



- Making public schools our top priority with maintenance and construction funding being thus designated.
- Creating world-class vocational apprenticeship programs.
- Investing in high quality affordable and available higher education, both vocational and academic.
- Creating a comprehensive curriculum for educating future teachers and quality professional development for current teachers.

Investing in a high-quality education system is critical to Florida's economic future.

HEALTHY AMERICANS, STRONG AMERICA

We, as Democrats, support affordable healthcare, expanding coverage to all Americans, holding insurers accountable, and working diligently to make our healthcare system a viable, quality system which upholds our Democratic ideals and protects all Americans. We believe:

- Access to affordable, high quality healthcare is a right for all Americans.
- Healthcare is about care and not insurance. Health is not a commodity.
- Focusing on preventive healthcare will save lives and money.
- Florida veterans have given of their physical and in many instances mental well-being; we Democrats will fight to ensure they receive the care required to recover their health.
- Women are capable of making decisions about their own healthcare including, and especially, in regard to reproductive health.

An investment in the health and well-being of Americans is an investment in the economic future and strength of our nation.

SOCIAL SECURITY

We, as Democrats, support the continuation of strong and reasonable protection of Social Security as a life wage and an insurance policy for the disabled of all ages. We believe:

- The Social Security trust fund must be secured and protected.
- Social Security and Medicare reform should be based on increased revenue, not decreased payments.
- Social Security benefits must keep pace with inflation.
- The application and approval process for Disability insurance must be streamlined and shortened.
- The “no bid” clause in Medicare Part D must be eliminated.

Social Security is not just for seniors, it is a safety net for all ages in times of need.

JUSTICE FOR ALL

Democrats believe that:



- All people should be treated equally and fairly, in all levels of government and society, by fighting discrimination based on race, color, religion, creed, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, and family status.
- Civil rights must be restored to those who have paid their debt to society.
- We must provide equal access and opportunities to Floridians so they have the expectation of being able to participate fully in the political process. Voter suppression laws must be repealed.
- The State of Florida must finally ratify the Equal Rights Amendment.
- We are against any law or amendment that seeks to violate equal protection under the law.
- We must provide to all veterans the highest, most comprehensive social services now, and in the future. Florida will not forget those who fought for and defended this country.
- In a just society, all persons should have the right to become citizens under a lawful process.

We must fulfill the promise of the Pledge of Allegiance: " ... and justice for all."

The Florida Democratic Party has brought together the major aspects of our beliefs and values in this Platform. We believe that everyone should have a fair and equal opportunity in a future that, with hard work, will bring them closer to the American dream. The Florida Democratic Party continues to champion efforts to strengthen our economy, improve our public schools, expand affordable access to medical care, honor our eldest citizens, and lead the way to guarantee all people their civil rights.