

Democratic Party Platform is Most Progressive Ever; GOP Platform Nutty and Dangerous July 25, 2016

[The 2016 Democratic Platform](#), cited as the most progressive in the party's history, was released in draft form on July 1 and will be voted on at the Democratic National Convention, July 25 – 28, in Philadelphia. The platform signals a moment of optimism and hope for the future in an election season marked by pervasive and blatant attacks against women, people of color, immigrants, Muslims and a slew of other groups targeted by the Republican Party. The Democratic Platform contains provisions that -- if achieved -- would result in large and long-awaited victories for feminists.

On the issues of most importance to NOW members and supporters, the Democratic Party Platform calls for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, supports full access to reproductive health care and seeks to overturn the Hyde Amendment, endorses paid family and paid sick leave, supports expanding Social Security and improving benefits for widows and caregivers, continues support of the Violence Against Women Act and calls for increased services for survivors of domestic violence/sexual assault, expands background checks for gun sales and closes loopholes, and securing equal pay for women.

Minimum Wage and Equal Pay

- Raise and index the current minimum wage to \$15 an hour
- Implement the One Fair Wage (\$15) for all workers in order to end the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers and persons with disabilities
- Support a model employer executive order to support employers who provide their workers with a living wage, good benefits, and the opportunity to form a union
- Secure equal pay for women

Family Leave and Caregiver Support

- Enact national paid medical and family leave by passing legislation that would provide for a minimum of 12 weeks of paid leave for an individual to care for a child or address serious personal or family health issues
- Promote policies that allow workers to earn at least seven days of paid sick leave and have paid vacation time
- Address the needs of family caregivers, who are disproportionately women, by creating a strong, stable workforce to meet the needs of families
- Ease the challenges of childcare by increasing access to affordable high-quality childcare and boosting wages for childcare workers
- Support the millions of individuals paying for, coordinating or providing care for aging relatives or those with disabilities

Reproductive Justice/Health Care

- Each woman is entitled to quality reproductive health services, including abortion, regardless of her income or place of residence and addresses overcoming barriers to care
- Support affordable comprehensive care, evidence-based sex education, full range of family planning services, ensuring a safe and health pregnancy and childbirth and providing services during pregnancy and after the birth of a child
- Fight Republican attempts to defund Planned Parenthood and other health centers providing reproductive health services
- Overturn policies that impede women's access to abortion, such as the Hyde Amendment, and continue to defend the Affordable Care Act
- Address barriers to access to reproductive health services, including race, income, and sexuality
- Ensure healthy pregnancies and child birth by increasing and improving maternal care services
- Calls health care a 'right' – not a privilege; affirms importance of the Affordable Care Act and says that Americans should be able to access coverage through Medicare or a public option
- Says health care costs are still too high and that premiums should be made more affordable, out-of-pocket expenses reduced and prescription drug costs capped

Violence Against Women

- Continue support for the crucial Violence Against Women Act to provide law enforcement the tools it needs to combat this problem
- Increase comprehensive support services for survivors of sexual violence and ensure a fair process for on-campus disciplinary proceedings and in the criminal justice system
- Increase sexual violence prevention education programs that cover issues like consent and bystander intervention in secondary school in addition to college
- Expand background checks for gun sales, close dangerous loopholes in current laws, hold irresponsible dealers and manufacturers accountable and keep assault weapons off our streets

Social Security

- Fight every effort to cut, privatize, or weaken Social Security, including attempts to raise the retirement age or diminish benefits by cutting cost-of-living adjustments
- Ensure the continuity of Social Security by taxing a portion of the income of those who earn more than \$250,000 annually
- Expand Social Security so that every American can retire with dignity and respect, including women who are shortchanged by the current system because they are widowed or took time out of the workforce to care for children, aging parents or ailing family members

Quality and Affordable Education

- Free community college and more investment by the federal government and the states to make higher education more affordable
- Allow those with current loans to repay debt at the lowest rates possible and cut interest rates for future undergraduates
- Expand access to income-based repayment so students are not forced to pay more than they can afford
- Create a Student Borrower Bill of Rights to ensure that students are aware of all available options regarding loans and repayment policies
- Restore the prior standard in bankruptcy law to allow borrowers with student loans to discharge their debts in bankruptcy as a measure of last resort
- Continue to crack down on for-profit schools that take millions in federal financial aid, then exploit students and burden them with debt rather than educate them

Social Justice

- Pass the Equal Rights Amendment to ensure constitutional protections against sex discrimination
- Commit to end institutional and systematic racism in society with a vow to challenge and dismantle structures that result in lasting racial, economic, political and social inequity
- Close the racial wealth gap by eliminating systemic barriers to wealth accumulation for different racial groups and improve opportunities for people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds to build wealth
- Affirm our commitment to eliminate poverty by developing a national strategy, coordinated at all levels, and direct more federal resources to lifting up communities that have been left behind, such as with the 10-20-30 model which directs 10 percent of program funds to communities with at least 20 percent of the population living below the poverty line for 30 or more years
- Work for comprehensive federal nondiscrimination protections for LGBT individuals and push back against state efforts to discriminate against LGBT individuals
- Work to end disability discrimination

Criminal Justice

- Reform the current criminal justice system, end mass incarceration, reform mandatory minimum sentences, close private prisons and detention centers
- Rebuild bonds of trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve by investing in training for officers on issues such as de-escalation and the appropriate use of force, encourage better police community relations and the use of smart strategies like police body cameras
- Instead of investing in more jails and incarceration, we need to provide greater investment in jobs and education, and end the school-to-prison pipeline

Voting Rights

- Protect voting rights by fighting discriminatory voter ID laws that disproportionately burden young voters, diverse communities, people of color, low-income families, people with disabilities, the elderly, and women
- Restore the full protections of the Voting Rights Act, expand early voting and promote vote-by-mail, same day voting, and universal automatic voter registration

Immigration

- We need to urgently fix our broken immigration system and fight for comprehensive immigration reform
- Immigrants who are living in the United States, who are assets to their communities and contribute so much to our country, should be incorporated completely into our society through legal processes
- Defend and implement President Obama’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and Deferred Action for Parents of Americans executive actions
- End raids and roundups of children and families and end contracts with for-profit private prisons and private detention centers
- Guarantee government-funded legal counsel for unaccompanied children in immigration courts

Republican Platform – A Collection of Nutty Ideas, Regressive and Harmful Policies

[The Republican Party’s 2016 platform](#), meanwhile, reveals a starkly different picture. The platform is an alarming continuation of the blatantly hateful rhetoric used by Donald Trump this election season, and contains provisions that attack women, people of color, immigrants, LGBTQIA individuals, Muslims and other groups. In addition, it reflects the virulent anti-woman, anti-reproductive rights and anti-LGBTQIA rights record of vice presidential candidate Mike Pence.

Most Extreme on Reproductive Rights - Revealing once again conservatives’ commitment to police women’s bodies and reproductive choices, the platform opposes legalized abortion with no exceptions for rape or incest, and supports the ability of all organizations to “provide, purchase, or enroll in healthcare coverage consistent with their religious, moral, or ethical convictions,” allowing employees to deny workers crucial health services.

Make Hyde Permanent, De-fund Planned Parenthood - The platform also calls for codification of the Hyde Amendment, and a permanent ban on federal funding for abortion and healthcare plans that include abortion coverage. Further, the party wishes to replace sex education programs for teens with education that sets abstinence until marriage as the “responsible and respected standard of behavior,” and encourages the teaching of the Bible in public schools. The platform calls for defunding of Planned Parenthood and other women’s health clinics and proposes to criminalize the acquisition or transfer of fetal tissue for research purposes. Fetal tissue research, it should be noted, is one of the most promising areas of medical research on genetic defects and serious diseases.

Repeal ACA, Privatize Medicare, Block Grant Medicaid - Predictably, the platform calls for a repeal of the Affordable Care Act but does not suggest a plan to help people who would lose insurance from a repeal of the act. It also calls for shifting Medicare to a premium support model which would provide beneficiaries with an income-adjusted contribution towards buying a private insurance plan. This privatizing of Medicare has been shown in polling to be deeply unpopular. Another idea involves turning Medicaid into a capped state block grant program which critics say would be most damaging for low-income, vulnerable and uninsured persons and over time would cover fewer persons, especially during economic downturns. (This proposal for block-granting Medicaid is something House Speaker Paul Ryan (R) has been pushing for some time.

Repeal Marriage Equality, Embrace Conversion Therapy - The platform supports a constitutional amendment to overturn the Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that legalized gay marriage, and asserts that “every child deserves a married mom and dad.” The GOP now supports the right of parents to force their children into conversion therapy (to brainwash them against their sexual orientation) and calls for transphobic legislation to prevent transgender individuals from using public restrooms that align with their gender identity, defining this as a practice that is “at once illegal, dangerous, and ignores privacy issues.” Additionally, the GOP platform embraces the proposed Parental Rights Amendment to the Constitution that would permit parents to refuse vaccination, school attendance and would allow them to beat their children without intervention from child protective services.

Climate Change Denied - Regarding environmental concerns, the GOP asserts that the central aspect of any “sensible environmental policy” is that “year by year, the environment is improving.” This assertion contradicts the findings of any qualified and reputable organization regarding climate change. The platform refers to coal as an “abundant” and “clean” energy source and wishes to protect coal miners from the Democratic Party’s “radical anti-coal agenda,” in addition to calling for the deregulation of carbon dioxide by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Walling Off Mexico - The GOP platform contains a provision to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, as might be predicted since Trump has repeatedly made that outrageous promise in his anti-immigrant rants. The document ignores the very real threat of gun violence facing the country and the Zika virus (Republicans refuse to adequately fund efforts to combat the virus), but declares pornography to be a “public health crisis” that is “destroying the lives of millions.”

Get Rid of National Parks, Forests - The platform’s plank to dismantle national parks, national forests and other public lands and open these up to private ownership and development is truly irresponsible. Other bizarre proposals include a call to fight magnetic impulse attacks, and oppose the addition of prairie chickens and sage grouses to the endangered species list.

Despite these and many other regressive and even dangerous ideas in the document, the GOP platform document proclaims that “a Republican administration will restore our nation’s credibility.”

Madness and Misogyny Prevail - Overall, the GOP platform provides abundant evidence that the party only functions when leaders feed their supporters the red meat of hatred, divisiveness,

fact-allergic, science-denying, false-promising rhetoric. Various media sources report extreme misogynistic themes at the Republican convention reaching a fever pitch with chants of “Lock her up,” following a mock trial of Hillary Clinton presentation by New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie. T-shirts sold outside the convention hall depict blatantly sexist illustrations and messages, <http://womensenews.org/2016/07/misogyny-runs-rampant-at-republican-national-convention/>.