

2015 Young Democrats of Washington Platform

Executive Summary

The platform of the Young Democrats of Washington is a declaration of human rights, justice, and opportunity for all. We reaffirm the rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and expect government at all levels to champion these rights for everyone.

We adopt this platform so the public and candidates for office can espouse and support ideals and aspirations. Finally, we affirm the charter and bylaws of the Young Democrats of Washington.

Human and Civil Rights: We believe human rights are inherent rights not dependent upon the civil laws of any country, they are self-evident truths.

Health Care: We believe consistent with the Democratic Party's tradition as the party of inclusion, compassion, and commitment to the health and well being of every citizen, and in the spirit of the US Constitution to promote the general welfare of its citizens, we support a public system of health care.

Criminal Justice and Public Safety: We believe the government has the responsibility to prevent crime by alleviating social conditions that contribute to it and by responding in a constitutional manner that respects the rights of all people.

Education: We believe education is the foundation of democracy; it brings together children of diverse experience, ability, and background for the common purpose of learning.

Environment and Energy: We believe protection of the environment and the promotion of economic growth are not mutually exclusive, and that preservation of the environment is an important obligation of our government. We support a cooperative and proactive approach to sustainable living practices that incorporate responsible, ecological practices.

Labor: Our economic system should serve everyone, not just a wealthy few. Safe and fair working conditions are essential to a prosperous middle class and key to a healthy economy.

Housing: We believe home ownership contributes significantly to community and economic stability. Strong communities are anchored by individual homeowners.

Foreign Policy: As members of the Democratic Party, we believe the United States is a leader in the global community and must act to respectfully promote peace, security, and general welfare throughout the world.

Taxation: We believe a fair tax system will ensure the prosperity of the American people and generate the funding necessary for a responsible government.

Transportation: We believe improving the transportation infrastructure will allow for a cleaner environment, shorter commutes and reduced traffic.

Elections and Campaigns: We believe elections and campaigns are a core value of our nation.

To read our full platform or learn more about the Young Democrats of Washington, please visit our website at www.ydwa.org.

Preamble

This platform is a declaration of human rights, justice, and opportunity for all. We reaffirm the rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and expect government at all levels to champion these rights for everyone.

We adopt this platform so the public and candidates for office can espouse and support our ideals and aspirations. Finally, we affirm the charter and bylaws of the Young Democrats of Washington.

Human & Civil Rights

Human rights are inherent rights not dependent upon the civil laws of any country; they are self-evident truths.

- We affirm that food, shelter, medical care, education, and equal employment opportunities are among basic human rights, and we support the development of social programs to protect these basic human rights;
- We oppose all discrimination in voting, employment, housing, public accommodations, healthcare, military service and veterans' status, insurance, licensing, or education based on race, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, size, political affiliation, national origin, and/or military service and veterans status;
- We support strong affirmative action laws designed to ensure that prejudice does not prevent qualified persons from obtaining education, employment, promotion, housing, insurance, or any other social good;
- We affirm the human right to have sovereignty over our bodies. We oppose any law, regulation, or government action restricting legal rights and private matters regarding one's reproductive functions. We support a woman's constitutional right to choose abortion, as protected by *Roe v. Wade*, which should not be restricted by age or ability to pay;
- We oppose any laws that protect or promote discriminatory practices based on religious beliefs;
- We affirm that government should legally recognize all couples who choose to marry and further believe that such couples share fully and equally in the rights, responsibilities, and commitments of civil marriage;
- We support strong legislation, treatment programs, and education designed to reduce domestic violence and child abuse. We believe each person has the right to life free from fear of personal injury;
- We affirm that each individual has a right to privacy and that right should not be violated by government or business. Proactive legislative steps should be taken to address the issue.
- We affirm our belief in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and recognize that the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all people are the foundations of freedom, justice, and peace in the world;
- We support a right for legal due process to include the reinstatement of habeas corpus for all people;
- We support the principles of internet neutrality
- We affirm the individual's right to choose their own gender identity and presentation and to not face discrimination on behalf of these identities;
- We recognize that the concept of human rights underlie and infuses every other plank of the platform of the Young Democrats of Washington.

Health Care

Consistent with the Democratic Party's tradition as the party of inclusion, compassion, and commitment to the health and well-being of every citizen, and in the spirit of the US Constitution to promote the general welfare its citizens, we support a public system of health care. Specifically:

- We support the implementation of and ready access to nationwide universal health care regardless of socioeconomic and citizenship status;
- We support extended coverage for all veterans, especially those with service-connected disabilities;
- We oppose discrimination in health care services and research;
- We support the right to physician-assisted suicide for those who are terminally ill and of sound mind;

- We support universal access to family planning procedures, and affirm that that insurance companies should provide complete coverage for family planning procedures and prescription contraceptives;
- We support government funding of stem-cell research;
- We affirm that mental health is equally as important as physical health and we support parity in health care coverage and efforts to de-stigmatize mental illness and the issues surrounding appropriate treatment;
- We support cutting the costs of prescription drugs through means such as importation, Medicare, collective bargaining, and universal health care;
- We believe in the medical necessity of gender confirmation procedures and that insurance providers should provide equity to all individuals;
- We oppose the discredited and dangerous practice known as conversion therapy and support legislation banning this abusive pseudo-science;
- We support the use of vaccines for the eradication of infectious diseases without non-medical vaccine exemptions.

Criminal Justice and Public Safety

The government has the responsibility to prevent crime by alleviating social conditions that contribute to it and by responding in a constitutional manner that respects the rights of all people.

- We continue to support proper funding for law enforcement and first responders, and the work that they do;
- We oppose racial profiling by law enforcement;
- We support the individual's right to record and/or document the police;
- We oppose the excessive use of force by the police and support the prosecution of officers who use it;
- We support the philosophy of community policing and restorative justice;
- We support the abolition of capital punishment;
- We affirm that the criminal justice system should focus on education and rehabilitation rather than punishment and that we feel all civil rights should be restored after they have completed their rehabilitation program;
- We oppose mandatory minimum sentencing for nonviolent offenders;
- We support the investigation and prosecution of white-collar crimes;
- We support safety locks on handguns, prohibition of importation and ownership of fully-automatic weapons, and strengthening of laws holding adults responsible for safeguarding guns at home;
- We support gun registration and licensing, safety training for gun owners, background checks on all gun sales, a minimum waiting period, and closing the gun show loophole.
- We support the legalisation, regulation, and taxation of marijuana.
- We affirm that the criminal justice system should house inmates according to their gender identity and should not withhold necessary treatments from trans inmates.

Education

Education is the foundation of democracy; it provides an opportunity for students of diverse experience, ability, and background for the common purpose of learning regardless of documentation status.

- We support the appropriate reduction of class sizes;
- We support ample funding for state and federal financial aid for higher education, including an increase in the Washington State Need Grant and Pell Grants;
- We oppose the public funding of charter schools;
- We support investment in alternative and magnet schools as long as they are accountable to the general public;
- We support a fair wage to teachers and annual cost of living increases;
- We support proactive state and federal government funding in disadvantaged school districts.

- We support the adoption of programs that seek to assess and accommodate learning disabilities;
- We support medically accurate and comprehensive sex education in all schools, as well as education on healthy relationships;
- We support affordability, accessibility, and accountability in higher education;
- We consider higher education component of basic education and believe free public higher education should be available to all people;
- We oppose differential tuition and acknowledge that excessive course fees can function as such;
- We support increased funding for fine arts education;
- We oppose predatory student loans that cannot be discharged in bankruptcy;
- We oppose the No Child Left Behind Act, as it is severely under-funded mandate that creates unrealistic standards for schools and punishes those that need help the most;
- We support the reform of standardized testing, and stand in solidarity with teachers that protest standardized testing they believe is unnecessary and burdensome;
- We support affirmative action and other admission practices that create a level playing field for marginalized communities;
- We support fully funding pre-K, K-12 and higher education.

Environment and Energy

We believe protection of the environment and the promotion of economic growth are not mutually exclusive, and that preservation of the environment is an important obligation of our government. We support a cooperative and proactive approach to sustainable living practices that incorporate responsible, ecological processes.

- We believe any individual, now and in the future, has a fundamental right to clean air, clean water, and other natural resources;
- We recognize the overwhelming scientific consensus that climate change is real and caused by humans, and that we must immediately take steps to counteract it;
- We support widespread research and use of energy efficient solar, wind, wave, tidal, biomass, geothermal, hydro, and other renewable natural sources of power.
- We support incentives for the use of energy conservation and emerging clean energy systems;
- We support strong measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the United States and strong treaties with other nations to reduce emissions worldwide;
- We oppose the practice of hydraulic fracturing in the nation;
- We support the cleanup and restoration of all damaged and degraded government and private project lands and future projects that perpetuate such damage should be opposed;
- We support the creation of an independent organization to oversee energy companies and help prevent unethical practices;
- We support comprehensive land use regulations that constrain sprawl, protect our environment, and promote strong, sustainable, and healthy urban areas.
- We support increased safety standards before any increase in coal or oil transportation in Washington.
- We oppose the export of natural resources which damage the environment and long-term economic sustainability of our state;
- We support regulation of carbon emissions through policies such as cap & trade, carbon taxes, or other methods;
- We support efforts to reduce ocean acidification;
- We support restoration of endangered species, which supports biodiversity and sustainability;
- We support responsible agricultural practices, such as efficient water use and ending the use of harmful chemicals;
- We support measures to reduce invasive species which harm native species.

Labor & Economic Justice

Our economic system should serve everyone, not just a wealthy few. Safe and fair working conditions are essential to a prosperous middle class and key to a healthy economy.

- We affirm the rights of workers to a safe and healthy work environment;
- We support all public and private workers' rights to organize and use mediation, arbitration, or strikes when necessary to resolve disputes;
- We oppose any intimidation or retaliation by employers to employees, especially when they attempt to unionize or discuss workplace conditions or compensation;
- We believe that the minimum wage should reflect a living wage for all employees and we support annual cost-of-living increases.
- We affirm the right to equal pay for equal work.
- We support workers' rights to unemployment insurance benefits when locked out by their employers;
- We oppose the use of permanent replacement workers during strikes;
- We support the principles upheld in the paid sick, parental, and safe leave.
- We oppose a training wage or any other exceptions to the minimum wage.
- We support the passage of an employee non-discrimination act to protect queer & trans people in the workplace.

Housing

Home ownership contributes significantly to community and economic stability. Strong communities are anchored by individual homeowners.

- We support a major increase in funding for assistance and construction of affordable and low-income housing in Washington state.
- We support the principles and enforcement of the Landlord-Tenant Act and the implementation of rent control
- We oppose predatory sub-prime lending and unfair foreclosure of houses
- We support rental licensing and safety programs.
- We support the permanent extension of the Document Recording Fee in order to protect the most vulnerable.
- We support zoning that encourages the development of affordable, safe, and environmentally sound housing.
- We affirm that no one should be denied housing based on protected identity.

Foreign Policy

As members of the Democratic Party, we believe the United States is a leader in the global community and must act to respectfully promote peace, security, and general welfare throughout the world.

- We urge the US and other nations to forgive undue and burdensome debts owed to them by impoverished nations;
- We encourage the United States to become a signatory of the Kyoto Accords;
- We support fair trade on responsible terms that encourages environmental and labor-friendly practices;
- We oppose trade barriers that economically undermine developing nations;
- We support a secure peace in Palestine and Israel and throughout the Middle East;
- We support the US ratification of the International Criminal Court;
- We support cooperative international efforts to contain the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and reduce current nuclear arsenals;
- We support global expedient disaster relief;

- We believe that in clear and identifiable cases of genocide, the United States and international community have a moral obligation to intervene on behalf of the persecuted populations, including the divestment of public funds from companies that deal with genocidal government;
- We support the United States being actively involved in fighting HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.
- We support the ratification of the International Covenant of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.
- We oppose the fast-tracking of international trade agreement ratification.
- We believe the United States and other previously-colonial nations should acknowledge and take the necessary steps to begin undoing the harms of colonization across the world.

Taxation

A progressive tax system will ensure the prosperity of the American people and generate the funding necessary for a responsible government.

- We support a progressive, countercyclical tax system for Washington state;
- We support incentives, including targeted tax credits, which allow businesses to provide family wage jobs with adequate health care and pension benefits;
- We support the implementation of an income tax;
- We support tax exemptions for small businesses, including the elimination of the Washington state Business and Occupation tax;
- We support the estate tax;
- We oppose tax cuts that disproportionately benefit the wealthy;
- We support mandatory sunset dates for all tax exemptions.

Transportation

Improving the transportation infrastructure will allow for a cleaner environment, shorter commutes, and reduced traffic.

- We support the funding, implementation, construction, and maintenance of adequate roads, bridges, rails, and airports serving remote areas and urban areas;
- We support the funding and development of a high-speed rail system.
- We support the state granting authority for local transit options to cities and counties.
- We support increased funding & incentivization for multi-modal public transportation systems and the infrastructure to support them.
- We support the expansion of equitable transit-oriented development and green streets.
- We support grade-separated transit and exclusive right-of-way when feasible.

Elections and Campaigns

A core value of our nation is the democratic process.

- We believe elections should be publicly administered in order to avoid discrepancies and to ensure that votes cast are tabulated scientifically and impartially;
- We support non-precinct voting, early voting, and Election Day as a national holiday. Additionally, we support same-day voter registration;
- We support thorough campaign finance reform;
- We support redistricting reform, including uniform federal redistricting standards.
- We support clear and transparent elections throughout the government, and at all levels of the Democratic Party.
- We oppose excessively long waiting times to vote;
- We support the option of public financing for local elections;

- We will not tolerate voting impediments or voter intimidation in any form. We oppose any law that would require identification to vote, because such laws only serve as impediments to students, the poor, the elderly and marginalized communities;
- We oppose abusive attempts to purge voter registration rolls;
- We support measures that expand access to voting, included by not limited to mandatory ballot drop boxes and postage-paid ballots
- We support uniform national standards for voter registration and absentee ballot application allowing all citizens, regardless of state residence, to apply for and participate in ongoing absentee voter status;
- We support voter pre-registration for 16 and 17 year olds;
- We believe the District of Columbia should have full representation in Congress.
- We support requirements of a paper trail for any electronic voting that protects individual privacy while preventing fraud;
- We support a single delegate selection process for presidential elections;
- We oppose decisions by the Supreme Court undercutting campaign finance laws.
- We oppose the use of the election process for judicial selection.
- We support full inclusion, representation, and voting rights for American citizens in all U.S. territories.