WORKSHEET – 2010 Whatcom County Democratic Party Platform

2008 Platform – Economic Justice, Labor & Economy

Economic justice for working families is essential for the realization of a democratic society. We believe in the resurgence of workers rights, government oversight, and good corporate governance.

We support or affirm:

Consumer Protection

- Abolishment of offshore bank and corporate secrecy systems that allow bank accounts or companies to be registered without listing the names of the owners; (move to Corporate Oversight)
- US Bankruptcy Law in which pensioners and employees with pension benefits in company-owned pension plans be first in line as creditors above all others when a company files for bankruptcy or reorganization under the bankruptcy laws; (move to Corporate Oversight)
- Regulate payday lending business practices and provide fair and reasonable consumer protections for Washington customers, including longer loan repayment periods and fair interest rates;

Housing

- Assistance and construction of affordable and low income housing, with a priority for home ownership;
- Restoration of HUD affordable housing budgets, Department of Agriculture rental and housing monies, and the National Housing Trust Fund Act;
- Low-interest Federal program loans to low-income first-time home buyers;

Rural Opportunity (See also Agriculture Section)

- Reduce the wage gap between the urban and rural areas of the state;
- Subsidizing farmers to raise crops for companies to produce environmentally friendly alternative fuel components, as well as creating a tax incentive for those companies;
- Farmer's right to earn an adequate income and preserve farmland;
- Prohibiting telephone and cable companies from discriminating against rural communities in building broadband networks and establishing a goal of universal broadband by 2010 by identifying gaps in availability in price and speed.

Social Security and Support

- Never privatize Social Security, and return of full benefits to age 65;
- Ensure that disabled, dependent, and survivor benefits are maintained in a fair, equitable, and universal manner;
- Washington pension system to give all current and retired members an active role in the governance of that system;
- Incentives, targeted tax credits, to businesses that provide family wage jobs with adequate health care programs and pension benefits.
- Welfare support to qualified families for the first five years of a child's life.

Economic Justice, Labor & Economy VALUES **These should be enduring value statements, which taken together cover the range of issues in this section. State in positive terms.**	2010 Economic Justice, Labor & Economy 2-Year Policy Priorities **From each values statement, think of one short-term goal that is fairly tangible and concrete, with a preference for local needs.**

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Jobs

- Provide living wage jobs to unemployed Americans by offering work to rebuild and restore national infrastructure;
- Rebuild and restore homes in the Southeast U.S. from the damage caused by hurricanes;
- Job stimulation programs that focus on small and local businesses;
- Reduce outsourcing of jobs overseas, prohibit sending publicly financed work offshore, and refuse tax breaks to any U.S. corporations that shut down factories or services or otherwise reduce employment in the U.S. and move those jobs overseas;
- For jobs exported overseas, companies must contribute the monetary equivalent of those employees' federal taxes to the state higher education system in the state from which those jobs were lost;
- Forgive student loans for workers who are entering the job market but making less than poverty level income and who have children;
- Prevent the use of prison labor for private gain.

Wages and Benefits

- Provide a living wage to their employees and an automatic increase in the minimum wage connected to the Consumer Price Index, also retaining COLA;
- Fair Minimum Wage Act, and a minimum hourly wage for all workers in Washington State of at least $7.25 per hour;
- Returning contracting work rules to the previous dollar limit or higher;

Workplace Protections

- The right of all workers to a safe and healthful work environment including the disclosure of toxic substances in the workplace;
- A workers' bill of rights that includes but is not limited to basic rights of association, fair trade, free speech, due process, unions, and a 40-hour work week;
- Workers' right to organize, use arbitration, and when necessary, strike to resolve disputes;
- Employers shall not replace striking workers;
- Stop abusive mistreatment of employees at work. We affirm the rights of workers to dignity at work without risk of health-harming mistreatment and abuse. We support State legislation and City/County ordinances to compel employers to prevent and correct these abuses.
- The enforcement of ergonomics rules written by Labor and industries, and their original timeline;
- Global abolition of child labor

Plan to attend the 2010 Democratic Grassroots Strategy Sessions, Saturday, March 6, 10 am – noon. Locations to be announced at whatcomdemocrats.com .

Bring this worksheet with your ideas to the Strategy Sessions so you can discuss them with other Democrats.

More information at 647-7661.