

**2015-2016 Arizona Democratic Party Platform
Roots in History, Vision for the Future**

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2015-2016 Arizona Democratic Party Platform Roots in History, Vision for the Future

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

The United States Constitution Preamble

The Arizona Democratic Party is committed to advancing a core set of universal values that includes individuals' freedom to speak their mind, assemble without fear, have access to information, worship as they please, and be treated equally among all people; and to have equal access to a representative democracy and the fair and equitable administration of justice. We work to leave our state and our world a better place for those generations who will follow.

Democrats believe that government is an essential institution that plays a positive role in protecting individual liberties, facilitating economic development, ensuring equality of opportunity, and helping to meet the basic needs of vulnerable individuals and families.

We are committed to making government at all levels more responsive, more accountable, more transparent, and more cost effective while upholding the rights and responsibilities set forth in *The U.S. Constitution*, its Amendments, the "Bill of Rights," and *The Arizona Constitution*.

Grounded in those historical rights and responsibilities, the Arizona Democratic Party Platform is a statement of the Party's vision for the future of Arizona.

The ideals and values articulated within this Platform should serve as a catalyst for conversations among citizens of all ages and political persuasions, knowing that this blend of beliefs will lead to purposeful action to further the fight for every Arizonan to "secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity."

"We the people of the United States..."

Diversity

We the people of the United States are a richly diverse group. We believe that in the fabric of our society, diversity allows us to weave together many distinctive, discrete threads to create a more vivid and enduring culture that represents who we are as a society.

Democrats also affirm the inherent right of Arizona tribes to self-government as well as the unique government-to-government relationship they share with the United States.

Non-Discrimination

No one should face discrimination on any basis, including race, ethnicity, national origin, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. Democrats will continue to lead efforts to facilitate access by everyone to employment opportunities and the ability to lead full, productive, and satisfying lives.

"...to form a more perfect union..."

Responsibility

Arizona Democrats believe that responsibility requires a commitment from each one of us to exercise our best personal and collective judgment in making choices and taking action. We as individuals and as a society share a responsibility in aiding and supporting our neighbors, both in good times and in bad.

Arizonans deserve a responsible government comprised of public servants who ethically serve everyone with integrity, competence, and transparency. As Arizona Democrats, we hold our government accountable for transparency with open meetings and negotiations, clear financial records, fair and clean elections, and accurate vote counting.

We support the Voting Rights Act, which prohibits states from imposing voting policies, voting qualifications, or other discriminatory practices against United States citizens. Suffrage should be embraced for and by everyone, and voting should not in any way be discouraged or impeded.

Public Education

A well-educated citizenry is the foundation of democracy and critical to the state's economic security. Our children and young adults are among our greatest resources. As Arizona Democrats, we serve as stewards to invest in their education, from pre-kindergarten through postsecondary opportunities, and to provide equal access to quality public education at all levels and to all individuals, regardless of socio-economic status or ability.

We believe in accountability in education: that government retains its obligation to properly fund our public education, and that public schools and universities must be held accountable for results. Arizona Democrats support the *Arizona Constitution*: that public higher education should be "as free as possible" to students.

Arizona Democrats strongly support our children and their abilities to achieve by providing access to vital pre- and post-natal care, quality preschool programs, comprehensive and rigorous public schools, and after-school programs.

“...establish justice...”

Equality

Justice represents the balance between one person's freedoms and another's rights. Arizona Democrats believe in the essence of the rule of law: justice that requires that laws apply to all equally and without discrimination.

Equal Opportunity

Arizona Democrats believe that equal opportunity in business, employment, education, and housing must exist for all. We condemn intolerance and unfairness in our personal and professional lives.

Democrats believe that for people who work hard and play by the rules there should be opportunity to fulfill the promise of their abilities and dreams. We believe this can be accomplished by growing a middle class and by providing ladders of opportunity for those working hard to join the middle class.

Personal Dominion

If justice balances freedoms and rights, justice also protects the principle that the rights of one do not extend into the privacy of others. We believe that the right of privacy includes the right of individuals to have dominion over their own bodies, including decisions regarding reproduction, medical treatments, and end-of-life issues.

Arizona Democrats support evidence-based and age-appropriate sex education, as well as evidence-based education relating to all other life-changing decisions such as medical treatment and end-of-life issues.

Civil Rights

As Arizona Democrats, we believe that justice and adherence to law are indisputable rights. An individual's civil and voting rights must have complete protection under the laws of our state and nation. People should have the ability to pursue justice without fear or repercussion for any reason, such as religion, race, age, cultural or ethnic heritage, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, political party, income level, or social status.

We support marriage equality and support the movement to secure equal treatment under law for same-sex couples in all aspects of living and the law such as livelihood, workplace, commerce, and recreation.

Reproductive Rights

Arizona Democrats strongly and unequivocally support Roe v. Wade and a woman's right to make decisions regarding her pregnancy, including a safe and legal abortion, regardless of ability to pay. Abortion is an intensely personal decision; there is no place for politicians or government to get in the way. We also recognize that health care and education help reduce the number of unintended pregnancies and thereby also reduce the need for abortions. We strongly and unequivocally support a woman's decision to have a child by providing affordable health care and ensuring the availability of and access to programs that help women during pregnancy and after the birth of a child, including caring adoption programs.

Equal Pay for Equal Work

Arizona Democrats support the elimination of pay discrimination, a practice that shortchanges women and their families during their work years and throughout retirement. We support laws and their enforcement that require men and women in the same workplace be given equal pay for equal work in all forms of pay including salary, overtime pay, bonuses, vacation and holiday pay, and other benefits.

“...insure domestic tranquility...”

Economic Security

As a community, we have a vital interest in growing a strong, viable economy for the betterment of individuals, families, and businesses. Arizona Democrats recognize that security and prosperity come from a stability and predictability that empower investment in growth and innovation, and provide quality working and workplace conditions. We believe in deficit reduction not by placing the burden on the middle class and the poor, but by re-evaluating revenue sources and asking the wealthiest and corporations to contribute their fair share.

Health Care

Accessible, affordable, and high quality health care for all is paramount to Arizona's security. In an economically secure community, more people can afford health care, housing, advanced education, and more. This produces healthier people who bolster a healthier economy. A healthy Arizona benefits us all and strengthens our economy.

Arizona Democrats support family caregivers and efforts to make formal caregiving more affordable, feasible, and accessible, allowing seniors and people with disabilities to remain at home for as long as possible to heal, age, and thrive. We support policies that provide the services needed for caregiving families to remain healthy, happy, and productive.

Workers

Arizona Democrats support the right of workers to a safe and secure workplace and to be compensated with a fair, living wage. All workers should be able to organize and negotiate with their employers in collective bargaining to create greater security and greater productivity.

Democrats continue to support measures that keep teachers and first responders on the job; put construction workers back to work by investing in our crumbling infrastructure, schools, and water supply; help families refinance their mortgages; cut taxes for small businesses that invest and hire; and put veterans back to work.

Arizona Democrats believe in eliminating tax breaks for companies that ship jobs overseas, and instead, offering tax breaks to companies that invest here in the U.S., with American workers who are making American products.

"...provide for the common defense..."

Immigration Reform

While understanding that our security requires the establishment and enforcement of boundaries, Arizona Democrats support preserving the historical openness of our society. Our federal

government must develop comprehensive immigration reform that reflects humane practices and fairness to families while valuing the economic and cultural contributions immigrants have made and will continue to make to our communities. Immigration reform must include a pathway to citizenship.

Democrats are strongly committed to enacting comprehensive immigration reform that supports our economic goals and reflects our values as both a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants.

Arizona Democrats support the DREAM Act where students can become legal residents and eventually citizens. We also support President Obama's executive orders on DACA and DAPA that temporarily allow students and their parents to work legally and acquire drivers' licenses.

Service Members

Democrats are committed to keeping the sacred trust we have with our troops, military families, and veterans. We prioritize support for wounded warriors and the mental and physical well being of our military families and veterans. We will keep working to give our veterans the health care, benefits, education, and job opportunities that they have earned.

Firearms

Arizona Democrats believe in effective enforcement of existing laws, strengthening background check systems, and working together to enact commonsense gun safety improvements. Arizona Democrats support gun control legislation that includes registration/background checks for every person who purchases a firearm in any venue. We support a ban on assault weapons and denial of gun purchases to those with a history of mental illness, domestic violence, or criminal acts.

"...promote the general welfare..."

Stewardship

The general welfare of Arizonans is promoted through stewardship of the resources entrusted to us: human and financial resources, education, infrastructure, and the environment. Arizona Democrats will remain vigilant in protecting and enhancing our resources to benefit current and future generations.

Environment

We face an urgent need to make smart changes in the ways we develop land, use water, and generate and consume energy. Democrats are committed to making responsible decisions, using sustainable practices to protect our dwindling natural resources, and promoting the health of Arizonans with improved air and water quality.

Climate Change

Climate change is one of the biggest threats of this generation as an economic, environmental, and national security catastrophe in the making. Democrats affirm the science of climate change, and commit to significantly reducing the pollution that causes unnaturally rapidly changing climates. We have to meet this challenge by driving smart policies that lead to ever-increasing clean and renewable energy generation with a range of economic and social benefits.

Prison Reform

Arizona democrats believe in prison reform that provides alternatives to prison time, particularly for the mentally ill and those harshly incarcerated under mandatory sentencing for minor drug use or other nonviolent offenses. Alternatives include substance abuse treatment, prevention services, mental health treatment, and re-entry programs. We oppose for-profit prisons.

“...secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity...”

Collective Action

As Americans, we are bound together by more than nationality or geography. We are bound by a shared set of ideals and values rooted in the notion that we are greater together; that our collective efforts produce something better than the sum of our individual actions; and that together, rather than divided, we can overcome the greatest challenges that come our way.

Both Social Security and Medicare must be kept strong for seniors, people with disabilities, and future generations. During their working years, Americans contribute to Social Security and Medicare in exchange for a promise that they will reap the benefits of a secure, healthy, and dignified retirement.

Arizona Democrats believe that when everyone - poor and wealthy, small businesses and large corporations included - pays a fair share in taxes, everyone can reap the benefits of a prosperous national economy rooted in high-quality public education, Social Security, affordable health care, Medicare, economic security, and an up-to-date and enviable infrastructure. Thus, through taxes and mutually beneficial policies, we secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves, each other, and for our posterity.