

Platform of the Kansas Democratic Party

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Statement of Principles

Kansas Democrats believe what brings us together is far stronger than what divides us. We strive to protect the freedom of the individual, while working together to actively contribute to the vibrancy and vitality of our communities.

We believe that government has a responsibility to promote policies that provide economic and social justice, access to healthcare, a clean environment, and safe workplaces. Government has a responsibility to improve the human condition.

Kansas Democrats are committed to putting the people of Kansas first by promoting the values and policies that advance the common good for all Kansans, through:

- honest, ethical leadership and sound, pragmatic decision-making;
- fairness and equity in our policies;
- a strong economy that does not leave anyone behind;
- investments in our children, families, and communities;
- forward vision regarding the social, economic, and environmental needs of tomorrow.

Kansas Democrats strongly support the need for fair, safe, and inclusive elections. We believe that, to express the democratic will of the people of Kansas, our government should encourage, enable, and facilitate the active participation in the political process of all people without distinction of any kind such as race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, physical, intellectual, and/or developmental disability, economic status, religion, creed, sex, veteran or military status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or gender identity/expression.

The Kansas Democratic Party asks the people of Kansas to examine our traditions of leadership and to join us in moving our state forward to an even brighter tomorrow.

Protecting Our Communities

1. Defending Human and Equal Rights

Non-Discrimination: Kansas Democrats believe in equal treatment under the law for every Kansan regardless of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, physical, intellectual, and/or developmental disability, economic status, religion, creed, sex, veteran or military status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or gender identity/expression. Kansas Democrats support adding “sexual orientation and gender identity” to the non-discrimination laws and policies in our state and the passage of hate crime legislation to protect equal rights.

Reproductive and Women’s Rights: Kansas Democrats demand women’s rights, including passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. We support equal pay for equal work and demand action on the part of our government to ensure this basic right. Kansas Democrats recognize the structural racism embedded in current policies applying to women’s rights and its disparities against communities.

We recognize the intersectionality of class and economics and racial and gender equality in reproductive decision making. We support a person’s decision to have a child by providing affordable health care and ensuring the availability of and access to programs that help during pregnancy and after the birth of a child, including caring adoption programs and support programs and solutions that will reduce the infant mortality rate in Kansas, as well as protections against pregnancy discrimination. Kansas Democrats support equity in maternal health and childcare.

Kansas Democrats believe that anyone who can become pregnant has the right to control their own reproductive choices, including the choice of contraception and the choice to terminate a pregnancy.

We oppose the “Value Them Both” amendment to the Kansas Constitution that limits the right to bodily autonomy and puts health care decisions in the hands of the legislature.

Kansas Democrats support the continued funding and operation of family planning clinics. We recognize these facilities provide preventive, prenatal, and

reproductive health care to vulnerable, at-risk populations who lack access to other care options. We condemn acts of violence and intimidation against reproductive health providers, patients, and staff.

Racial Justice: Kansas Democrats oppose racism and racial “supremacy” movements and oppose racial and ethnic profiling. Kansas Democrats recognize that generations of policies of systemic racism and inequities that disadvantaged communities of color are embedded in our institutions today, including but not limited to access to voting, social services, employment, education, health care, mortgages, buying property, housing, and the criminal legal system.

Kansas Democrats support social movements, litigation, environmental justice initiatives including laws, policies and practices that work to remove discriminatory practices in our policies and institutional systems.

LGBTQ+ Equality: Kansas Democrats support marriage equality and full recognition of same-sex relationships, including the right of same-sex couples to adopt, parent, and raise a family. We oppose subjecting minors to so-called “conversion therapy,” which damages children by forcing them to express a sexual orientation or gender identity at odds with who they are.

Kansas Democrats support the right of all Kansans to express their gender in the way they identify. We support the rights of parents to handle decisions related to the mental and physical well-being of transgender youth. We oppose efforts to force transgender Kansans to use facilities for the gender with which they do not identify. We support the ability of transgender Kansans to update their birth certificates and other identifying documents to reflect their gender identity. We support transgender individuals participating in sports and organizations that match their gender identity.

Kansas Democrats support The Equality Act which provides consistent and explicit anti-discrimination protections to the LGBTQ+ community across key areas of life including employment, housing, credit, education, public spaces and services, public accommodations, federally funded programs, and jury service.

Native American Rights: Kansas Democrats honor Indigenous Peoples and Kansas tribes. The sovereignty of Native American lands, reservations, and cultural,

spiritual, and burial sites must be respected and protected. “Land grabs” for pipelines or other private development must be resisted.

Native American access to health care and education must be guaranteed. Kansas Democrats support adequate funding for Haskell Indian Nations University and support expanding Haskell branches into areas of the state with significant Native American populations.

Kansas Democrats support The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and we recognize the urgent need to respect and promote the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples that derive from their political, economic, and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories, and philosophies, especially the rights to their lands, territories, and resources as stated in the United Nations (UN) document.

Religious Liberty: Kansas Democrats uphold and support the separation of church and state principle as codified in the Kansas and United States Constitutions, which protects Kansans from sectarian divisions and allows for full religious freedom without the assistance or promotion of the government.

Religion is a private matter, separate from the state, and must not be used to shape public policy affecting all Kansans who hold a myriad of beliefs and philosophies.

Kansas Democrats do not support religious exemptions to civil liberties.

2. Safeguarding Disability Rights

Kansas Democrats believe people with disabilities deserve to lead full, happy, and healthy lives. We support and uphold the enforcement and full funding of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Fair Housing Act, the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act, and the Help America Vote Act, among other bedrock statutes protecting the rights of people with disabilities.

Kansas Democrats support rigorously enforcing non-discrimination protections for people with disabilities in health care, employment, education, and housing, and equal access to the ballot box.

Kansas Democrats support complete abolishment of the subminimum wage, expanding competitive, integrated employment opportunities, and protecting and strengthening economic security for people with disabilities.

Kansas Democrats support increased funding to expand accessible transportation, accessible public accommodations, and accessible, integrated, and affordable housing.

Kansas Democrats will ensure that students with disabilities receive an appropriate early childhood, secondary, and postsecondary education in the least restrictive environment and that students moving out of the public education system receive appropriate transition services. We support vocational rehabilitation services for adults with new or ongoing disabilities.

To ensure a higher quality of life for Kansans with disabilities, we will:

- support the timely processing of Medicaid applications and the determination of individual disabilities by the Disability Determination Services;
- support the expansion and full funding of the waived services to help avoid waitlists that leave our most vulnerable citizens living years without necessary services;
- support prevailing wages, training, and continuing education for service providers in order to recruit and retain excellent care staff;
- support eliminating the privatization of the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver;
- support requiring psychiatric hospitals to admit persons with disabilities and mental health issues for in-patient care;
- prevent cuts and caps to Medicaid;
- encourage broadening financial aid/or loan assistance programs for accessible housing, vehicles, durable medical equipment, and technology, which would give much-needed assistance for individuals to pay for improvements to their life functionality.

3. Caring for Children, Families, and Senior Citizens

Kansas Democrats support adequate funding of social service programs that will provide accessible, quality childcare, advance maternity/paternity leave policies and legislation, expand family medical leave, provide tax credits for childcare, expand low-income housing, protect Medicare, and reform the Department of Children and Families.

Kansas Democrats believe in ensuring an economic safety net for all families. We support services that are needed to help families regain their independence. We support programs that eliminate food insecurity. Kansas Democrats will continue to lead by advocating for safe and affordable childcare, before-school and after-school programs, child immunizations, enforcement of child support payments, and criminal penalties for those who perpetrate domestic violence, childhood sexual abuse, and sexual assault.

Kansas Democrats will continue to advocate for children in foster care. Social workers are currently underpaid and overworked, a situation that puts our most vulnerable children at risk. We must provide adequate funding, staffing, and oversight to ensure that children receive the care and attention they need, are placed in safe environments, and continue to be supported alongside their families after reintegrating into their home.

Democratic presidents created both Medicare and Social Security, two cornerstones of American society that grant seniors financial and medical security. Kansas Democrats support expansion of these programs to assist with dental, vision, and long-term care services as well as the push to remove the cap on earned income contributions that fund Social Security.

We recognize that Medicare services and programs are not one size fits all. We fully support Medicare policies that consider race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity in healthcare decisions.

We believe child marriage is coerced marriage, and we support efforts to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 years of age.

4. Reforming Our Criminal Justice System

Our criminal justice system is failing to keep communities safe—and failing to deliver justice. America is the land of the free, and yet more of our people are behind bars, per capita, than anywhere else in the world. We can and must do better for our communities.

Kansas Democrats support and are committed to implementing Governor Kelly's Racial and Equity Commission's recommendations for criminal justice reform.

Kansas Democrats support the review of the criminal justice system from top to bottom. This is the moment to root out structural and systemic racism in our criminal justice system and our society and reimagine public safety for the benefit of our people and the character of our country. We also recognize that all too often systematic cuts to public services have left police officers on the front lines of responding to social challenges for which they have not been trained. We believe law enforcement officers should be well-trained in de-escalation techniques and receive comprehensive training in recognizing at-risk individuals, including those undergoing mental health crises, the homeless, or those living with a disability.

Kansas Democrats will reinvigorate community policing approaches, so officers on the beat better serve the neighborhoods they work in and make smart investments to incentivize departments to build effective partnerships with social workers, mental health professionals, and substance use counselors to help respond to public health challenges. Body cameras are not a panacea, however, Kansas Democrats believe they can help improve accountability and transparency. We support their continued use and will take steps to improve compliance, require their use in blended federal-local task forces, and promulgate best practices to protect personal privacy.

Kansas Democrats also support measures to increase diversity among the ranks of police departments. We support increased funding for translation services. We will seek increased funding for officer health and well-being in police departments, including personal safety equipment and mental health services.

Kansas Democrats support eliminating the use of cash bail and believe no one should be imprisoned for failing to pay fines or fees or have their driver's licenses revoked for unpaid tickets or simple violations. Equal justice under the law should not be contingent on the ability to pay for quality legal representation, which is why we support increasing funding for public defenders and for the Legal Services Corporation.

Kansas Democrats believe a shift to treatment, rehabilitation, and education is critical to assure lower recidivism rates. Lower recidivism rates are positive to Kansas taxpayers, communities, and most importantly Kansas families. Kansas Democrats support state efforts to prohibit employers from asking for information about arrest and conviction history on an initial employment application, which will make it easier for returning people to access work opportunities.

Kansas Democrats support the continued implementation of juvenile justice reform. A full shift to focusing on rehabilitation and community programs that provide support for both juvenile offenders and their families is critical to lower juvenile recidivism rates. Full implementation equals full funding for treatment programs for juveniles.

Kansas Democrats support full legalization of cannabis, the expungement of past marijuana convictions, and the subsequent release of those imprisoned solely on marijuana related charges.

Kansas Democrats support dignity and safety for all offenders during incarceration, including parental rights, protections for transgender individuals, and access to effective programming. Kansas Democrats demand adequate staffing at state detention facilities, ensuring the safety of the public, incarcerated individuals, and correctional employees and contractors. Private-for-profit businesses should not motivate the provision of vital public services, including in the criminal justice system. Kansas Democrats support ending the use of private prisons and private detention centers and the removal of exemptions to the slavery clause.

All incarcerated individuals should have access to care that meets their medical needs. Past physical, sexual, and mental trauma should be considered in the

sentencing process. Incarcerated individuals in custody should feel safe from abuse by other incarcerated individuals and from abuse, neglect, and/or lack of medical attention by prison staff.

Police officers, probation/parole officers, jailors, and other law enforcement staff must be held accountable when they commit unwarranted and unfair violence against any person, including anyone suspected of committing a crime and those who are incarcerated.

Citizens review boards should be given oversight powers to review law enforcement policies, training, and allegations of misconduct.

Kansas Democrats oppose the continued militarization of law enforcement.

Kansas Democrats support an end to capital punishment.

Kansas Democrats oppose sexual abuse and human trafficking in all its forms and support efforts to combat them. We support services for victims and survivors, extension of the elimination of the statute of limitations, and preventive measures aimed at those most at-risk of being sexually abused and human trafficked.

Firearms: Kansas Democrats believe guns have a very limited place in public educational institutions, public libraries, or other public buildings.

We insist that firearms be carried only by those who have been properly trained and certified in their use, have passed a thorough background check, and have been licensed by the state.

Kansas Democrats support:

- enacting universal background checks and red flag laws;
- closing dangerous loopholes that currently allow stalkers, abusive partners, and some individuals convicted of assault or battery to buy and possess firearms;
- preventing individuals who have been convicted of hate crimes from possessing firearms;
- closing the “Charleston” loophole allowing gun sales to automatically go through if a background check is not completed within three business days;
- passing legislation requiring that guns be safely stored;

- supporting state legislation that is in accordance with the principals of the Brady Act;
- prohibiting the manufacture of “ghost guns;” those that do not have a manufacturer’s serial number.

Kansas Democrats believe that gun companies should be held responsible for their products, just like any other business, and will prioritize repealing the law that shields gun manufacturers from civil liability.

Domestic Terrorism: Many Republican leaders’ words and actions have given safe harbor and encouragement to racists, anti-Semites, anti-Muslim bigots, and white supremacists. It is time to root out domestic terrorism in all its forms. We support using all available law enforcement tools and resources that are consistent with the Constitutional right to free speech and civil liberties to address domestic terrorism in Kansas.

Achieving Universal, Affordable, Quality Health Care

5. Providing Access to Affordable Health Care

Healthcare is a basic human right. Kansas Democrats believe all Kansans should have access to affordable healthcare. We support the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and believe the Medicaid-expansion component of the ACA should be enacted in Kansas. We oppose for-profit “junk” limited coverage insurance policies. We support insurance policies that are comprehensive and ACA compliant.

Kansas Democrats support a transition to a single-payer health care system, for example, “Medicare for All.”

Kansas Democrats oppose the privatization of government funded health care, such as “KanCare,” including mental health. We believe it is the responsibility of the State of Kansas to safely and effectively operate all state hospitals.

Kansas Democrats support the full funding necessary to ensure all Kansans, urban and rural, have access to affordable mental health services. Overdose and substance misuse is a mental and public health crisis facing communities at the

local, state, and national level. Kansas Democrats support expanding access to treatment and recovery, funding advancements in addiction science, and removing the stigma associated with substance misuse through education and awareness. We must also ensure that age-restricted substances like alcohol and electronic nicotine products are not marketed to minors.

Kansas Democrats support the provision of equitable access to healthcare to underrepresented populations.

Kansas Democrats support expansion of telehealth services to improve access and convenience for patients.

6. Recovering from the Covid-19 Pandemic

The United States must never again be left vulnerable to a global pandemic. We support our state Democratic leadership's efforts to swiftly implement a comprehensive, statewide public health program for COVID-19 and future infectious diseases.

Kansas Democrats believe we must reverse decades of underinvestment in our state's public health infrastructure. We support increased funding for the state and local public health departments, many of which suffered deep budget cuts during the Great Recession and are at risk of further cuts as a result of Republican leadership. State and local public health departments should be given sufficient resources to address pandemic diseases and other public health crises through coordinated efforts that are inclusive of underrepresented groups who may be disproportionately impacted. Kansas Democrats support medical and public health research grants for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), which are particularly well suited to research health disparities in the context of COVID-19.

Combating the Climate Crisis

7. Protecting the Environment

Climate change is a global emergency. We have no time to waste in taking action to protect human lives and the future of the planet. The last four years have seen record-breaking storms, devastating wildfires, and historic floods in Kansas. Farmers' crops have been drowned in their fields across the state, while others are suffering from drought.

As Kansas Democrats, we believe the scientists. The window for unprecedented and necessary action is closing and closing fast. We have the power to make immediate, important changes that will secure a safer future. Kansas Democrats reject the false choice between growing our economy and combating climate change; we can and must do both at the same time. We assign a high priority to cleaning up our rivers and streams, reducing the pollutants in the air, protecting groundwater from depletion and pollutants, preserving biodiversity and wildlife habitat, and addressing climate change.

Like so many crises facing the United States, the impacts of climate change are not evenly distributed in our society or our economy. Communities of color, low-income families, and Indigenous communities have long suffered disproportionate and cumulative harm from air pollution, water pollution, and toxic sites.

We will use state resources and support increased federal funding for proven clean energy solutions. Clean energy policy has the potential to create millions of family-supporting and union jobs; upgrade and make resilient our energy, water, wastewater, and transportation infrastructure; and develop and manufacture next-generation technologies to address the climate crisis right here in Kansas. We will do all this with an eye to equity, access, benefits, and ownership

opportunities for frontline communities—because Democrats believe we must embed environmental justice, economic justice, and climate justice at the heart of our policy and governing agenda.

The depletion of the Ogallala Aquifer and other water sources as well as the silting of Kansas reservoirs are critical problems for the future development in Kansas. We support educating the public on water conservation. Kansas Democrats oppose unregulated hydraulic fracturing (fracking). We demand full transparency on the chemicals injected underground. Fossil fuel companies must be able to guarantee their operations will not disrupt or pollute vital groundwater and aquifers, and that injection and waste disposal operations will not cause earthquakes. Kansas Democrats believe action is needed to protect Kansans from uncompensated economic damages caused by induced earthquakes and to protect water systems vital to agricultural, commercial, and domestic use.

Kansas Democrats believe in conservation and support the protection of the environmental resources, which make our state unique. We believe native animal and plant species and their homes should be preserved in a way that compliments agricultural and urban land uses for the next generation.

8. Leading the Way in Renewable Energy

Kansas Democrats have always led the way in supporting the development of economically and environmentally sustainable clean energy resources and a long-term commitment to the development of a renewable energy economy, based on the production of power from renewable resources and lessen reliance on fossil fuels.

Kansas Democrats believe we should:

- encourage renewable energy companies to move to and expand their manufacturing operations in our state;
- encourage fair net metering practices when buying back surplus power from residential solar and wind production;
- offer tax credits for homeowners who install solar panels and wind generators;

- encourage incentives for residential property owners to substantially increase the energy efficiency of their buildings through energy efficient appliances and advanced construction techniques;
- encourage power companies to expand wind generation and require transparency during development and community engagement during development;
- incentivize the development and expansion of competitive, reliable solar power generation;
- encourage the installation of fast-charging electric vehicle stations.

We support the Biden administration’s commitment to direct 40% of climate and clean energy investments to disadvantaged communities.

Strengthening our Democracy

9. Strengthening Public Education

As Kansas Democrats, we will always fight for education as the key to addressing the challenges before us—to growing our economy and building a more just, equitable, civically engaged, and socially conscientious state. We believe that education is a critical public good—not a commodity—and that it is the government’s responsibility to ensure that every child, everywhere, is able to receive a world-class education that enables them to lead meaningful lives, no matter their race, color, ethnicity, national origin, disability, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, language status, immigration or citizenship status, household income, or ZIP code.

School Funding: As Kansas Democrats, we prioritize public education and believe there is no higher purpose for our tax dollars. The Kansas Constitution mandates adequate funding for our public schools. World-class schools require more than adequate funding; they require a commitment to excellence and to meeting the needs of a 21st century workforce.

We oppose vouchers and unfunded mandates and support ending the tax credit program for corporations and individuals that funds scholarships for private K-12 schools. We support funding for universal pre-kindergarten.

We demand a return of suitable funding and commit to advocating for increased funding for all post-secondary education. Prosperity and job creation in the 21st century depends on vocational and technical training, community colleges, and universities in Kansas. We cannot place the burden of increasing costs of higher education on students through increasing tuition. We support tuition-free community colleges for Kansans.

Teacher Attraction & Retention: Kansas Democrats support attracting and retaining high quality teachers. We must fund stellar teacher education programs and provide competitive compensation packages and reinstate due process for public school teachers.

Public school educators should have the same rights to organize, join a union, and collectively bargain as private sector workers. Substantive due process rights for Kansas teachers should be restored. Kansas Democrats will fight to significantly increase pay and benefits for all educators, in order to help recruit, retain, and reward high-quality teachers and support professionals and will continue to support measures to eliminate teachers having to pay for out-of-pocket expenses including continuing education. We will support programs to help introduce students to the teaching profession, enable school support staff to climb the professional ladder within schools, and recruit a diverse educational workforce through partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Minority-Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities.

Curriculum & Instruction: Specific curriculum decisions should continue to be made by the locally elected Boards of Education, not by lobbyists or by members of the legislature. Kansas Democrats believe that education policy should include early childhood through post-secondary education, including vocational and technical education.

Kansas Democrats support LGBTQ+ inclusive, age-appropriate, evidence-based sex education. Kansas Democrats support culturally responsive diversity and inclusion curriculum and training education for teachers, staff, and students.

School Safety: Kansas Democrats are committed to safe and supportive school climates for students and educators alike. Guns have a very limited place in our

schools. We disagree strongly that teachers should bring firearms into the classroom. Kansas Democrats firmly believe that all schools should have adequate resources to expand school-based health services and hire guidance counselors, social workers, nurses, and school psychologists to help support students' and school employees' mental health needs, address trauma, and promote social and emotional development. We will work with school administrators, educators, students, and mental health advocates to reduce the stigma that too often prevents students from seeking out these resources. Kansas Democrats will make sure schools do not engage in, and appropriately address, discrimination, bullying and harassment. We will continue to protect the rights of LGBTQ+ students.

10. Securing Fair Elections

Kansas Democrats believe voting is a right, not a privilege, for all citizens. It is a core principle of the Party to maximize voter participation for all Kansans. Voting is also a duty, and impediments to the exercise of that right and the practice of that duty are deplorable. The sanctity and security of elections in Kansas must be protected from partisan, ideological, and personal motives. We must make it easier to vote, not harder. We support efforts to defeat voter suppression tactics.

Republicans have enacted various voter suppression laws, even though courts have found these measures violate federal law and the United States Constitution. Kansas Democrats will continue to oppose these laws and fight to preserve the fundamental right to vote.

Kansas Democrats believe prosecutorial power for election crimes should be under the jurisdiction of local prosecutors. Politicization of the Kansas Secretary of State's office, combined with new prosecutorial power, has had a chilling effect on voter registration and participation.

Kansas Democrats support:

- same-day voter registration;
- the expansion of in-person voting, including Sunday voting;
- making Election Day a legal holiday to encourage participation;
- a transition to automatic vote-by-mail for all elections;

- implementing the Help America Vote Act and requiring that polling places and elections are accessible for people with disabilities;
- ranked-choice voting;
- the National Popular Vote bill;
- making registration and voting easy and accessible, especially for those with disabilities;
- expanding drop boxes and polling places, especially in rural Kansas.

The Kansas Democratic Party supports the establishment of a non-partisan state election commission to oversee elections and a non-partisan chief state election officer. We believe county election officials should be elected by the community they serve. We also support an independent, nonpartisan redistricting commission.

Kansas Democrats believe ethics in campaigning and government are absolute principles to which our candidates and public officials must adhere. Kansas Democrats support complete transparency in campaign finance and an overturning of the “Citizens United” Supreme Court ruling which has allowed a flood of “dark money” to corrupt our political process.

We must give voters the confidence that their ballot was counted as cast by supporting mandatory, statistically meaningful post-election audits and full transparency of all election results and data. To ensure every eligible ballot is counted, vote-by-mail voters must be informed of and provided a meaningful opportunity to fix any problem with their ballot. A professional and well-trained election workforce is critical to the administration of elections. We support ongoing federal and state funding for local elections offices.

Welcoming Immigrants and Refugees

11. Welcoming Immigrants and Refugees

Kansas Democrats welcome immigrants and recognize they are essential to our society, our culture, and our economy. Immigrants have helped create, transform,

and revive Kansas communities. Kansas Democrats believe in pursuing a sensible, humane, and responsible approach to immigration that strengthens Kansas and the United States.

Kansas Democrats support Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). People brought to our nation as children should be cared for and given a clear path to citizenship. We believe immigrant children who have lived most of their lives in Kansas should have the same educational opportunities and continue to be afforded the same tuition rates as other Kansas residents.

We support a path to citizenship for undocumented workers, caregivers, students, and children who are an essential part of our state economy and the fabric of our nation. Mass deportation of immigrants would deal a devastating blow to many Kansas communities and vital industries.

Kansas Democrats advocate for the education of immigrants on their workplace rights to prevent the exploitation of labor and support prosecution of employers who ignore workplace safety and compensation laws. We support the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act known as the DREAM Act.

Kansas has a long history of welcoming refugees fleeing war and persecution in their home countries. Kansas Democrats support a continuation of this tradition and oppose efforts to deny safe haven to vulnerable peoples. We will work to protect and expand the existing asylum system and other humanitarian protections.

Building a Stronger, Fairer Kansas Economy

12. Enacting Fair Taxation and Fiscal Responsibility

Kansas Democrats believe that today's extreme levels of income and wealth inequality are bad for Kansans, bad for our businesses, and bad for our economy. Our state has always depended on a thriving middle class to drive economic growth, however, the middle class is disappearing. Meanwhile, the top one-tenth of one percent of Americans now own almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent combined. Unless we invest in building a level playing field, we all lose.

Kansas Democrats support fiscal responsibility in government. Recurring tax revenue must be equal to or greater than recurring expenses.

The goals of rebuilding reserves and paying down debt are important; achieving a structurally balanced budget is a top priority.

The State of Kansas should provide reasonable and adequate services paid for through a fair and balanced tax system.

Kansas Democrats support elimination of the tax on food and a return to pre-2010 sales tax levels. We must continue to seek alternate revenue streams.

Kansas Democrats support a progressive income tax structure that treats workers fairly and ensures that all Kansans pay their fair share. We support an end to tax loopholes and exemptions that favor the wealthiest Kansans and corporations while leaving working Kansans to bear the burden of funding state services.

Kansas Democrats support efforts to provide property tax relief.

13. Attracting and Growing Business

Kansas Democrats support creating new Kansas jobs through investment in research and new technologies. By supporting small business and entrepreneurship, we can grow jobs faster in Kansas.

We support expanded access to new markets because every Kansas small business should be able to tap new markets — whether across their city, across their state, or around the world.

Kansas Democrats support targeted funding and support for entrepreneurship, agribusiness, and small business growth in underserved communities. Businesses who receive incentives must agree to invest in our communities and labor force treating Kansans as people and not commodities.

Kansas Democrats support and promote “buy local” programs.

Kansas Democrats recognize our economy and thousands of jobs depend on maintaining good quality infrastructure, particularly for our communication and

transportation networks. The awarding of infrastructure contracts should first favor Kansas companies that employ Kansas workers.

Business investment will tend to follow communications infrastructure resulting in job growth and entrepreneurial creativity. Government operations can be made both more cost-effective and more convenient through greater online access.

We realize the critical importance of small businesses as engines of opportunity for people of color, women, LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, veterans, and people in rural Kansas, and will work to nurture and fund entrepreneurship.

Kansas Democrats continue to believe new opportunities in fields as diverse as bioscience, agricultural research, and energy efficiency hold great promise for our state's workers. We believe expanded broadband to reach all Kansans is critical to supporting these goals.

14. Jobs and Infrastructure

Kansas Democrats believe investing in the infrastructure needs of the future will create jobs and grow our economy. We want to:

- repair our roads and bridges;
- expand our inadequate public transportation systems in urban, suburban, and rural communities, including Amtrak service in the state of Kansas, and provide much-needed help to low-income households and people with disabilities;
- ensure clean drinking water is a right in all communities;
- build affordable, high-quality, high-speed broadband infrastructure to reach 100 percent coverage;
- build a more resilient electric transmission system, modernizing power generation and delivering clean electricity;
- plug orphan oil and gas wells and clean up abandoned mines;
- produce, preserve, and retrofit affordable, resilient, accessible, energy efficient, and electrified housing units;

- build and rehabilitate housing for low- and middle-income residents;
- address longstanding public housing capital needs;
- modernize our public schools and early learning facilities;
- upgrade child-care facilities and build new child-care facilities in high need areas;
- invest in university and community and technical college infrastructure;
- target workforce development opportunities in underserved communities;
- solidify the infrastructure of our care economy by creating jobs and raising wages and benefits for essential home care;
- modernize and maintain state computer networks to avoid critical failures;
- strengthen and create good-paying union jobs of the future;
- restore and continue to grow women and minorities labor force participation.

15. Developing Strong Rural Communities

Kansas Democrats recognize both the challenges and possibilities of our state’s rural communities. We believe we must do more to address these challenges and restore opportunity to all rural Kansans, including immigrant communities and to support policies that give our young people a reason to return and to stop the “outmigration” from rural areas.

Rural Kansas shares many of the same challenges as many parts of urban Kansas, including a lack of access to fresh foods, minimal or non-existent public transportation, a shortage of affordable and quality housing, aging infrastructure, and spotty broadband. The economic engine of rural Kansas has been hollowed out by consolidation. The opportunity to restart that engine with a sustainable, local economy in a place with a slower pace of life is something Kansas needs to capitalize on. Kansas Democrats believe that with specific investments in rural communities, they can be competitive and vibrant places to live, to work, and to raise a family.

Broadband Access: Kansas Democrats support continued expansion of affordable and high-quality broadband internet access to maintain and improve the quality

of education available in rural schools, improve access to telemedicine and mental health access resources, and open new paths for remote workers.

Creating an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: Many jobs now require access to the internet. With greater access to broadband, rural communities and counties could set up remote worker recruitment programs. With Rural Opportunity Zones, rural communities could promote opportunities in rural areas, and help those communities diversify by providing additional incentives and capital to entrepreneurs who are planning to start a business in one of the many sectors that are needed, such as childcare, building trades, healthcare, technology, retail, and hospitality.

Childcare is Investing in Families: The lack of quality childcare is keeping young people in rural Kansas from taking jobs or having children. Kansas Democrats believe that this is not just an issue for parents, but for an entire community, as it undermines economic development efforts that focus on job growth, and it compromises the viability and appeal of rural life.

Healthcare Access: Kansas Democrats will continue to fight to make healthcare, including dental care and mental health services, accessible and affordable to our most remote rural communities. Kansas Democrats recognize the crisis caused by not passing Medicaid expansion has forced many rural hospitals and health care facilities to close. The closure of a rural hospital does not just mean the loss of well-paying hospital jobs; it is the loss of one of the cornerstones of a community. Like good schools, having a hospital is a sign to businesses, residents, and potential transplants that this is a community with a future.

We encourage skilled medical professionals to establish their practices in rural communities and to promote tele-medicine, so rural residents can have the same access to specialists as those living in cities.

16. Supporting Our Agricultural Economy

The foundation of any society is the ability to grow food, feed its people, and maintain agriculture as an economic generator. Kansas Democrats believe farmers and rural economies should be protected and sustained for the good of

all Kansans. We believe in celebrating and promoting the products that are grown and produced in Kansas.

Agriculture is the backbone of our economy and culture. Utilizing smart farming and ranching practices and encouraging environmental stewardship, while expanding markets for our products, will ensure that Kansas agriculture will continue to grow and thrive for the foreseeable future.

The Right to Fair Capital: Many Kansas farmers struggle to pay high prices for seed, chemicals, and other crop inputs. We believe there should be an assurance of a fair return for farmers achieved by development of U.S. export markets, expansion of world trade under conditions which promote fair tariff and subsidy practices, and restoration of fair market pricing in the marketplace to meet the cost of production, plus a fair return for labor and investment. Kansas Democrats want to ensure that family farmers and small businesses can equally access fair credit, too.

Kansas Democrats recognize that Black and minority farmers and ranchers face systemic challenges in the agricultural economy and support funding and resources specific to under-represented populations to ensure equity.

The Right to a Brighter Future: High costs and low prices have forced many of our farmers to work two or more off-the-farm jobs, while others have left farming entirely. Kansas Democrats strongly believe that the next generation of farmers need us to invest in new economic opportunities and access to basic services. This should happen regardless of location, education funding, health care, mental health services, hospitals, and the proper public funding of extension offices so that the best and wide array of agricultural policies are available to all Kansans.

Kansas Democrats understand the need to protect our soil and water as a habitat for pollinators, for wildlife, and for future generations of farmers, ranchers, and hunters. This is best accomplished by research, education, and keeping the land in the hands of family farmers. Protecting soil and water resources from non-point

source pollution leaching into the ground from rain and farm runoff cannot be overlooked.

Kansas agriculture requires adequate crop insurance, good land use planning that protects prime agricultural land, and continuation and enhancement of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to meet multiple national goals for environmental, emergency, energy, wildlife, and other uses. Kansas Democrats support publicly sponsored agricultural research including responsible biotechnological research to enable the reduction of the use of farm chemicals and other expensive production aids.

We support sustainable food production that includes local production and adequate infrastructure for production and delivery to market. We support local food production and processing, farmers markets, community gardens, and the elimination of food deserts in both rural and urban areas.

We support helping farmers use organic, or sustainable production methods and diversifying crop production, including industrial hemp as an agricultural commodity for a wide range of products. Kansas Democrats support promotion of crops that require less water, such as cotton and new crop varieties like perennial wheat.

The Right to Fair and Open Markets: Kansas Democrats support strong antitrust safeguards, competition between buyers of farm products and those selling to farmers, and protections of contract farmers from multinational corporations.

The Right to Protect Our Natural Resources and Local Control of Our Land: Kansas Democrats believe that a thriving local and regional food system is an important security issue, not only for our state, but also for our nation. We believe that country-of-origin-labeling (COOL) and fully-transparent food labeling are important components of a safer food system, one that will especially benefit consumers. We support the termination and prevention of any corporate “stacking” and capturing of government agencies. We also support implementing

meaningful regulations that curb corporate overreach and unchecked control of Kansas agriculture, which includes terminating foreign corporate ownership of farmland, protecting our communities' right to establish standards for "mega farms," and limiting the influence of corporate agribusiness.

Right to Repair: Kansas Democrats support farmer's rights to repair their own tractors and equipment, free from predatory contracts that increase operating costs and stifle competition in the equipment service market.

17. Ensuring Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces

Kansas Democrats believe that supporting workers through collective bargaining, higher wages, workplace protections, policies to balance work and family, workers' compensation reform, and other investments will help rebuild the middle class for the 21st century. The system is not working when we have a rigged economy in which ordinary Kansans work longer hours for lower wages, while most new income and wealth goes to the top one percent.

Collective Bargaining: Kansas Democrats believe collective bargaining is a fundamental right. Republican politicians and their corporate allies have launched attack after attack on workers' rights to organize and bargain collectively. The right to hold negotiations between unions and management is essential so that working people have the strength to improve their living standards, provide for their families, and build a strong middle class. Union members earn better wages and benefits than workers who aren't union members.

Higher Wages: Kansas Democrats believe that the current minimum wage is a starvation wage and must be increased to a living wage. No one who works full-time should raise a family in poverty. We believe that Kansans should earn a living wage and have the right to form or join a union.

We need to:

- ensure pay equity for women, minorities, persons with disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ+ community;
- abolish sub-minimum wage for Kansans with disabilities and tip workers;

- put an end to wage theft and the rampant misclassification of employees as independent contractors;
- reenact prevailing wage standards. Kansas was the first state to pass a “prevailing wage” for its own public works projects in 1891. In 1987, Kansas repealed its state prevailing wage law.

Workplace Protections: Kansas Democrats support repealing “right to work” laws that undermine worker power and lead to lower wages and less protection for workers across the economy. We support ensuring that those who have been left without wage and hour protections for decades, including domestic workers, farm workers, and gig economy workers have the same rights as other workers. These laws work against underrepresented communities such as minorities and immigrants.

Kansas Democrats strive to be more aggressive about rooting out discrimination in our employment systems. We support increasing authority to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to initiate directed investigations into civil rights violations, violations of the rights of people with disabilities, and violations against LGBTQ+ people, especially transgender women of color. State contractors should be required to develop and disclose plans to recruit and promote people of color, women, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, and veterans—and be held accountable.

Due to COVID-19, we seek robust paid sick leave protections as part of the COVID-19 response for all workers in the economy, including contractors, gig workers, domestic workers, and the self-employed.

Workers’ Compensation: Kansas Democrats believe in a fair, equitable and efficient workers compensation law. We will fight to strengthen workers’ compensation in the interest of Kansas workers.

Developing a Stronger Kansas

18. Honoring Our Military and Veterans’ Service to Protect our Freedoms

Kansas Democrats support the servicemembers of our Kansas National Guard and armed forces as they defend our state and nation. Kansas Democrats led the way

in the creation of a Military Bill of Rights to help ease the financial burden of military service. We pledge to always stand with military personnel, veterans, and their families as they serve as well as when they return home. We support additional help for Kansas veterans to honor their service to our nation.

Kansas Democrats recognize the role both groups play in our homeland security efforts. Kansas Democrats support our national defense and the continued presence of all U.S. military bases located in Kansas. We strongly support providing our troops with the tools, training, and support they need to defend our state from man-made and natural threats.

Kansas Democrats are committed to supporting the mental health needs of our veterans and active-duty service members. Kansas Democrats fully support Veterans Treatment Courts as an alternative to detention, as well as funding alternatives for the disproportionate number of homeless veterans. We support expanding available healthcare to all eligible veterans of Kansas regardless of geographic location, while protecting the Veterans Administration by opposing privatization.

Kansas Democrats continue to support the right of members of the LGBTQ+ community to serve in our military and honor their service.

19. Preserving Our Quality of Life

Our great state of Kansas is known for its wide-open prairies, rolling hills, lakes, rivers and streams, and unique features and attractions. Kansas Democrats believe all Kansans have a right to enjoy the beauty of our state and participate in our diverse culture. We need policies and investments that will keep Kansas public lands public, strengthen protections for our natural and cultural resources, increase access to parks and public lands for all, protect native species and wildlife, and harness the immense economic and social potential of our public lands and waters.

Kansas Democrats support keeping state parks and recreation areas affordable for working families and accessible for people with disabilities. Current facilities should be maintained and expanded. Reducing and removing facilities makes our parks less accessible and less enjoyable. The cost of permits for hunting, fishing,

and camping should be kept affordable for all Kansans. Kansas Democrats believe our lakes, rivers, and streams must be kept accessible to public use and recreation.

Kansas Democrats believe we should have a fully funded arts commission. Performing and creative arts have suffered greatly since the Kansas Arts Commission was dissolved, leaving many small communities without access to plays, musical performances, painting and sculpture exhibitions, and more. Restoring funding will help maintain our rural communities, providing entertainment and education to local communities.

The places and people of Kansas have a rich history and culture. Kansas Democrats believe in conserving our historic buildings and sites for future generations to enjoy.