North Dakota Democratic-NPL Party Platform & Resolutions
Adopted at the Dem-NPL State Convention
Bismarck Event Center
April 1, 2016

PREAMBLE
Democrats join together to elect officials who promote a government that is, first and foremost, responsive to the needs and concerns of all individuals and maintains the rule of law as the primary safeguard against arbitrary governance in a democratic society. We work in concert believing that tomorrow can be better than today: our educational, social, economic and ecological systems can be more equal and healthier with each passing generation.

PRINCIPLES
Democrats welcome diverse religious and cultural perspectives in public policy debates and advocate for policies that promote shared American values of individual liberty, civic and personal responsibility, mutual respect, and inclusion.

Democrats expect public employees and elected officials to demonstrate high ethical standards and transparency in the conduct of public business.

Democrats support a system of government fees and taxes that is not burdensome, ensures everyone pays a reasonable share, and generates adequate funds.

Democrats view safe communities and a modern infrastructure as vital government responsibilities.

Democrats promote sufficient and high quality economic and recreational opportunities for all individuals no matter their physical, financial, or geographic circumstances.

Democrats are committed to North Dakota being a trusted provider of the highest quality food through prosperous family farms and thriving rural communities.

Democrats are dedicated to the responsible development, distribution, conservation and use of our natural resources.

Democrats recognize the value of a quality, uniform public education system that prepares students to succeed in higher education and the workplace and to actively engage in global civic and cultural endeavors.

Democrats are in favor of universal access to quality health care including mental, dental and vision health; a comprehensive system of childcare; and a strong higher education and research system is essential to the environmental, economic, and social development of the state and its people.

Democrats advocate for safe workplaces where all employees are compensated equitably, able to speak freely, secure in their right to organize and bargain collectively, and receive adequate unemployment and workers compensation benefits when necessary.

Democrats promote economic activities which safeguard that which we hold in common: air, water, public lands and climate.
1. **Reversal of Citizens United Supreme Court Decision** The Dem-NPL Party supports a Constitutional Amendment to reverse the Citizens United Supreme Court Decision.

2. **Corporations as “Persons”** The Dem-NPL Party calls upon the U.S. Congress to pass a constitutional amendment to strip corporations of “personhood” by banning corporate campaign contributions.

3. **Campaign Finance Reform** The Dem-NPL Party supports efforts to reduce the influence of money in political campaigns and on our elected officials.

4. **Social Security** The Dem-NPL Party opposes any and all efforts to privatize Social Security or weaken Medicare. The Dem-NPL Party supports efforts to eliminate the cap on taxable earnings for Social Security taxes.

5. **Voter Rights** The Dem-NPL Party is committed to an election process free of procedural barriers that disenfranchise and discourage voters. We endorse all voting methods to require a paper trail to facilitate a transparent canvassing and recount process.

6. **Ethics Commission** The Dem-NPL Party is committed to the establishment of an Ethics Commission to foster integrity in public service in state government, to promote the public’s trust and confidence, and to prevent conflicts between private interests and public duties. As such, we support strong candidate financial disclosure requirements.

7. **Infrastructure Funding** The Dem-NPL Party urges the North Dakota legislature to support proposals that will fund the infrastructure needs of all political subdivisions.

8. **Flood Impact Funding** The Dem-NPL Party supports adequate infrastructure funding for all areas impacted by flooding, provided all such infrastructure fully complies with state and local laws and adequate funding is also provided for those impacted by flood mitigation measures.

9. **Annual Legislative Sessions** The Dem-NPL Party supports annual legislative sessions within the 80-day biennial limit to allow for more timely legislative action and make it easier for working people and persons with young or school age children to serve as legislators.

10. The Dem-NPL Party urges our Congressional delegation to do all it can to restore a reliable and viable postal service, which includes Saturday delivery.

11. The Dem-NPL Party urges Congress to rescind the requirement for full pre-funding of future retirement benefits of postal workers.

12. The Dem-NPL Party calls for a constitutional amendment to create a non-partisan redistricting commission that shall be responsible for drawing congressional and state legislative district.

13. **Keeping Elected and Appointed Officials Accountable** Full time state elected and appointed officials must account for their time. They must record their leave and not take more leave than the most generous leave afforded classified employees.

14. **Open Communication** State legislators must be as open about their communication about official state business as they expect for other public officials.

15. **House Sub-Districts** The Dem-NPL supports a legislative change to create individual House sub-districts of State Senate districts.
LABOR AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. **State-administered retirement funds** The Dem-NPL Party supports all state-administered retirement funds being fully funded by legislative action.

2. **Pensions for Teachers and Public Employees** The Dem-NPL Party supports maintaining a defined benefit retirement plan for teachers and public employees.

3. **Workforce Development** The Dem-NPL Party supports expanding programs which train high-quality workers in areas of labor shortage.

4. **“Right to Work”** The Dem-NPL Party supports the elimination of unfair practices that currently prohibit workers from organizing in their workplaces and supports education about the term “Right to Work”.

5. **Undocumented workers** The Dem-NPL Party supports legislation to penalize employers who take advantage of undocumented workers and their situation.

6. **Injured Workers** The Dem-NPL Party supports passage of an Injured Workers Bill of Rights that includes, but is not limited to injured workers receiving compensation and benefits without regard to age, personal habits, genetic factors, or latent conditions or be subject to offsets; selecting their own physician; receiving a 3rd-party independent medical exam by a specialist in the type of injury received and paid by the State, if there is a dispute; having access to administrative hearing and judicial appeal about agency decisions; and receiving legal counsel and vocational rehabilitation.

7. **Locked-Out Workers** Dem-NPL party supports a change to North Dakota Century Code to reflect that a locked out worker should be eligible for unemployment benefits.

8. **Union Workers' Rights** The Dem-NPL Party supports union workers' rights and respects their efforts as a union to assure their members a decent wage, safe working conditions, and their opportunity for a reasonable standard of health insurance for the workers and their families.


10. **Personnel Serving Persons with Disabilities** The Dem-NPL Party supports reimbursing the providers the full cost of providing care to people with disabilities, behavioral health needs, foster care, and other care needs.

11. **Payment to Physicians** The Dem-NPL Party supports regionally competitive contracting standards for physicians with commercial health insurers.

12. **Healthcare Workforce** The Dem-NPL Party supports initiatives to address health care workforce issues, including physician, nurses and allied health shortages.

13. The Dem-NPL Party supports the increase of minimum wage to $15.00 per hour.

14. The Dem-NPL Party supports a partnership agreement between the State of North Dakota and The 5 Tribal Governments to research, develop, and implement a statewide Tribal Economic Development Plan.
EDUCATION

1. Affordable Higher Education The Dem-NPL Party supports the state legislature providing more funding to students attending our universities to mitigate escalating costs of a college education and make higher education more affordable for all. The Dem-NPL Party further supports the creation of a low interest student loan program for all students who can get a student loan from the Bank of North Dakota at BND base-rate. The Dem-NPL Party supports two years of tuition-less in-state post-secondary education to North Dakota high school graduates to a North Dakota University System institution.

2. Pre-K Education The Dem-NPL Party supports allowing local school districts to offer approved pre-K programs, with state assistance and coordination.


4. Before and After-School Programs The Dem-NPL Party is committed to providing before and after school learning programs.

5. Special Education Funding The Dem-NPL Party supports the state fully providing the local portion of funding for special education.

6. School Nurses The Dem-NPL Party supports all children having consistent access to qualified school nurses.

7. Educator Salaries The Dem-NPL Party supports state funding so that salaries elementary, secondary and post-secondary teachers are regionally and nationally competitive.

HUMAN RIGHTS

1. ND Human Rights Law The Dem-NPL Party supports extending to persons the protection of the ND Human Rights Law that prohibits discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations, and marriage based upon sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.

2. The Dem-NPL Party strongly supports measures to stop human trafficking in North Dakota.

HOUSING, CHILD CARE AND QUALITY OF LIFE

1. Income Equality The Dem-NPL Party recognizes that the income inequality gap has been widening for the past three decades and supports local, state and federal policies that will reverse this trend.

2. Rent Subsidy The Dem-NPL Party urges the state legislature to develop a needs-based formula to assist with rental costs, with an emphasis on the elderly, veterans, young families and people with disabilities.

3. Housing The Dem-NPL Party supports making Bank of North Dakota loan guarantees available to cover the housing appraisal gap (the gap between purchase price and resale value) especially in rural and oil patch regions and to assisting localities in fighting homelessness.

4. Childcare Services The Dem-NPL Party supports funding for developing professional childcare services throughout North Dakota, especially in areas where services are lacking.

5. Childcare The Dem-NPL Party supports providing educational and training opportunities to child care workers, grants to licensed child care providers to assist with facilities and equipment, and childcare tax credits.

6. Childcare The Dem-NPL Party supports making North Dakota’s childcare quality rating and improvement system available to all early care and learning settings ensuring children have optimal opportunities.
**HUMAN SERVICES**

1. **Services for Persons with Disabilities** The Dem-NPL Party supports expanding employment, education, housing (including home ownership), transportation, and access to assistive technology for people with disabilities.
2. **Regional Substance Abuse Programs** The Dem-NPL Party is committed to increasing support for regional and tribal addiction treatment centers.
3. **Vouchers for mental health and substance abuse treatment** The Dem-NPL Party supports the use of vouchers to secure all mental health and substance abuse treatment in the Medicaid program, including treatment at human service centers.
4. **Psychiatric Services** The Dem-NPL Party supports increased statewide access to medically-based psychiatric services.
5. **Services to pregnant minors** The Dem-NPL Party supports comprehensive support services to pregnant minors and a review of laws related to consent for pregnancy testing, prenatal care, and pain management.

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

1. **Use of Alcohol/Drug Testing Devices** The Dem-NPL Party is committed to enhancing public safety while diminishing prison costs by expanding the use of devices at the expense of the state that sense when offenders are using alcohol and drugs.
2. **Alternatives to Incarceration** The Dem-NPL Party supports state funded regional substance abuse treatment programs that are available to the public and as an alternative to incarceration for those convicted of non-violent drug use violations.
3. **Prescription Drug Abuse** The Dem-NPL Party is committed to making changes needed to reduce prescription drug abuse in the state.
4. **The Dem-NPL supports the decriminalization and regulation of cannabis.**

**ENERGY INDUSTRY**

1. **Pipelines, Transmission Lines and Refinery** The Dem-NPL Party supports the State to continue to assist in expanding and modernization of pipelines, transmission lines, and additional oil refining capacity in an environmentally responsible manner.
2. **Investment in Energy Transmission** The Dem-NPL Party supports the State to investment in and development of the infrastructure necessary to have our own natural gas and crude oil refining facilities.
3. **Energy Transmission** The Dem-NPL Party supports policies that will lead to the expansion of North Dakota's energy transmission capabilities.
4. **Funding for Renewable Energy** The Dem-NPL Party asks the state legislature and Congress to significantly increase funding for research and development of new and renewable fuels and supports incentives which would lead to increased energy efficiency in our homes and businesses to decrease our dependence on oil.
5. **Wind and Solar Energy** The Dem-NPL Party supports the development and funding of wind and solar energy projects that are environmentally friendly and that can benefit our local communities. The Dem-NPL Party also supports the establishment of renewable portfolio standards.
6. **Hydraulic Fracturing Fluid Disclosure** The Dem-NPL Party supports state and/or federal legislation that would require oil companies using the technique known as hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, to disclose the chemicals contained in the fracking fluid to the North Dakota Department of Health for public disclosure.
7. Environmentally Responsible Development The Dem-NPL Party supports state and federal legislation that considers environmental responsibility first and foremost in all energy development. Consideration should be given to landowner rights, with damage and reclamation costs being borne by the energy companies.

8. Natural Gas Distribution to More Communities The Dem-NPL Party demands the state legislature provides cost sharing and incentives to build and extend natural gas supply and distribution lines to every community in our state.

9. Oil Patch The Dem-NPL Party supports the protection of Special Places in ND: Appropriate state and federal agencies must review every drilling permit application for areas within two miles of National and State Parks, National and Historic Sites, US Forest Service Backcountry Recreation Areas, The Missouri, Yellowstone, and Little Missouri Rivers, State Game Management Area and Federal Waterfowl Production Areas and National Wildlife Refuges, to ensure best possible citing of well pads and roads leading to them.

10. The Dem-NPL Party supports asking the legislature to appropriate the money necessary to do a complete audit of the mineral right ownership in the oil patch.

11. The Dem-NPL supports research into the environmentally responsible use of coal.

12. The Dem-NPL Party urges the legislature to undertake a study and change the unitization law to protect the mineral owners including that state’s mineral interests by making unitization for secondary recovery only.

13. The Dem-NPL Party supports legislation allowing for flaring of natural gas for only the first 30 days after a well begins producing.

14. The Dem-NPL Party supports increased oversight and enforcement of the dumping of toxic and radioactive waste. Furthermore, we support the study of additional means of cataloguing, tracking, disposal, and containment of toxic and radioactive materials.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

1. Water Policy The Dem-NPL Party supports developing a plan that addresses the short and long-term needs for safe drinking water.

2. Mineral Leases The Dem-NPL Party urges the North Dakota Legislature to enact measures that would require forfeiture of leases on the part of oil and gas companies that do not meet the bonus payment terms of a mineral lease.

3. Climate Change The Dem-NPL Party supports taking science-based actions to reduce the threat of climate change and address the economic, social, and environmental impact.

4. State Policy on Resources The Dem-NPL Party supports a more comprehensive state policy on oil and gas drilling with respect to impacts on land, water, housing, wild game hunting and other infrastructure.

5. “Lasting Harvest Plan” The Dem-NPL Party supports a “Lasting Harvest Plan” focusing on how to transition from the state’s current approach of taking a one-time harvest of the state’s minerals and related revenues to an approach that is based on a lasting harvest of North Dakota resources and entrepreneurship and the resulting healthy and sustainable state growth.
HEALTH CARE

1. Affordable Care Act The Dem-NPL Party opposes any attempts to repeal the federal Affordable Care Act.
2. Medicaid Expansion The Dem-NPL Party supports expansion of Medicaid as provided for under the Affordable Care Act.
3. Psychiatric Services The Dem-NPL Party urges increased statewide access to medically based psychiatric services, including treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
4. Veterans’ Health Care The Dem-NPL Party strongly urges that all steps be taken to ensure that all veterans receive the health care and related services required, using the most modern equipment, procedures and techniques available. The veteran should be able to access necessary services at the facility closest to their home of record and we ask the North Dakota Congressional delegation to support this request at the national level.
5. Single Payer Health Insurance The Dem-NPL Party supports implementation of a universal single-payer healthcare system.
6. Children’s Health Insurance The Dem-NPL Party support ways to expand coverage for uninsured and underinsured children to insure that all children in North Dakota have access to health care coverage, including raising the eligibility for North Dakota Healthy Steps and the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIPs).
7. Post-Secondary Students’ Health Insurance The Dem-NPL Party supports ways to expand coverage for all uninsured or underinsured students attending any post-secondary educational institution, either public or private, within one year of graduating from high school until the students graduate or until they reach age 26.
8. Long-Term Care Policies The Dem-NPL Party is committed to protecting consumers who buy long-term care insurance policies.
10. Emergency Medical Care The Dem-NPL Party supports expansion of the Division of EMS administrative support and local matching grant program.
11. Medicaid Fraud The Dem-NPL Party supports the establishment of a Medicaid Fraud Unit in the ND Bureau of Criminal Investigation.
12. Reproductive Medical Care The Dem-NPL Party opposes government action that interferes with a woman accessing reproductive medical care. The Dem-NPL Party further supports medically accurate sexual health education in schools.
14. Improved Health To improve the health of North Dakotans, we support legislation that will support the work of statewide and local coalitions and organizations by providing personnel and financial resources to promote health and wellness.
15. The Dem-NPL Party supports providing health benefits and Workman Compensation Insurance to volunteer firefighter and emergency responders.
TAXES

1. **Property Taxes** The Dem-NPL Party strongly urges the State Legislature to address inequities and deficiencies in the current property tax system.
2. **Earned Income Tax Credit** The Dem-NPL Party supports a state Earned Income Tax Credit.
3. **Renters tax relief** The Dem-NPL Party is committed to providing tax relief to residential renters through income tax credits.
4. **School Support** The Dem-NPL Party is committed to strong state financial support resulting in a reduction in school property tax while at the same time allowing local school boards adequate authority to fund a basic education program.
5. **Homestead Tax Exemption** The Dem-NPL Party supports expanding the homestead tax exemption to more North Dakota residents.
6. **Tax Cuts** The Dem-NPL Party opposes any effort to extend the Bush-era tax cuts for the top 2% income bracket.
7. **Natural Disaster Relief** The Dem-NPL Party believes the State of North Dakota should not profit from the property losses suffered when declared natural disasters strike our citizens. To meet this goal, the State of North Dakota should provide, with the approval of the local government, sales tax reductions, property tax reductions, and North Dakota income tax credits for the uninsured losses, to the original property owners, in the event of a governmentally-declared natural disaster.
8. We support committing more of the state collected oil production tax to the oil producing counties for support services and infrastructure needs.
9. We support an enhancement of the formula used to fund State Aid Distributions Fund.
10. We support providing tax incentives to ND businesses to provide tuition assistance to North Dakota students in return for job placement with that company.
11. We support a sales tax exemption on clothing, feminine hygiene products, prescription and OTC medications.
12. The Dem-NPL Party supports the flat, workable oil extraction tax of 6.5%.

TRANSPORTATION

1. **Roads and Bridge Funding** The Dem-NPL Party supports a significant increase in funding for transportation infrastructure.
2. **Public Transportation** The Dem-NPL Party encourages the state of North Dakota to do all it can to encourage the use of public transportation with a focus on providing to seniors, the disabled, and healthcare needs.
3. **High-Speed Rail** The Dem-NPL Party supports a study of the potential for high-speed rail.
4. **Hiawatha Route** The Dem-NPL Party supports restoration of the North Coast Hiawatha Amtrak route. The Dem-NPL Party urges implementation of the Amtrak study on this matter be resumed and that North Dakota work closely with our neighbors in Montana who are energetically pursuing this important project. The Dem/NPL further continues its strong support for the well-funded continuation of the Empire Builders Amtrak route.
5. **Weigh Stations** The Dem-NPL Party encourages the state legislature to reopen the closed weigh stations and add more in the heavily travelled areas.
6. We call on our governor, our congressional delegation, and the Surface Transportation Board to pressure the rail industry to honor its common carrier obligations to address delayed rail services which are impacting grain shipments from our state.
AGRICULTURE

1. The Dem-NPL Party thanks Senator Heitkamp for her continued support of agriculture.
2. Local Foods The Dem-NPL Party supports local food movements such as CSAs and providing as much locally
grown foods to our schools and colleges as possible.
3. Seed Availability for the Future The Dem-NPL Party supports research and development in our land grant
colleges of non-GMO crops to assure non-GMO seed availability for the future.
4. Anti-Corporation Farming The Dem-NPL Party supports upholding North Dakota’s current anti-corporation
farming law.
5. Agricultural Products Utilization Commission The Dem-NPL Party supports the work of the Agricultural Products
Utilization Commission.
6. State Mill and Elevator The Dem-NPL Party supports the State Mill and Elevator buying only domestic grain
when possible.
7. The Dem-NPL Party support local control measures that allow local political subdivisions to establish zoning
ordinances establishing setbacks, odor limits and other environmental impacts with inputs from affected citizens.

FOREIGN POLICY

1. Extraordinary Rendition The Dem-NPL Party opposes the use of extraordinary rendition under any
circumstances and likewise rejects any rationale related to the so-called war on terrorism for invalidating the
right of habeas corpus.
2. The Dem-NPL Party opposes the use of drone strikes without the support of Congress.
3. Preemptive Military Action The Dem-NPL Party opposes preemptive military action and when or if war becomes
necessary, our troops should only be deployed in adequate numbers and with adequate training and equipment.
4. Geneva Conventions The Dem-NPL Party opposes the use of torture under any circumstances and supports the
U.S. government following the Geneva Conventions.
5. Trade With Cuba The Dem-NPL Party supports trade with Cuba and the removal of the blockade against travel
and trade with Cuba.

BALLOT MEASURES

1. Measure 1 – support a “NO” vote on June 14 on Measure 1 which would weaken North Dakota’s anti-
corporate farm bill.
Special Resolutions

The Dem-NPL Party gratefully acknowledges the courageous leadership of President Obama and Vice President Biden as they led the US back from the great recession, addressing global climate change, supporting marriage equality and ended the nonproductive isolation of Cuba. President Obama and Vice President Biden have presided over the most prosperous agricultural years in North Dakota and the greatest progress toward energy independence in American history. This Convention salutes their civil, respectful leaderships and expresses our gratitude.

Until economic conditions improve, we the ND Dem/NPL urge the legislature to preserve and, where needs are most critical, enhance ongoing budget expenditures. We oppose future budget cuts, especially cuts to k-12 education and Human Services Department budgets. To mitigate future revenue shortfalls the ND Dem/NPL urges the following:

1) Limit one time (or new) spending by prioritizing projects and programs that benefit the health, safety and welfare of ND citizens.

2) Transfer eligible monies from special, statutory, and constitutional funds to the General Fund.

3) Until ND recovers from present economic down turn, oppose establishment of additional special funds and limit transfers of new monies into existing special funds.

4) Oppose corporate, personal income and oil extraction tax cuts.

5) Support a review of existing corporate and personal income tax exemptions, especially those that do not enhance job opportunities and the overall well being of ND citizens.

The North Dakota Democratic-NPL Party believes the national Democratic party is ready for democracy. We believe that all national convention delegates should be elected by a democratic process within the presidential election calendar year. There should be no votes awarded to automatic delegates, ex-officio or super delegates at any level in the process. We hereby request our Democratic National Committee (DNC) representatives and State Party Chair to communicate this position to the DNC and its delegate selection committee(s). Passed without opposition, D-35 convention.

The 2016 Democratic-NPL State Convention delegates adopted this Platform and these Resolutions on Friday, April 1, 2016.