

1 WASHINGTON STATE FEDERATION OF DEMOCRATIC WOMEN

2
3 2006 Platform

4 Preamble

5
6 We, the members of the Washington State Federation of Democratic Women, hold certain
7 principles as core values and accept our responsibility to uphold them in our communities, our
8 public offices, our homes, and all other realms of our lives. We believe that nonviolence and
9 *The Precautionary Principle*ⁱ should be essential organizing principles of all civilized societies,
10 and we support the implementation of this concept in all social structures, including government,
11 education, and research institutions. To exemplify and guide our decisions and actions we
12 hereby set forth in this 2006 Platform our beliefs and positions regarding these areas of concern:
13 Education, Environment, Government, Health, Human and Civil Rights, and Labor.
14

15 I. CIVIL and HUMAN RIGHTS

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17 We believe in and support *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*ⁱⁱ and emphasize that
18 these rights apply fully to women and children. Further, we accept the responsibility of
19 protecting these human and civil rights.
20

21 We support:

- 22 • individual rights of privacy and repeal of those sections of the USA PATRIOT Actⁱⁱⁱ that
- 23 limit civil liberties and human rights.
- 24 • affirmative action.
- 25 • access for any person (citizen or non-citizen, documented or undocumented) to health
- 26 care, housing, childcare, public education, and job training to achieve independence.
- 27 • community-based, citizen review boards with extensive authority to address allegations
- 28 of racial and other profiling.
- 29 • legal recognition of the range of genders occurring in the human species.
- 30 • the right of all peoples to self-determination and freedom from intimidation by U. S.
- 31 Military Forces anywhere in the world.
- 32 • along with all other citizens of the United States, the commitment of the *Washington*
- 33 *State Federation of Democratic Women*, to freedom and justice and believe that in order
- 34 to achieve freedom, everyone must be treated equally, without discrimination.
- 35 • the ratification of the *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women*^{iv}
- 36 (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly and ratified by 180
- 37 or the 191 member states of the U. N.
- 38 • the right and ability of all persons to be able to report crimes or seek services without fear
- 39 of punishment, deportation, or other forms of retribution.
- 40 • the right of all men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality,
- 41 sexual orientation, or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family and to enjoy
- 42 these equal rights as to marriage, during marriage, and at its dissolution.
- 43 • the right of every person to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of
- 44 himself or herself and his or her family.
- 45 • the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic
- 46 holidays with pay.
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We oppose

- the use of rape as a weapon of war and the abduction of children to serve as soldiers.
- discrimination in employment (including military), salary, housing, public accommodations, and education based upon race, religion, age, gender identity expression, national origin, sexual orientation, color, ethnicity, or veteran status.

We urge an active leadership role for government and people of the United States of America in the prevention and cessation of genocide anywhere in the world, but particularly in Darfur, Sudan; Rwanda, Uganda, Chad, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

II. EDUCATION

We support:

- the passage of school levies with a simple majority rather than the 60% super majority.
- increased salaries for public school and higher education employees with parity of salary and benefits for less than full-time workers.
- the full funding of public education, early childhood through grade 16, and/or vocational training.
- the full funding of Operation Headstart.
- repeal of the so-called “No Child Left Behind” act because it is unfunded and is detrimental to local educational programs. We encourage Washington State to opt out of the program.
- the Student Privacy Protection Act of 2005.
- having all high school PTSA’s contact their students each September, informing them of their right to sign an “opt-out” form that would allow them to take their name off the list sent by the local school districts to military recruiters.
- reasonable teacher-student ratios which will provide an optimal learning experience for students.
- a strict anti-bullying policy that includes education and participatory activities designed to prevent and discourage bullying in schools.
- the application of human rights at all levels of public education.
- the funding of programs for historically underserved populations seeking education or job training, such as second language learners, homeless people, and ethnic minorities.
- the inclusion of age-appropriate sex education curriculum in the elementary grades.

We strongly oppose voucher and charter systems which undermine our public education system.

III. ENVIRONMENT

We support:

- environmental sustainability (and awareness of the resources and fragility of the physical environment and the effects on it of human activity and decisions) as a

- 94 critical consideration in all economic, societal, and governmental policy research
95 and development.
- 96 • laws and regulations to ensure clean air and water, uncontaminated food, and a
97 healthy, natural environment for all, everywhere.
 - 98 • the maintenance of all water supply in the public domain.
 - 99 • fiduciary accountability for corporations that contaminate or otherwise cause
100 detriment to the soil, water, and air.
 - 101 • repayment to the people overcharged resulting from the Cheney agreement with
102 the energy companies.
 - 103 • continued funding of EPA air monitors at current 2006 levels.
 - 104 • development and implementation of effective and efficient mass transit systems
105 that meet the clean air standards and significantly increase transit ridership by
106 offering safe, fast, clean, frequent, and easily accessed public transit.
 - 107 • licensing and development of renewable technologies and energy plants (such as
108 solar, wind and biodiesel) to increase affordable Pacific Northwest electricity and
109 encourage conservation of energy resources.
 - 110 • the rights of environmental groups and individual citizens to petition the federal
111 government for rare plants and animals to be listed as endangered.
 - 112 • the protection of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from oil and gas
113 development and the protection of the Washington and Oregon coastline from
114 drilling.
 - 115 • a moratorium on the construction of any additional logging roads on public lands
116 and state and national forests.
 - 117 • the Clinton Administration standards and the Clean Water Act to ensure clean
118 drinking water, including the protection of our watersheds.
 - 119 • the U.S. Government's participation in international talks on global warming and
120 support ratification of the Kyoto Treaty.
 - 121 • the rights of consumers to have informed choice and, therefore, call for the
122 complete and honest labeling of all foods, food additives and medications.
 - 123 • sustainable local agriculture (*i.e.*, small family farms) to maintain local jobs and a
124 decentralized control of the food supply. We oppose "dead-end"^v seeds and the
125 patenting of food and seed stocks by corporations.
 - 126 • the maintenance of healthy, sustainable wild fish stocks rather than commercial
127 fish farming which increases pollution, puts the health of the wild fish at risk and
128 causes health risks to humans.
 - 129 • the maintenance, preservation, and completion of our high occupancy vehicle
130 lanes within and between our cities (HOV) and the management of those lanes for
131 carpools, vanpools, and buses to meet or exceed the Washington State
132 Department of Transportation standard of 45 miles per hour 90% of the time.

133 134 **IV. GOVERNMENT**

135
136 We are in a Constitutional crisis. The Constitution and the Bill of Rights are being undermined.

- 137
138 • The *USA PATRIOT Act* violates the First, Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth amendments to
139 the U. S. Constitution.

- 140 • Governmental “faith-based” initiatives and the injection of religious observances into the
141 secular realm are violating the First Amendment principle of the separation of church
142 and state.
- 143 • International trade agreements are violating the Ninth and Tenth amendments which are
144 the foundation of our Federalist system.

145
146 The Supreme Court is being unduly influenced by

- 147 • the executive and legislative branches and
- 148 • the violation of the Bill of Rights with respect to the separation of powers.

149
150 Government’s primary function is to support the wellbeing of people.

151
152 **We oppose:**

- 153 • the principles and agenda of the Project for the New American Century.^{vi}
- 154 • the policies of pre-emptive strikes and wars of aggression.
- 155 • the erosion of a progressive system of taxation.
- 156 • the erosion of public control over services that directly impact our health and well-being.
- 157 • unfunded mandates, cost shifts to local budgets, and tax shifts to local governments.
- 158 • blatant exploitation of Washington’s citizens by the egregious practices of credit card
159 companies.
- 160 • any action of self-appointed vigilantes such as the Minutemen project.
- 161 • the funding of judicial campaigns by political action committees.
- 162 • pharmacists’ refusal to fill any legal prescriptions.

163
164 **We support:**

- 165 • access to safe, legal abortion as a universal, protected, fundamental part of reproductive
166 rights.
- 167 • the right of a woman to determine the number, timing, and spacing of her pregnancies.
- 168 • diplomacy as the paramount force and power of international relations.
- 169 • removing the designation of “personhood” of corporations.
- 170 • respecting the treaty rights and sovereign status of First Nations.
- 171 • full funding of essential resources and services.
- 172 • the development of strong communities recognizing the interdependence of all people.
- 173 • ensuring the preservation of our democracy by providing clear, open, and accurate
174 partisan election processes as stated in the 2004 Supreme Court ruling requiring political
175 party designations.
- 176 • the Constitutional independence of the judiciary which is currently being compromised.
- 177 • protecting FCC policies that forbid media monopoly and ensure public ownership and
178 access to guarantee wide points of view on important issues.
- 179 • reform of international trade agreements and institutions to conform with the Constitution
180 of the United States.
- 181 • economic development strategies that are based upon “Economic Gardening” which
182 focuses on investing in local businesses rather than the traditional approach “economic
183 hunting” by luring businesses from elsewhere following a process of “beggar thy
184 neighbors” philosophy.

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Government and Corporate Power:

The “commons”^{vii} includes the vast realms of nature and society that we inherit together and must pass on, undiminished, to future generations. The “commons” is protected in “The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man” and must not be privatized.

We believe that:

- giant corporations govern the United States of America and the earth, violating the fundamental democratic principle of the “consent of the governed.”
- democracy can contest corporate domination.
- democracy must make people’s humanity and constitutional rights a reality.
- we can challenge illegitimate corporate authority.
- corporations are not persons, but are *legal fictions*.^{viii}
- corporate subsidies that consume taxpayer dollars and that undermine fair competition should be eliminated.

We support:

- the revocation of charters of corporations that violate our laws.
- a government that places the needs of the people of the United States of America above those of corporations.
- the protection of “the commons” so that future generations will be able to thrive.
- transparency in corporate accounting.
- tax credits and investment support for small business.
- the invigoration of oversight and revocation powers of the states with regard to corporations no longer serving the public interest.

We oppose:

- the preferential treatment that corporations have over individual and collective rights in the U. S. Judicial System.
- undue influence by corporations over the government of the United States of America.

V. HEALTH.

We believe that all governmental decisions should be based upon the “precautionary principle.” First, “Do No Harm.”

We support:

- preventive healthcare, not healthcare controlled by drug companies.
- as part of preventive health care, the removal of potent, bio-accumulative toxins (PBTS) such as mercury, arsenic, lead and PBDES from the human body and the environment; and
- the removal of the registered pesticide thimerosal (containing 48% mercury) from all vaccines.

- 234 • both nationally and internationally, a woman’s freedom of choice for reproductive rights.
- 235 • publicly funded research that supports women’s health and is free of racial
- 236 discrimination.
- 237 • a single-payer healthcare system that provides universal healthcare for all medically
- 238 necessary care, without regard to previous illness or pre-existing conditions; requires
- 239 medical insurance companies to provide coverage; and requires employers to partner
- 240 financially at a reasonable level.
- 241 • full funding of prescription medications for Medicare recipients.
- 242 • stem cell research for medical reasons.
- 243 • consumers’ right to choose alternative or complementary medicine and to have insurance
- 244 companies provide coverage.
- 245 • the requirement that dentists and doctors provide medically accurate information to
- 246 patients.

247
248 **We oppose**

- 249 • the cloning of human beings.
- 250 • the privatization of the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

251
252 **VI. LABOR**

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254 **We support:**

- 255 • the right of all workers to join together and organize without interference to secure better
- 256 wages and working conditions.
- 257 • a living wage and cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) throughout the United States and
- 258 its territories.
- 259 • full funding for enforcement of employment standards, child labor laws, and work safety
- 260 regulations, including the regulations to protect and compensate workers for ergonomic
- 261 injuries.
- 262 • using Washington workers, products, goods and services for functions occurring within
- 263 the state and country rather than outsourcing to other countries or non-governmental
- 264 entities.
- 265 • fair trade, not free trade, and abolishing the Central American Free Trade Agreement
- 266 (CAFTA) because when jobs are exported then workers and the environment are
- 267 exploited.
- 268 • workers’ rights to unemployment insurance when locked out by employers.
- 269 • restrictions on corporate takeovers and mergers when workers are dismissed without just
- 270 cause or compensation.
- 271 • protection of the U.S. Social Security System and pension plans.
- 272 • state and federal prevailing wage laws for all government contracts.
- 273 • assistance for the working poor through access to affordable healthcare, housing, child
- 274 care facilities “24/7” and job training/apprentice programs.
- 275 • reform of the WTO in order to protect and extend American labor, environmental
- 276 standards and civil rights to international trading partners.

277
278 **We oppose:**

- 279 • the use of temporary workers during strikes and, further, we oppose the permanent
- 280 replacement of striking workers.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ The Precautionary Principle -- "When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken, even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. In this context the proponent of an activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of proof. The process of applying the precautionary principle must be open, informed, and democratic and must include potentially affected parties. It must also involve an examination of the full range of alternatives, including no action." - **Wingspread Statement** on the Precautionary Principle, Jan. 1998. The precautionary principle, virtually unknown here six years ago, is now a U.S. phenomenon. In December 2001 the *The New York Times Magazine* listed the principle as one of the most influential ideas of the year, describing the intellectual, ethical, and policy framework SEHN had developed around the principle. In June 2003, the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco became the first government body in the United States to make the precautionary principle the basis for all its environmental policy.

ⁱⁱ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights -- See "Appendix A."

ⁱⁱⁱ The USA PATRIOT Act -- See "Appendix B."

^{iv} The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) – See "Appendix C."

^v "Dead-end" Seeds -- sterile seeds derived through an interplay among three transplanted genes, one of which produces a toxin that kills seeds in their final stages of development. Critics however refer to it as "terminator technology" because of the technique's ability to neutralize a plant's germinating capacity—a characteristic introduced for purely commercial reasons.

^{vi} "The Project for a New American Century" is a political agenda dedicated to establishing an American empire controlled by American corporate, political, economic, and military forces throughout the world. This includes military action to secure control of non-renewable energy resources wherever located; trade agreements that undermine our Federal and state regulations regarding work conditions, health care, and environmental protection; control of our political processes to favor the Project to the detriment of American citizens..

^{vii} "the commons" – those features of the earth and its atmosphere that are held in common by the inhabitants of the earth: air, water, the airwaves, and similar forms of existence.

^{viii} "legal Fictions" -- concepts that are created only under the law; legal fictions are artificial entities. As an example, slavery was a legal fiction that was abolished at the end of the War Between the States in 1865. Corporate personhood is a legal fiction that was born into jurisprudence in 1886 when the U. S. Supreme Court dubiously declared corporations to be persons under the Fourteenth Amendment, a Civil Rights amendment designed to safeguard newly emancipated Blacks from unfair treatment by the government. In *Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad*, the head note declared corporations to be persons, yet the text of the opinion contains no analysis discuss the legitimacy of this ruling. In subsequent cases (in which the Court has expanded the number of amendments under which corporations can be protected) the only analysis of the merits of "corporate personhood" has been in the dissenting opinions. The Supreme Court has extended corporate personhood to give corporations rights under the First, Fourth, and Fifth Amendments. For further information, please see these websites: <www.POCLAD.org> and <www.SoundDemocracy.org> and <www.wilpf.org>.