

# **2006 Hawai'i County Democratic Party Platform**

## **Preamble**

The abiding values of the Democratic Party are freedom, liberty, equal opportunity, justice, fairness, compassion and respect for the dignity and worth of the individual. In this time of War, these principles are at their highest value and must be protected.

It is the Democratic Party that has made a profound difference in Hawai'i's history by opening the doors of economic, political and social opportunities. We commit ourselves to these values as the party of the people.

## **Education**

Democracy depends on an educated electorate; thus education of Hawai'i's people is our first priority.

The Democratic Party is committed to re-inventing a viable public education system based on practical approaches to local control. The public education system must provide lifelong education that equips our people with the tools, insight and wisdom to pursue their ambition and to be informed participants in the democratic process. A variety of training and educational opportunities should be available so people can acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to secure their economic futures.

We strongly support expansion and development of higher educational programs throughout the Island of Hawai'i. All the campuses and centers of the University of Hawai'i must be given adequate funding for successful pursuit of excellence. Of utmost importance is adequate funding to make attendance possible for all qualified Hawai'i students.

## **Economic Development**

The Democratic Party measures economic progress by its long-term impact on the quality of life of all residents. The economy of Hawaii Island is based on our ecological, aesthetic, and cultural resources. Maintenance of those resources, particularly our rural ambiance, is essential if economic development is to be sustainable.

Visitor industry development should enhance both the life of the resident population and the quality of the visitors' experience and.

To conserve our island life-style, we encourage and support diversified agriculture that can be carried out by small producers. These activities must be compatible with local culture and resources. As production is only the first step in agriculture, every effort should be made to support value-added products and the "Buy Hawaii" program.

Economic development must benefit all members of our communities. Workers need to earn a "living wage." Corporations should not be provided incentives to relocate jobs

outside the state. Workers' rights to organize to protect their common interests, without reprisal from their employers, must be protected.

### **Land Use and Infrastructure**

The Democratic Party recognizes there is a crisis in Hawaii County regarding land use, development, and infrastructure.

The Democratic Party believes a major priority is to create the infrastructure necessary to allow controlled growth within the framework of the County's Master Plan. Before new development is permitted, provision must be mandated for water, roads, government services, parks, and utilities for existing and future residents of areas slated for development.

### **Environment**

The Democratic Party believes that the preservation and restoration of our environment is essential. We support a sustainable society that utilizes the earth in such a way that future generations will benefit from the practices of our generation.

As Democrats, we support and encourage local, state, and national legislation to conserve, preserve, and renew the earth's mineral, soil, water, air, forests, ocean life systems, and virgin wilderness. We stand in support of renewable and self-sustaining agriculture and industry.

We believe in the vigorous enforcement of our environmental laws and increased citizen involvement in protecting our resources. Our public lands shall be managed on a multi-use basis, protecting all native flora and fauna. Harmful invasive species must be controlled. We further support increased designation of wilderness open space in Hawai'i, including wetlands, coastlines and watersheds.

We support programs that encourage the use of alternative energy sources and modes of transportation. We call for and support legislation for the ban on the use of substances that are dangerous to the people and environment of our island as well as the rest of the earth.

### **Government**

We, as Democrats, insist that government operations at all levels be efficient, effective, and open to all. We are committed to citizen participation in government at all levels. Further, we believe that essential government functions such as policy-making be made by government employees rather than contractors.

The Democratic Party supports the rights of citizens to freely and equally participate in and benefit from government programs. To protect these rights, we support "Sunshine and Freedom of Information Acts and Laws, campaign finance reform, and equalization of the tax laws to ensure individual taxpayers, small businesses, large corporations, and

organized religious groups all pay their fair share. We demand all Hawaii legislators to strongly support both the US and Hawaii constitutions, particularly the Bill of Rights.

We support the re-engagement in the important treaties that the current Bush Administration has abandoned beginning with the Kyoto Treaty on Global Climate Change and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

### **Family**

As Democrats, we affirm that the rights to define family reside with the individual, not the state. We reaffirm our recognition of both traditional and nontraditional families as a means to promote individual growth and fulfillment within the framework of the common good.

### **Health and Human Services**

As Democrats, we support creation and maintenance of programs that protect the health and welfare of all citizens. We believe this “safety net” is critical to working families and vulnerable populations who face countless pressures and challenges. We as Democrats will support candidates, as well as public and private initiatives that creatively and vigorously address these issues.

### **Affordable Housing**

The Democratic Party of Hawaii County recognizes that there are many individuals on the Big Island who are without adequate, accessible, affordable and safe housing. We support the priorities established by the Hawaii Island Continuum of Care to meet the needs of these individuals and the local services providers working to address these priorities. We also support efforts to provide affordable housing, such as government-assisted housing, for working families located near their places of employment.

### **Culture**

We recognize all of Hawai'i's diverse people, their history and culture as valuable resources. As Democrats, we encourage and support the expression of those cultures and the preservation of both oral and written history. The arts and the historic sites of our people are part of the rich context that makes Hawai'i truly unique.

### **Conclusion**

We Democrats commit to do all this with a renewed sense of aloha, a spirit of openness, mutual respect and deep caring. It is only with this spirit that we can assure that Hawai'i will remain a special place for all who call it home.