

2004 Platform

Approved at the Snohomish County Democratic Convention on 24 April 2004.

Summary

Snohomish County Democrats believe that—

- The quality and content of public education is the state government's paramount duty, because schools that meet each student's needs are the surest path to equality of opportunity and prosperity, along with the continuing preservation of our democratic heritage.
- Universal economic justice is the foundation on which healthy families, healthy communities, and a free and prosperous nation rest.
- Good agricultural practices support a healthy economy and sound nutrition.
- The air, water, and land must be protected for current and future generations.
- Every person is entitled to equal dignity and respect.
- Sufficient health care and nurture should be available to every person.
- The foreign policy of the United States needs to be cooperative rather than directive while seeking peace, freedom, and justice for all.
- Our national defense should be strong enough to ensure national security, guarantee international trade, and uphold our treaty obligations.
- Criminal justice, crime prevention, and victims' support services must be fully funded.
- We should work together to achieve our common goals.

Education

Snohomish County Democrats believe that the quality and content of public education is the state government's paramount duty, because schools that meet each student's needs are the surest path to equality of opportunity and prosperity, along with the continuing preservation of our democratic heritage.

The state must see that ancestry, race, creed, gender, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, ability, or school district tax base not limit a child's educational opportunities. Public education must be kept under full public control. Education reform should focus on skill development, student success, and encourage parental participation. Each child's different physical, mental, and emotional development requires fully supported and accessible accommodation and adequate funding. Children need age-appropriate instruction about child abuse awareness, decision making, empathy, respecting differences, citizenship, reproduction, sexuality, drug abuse, and communicable diseases, including sexually transmitted diseases and HIV. All schools need to be safe, secure, and nurturing. The ratio of students to actual classroom teachers should promote effective learning.

Universal pre-school access gives every child a chance to prepare for the task of learning. Adequate funding and staff trained in early childhood education are essential to reach this goal.

A strong economy depends on providing affordable and quality opportunities for immediate post-secondary students and for continued education and career opportunities later in life. School-to-work partnerships among public education, organized labor, and business serve students and business well.

Effective educational programs require caring and competent classified school employees and professional educators. Each person requires a competitive and commensurate wage based upon education and responsibility as compared to other professionals.

Labor and Business

Snohomish County Democrats believe that universal economic justice is the foundation on which healthy families, healthy communities, and a free and prosperous nation rest.

Business needs justly paid employees working in safe and productive conditions to develop a strong economy. Industrial, agricultural, and professional workers require protection in their legal right to organize into unions to bargain collectively to create these conditions.

Women, people of color, people with disabilities, and sexual minorities need to earn equal compensation for equivalent work.

Those exploiting migrant, temporary, and contract workers not only harm all workers but also harm those employers trying to treat their workers well.

Prevailing wage laws for work under government contracts protect family income and provide a good tax base.

Effective, efficient government requires competent, professional employees. Our state and local government employees require and deserve competitive and commensurate wages.

Agriculture

Snohomish County Democrats believe that good agricultural practices support a healthy economy and sound nutrition.

Protecting our food production is vital to maintaining safe and abundant food.

Farm trade should be protected from countries that ignore established environmental and animal husbandry practices.

All levels of Government should work to promote locally grown products. In addition, government needs to help support our vanishing farms as much as government is willing to support commercial and industrial interests.

Growth, Environment, and Transportation

**Snohomish County
Democrats believe that the
air, water, and land must
be protected for current
and future generations**

Conscientious implementation, funding, and enforcement of the Growth Management Act limits urban sprawl, keeps the integrity of agricultural areas, protects wildlife and forests, and allows for responsible growth. Intelligent planning requires full and concurrent mitigation by those creating the growth. Taxpayers should not subsidize developers.

Traffic delays commerce. Commutes take noticeably longer than just a few years ago. Mass transit is a positive and necessary part of the solution. Transit service needs to be provided in the most cost-effective, wide-reaching manner.

Personal and corporate gain must not endanger long-term environmental viability. Sustainable practices and renewable energy provide long-term job and environmental protection.

Civil and Human Rights

**Snohomish County
Democrats believe that
every person is entitled to
equal dignity and respect.**

While there have been improvements in employment, housing, and educational opportunities for people with disabilities, equal treatment is a promise that awaits fulfillment.

Government must ensure that no person is discriminated against on any basis not reasonably related to the accomplishment of a legitimate purpose. Legislation and administrative code needs to address inequality where found.

The freedom of religious belief and practice from the influence and control of the state is essential for a free society.

Family structures have undergone major changes throughout history. Extended and nuclear families have never been exclusive. Government and business should not discriminate against other family types.

While individual actions are subject to law, individual beliefs and values are not within governmental domain.

Business should not gather or disclose personal information except with the full knowledge and informed consent of the individual involved. Those gathering this information must be held responsible for the security of this information. The exchange of lawful information should not be hindered.

Health and Nurture

Snohomish County Democrats believe that sufficient health care and nurture should be available to every person.

The working poor and unemployed regularly lack access to health care. Children frequently lack basic care and nurture. Elders often lack the means to live in human dignity. Access to mental health care is frequently subject to undue restrictions, even for those with insurance. Hunger, homelessness, and despair exist in rural, suburban, and urban areas. These shortcomings affect everyone.

Shortsighted access restrictions to health care cost us more money. A compassionate society provides assistance to those struggling to meet responsibilities for day care, health care, and elder care.

Individuals are more likely to seek needed medical help if they know their illness is not a matter of public record.

Government control of family planning services, or not providing access to all, is contrary to the public good.

Educating the public on childcare, nutrition, and living a healthy lifestyle results in personal, community, and economic benefits.

International Relations

Snohomish County Democrats believe that the foreign policy of the United States needs to be cooperative rather than directive while seeking peace, freedom, and justice for all.

Peace is more than the absence of war. Peace results from advancing justice, democracy, and human rights. The United States should actively seek cooperative justice, human rights, and reconciliation among the nations of the world.

The United Nations and its agencies, including the World Court, are key tools in providing justice, democracy, and human rights. The United States should bear a fair share of development, peacekeeping, and defense initiatives.

The United States should provide leadership towards worldwide elimination of land mines, and the banning of nuclear, chemical, biological, and space-based weapons. Our nation should avoid international weapons trafficking with non-democratic nations.

We should negotiate fair trade agreements with all willing countries. These agreements should include provisions to protect the environment, including encouraging sustainable agricultural and manufacturing practices. These treaties should protect health, safety, and workers rights.

The United States should discourage domestic companies from engaging in practices abroad that would be prohibited at home.

Defense and Veteran Affairs

Snohomish County Democrats believe that our national defense should be strong enough to ensure national security, guarantee international trade, and uphold our treaty obligations.

Everyone should respect and honor the sacrifices made by members of the Military, National Guard, Merchant Marine, and Coast Guard. A part of that honor and respect is adequate pay and benefits for those serving and their families, and the full funding of veterans benefits.

All people serving in the military should be provided equipment at government expense that enhances their ability to fight and survive in battle.

Any deployment of military personnel must be the result of a clear and certain threat to the nation's security. There should be due consideration for the consequences of such deployment.

Criminal Justice

Snohomish County Democrats believe that criminal justice, crime prevention, and victims' support services must be fully funded.

There should be equal criminal punishments for comparable crimes. Law enforcement must be effective, fair and responsive to people of all cultures, respecting individual dignity and civil rights.

Crime prevention programs are more cost effective than incarceration, particularly those providing youth with recreation, education, intervention, and peer support. Society benefits from alleviating the conditions of crowded court dockets, prison overcrowding, and recidivism. Rehabilitative treatment should be used whenever appropriate.

The legislature should not add to the burdens of law enforcement and the legal system through mandates without funding. Our law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and prisons need adequate money to operate effectively.

Government and The Democratic Party

Snohomish County Democrats believe that we should work together to achieve our common goals

Government must be effective and of the highest quality so that public trust is ensured and there is pride in civic service and participation in the electoral process.

Government should support people taking responsibility for their own lives. Government should serve all, not the few. In government we have a tool for positive change, a tool too often derided.

The ballot—not the bank—should decide elections. Voting should be by secure, verifiable means.

This platform and resolutions represent the widely held concerns of Snohomish County Democrats. These are not abstract beliefs, but an agenda for action. While the platform is not a litmus test, candidates should seek implementation of the general principles. Party members pledge their active, united support for candidates that keep faith with the platform.

2004 Resolutions

Education

**Be it resolved that the
Snohomish County
Democrats support—**

Creating a dedicated revenue stream to support education.

Directing education reform to support educators and students.

Providing adequate funding and modern resources to support preschool education, primary and secondary education, and post-secondary education.

Having teacher salaries keep pace with the cost of living, as approved by Initiative 732, “The Teacher and School Employee Cost of Living Initiative.”

Repealing the Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 2295, “Authorizing Charter Schools,” signed by Governor Gary Locke on 18 March 2004.

Repealing the No Child Left Behind Act.

Restoring funding to meet the goals of I-728, “Shall School Districts Reduce Class Sizes, Extend Learning Programs, Expand Teacher Training, and Construct Facilities, Funded by Lottery Proceeds, Existing Property Taxes, and Budget Reserves.”

Reducing the benchmark for passing school bond measures and levies from a 60-percent super majority to a simple majority.

Using age-appropriate education on reproduction in public schools that is effective and balanced curriculum, as opposed to an abstinence-only approach.

Maintaining at current levels or expanding high school vocational education.

Providing funds for extra- and co-curricular activities to allow all students the opportunities to fully develop their skills.

Ensuring requirements that the Washington Assessment of Student Learning respect and value the diversity of our multicultural society.

Science being a compulsory subject in all grades in elementary and secondary schools.

Labor and Business

**Be it resolved that the
Snohomish County
Democrats support—**

State employees receiving a yearly cost of living increase indexed to inflation.

The workers' compensation program receiving funding that keeps pace with the number of injured workers and inflation.

The United States removing the tax incentives corporations receive by outsourcing jobs to foreign countries.

All trade agreements by reviewed and improved for fair trade provisions of workers' rights, human rights, and environmental principles.

Promoting the broadest possible diversity of media ownership.

Requiring the broadcast media to provide issue-oriented programming from multiple perspectives as a part of their requirement to serve the public interest.

The Washington State Ferries remaining union-operated under state ownership as a part of the state highway system.

Enforcing the law that prohibits employees from being classified as subcontractors.

Holding general contractors responsible and accountable for all lost taxes and other revenues to the state resulting from the misclassification of their employees as subcontractors.

Making computer technology as readily available as telephone technology.

Controlling Internet access as a common carrier.

Opposing efforts to privatize the workers compensation program in Washington.

Expanding responsible bidder language in all public and public-financed work to include issues of fair wages, health insurance, retirement, and training.

Apprenticeship set-asides be included in all contracts involving publicly financed work to maintain ongoing education and training.

Agriculture

**Be it resolved that the
Snohomish County
Democrats support—**

Monitoring and reducing the contamination of our air, water, and land from farms.

Farming techniques engineered and maintained by the National Resources Conservation Service of the US Department of Agriculture (formerly known as the US Soil Conservation Service) to provide a sustainable, environmentally friendly economic base to support families on farms as well as maintaining animal health and safety.

Labeling all foods containing genetically modified organism.

Growth, Environment, and Transportation

**Be it resolved that the
Snohomish County
Democrats support—**

Legislation that encourages raising the fuel efficiency mandated by the Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards (CAFE Standards) for all vehicles, including trucks.

Ratifying of the Kyoto Accords by the United States.

The United States preserving our remaining Old Growth Forests in order to protect wildlife and the environment.

Repealing the Executive Orders from the George W. Bush administration that adversely affect the environment.

Prohibiting the dumping of high-level radioactive waste and mill tailings as currently defined by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission at the Hanford Reservation.

Accelerating the clean up the radioactive waste at the Hanford Reservation.

Opposing the reclassification of radioactive waste into lesser categories without sound scientific evidence.

The United States toughening environmental protections, reduce oil dependence, and spur investment in alternative energy sources including hydrogen, solar, wind, and ocean.

Making available financial and other incentives to businesses that conserve energy, install pollution prevention technologies, and redesign toxins out of their manufacturing processes.

The public's right to know taking precedence over corporate proprietary rights when it comes to the release of potentially harmful agents into the environment.

Opposing drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Efforts to restore and protect the fisheries in international waters.

The United States undertaking a focused and adequately funded research effort, analogous to the Manhattan Project or putting the a person on the moon, with the goal of achieving national energy self-sufficiency based on renewable fuels.

Opposition to current proposals to weaken protections for the Pacific Northwest ancient forests.

Full implementation of plans to provide habitat protection, water flows, hatchery reforms, and fish harvest reforms for our endangered wild salmon.

Civil and Human Rights

**Be it resolved that the
Snohomish County
Democrats support—**

Efforts to end terrorism not be waged at the expense of the fundamental civil rights of the people of the United States and the world.

Repealing the USA Patriot Act and similar legislation that curtails our constitutional freedoms.

Not adding an amendment to the United States Constitution defining marriage.

One criterion for supporting any candidate for the judiciary needs to be supporting a woman's right to privacy in her medical decisions.

Maintaining affirmative action as one tool to promote racial and gender equality.

Focusing the eliminating drug abuse on rehabilitation over retribution.

Opposing capital punishment because of its inequitable and uncertain application.

Services for male victims of domestic violence outreach, treatment, and services.

The full funding of the United Nations International Planning Fund and the removal of the gag rule preventing the mention of abortion services so all families in developing nations have adequate access to birth control counseling and devices.

Moving the Ten Commandments monument that sits at the entrance to the Everett Police Station to a more suitable location.

Health and Nurture

**Be it resolved that the
Snohomish County
Democrats support—**

Encouraging employers to provide comprehensive health insurance to their employees through the use of incentives.

The United States takes positive, incremental, and time-certain steps towards assuring basic health care for all residents, particularly those marginalized by society.

The federal government enacting legislation to allow FDA regulation of tobacco products.

Establishing the governmental bulk purchasing of pharmaceuticals to lower prescription drugs costs.

Increasing enforcement of laws that require parents to meet financial obligations to support their children as required by court decree.

Opposing the privatization of Social Security.

Assuring the financial viability of Social Security for future generations.

Protecting our social safety net as among the highest priorities of government.

The focus of any new welfare reform program be on reducing poverty among families, not just reducing the caseload.

Improving the enforcement of food safety laws.

Opposing tort reform that limits a patient's right to appropriate compensation due to incompetent medical care.

Directing efforts towards reducing medical malpractice costs towards the small minority of doctors causing the vast majority of claims.

Initiative 869 with an endorsement, which would implement a single payer universal health care system in the state of Washington.

The United States funding and encouraging the study of the health effects of depleted uranium in Iraq by the World Health Organization, International Atomic Energy Commission, and the United Nations Environmental Agency.

International Relations

**Be it resolved that the
Snohomish County
Democrats support—**

Establishing fair trade with Cuba in order to encourage democratic reforms there.

The United States recovering the depleted uranium used in our spent armaments in throughout the world.

The United States working with the United Nations to limit military spending by working cooperatively to world conflicts.

Calling on the President and Congress to pursue a neutral policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to actively work towards an equitable and non-violent solution.

Advocate the trial of Saddam Hussein be carried in an international court.

Including the global community in advancing democracy in Iraq.

Congress investigating the premise and conduct of the latest Iraq War.

Withdrawing all United States troops from Iraq at the earliest practical date by working with the United Nations.

Defense and Veteran Affairs

**Be it resolved that the
Snohomish County
Democrats support—**

Eliminating funding for the research, development and construction of the National Missile Defense System.

The type of benefits provided in the original GI Bill be restored and funded for all veterans.

Fully funding Veterans Administration hospitals.

Government and the Democratic Party

**Be it resolved that the
Snohomish County
Democrats support—**

Directing more resources to our local emergency responders, including fire, police, and public health departments.

Results of the Maine Clean Election Act, meant to avoid the influence of special interests, be examined for its outcomes.

Qualified computer experts examine and certify the operation and results of electronic voting equipment.

Voters' rights to access to the ballot be protected along with fair and accurate vote counting.

Voters having a way to verify their ballots.

A paper ballot carrying precedence over electronic voting data using current technology.

The counts of absentee ballots be randomly audited for accuracy.

Voting machine companies use open source code in electronic voting machines, as in Australia.

The state of Washington seriously consider a state income tax as part of overall tax reform.

The United States Congress restoring the "Pay As You Go" policies of the 1990s to reestablish responsible fiscal policy.

Retaining the estate tax while allowing for the passing on of family farms and small businesses within families.

Making capital investments infrastructure and the environment.

The state sales tax should be the same throughout the state of Washington.

Opposition to Initiative 892, authorizing additional electronic scratch ticket machines, which would dramatically increase gambling in the state of Washington, and call for all Democrats to work for its defeat.

Opposition to Initiative 864, which calls for a permanent 25% decrease in non-voter approved local levies across the board, and call for all Democrats to work for its defeat.

Urging local, state, and federal governments not to contract for goods or services to non-domestic suppliers of labor without making a good faith effort to secure local suppliers of the goods and services at a reasonable and fair cost.

2004 Snohomish County Democratic Convention

Federal regulatory agencies, including the FDA, the SEC, the EPA, and the FCC, should be fully funded, protected from political pressures, and not staffed or managed by revolving-door lobbyists from the industries they are supposed to regulate.

Returning Old Man House State Park, the historical site of Chief Seattle's Long House and within the boundaries of the Port Madison Indian Reservation in Suquamish, Washington, to the Suquamish Tribe.

Keeping our focus on separation of church and state and call on our political leaders to make decisions based on constitutional law, not personal faith.