

SPONSOR: Policy & Platform Committee

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SUBJECT: Social Safety Net Platform Plank

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE: Revised Platform Plank in the Social Justice and Liveable Community pillar. Social Justice and Equal Opportunity, Respect for Diversity, and Personal and Global Responsibility are the involved 10 Key Values of the GP.

PROPOSAL

(new=underlined; struckout=deleted)

ONLY THE CHANGES WILL BE DISCUSSED

Social Safety Net

The purpose of the social safety net is to provide a floor below which a citizen in America should not suffer economic deprivation. Our social safety net provides assistance to persons who are elderly; disabled; economically poor; and in families with very young, sick or special-need children.

Since its inception in 1936, the Social Security System has been an essential asset to elderly Americans. However, in the last two decades these funds have been used to reduce the federal deficit, they are not placed in a separate trust fund. Middle and low income workers who have paid disproportionately more of their wages into the system will not receive their due upon retirement.

In the next decade, millions of disadvantaged and disabled people, as well as single and divorced parents, who have depended upon this support system will be removed from local, state and federal roles. Recipients will be forced into "workfare" for minimum wages or less without health, safety and union protections, displacing current workers and pushing down wages for everyone. Single parents forced into taking jobs without provisions for childcare will have to choose between economic destitution or neglecting their children and losing them to foster care.

The premise of so-called "welfare reform" is that there are enough jobs that pay a living wage, when indeed there are not. In actuality, so-called "welfare dependency" is caused by a lack of affordable child care, higher education, housing and medical care.

The Green Party calls for a reliable social safety net with benefits sufficient to meet basic necessities:

The Elderly

Recognize Social Security as a human right as stated in the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights - everyone has the right to a secure retirement.

Separate Social Security from the federal budget. Social Security funds must be handled independently and for the benefit of the people they are meant to help.

Stop cuts in social security. Benefits should be tied to actual increases in the cost of living, which should be determined by committees of consumers. This would avoid the danger of the consumer price index being manipulated to justify decreasing benefits.

Retain the safety net for senior citizens who rely upon it to cover medical benefits in addition to subsistence benefits. They should not be forced to liquidate their assets for long term health care.

The Disabled

Provide adequate levels of security for those less fortunate who find themselves dependent, temporarily or permanently, upon the social services of the state for their survival. There are some people among the developmentally disabled, physically handicapped, and severely emotionally disturbed who may require support most of their life. It is incumbent upon society to provide for them.

Fully fund rehabilitation to permit the disabled to achieve their maximum potential. Treatment programs for addictive diseases, including narcotics and alcohol, must be available as needed. Until full self-sufficiency is attained, earnings should be supplemented at adequate levels.

Families with Children

Do not require workfare outside the home for single parents of small children. Running households and caring for children is work, even though women have often performed such work without pay.

Provide paid parental leave for one parent of very young, ill, or special needs children.

Make quality child care available to all parents who are engaged in paid employment, higher education, or job training.

The Economically Disadvantaged

Provide support, with out time limits, for those who are economically disadvantaged.

Keep benefit levels up with inflation, and keep them sufficient to meet basic needs.

Do not exclude immigrants from the benefits of the safety net. Everyone who lives here contributes to the economy through work, paying taxes (including sales taxes), and purchasing goods and services.

Pay a living wage or the prevailing wage in industry, whichever is greater, for all people in compulsory work-placements (so-called "workfare"), whether the work is performed in the private sector, community service or otherwise.

Provide union recognition and full health and safety protections for workfare workers.

Allow exemptions from work requirements for welfare recipients pursuing higher education, homeless people looking for housing, or for victims of domestic violence who need additional time to find safety and independence.

All United States Residents - Social Security For All

Expand Social Security to all adult residents of the U.S. regardless of age and work income, in the amount of at least \$1,000 per month in 2024 U.S. dollars (adjusted for inflation afterward.) This expansion must be *above* regular age-based Social Security and other social welfare programs, *must not* be used to replace any other social welfare programs, and must allow all recipients including people over 62 years of age to work for *added* income if they desire to do so.

COMMITTEE DECISION: This revised platform plank was a consequence of the development of Reparations for Black American Freedmen plank and the draft Policy and Platform Omnibus Reparations plank consensed to by the Policy and

Platform Committee at its Thursday, October 24 zoom meeting after extensive deliberations throughout 2024.

RESOURCES: This is a revised platform plank.