



## **2022 Platform**

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## **Nebraska Democratic Land Acknowledgement**

Nebraska Democratic Land Acknowledgement We, as members of the Nebraska Democratic Party, wish to acknowledge that we gather together to state our values on lands that have been stewarded through many centuries by the ancestors and descendants of Tribal Nations who have been here since time immemorial. We honor all Native communities, relatives, two-spirit, and elders of this continent and recognize that our state was built on Indigenous homelands. We pay our respects to the millions of Indigenous people throughout history who have protected our lands, waters, and animals.

Today, four Federally recognized tribes in Nebraska – the Omaha Tribe (Umonhon), Ponca Tribe, Santee Sioux Nation (Isanti), and the Winnebago Tribe (Ho-Chunk).

We respectively recognize that we will present this Land Acknowledgement at our 2022 Nebraska Democratic State Convention on the lands of the four (4) Federally recognized tribes in Nebraska – the Omaha Tribe (Umonhon), Ponca Tribe, Santee Sioux Nation (Isanti), and the Winnebago Tribe (Ho-Chunk).

## Preamble

This platform reflects our pride in the fact that our party welcomes people with diverse opinions. We are also proud that whatever our differences on specific issues, we as Democrats are committed to a set of principles about how government ought to work and what should be the outcomes of government actions, as follows:

- **Honesty and Integrity** -We value truth, open communication, and promise keeping, and expect values of our office holders and public servants. Key to these aspirations is our individual freedom of expression and a vigorous free press unthreatened by those in power. We stand against the “Big Lie” promoted by Republicans that the last election was not won by President Joseph Biden.
- **Opportunity**- We believe that responsible governance opens doors for the advancement of all people.
- **Responsibility and Accountability** - We believe that keeping the decision-making process visible to all people creates policies that benefit all rather than special interests.
- **Mutual Prosperity** - We believe that the health, freedom, and financial security of the full range of families and individuals should not be compromised by policies protecting the wealth of those at the top to the detriment of the poor and the middle class.
- **Respect and Inclusivity**-We believe that one of the greatest strengths of this county lies in the diversity of its people and ideas, and as such all individuals and groups should be treated as equals in the decision-making process and no individual or group should be subject to unfair treatment or harassment.
- **Freedom and Justice** -All people are created equal, and should enjoy the same rights and privileges. In our collective search for justice, no crime should be ignored because of the identity of the victim, and no criminal should be punished more harshly because of his or her identity.

- **Civic Participation** -We foster and value the participation by citizens in elections, public fora, jury duty, legislative hearings and media exchange of opinions; these are the means of assuring that public policy reflects informed understanding in the electorate and community. We must make it easier for people to vote, not make prevent people from legally voting.
- **Human Rights**-We promote the protection of human rights of all citizens and non-citizens, regardless of status, including comprehensive health care.
- **Science** - We believe that the Scientific Method is the best way to establish the facts upon which we base our decisions. Research that has passed the rigors of peer review must never be denigrated just to please anti-science interests, narrow constituencies, and deniers of all persuasions.

## **Build Back Better**

We support the Biden-Harris administration’s “Build Back Better” plan to stimulate the economy, help families, and reduce global warming. Measures such as the child tax credit, universal pre-school, and expansion of Medicare will help millions. It is important that Congress pass this legislation as soon as possible.

## **Criminal Justice**

The events of the last two years have made it clearer than ever that there must be significant criminal justice reform. The current system has resulted in the greatest level of mass incarceration in the world. Nebraska itself has the most overcrowded prison system in America. The rate of incarceration of people of color is especially disturbing. We must end the failed War on Drugs, which has driven much of the mass incarceration. We support the passage of LB920 by the Nebraska Legislature, which would make a real difference in the number of people incarcerated, by reforming sentencing laws and strengthening alternatives to incarceration. We oppose building a new prison. We support the expansion of problem-solving courts and pre-trial diversion.

We encourage the efforts of local law enforcement to build positive relationships with our youth and to attract minority recruits. We support increased transparency and accountability of law enforcement officer's rates of arrests and searches based upon race and ethnicity. Law enforcement agencies should not use weapons such as tear gas, rubber bullets, and pepper spray. We support increased use of social workers to accompany law enforcement officers to respond to mental health calls.

We support the elimination of the money bond system. It is immoral to hold people in jail based upon their wealth. This has been especially damaging for people of color. A risk assessment system has been proven to release more people from jail, and to make communities safer.

We oppose capital punishment.

## **Education**

We support the right of every child in America to have access to quality free PreK – post-secondary education in a safe secure setting. Further, every PreK – 12, student should have access to a diverse learning curriculum, which we encourage local school board officials to prescribe. Examples of such curricula should include a balanced exposure to the study and application of all content areas including STEM education, humanities, arts, and essential life skills and be designed for students of all abilities. PreK – 12 students should be prepared for any post-secondary opportunity which is right for them, including post-secondary education, job training, military service or direct entry into the workforce.

We support the importance of basing state sponsored and funded curriculum on best practices and content knowledge as defined by educational, social and physical scientists and experts.

We support those with special needs and their families and caregivers and encourage expansion of programs and benefits that will aid each individual with their unique needs. Lancaster County Democrats believe that Special Education (SPED) programs should continue to be based on the individual needs of each student.

We believe every child should have a safe school environment conducive to learning, free from all forms of bullying, harassment, or violence. We believe that schools should be safe from gun violence, and support schools in securing facilities to protect students. Lancaster County Democrats oppose efforts to fund school security initiatives that divert funds away from classrooms. We oppose arms of any kind on school grounds, with an exception for emergency responders.

Lancaster County Democrats support the elimination or capping of Federal student debt. In cases where student debt is forgiven, it should not be taxed as income.

## **Environmental Stewardship**

Since the health of our communities and the opportunities we leave for future generations are directly impacted by the decisions we make today, we must work to use our resources wisely and protect the environment. Global warming is a crisis and we must take action to eliminate the greenhouse gases that cause global warming and the climate disruption it causes. We believe that ocean floor mining holds the potential to destroy the delicate deep ocean ecosystem. Efforts to harvest those resources must be attempted with great care, if at all. We support President Biden's efforts to reduce global warming, including the provisions of "Build Back Better".

We must eliminate the use of fossil fuels and increase usage of clean renewable energy, especially wind and solar. We support consideration of a carbon tax to reduce the use of fossil fuels, while protecting the most vulnerable members of our society. We call on our public power electric companies to increase generation of clean energy, especially wind, expand programs to assist homes and businesses to use energy more efficiently, and apply strategies to eliminate the use of fossil fuels. We also support greater availability and use of mass transit.

We support the efforts of the City Council to mandate the recycling of cellulose products and encourage the expansion of those efforts to other recyclables. We also advocate increasing the availability of free recycling locations and grant programs to pay for pickup services for people in need.

We thank President Joseph Biden for canceling the Keystone Pipeline.

We support environmentally responsible agricultural methods which reduce any negative impact on soil, water, and air quality. Furthermore, we support the research and development of such methods.

We, as members of the Lancaster County Democratic Party, stand with the Biden-Harris administration on the 30x30 Executive Order. Also known as “America the Beautiful” plan, the Executive Order calls for preserving 30 percent of the land by 2030. Thirty percent being the amount of land many scientists say should be preserved to protect species in a warming world. As of now, about 12 percent of U.S. land is being preserved.

## **Firearms and Gun Violence Prevention**

We recognize that gun violence is a serious problem that claims the lives of tens of thousands of Americans per year, injures many more, traumatizes countless others, and disproportionately impacts communities of color. We support the right of Americans to live free of gun violence. We recognize that gun violence is the consequence of an inadequately regulated consumer market.

We support the repeal of the federal Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA), which offers special immunities from liability to gun manufacturers and sellers and deprives injured persons of the right to legal remedy in the courts.

We support a reinstated and updated Brady Bill.

Lancaster County Democrats support the right of communities to respond democratically to gun violence by passing local ordinances to address their needs. If guns are owned, they must be secured and used responsibly.

We support a tax on weapons and ammunition to fund school security measures.

We support criminal and civil liability for those who do not safely secure their guns.

We further support the American Medical Association’s (AMA) proposed ban of the purchase or possessions of guns and ammunition by people under 21. We support legislation that allows relatives of suicidal people or those who have threatened

imminent violence to seek court-ordered removal of guns from the home. We support better training for physicians to recognize patients at risk for suicide and ending



loopholes in laws that still allow people found guilty of domestic violence to purchase guns.

We further support the American Academy of Pediatrics' (AAP) call for gun-safety legislation. We believe that assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines should be banned. We support mandatory background checks and waiting periods of all firearm purchases.

We recommend further that handguns and handgun ammunition be regulated, that restrictions be placed on handgun ownership, and that the number of privately owned handguns be reduced.

Firearms should be removed from the environments where children live and play, but if they are not, they must be stored locked and unloaded. Safe storage practices can reduce the risk of death or injury but loaded firearms and unloaded firearms and ammunition represent a serious danger to children.

## **Gender Equity**

We promote equal rights, including equal pay for equal work.

We support legislation to protect victims of violence regardless of gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, immigration status, age, disability or marital status.

We promote the end to discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, including housing, education, and employment discrimination.

## **Healthcare**

Lancaster County Democrats believe that access to affordable, quality health care is a right for all. We support expanding the current healthcare system to Medicare for All Act of 2021. We support a broad base of coverage including but not limited to primary care, preventative care, inpatient, outpatient, emergency care, prescription drugs, durable medical equipment, long term care, mental health, substance abuse

services, non-cosmetic dentistry, pre-existing conditions, chiropractic services, basic vision care and correction, outpatient therapies and ambulance services. Under Medicare for All, we believe eligible providers would be any licensed or accredited provider in compliance with the law. We believe that patients should choose their own healthcare provider. No one should be denied life-preserving medical care, medications, or medical supplies due to cost or pre-existing conditions. Lancaster County Democrats recognize the need for more rural health clinics and adequate funding for critical care hospitals. Lancaster County Democrats support further research into affordable, accessible contraceptive methods for all persons. We continue to oppose any state and federal laws that would impede a woman's or other person's constitutional right to a safe and legal abortion, regardless of gender identity. We support efforts to guarantee healthcare for all people, including the option of Medicare for all. We believe all U.S. residents, regardless of immigration status, should have access to quality health care.

We oppose centers that provide biased and inaccurate information regarding reproductive health care options, and shame or stigmatize individuals for their sexual practices. We oppose the removal of funding to federally qualified health centers and any entity that receives Title X funding. We denounce all acts of violence towards providers of family planning and health care services. Lancaster County Democrats continue to advocate for and support all reproductive choices for women or other persons regardless of gender identity.

We support full funding for the Children Health Information Program (CHIP). Lancaster County Democrats support Nebraskans' access to medical cannabis with a doctor's prescription. We support stem cell research and therapy as a critical component of health care. Also, we support both public and private funding for stem cell research.

Lancaster County Democrats shall work to make it easier on families to afford high-quality insurance in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplaces by ensuring that no one pays more than 8.5% - 9% of income in premiums and eliminating the cap on subsidies. Lancaster County Democrats support reducing the cost of prescription drugs. We also support LGBTQIA2S+ people and people living with HIV or AIDS having full access to healthcare and resources. This includes requiring that the federal

government mandate federal healthcare plans to include coverage for HIV/AIDS testing and treatment, and for HIV prevention medications, gender affirmation surgery and hormone therapy.

Lancaster County Democrats also support increasing community HIV prevention and testing programs that effectively reach the Latinx, Black, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Native American, and other communities. We support the efforts of the federal government to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic by the year 2025.

Lancaster County Democrats support increased funding for research into health disparities of different communities like race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation and more.

Lancaster County Democrats recognize drug addiction as a public health crisis issue. We support rehabilitation and destigmatization for persons struggling with drug addiction. In addition, we call for an increase of funding for drug addiction treatment.

## **Immigration**

We believe that the United States is a country that should welcome all immigrants inasmuch as immigration is a defining aspect of the American character and our shared history. We support fair, effective, and humane immigration reform. We believe that all immigrants and refugees fleeing violence must be assured Due Process in accordance with U.S Constitution before they are deported or refused entry.

We support investing in culturally appropriate immigrant integration services, expanded access to English language education, and promote naturalization to help the

millions of immigrants eligible for citizenship to take the final step to become fully participating U.S. Citizens.

We promote a balanced and humanitarian approach to immigration reform which recognizes the importance of Family Reunification and the vital economic role millions of undocumented workers play in this country by expanding access to documented immigration and the path to citizenship.

We support our DACA recipients and the creation of a pathway to U.S. citizenship. We support the passage of the Citizenship Act of 2021, proposed by the Biden-Harris Administration to protect immigrants and refugees that are fleeing from violence.

We promote Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CIR) that must 1) address the current system that discriminates against certain immigrants, refugees and DREAMERS; 2) address family backlogs, 3) eliminate policies that would restrict legal immigration avenues and denigrate immigrants, and 4) reinstate the initial DACA application process, 5) and provide children under the age of 19 with appointed counsel in all Removal Proceedings.

### **Labor/Working Families**

We support a tax system in which the wealthiest Americans pay their fair share, and no one can hide their income or assets through loopholes such as tax inversions, shell corporations and other forms of offshore tax havens. Capital gains, dividends and private equity management fees should be taxed the same as wages. The increasing concentration of wealth in the hands of a few is unhealthy for our country. We should reward employers who choose not to outsource jobs and we endorse trade policies which encourage such behavior.

We support legislation to increase the federal minimum wage, and to index increases in the minimum wage to inflation. We support the petition drive to give Nebraskans the chance to vote for an increase to the minimum wage.

We support expanding the Obama-Biden Administration's Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces policy and use the purchasing power of the federal government to incentivize private companies to recruit and advance people of color, women, people with disabilities, and veterans. We will also work with Congress to direct the Chair of the Federal Reserve to report on the extent of racial employment and wage gaps. We support the release of details on how the central bank is countering those gaps, in addition to monitoring, reporting on, and responding to macroeconomic conditions in general.

We promote support for families experiencing catastrophic illness or the death of a family member and encourage paid and protected medical and bereavement leave for every worker. We support families experiencing birth, adoption or emergency foster hood of a child and encourage paid and protected leave for every worker and affordable childcare for parents who return to work.

We believe that working people who want to bargain collectively need a fair chance to express that preference and we promote the passage of legislation which would increase penalties for unlawful employer anti-union tactics, create union recognition when a majority of employees sign cards and mandate a first contract within a year of the start of collective bargaining. We will work to pass the Public Sector Foresight Network (PSFN), which would provide the federal government's guarantee for public-sector employees to bargain for better pay and benefits and the working conditions they deserve. We insist that markets and employers must pair human dignity with enterprise and that full-time employees must receive a wage that enables them to live without government assistance.

We propose that a comprehensive policy to erase income inequality be put in place including, but not be limited to, changes in tax-policy at all governmental levels, student loan debt forgiveness, as well as changes in income starting with guaranteeing a living wage.

We advocate improvement and expansion of StarTran Services.

## **Legalization of Cannabis**

We support the legalization of marijuana under a state regulated system. We believe tax revenues from marijuana sales will help reduce reliance on property taxes. Prohibition of marijuana has been used as a weapon against people of color, and has unnecessarily harmed many people. It has been no more effective than the prohibition of alcohol was, and it must end. We believe that people who live with an incurable, chronic, medically based condition should be afforded the option and choice of medical marijuana to ease their pain, suffering and symptoms of any ailment that causes disability, diminished quality of life or inevitable death. We support medical cannabis and pharmaceutical access, including for minors, under the direction of a physician.

We support the petition drive to give Nebraskans the opportunity to vote for medical marijuana.

## **Pandemic**

We support President Biden's efforts to contain the pandemic and keep us safe. We support efforts to vaccinate Americans and to require masks, when necessary, as the best ways to keep people safe. We are thankful to Mayor Gaylor Baird and Health Department Director Pat Lopez for their leadership and efforts to keep people in Lincoln safe during the pandemic.

## **Prison Reform**

We support efforts to reduce prison overcrowding by increasing mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, sentencing reform, an enhanced probation system and job training to keep people from entering the criminal justice system. We support the increased use of problem-solving courts, including drug and mental health courts, to provide alternatives to incarceration. We support increased use of pre-trial diversion programs.

We support increased resources for mental health. Inadequate mental health services lead to increased hospitalization, incarceration and overall human suffering. We oppose the overuse of segregation because of the damaging effects on mental health.

Lancaster County Democrats demand that the legislative branch and the Governor immediately reform the state correctional system including reforms to segregation practices, prison overcrowding, lack of staffing, freedom to practice religion, medical care, and mental health treatment. We oppose building new prisons and any form of private prisons.

## **Reproductive Rights**

We support family planning, including the right to reproductive freedom. Access to contraception should be a guaranteed part of health care. We oppose efforts to restrict reproductive rights. Reproductive Rights are based on the United Nations internationally accepted Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a comprehensive body of law that details the rights of all individuals, including but not limited to: Indigenous women/persons, women/persons of color, and trans persons.

We recognize that people who identify as men, non-binary, gender non-conforming, genderqueer, and many other gender identities can become pregnant. In addition, we believe that our state and federal governments have the responsibility to protect their reproductive rights.

Lancaster County Democrats affirm that Reproductive Rights are about access to services, not choice. Mainstream movements have focused on keeping abortion legal as an individual choice. That is necessary, but not enough. Even when abortion is legal, many women/persons and women/persons of color cannot afford it or cannot travel hundreds of miles to the nearest clinic. There is no choice where there is no access.

## **Social Entitlements (Social Security/Medicare/Veterans Benefits)**

We support the protection of aging Nebraskans and Nebraskans with disabilities through protection of Social Security and Medicare. Any reforms should not include

privatization or vouchers but should include removing the cap on income to fund Social Security.

We strongly support legislation granting our present-day veterans education benefits previous veterans have received, such as the GI Bill. We applaud efforts to provide new veterans housing on the Lincoln VA campus.

## **Ukraine**

We oppose the invasion of Ukraine by Russian military forces directed by Vladimir Putin. All who cherish freedom must stand with Ukraine at this time. We support efforts to sanction Putin and Russia. We support supplying Ukraine with needed supplies. We support efforts to assist Ukrainian refugees. All Russian forces must leave Ukraine. Ukraine's status as an independent democracy cannot change.

## **Voting Rights**

It is crucial that Congress pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Act to protect voting rights. We are opposed to Republican efforts to make it more difficult to vote, especially harming people of color. We support the sacred principle of “one person, one vote”—and we must fight to achieve that principle for every citizen, regardless of race, income, disability status, geography, or English language proficiency. We support efforts to expand voting by mail, and other methods which have been proven to expand turnout. We promote efforts to overturn the Citizens United decision. We promote efforts to amend the Constitution as necessary to make it clear that corporations are not people. We support limits on campaign contributions, and we oppose corporations being able to make campaign contributions. We strongly oppose the secret funding of third-party efforts to pay for political advertisements.

*We as the Lancaster County Democrats are further motivated and inspired by the Platforms of the Nebraska Democratic Party and the National Democratic Party.*