

Platform of the Kansas Democratic Party

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Statement of Principles

Kansas Democrats believe government is at its best when it operates in the spirit of cooperation and compromise, rather than partisanship and enmity. We believe what brings us together is far stronger than what might pull us apart. We seek 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, a clean environment and safe workplaces. In short, we believe that 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:

- sensible leadership and sound, pragmatic decision-making;
- fairness in our policies;
- investments in our children, our families, and our communities;
- expanded opportunities for every resident of our state.

Our core values call on all Kansans to work together to make our state an outstanding place to live, work, and raise a family.

Kansas Democrats 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 regardless of their race, color, age, physical abilities, economic status, religion, creed, sex, national origin, ethnicity, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

The Kansas Democratic Party asks the people of Kansas to examine our traditions of leadership, of upholding of core Kansas values, and of promoting expanded opportunities for every Kansan, and to then join us in moving our state forward to an even brighter tomorrow.

Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces

Kansas Democrats believe we must break down all the barriers holding Kansans back and restore the basic bargain that built Kansas's mighty middle class: If you work hard and play by the rules, you can get ahead and stay ahead. 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. Republican politicians and their corporate allies have launched attack after attack on workers' fundamental rights to organize and bargain collectively.

The Democratic Party believes 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.

Collective Bargaining:

The right to collectively bargain is essential so that working men and women have the strength to improve their living standards, provide for their families and build a strong middle class. Kansas Democrats believe collective bargaining is a fundamental right.

Union members earn better wages and benefits than workers who aren't union members. On average, union workers' wages are 27 percent higher than their nonunion counterparts.

Unionized workers are 60 percent more likely to have employer-provided pensions.

More than 79 percent of union workers have jobs that provide health insurance benefits, but less than half of nonunion workers do. Unions help employers create a more stable, productive workforce—where workers have a say in improving their jobs.

Higher Wages:

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

Democrats have a plan to repair the engine that drives Kansas economic growth and prosperity; we must first restore the link between the growth of wages and the growth of economic productivity. The best way to do this is to achieve full employment. Other key steps include:

- Making it easier for working people to join in unions to bargain for better wages and benefits.
- Reenacting 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.
- Putting an end to wage theft and the rampant misclassification of employees as independent contractors.
- Ensuring pay equity for women and minorities.

Workplace Protections:

Kansas Democrats believe “right to work” laws are wrong for workers who serve our communities every day—and wrong for Kansas. We will continue to vigorously oppose those laws and other efforts to eliminate dues check-off procedures, roll-back prevailing wage standards, abolish fair share requirements, restrict the use of voluntary membership payments for political purposes, attack seniority, restrict due process protections, and require annual recertification efforts. We oppose legislation and lawsuits that would strike down laws protecting the rights of all Kansas workers.

Work and Family:

Kansas Democrats will fight for paid family and medical leave. Collective bargaining provides working people the opportunity to make their workplaces work for working families. Many unions have arrived at innovative agreements that help working people meet their family obligations while ensuring the employer can succeed.

Workers’ Compensation Reform:

Kansas Democrats believe in a fair, equitable and efficient workers compensation law. Founded in the early 1900s, this program should protect workers who are hurt on the job. Kansas Democrats will fight to strengthen workers’ compensation in the interest of Kansas workers.

Strengthening Public Education

Education is a core value of Kansans; therefore, investing in public education at all levels has been, and always will be, a top priority of Kansas Democrats. The success of our children and our communities depends on quality schools with educators who have successfully completed teacher education programs and are licensed through the Kansas Department of Education. A quality education depends on quality teachers. The success of our economy depends on a well-educated and well-trained workforce. Respect for and retention of educators are fundamental goals of Kansas Democrats.

Kansas Democrats support adequate and equitable funding for K-12 public education as required by the Kansas Constitution. There is no higher priority for our tax dollars and there is no higher commitment for Kansas Democrats. We support ending the tax credit program for corporations and individuals which funds scholarships for private K-12 schools.

Kansas Democrats support attracting and retaining professionally licensed teachers. We must fund stellar teacher education programs and provide competitive compensation packages, and reinstate due process for public school teachers.

Prosperity and job creation in the 21st century depend on vocational and technical training, community colleges and universities in Kansas. We support a return of adequate funding for all higher education.

Kansas Democrats believe we cannot place all of the burden of increasing costs of higher education on students alone through increasing tuition. We support tuition-free community colleges for Kansans.

Kansas Democrats believe that education should be funded responsibly and that education policy should include early childhood through post-secondary education, including vocational and technical education, and comprehensive, age-appropriate sex education.

Strong Rural Communities

Kansas Democrats recognize the value of vibrant rural communities. Yet many rural areas of our state face real challenges. That is why we believe we must do even more to address these challenges and restore opportunity to rural Kansas.

A vibrant, economically healthy rural community depends on public schools, places of worship, family farms, and access to local health care.

Kansas Democrats support continued expansion of broadband internet access to maintain and improve the quality of education available in rural schools; developing regional networks of health care which, through expanded technology including remote and telemedicine, can provide much needed support for rural hospitals; and new technology that has the potential to create new industries and jobs in rural areas.

Renewable energy production including wind, water, solar and bio-fuel, has the potential to revitalize rural communities, bringing jobs and prosperity while at the same time benefiting our environment. Kansas Democrats will continue to lead the way in efforts to expand these industries in Kansas.

Kansas Democrats support diverse family agriculture that is profitable and sustainable, delivering healthy foods to hungry people. We support family farms by enhancing and expanding markets for our agricultural products along with technical and processing support for local food production.

Kansas Democrats support promotion of crops that require less water, such as cotton and industrial hemp, and new crop varieties such as perennial wheat.

Support Our Agricultural Economy

Kansas Democrats support a robust system of traditional family farmers and ranchers. Agriculture is the backbone of our state's economy and culture, and it's through smart farming and ranching practices, environmental stewardship, and expanding markets for our agricultural products that Kansas agriculture will continue to grow and thrive.

Kansas farmers, including small, independent farmers struggle to pay high prices for seed, chemicals, and other crop inputs. High costs and low prices have forced many of our farmers to two or more outside jobs or for them to leave farming entirely.

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, restoration of fair market pricing in the marketplace to meet the cost of production, plus a fair return for labor and investment.

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.

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 sustainable food production which includes local production and adequate infrastructure for production and delivery to market. We support local food production and processing, and the elimination of food deserts in both rural and urban markets. We support helping farmers use eco-friendly production methods and diversifying crop production.

Kansas Democrats advocate action to promote industrial hemp as an agricultural commodity for a wide range of products, for example: agriculture, textiles, recycling, automotive, furniture, food/nutrition/beverages, paper, construction materials, biofuels, and personal care.

Kansas Democrats recognize the value that immigrant labor provides to agriculture and agribusiness.

Healthcare for All

Kansas Democrats believe healthcare is a basic human right. All Kansans should have access to affordable healthcare. We support the Affordable Care Act, and believe the Medicaid-expansion component of the ACA should be enacted in Kansas. We recognize the benefits of this law to Kansans and support its provisions to promote wellness and preventive care, provide insurance coverage for children up to age 26 on their family's insurance, coverage for preexisting conditions, affordable premiums, and expanded coverage for previously uninsured Kansans.

Kansas Democrats support a transition to a single-payer health care system, for example "Medicare for all."

Kansas Democrats recognize the crisis forcing many rural hospitals and health care facilities to close. We believe public policy solutions must be found to keep healthcare, including dental care, accessible and affordable to our most remote rural communities, to keep hospitals open, and to encourage skilled medical professionals to establish their practice in rural communities.

Kansas Democrats support the full funding necessary to ensure that all Kansans have access to affordable mental health services. In addition, we are committed to maintaining our community mental health services.

Kansas Democrats believe the state should take immediate action on the opioid epidemic. We must confront the epidemic of drug and alcohol addiction, specifically the opioid crisis, by vastly expanding access to treatment, supporting recovery, helping community organizations, and supporting best practices by prescribers. We should also do more to educate our youth, as well as their families, teachers, coaches, mentors, and friends, to intervene early to prevent drug and alcohol abuse and addiction.

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 the state hospitals at Osawatomie and Larned.

Kansas Democrats support the right of individuals to make health care choices to receive medical procedures and treatments after consulting with their health care provider. Kansans must be able to seek care from the provider of their choice.

Kansas Democrats support the availability of marijuana for medical use and protection of patients from criminal arrest and prosecution.

Kansas Democrats support access to affordable family planning services and will continue to oppose efforts to defund family planning health centers.

Kansas Democrats support comprehensive, evidence-based and age-appropriate sex education.

Disability Rights

The Kansas Democratic Party believes in the right of every Kansan to lead a productive life, enjoy liberty, and to pursue happiness. Kansas Democrats support and uphold the enforcement and full

funding of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Olmsted Act, and all federal and state disability and access laws and regulations.

We will protect and expand the rights of Americans with physical, mental, developmental and/or intellectual disabilities to get the accommodations and support they need to live in integrated community settings by promoting independent living programs and Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS).

To ensure equality for people with disabilities, Kansas Democrats will:

- Support the timely processing of Medicaid applications and the determination of individual disabilities by the Disability Determination Services;
- Support the elimination of waived services wait lists, including increased capacity of service providers through adequate reimbursement rates;
- Promote Medicaid expansion to support HCBS to keep people in their communities not in institutions
- 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;
- Advocate for increased services for mental health care;
- Ensure that students with disabilities receive an appropriate early childhood, secondary, and postsecondary education in the least restrictive environments;
- Advocate for full extension of benefits to veterans and families of veterans who sustain partial or permanent disabilities, including post injury and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder;
- Promote increased access to meaningful and gainful employment for people with disabilities;
- Fully support the disability access provisions of the Help America Vote Act;
- Support the carve out of the HCBS from KanCare;
- Prevent cuts and caps to Medicaid

Children and Families & Senior Citizens

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

Kansas Democrats will continue to lead on the issues of pre- and post-natal care, safe and affordable child care, after-school programs, child immunizations, enforcement for child support payments, and criminal penalties for those who perpetrate domestic violence and sexual assault.

Kansas Democrats oppose human trafficking in all its forms and support efforts to combat human trafficking. We support services for victims and survivors of human trafficking as well as preventative measures aimed at those most at risk of being trafficked.

Kansas Democrats believe in ensuring an economic safety net for all families. We support services needed to help families regain their independence with adequate monitoring programs to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse.

Kansas Democrats support Meals on Wheels.

Democratic presidents created both Medicare and Social Security, two cornerstones of American society that not only grant seniors financial and medical security but also the peace of mind to enjoy their golden years to the fullest. Kansas Democrats continue to support these vital programs, believe that a dignified retirement is central to the American Dream, and that Medicare and Social Security are the foundation of realizing that dream. Kansas Democrats support removing the cap on earned income contributions that fund Social Security.

Welcoming Immigrants and Refugees

Kansas Democrats welcome immigrants and recognize they benefit our state in important ways. Immigrants have helped create, transform, and revive Kansas communities, helping to reverse the long decline many rural areas are experiencing.

Kansas Democrats support 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.

Kansas Democrats support a path to legal status and citizenship for law abiding immigrants and their families. Mass deportation of immigrants would deal a devastating blow to many Kansas communities and vital industries, such as farming and ranching.

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.

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.

Ethics and Elections

Kansas Democrats believe voting is a right, not a privilege, for all citizens. Voting is also a duty. 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. It is a core principle of the Party to maximize voter participation for all Kansans. We must make it easier to vote, not harder.

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

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 also support an independent, non-partisan redistricting commission.

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.

Kansas Democrats support the expansion of in-person voting, including Sunday voting.

Kansas Democrats support making Election Day a legal holiday, to encourage participation.

Kansas Democrats support a transition to vote-by-mail in all elections.

Public trust in our democracy requires that the actions of our elected officials are guided by the public good. 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.

Tax Fairness and Fiscal Responsibility

Kansas Democrats believe that today's extreme levels of income and wealth inequality are bad for our people, bad for our businesses, and bad for our economy. Our state depends on a thriving middle class to drive economic growth, but the middle class is shrinking. Meanwhile, the top one-tenth of one percent of Americans now own almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent combined. These trends create problems beyond insulting our sense of basic fairness. Social mobility is far lower than most believe it to be. Children who are born to families in the lowest fifth of earnings are more than 10 times more likely to remain there as adults than they are to earn as much as those in the top fifth. 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 also important, but 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 reduction and eventual elimination of the tax on food, and a return to pre-2010 sales tax levels.

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 while leaving working Kansans to bear the burden of funding state services.

Kansas Democrats oppose raids on KDOT, KPERS, and other agency funds. This type of political budget fix only kicks the can down the road for future generations.

Criminal Justice Reform

Kansas Democrats are committed to the reformation of the criminal justice system. 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 an end to capital punishment.

Kansas Democrats support full legalization of marijuana for personal as well as medical use.

A fully funded public defender system is pivotal in assuring individuals get the fairest opportunity for justice.

Kansas Democrats support dignity and safety to 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.

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 prison staff.

Kansas is currently in the top 10 for high juvenile recidivism. Kansas Democrats support the continued implementation juvenile justice reform. A full shift to treatment of 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 specific training for law enforcement agencies to assist staff in recognizing mental health concerns in individuals pending arrest and or detention.

Honoring our Military and Veterans' Service to Protect our Freedoms

Just as we support law enforcement officers, Kansas Democrats also support the men and women 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. Kansas Democrats 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 as a way to honor their service to our nation.

Kansas Democrats recognize the role both of these groups play in our homeland security efforts. We strongly support providing these brave men and women with the tools, training, and support they need to defend our state from man-made and natural threats.

Kansas Democrats support expanding available healthcare to all eligible veterans of Kansas regardless of geographic location, while protecting the Veterans Administration by opposing privatization.

Kansas Democrats support funding alternatives for the disproportionate number of homeless veterans, particularly female homeless veterans, by expanding the vocational tuition options for veterans.

We recognize the unique experiences of those that have served our country. A significant number of veterans that have found themselves in the criminal justice system suffer from the unseen wounds of war or other traumas connected to military service. Kansas Democrats fully support Veterans Treatment Courts as an alternative to detention.

Kansas Democrats support our national defense and the continued presence of all US Military bases located in Kansas.

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

Protecting the Environment

Kansas Democrats support a healthy environment. The health of Kansans is intertwined with the quality of our water, air, and soil. Incentives should be offered to assist farmers, industries, and municipalities as they adopt more environmentally-friendly practices. We support environmental policies and long-range planning that will enhance, rather than diminish, the natural assets we pass on to our children and grandchildren.

Kansas Democrats acknowledge the scientific consensus that human activities are contributing to unprecedented changes in the climate of our planet. This climate change poses a very real danger to our state's residents and economy. Kansas Democrats support action to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, through the use of alternative fuels and increased energy conservation and efficiency.

Kansas Democrats assign a high priority to cleaning up our rivers and streams, reducing the pollutants in the air, protecting ground water from depletion and pollutants, preserving biodiversity and wildlife habitat, and addressing climate change. 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.

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. Kansas needs a long-term strategy for coming to grips with this problem of resource depletion. We support educating the public on water conservation.

The fertile soils of Kansas farms must be protected and conserved. 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 Democrats support the protection of the environmental qualities which make our state unique. We believe native animal and plant species, and their homes, should be preserved in way that compliments agricultural and urban land uses.

The U.S. Geological Survey has found that wastewater injection wells associated with fracking are causing earthquakes in Kansas and Oklahoma. 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 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.

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, 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. Distance learning and telemedicine will continue to be important, especially to rural Kansas communities. 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 women, people of color, tribes, and people in rural Kansas, and will work to nurture entrepreneurship.

Kansas Democrats recognize farming and ranching as important parts of the state economy. We continue to believe new opportunities in fields as diverse as bio-science, agricultural research and energy efficiency hold great promise for our state’s workers. We believe expanded broadband to reach all Kansans is key to supporting these goals.

Leading the Way in Renewable Energy

Kansas Democrats support measures to increase energy efficiency. We support 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 wind, water, sun and bio-fuel.

We believe that energy efficiency and economic growth go hand in hand. We will make our economy more efficient by reducing our dependence on fossil fuels, producing less waste, and using less energy.

Kansas Democrats support and encourage renewable energy companies to move to and expand their manufacturing operations in our state.

We believe excessive charges for the use of residential solar and wind power should be discontinued, and that tax credits for homeowners who install solar panels and wind generators should be offered. Residential property owners should be offered tax incentives to substantially increase the energy efficiency of their buildings, through energy efficient appliances and advanced construction techniques.

Kansas Democrats support the development and expansion of biofuel production. Biofuels should be derived from crops that require limited irrigation from our threatened aquifers.

Power companies should be encouraged to expand wind generation, and incentives should be offered for the development and expansion of competitive, reliable solar power generation.

Companies with heavy power consumption requirements should be offered incentives to convert to clean, renewable energy sources.

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.

Kansas Democrats support keeping state parks and recreation areas affordable for working families. 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 the state arts commission should be funded at pre-2011 levels. Rural 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 sculptural 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.

Defending Human and Equal Rights

Non-Discrimination:

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

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. Freedom of conscience belongs to all the citizens of Kansas, and must be protected to ensure a free, democratic society. Religious liberty shall not be misconstrued as a license to discriminate or otherwise violate the law.

Women's Rights:

Kansas Democrats support 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 fairness.

We recognize the intersectionality of class and economics, racial and gender equality in reproductive decision making. We support a woman's decision to have a child by providing affordable health care and ensuring the availability of and access to programs that help women 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.

Kansas Democrats believe that women have a right to control their reproductive choices including a woman's right to make decisions regarding contraception and pregnancy, including the option of terminating a pregnancy safely and legally consistent with the Constitution of the United States. We oppose efforts to weaken or undermine that right.

Kansas Democrats support the continued funding and operation of family planning clinics, such as Planned Parenthood. We recognize these facilities provide preventive, prenatal, and reproductive health care to vulnerable, at-risk populations who lack access to other care options.

Racial Justice:

Kansas Democrats oppose racism and racial "supremacy" movements, and oppose racial and ethnic profiling.

Kansas Democrats support and encourage training of law enforcement on de-escalation. We believe disparities in sentencing must be addressed, with our criminal justice system reformed to treat minorities with dignity and respect. Sentencing should be audited for racial bias. We support an end to mandatory minimums, an end to "broken windows" policing, and we encourage community policing.

LGBT Equality:

Kansas Democrats support marriage equality and full recognition of same-sex relationships, including the right of same-sex couples to 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 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.

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.

Addendum: A Safe State for Kansas Families

This plank was inadvertently omitted from the packet reviewed, debated, and adopted at the Platform Committee meeting of August 27, 2017. It was unanimously approved as a permanent addendum to the Platform of the Kansas Democratic Party by the state committee at Demofest, September 30, 2017.

Kansas Democrats believe all Kansans have a right to be safe in their homes, schools, offices, places of worship, and communities. We recognize our safety is due to the hard work and sacrifice of law enforcement officers, social workers, educators, and others involved in overseeing the safety of others. We thank them for their service.

Training and Accountability:

We believe law enforcement officers should be well-trained in de-escalation techniques, and receive comprehensive training in recognizing at-risk individuals, such as those in crisis or living with a disability.

Police officers, probation/parole officers, jailors, and other law enforcement staff must be held accountable when they commit unwarranted and unfair violence against those accused of a crime, while being arrested, or while incarcerated.

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

We support the wearing of “body cams” by law enforcement officers, and that recordings of interactions between them and the public be reasonably accessible.

Kansas Democrats oppose the continued militarization of law enforcement.

Firearms:

Kansas Democrats believe guns have no place in public schools, in our colleges, universities, 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.

Fire Protection:

Our state government is woefully unprepared for wildfires. Rural Kansas communities have been devastated by range fires which have burned tens of thousands of acres, killed thousands of heads of cattle and other livestock, and have caused millions of dollars in damage.

As the effects of climate change become more extreme, Kansas must rapidly invest in the training and infrastructure to prepare for and fight wildfires.

