

# Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party Action Agenda

*Thank you for your interest in the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party Platform. This document is part of the platform, known as the Action Agenda. These statements embody the beliefs and principles of the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party and consist of statements of support or opposition with regard to particular policies. Each of these items has received at least a 60% affirmative vote at the 2020 State Convention of the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party. The categories are arranged alphabetically, and the ordering of the points does not reflect rank or priority.*

## Agriculture, Food & Land Stewardship

Support adequate payment to farmer landowners when taking land out of production for buffer strips and waterways, with incentives to set up alternative agriculture production systems including haying and grazing.

Support innovative programs to identify and prevent rural and urban food deserts by establishing food coops and/or small independent grocery stores in both rural and urban communities through grants and/or tax credits.

Commit to holding large-scale animal agricultural operations accountable for the pollution they create and the environmental and community costs of their production practices; and to fight any attempt to weaken Minnesota's existing local control regulations.

Support a sustainable, statewide, locally adapted food economy from source-to-table that is designed to be inclusive, expands SNAP benefits and helps create health and well-being for all people in rural and urban communities, including under-served communities such as Black, Indigenous, and immigrant communities, and the rural poor.

Support more competition in the meat processing industry through enforcement of the Packers and Stockyards Act, promoting meat cutting programs at vocational schools, and grants to local butcher shops to expand their businesses to compete with the major packers.

Support building the infrastructure needed by small and mid-sized farms in rural and urban communities to create regional food systems that support regenerative farming and provide all people with the nourishing foods they want and need, including investment in small business development and transitions, processing infrastructure, and marketing of goods and specialty crops.

Support full funding for all nutrition programs at public schools including, but not limited to healthy food at breakfast, lunch, and snack time.

Support funding to provide accessible grants and direct payments to farmers, as well as funds for research, technical assistance, and education, to establish and sustain soil health practices such as utilizing perennial crops, rotational grazing, cover crops, and no-till farming. Set a statewide goal to reach 5.75 million acres of farmland with soil-health practices by 2030, 11.5 million acres by 2035, and 23 million acres by 2040. Invest in rural communities and our food and farming system, to conserve and build healthy soils, clean our water, sequester carbon, and bolster farm income.

## Civil, Human, Natural, & Constitutional Rights

Advocates for enhanced access to voting by supporting the John Lewis Freedom to Vote Act, supporting multiple ways to cast ballots such as in-person early voting with immediate ballot counting, automatic voter registration upon obtaining a Driver's License with an opt-out option, and pre-registration of high-school students age 16 and 17.

Supports strengthening democracy by using 21st century technology to ensure all Minnesotans are able to cast their ballot freely, safely, and equally. We also support enhanced protections for voters and elections officials against threat or intimidation, foreign or domestic.

Supports calling for a United States Constitutional amendment to overturn Citizens United to establish that only human beings are endowed with constitutional rights, that money is not speech and, therefore, regulating political contributions and spending is not equivalent to limiting speech.

supports the passage of legislation restoring voting rights to Minnesotans convicted of a felony after they are granted supervised probation or parole.

Supports banning discrimination on the basis of gender/sex by strongly advocating for the removal of the deadline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and also for the passage of legislation to add an Equal Rights Amendment to the Minnesota State Constitution.

Supports women's right to safe, legal, accessible, affordable abortion services and reproductive health services, and strong measures to equalize access to reproductive services among all populations and classes.

Supports Roe v. Wade and see any attempt to control another's reproductive rights as a violation of our core democratic principles of human rights, equality, privacy, and individual freedom.

Supports the creation of a nonpartisan independent redistricting commission empowered to draw fair district boundaries at local, state, and federal levels, after the 2030 census and for all future redistricting.

Supports the legalization, regulation, and taxation of marijuana in a manner similar to that of tobacco or alcohol, the pardoning of those currently incarcerated for related offenses, and the retroactive expungement of criminal records for related offenses.

Supports the state of Minnesota upholding all of our treaties with Indigenous Minnesota tribes, including those involving manoomin (wild rice). These treaties are defined as the "supreme law of the land" under the U.S. Constitution. Failure to uphold treaties is considered a violation of human rights under international law.

Support passing legislation to allow terminally ill adults a full range of end-of-life options, including medical aid in dying, permitting Minnesotans to make the best end-of-life decisions for themselves and their families.

Supports government entities' or private citizens' standing to bring action against any entity that damages Minnesota waters and wetlands, which have a right to exist, flow, and be protected against harm.

Support our 1<sup>st</sup> amendment right of free speech, to protest and practice civil disobedience.

Supports comprehensive immigration reform with a fair, humane pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.

## **Community Development & Local Business**

Support expanding resources for a range of affordable housing: apartments, townhouses, and starter/small homes for individuals, families, and seniors throughout the state. Protect public housing and balance the rights of renters with the interests of property owners.

Homelessness and housing are state-wide issues. All levels of government must renew their commitments to decent housing options, affordable for all. Solutions must include safe neighborhoods, removal of income and racial barriers to decent housing and ensuring no one must spend more than 30% of their monthly income on permanent housing.

Supports a Green New Deal to rapidly cut greenhouse gas emissions and provide an equitable energy future, establishing millions of high paying jobs, affordable housing, investing in multi-modal transportation options; to provide clean air and water, healthy food, and a sustainable environment for all.

## **Corporate & Business Accountability to the Public**

Support legislative oversight of Minnesota's member-owned electric cooperatives to improve transparency and ensure there is opportunity for input from members before key decisions are made that affect asset management, member payments, or climate impacts.

## **Consumer Protection**

Support banning the use of non-compostable plastic bags and polystyrene containers in stores and eating establishments and require the use of compostable plastic or paper bags.

Support discussion and cooperation between manufacturers, retail, food retail, and trash disposal groups to reduce or ban the use of plastics, especially single-use plastic, require the recycling of all plastics that are used, and require packaging producers to share cost for disposal and recycling of the products they sell in Minnesota.

Support the reduction or banning of toxic and carcinogenic substances, such as harmful PFAS chemicals, in consumer goods, and require newly developed similar substances to be proven safe before widespread manufacture and use.

Support rent stabilization.

Support a comprehensive policy to make available and maximize the expected use life, facilitate efficient repair, reuse, and recycling of manufactured products. Minimize the use and maximize recycling of strategic materials. Promote widespread reduction, usage, and composting of food waste.

Support Right to Repair Laws to protect consumers from manufacturers that restrict the ability of third party and self-repair of their products (like farm tractors or cell phones) that are already purchased.

## **Education**

Support all public school students having access to local, quality public education through an equitable funding formula to maintain uniform, high quality public schools throughout the state.

Support K-12 education that provides a quality civics education including the history of Minnesotans of all races.

Support affordable and quality pre-school for all.

Support the Federal Government and Minnesota working to reduce the crushing student loan debt of our population.

Support the basic premise that a fundamental requisite for a thriving democracy, economy and healthy, fulfilling society is a public education system from infant daycare through K-12, vocational, college, and higher education that is robust and affordable.

Support encouraging the Minnesota Legislature to more fully fund special education in our state for the purposes of equalizing services for learners and stabilizing the financial positions of districts around the state.

## **Energy & Climate**

Support federal legislation that puts a steadily-rising, revenue-neutral fee on carbon with a border adjustment import tax.

Supports a transition to 100% clean electricity by 2040 as part of a plan that reduces racial, gender & economic disparities and provides high paying jobs, while cutting greenhouse gases by 45% by 2030 and to "net zero" by 2050. We support a massive shift in electricity generation towards a future powered by wind, solar, storage, and a modern electrical grid that will power our homes, businesses, and transportation.

Supports mandating the calculation of climate impacts including external and social costs of carbon, for all new infrastructure projects; limit funding or deny permits for high-impact projects and incentivize those with the lowest carbon footprint; remove existing fossil-fuel based infrastructure as quickly as possible.

## **Government Accountability to the Public**

Support strengthening Federal campaign finance disclosure laws, to include disclosure of fundraising and expenditures, and reassess our system of public financing. [

Support the restoration of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Citizen's Board to its full capacity and authority.

Support passage of the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact to elect the President by popular vote.

Support ending the practice of privatization of public institutions and services, including prisons, hospitals, and educational institutions, and also including other services formerly conducted by public governmental agencies and civil servants.

Support allowing undocumented Minnesotans access to the process of acquiring a Minnesota State Drivers' License.

## **Health & Human Services**

Supports legislation to protect and extend Medicare/Medicaid by capping Medicare out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs, including insulin, at \$2 000 per year, creating hearing, vision, and dental benefits under Medicare, expanding Medicaid to cover more nursing home and assisted living expenses for seniors, and protecting Medicare/Medicaid from benefits cuts.

Support the availability and funding of mental health and substance abuse treatment so all individuals who are in need of help, including children, have sufficient access to these services.

Supports taking bold action to ensure every Minnesotan is able to easily access needed medical care without worrying about cost by expanding MinnesotaCare, so this high-quality public program is available to all Minnesotans.

Supports access to MNCare and MNSure to undocumented Minnesotans.

Supports state and federal processes to limit the increase in costs of prescription medications and over-the-counter drugs.

Supports expanding, improving, and fully funding all programs that constitute a viable safety net for Minnesota's senior citizens to stay in their homes, provide in-home services to improve seniors' ability to age in place, and provide efficient, safe, convenient transportation options.

Supports the Keep Nurses at the Bedside Act legislation that sets a maximum number of patients that a Registered Nurse can take care of at one time; and provides mental health and professional development resources that will Minnesota keep nurses working at the bedside.

Supports the reduction of lead exposure in people and animals by eliminating lead in drinking water, investing in lead remediation in Minnesota homes and other locations, and banning the use of lead ammunition and fishing tackle.

Support legislation for government sponsored universal healthcare, wherein "universal" means all persons are fully covered for healthcare.

Supports preventing further corporatization of health care, stronger regulations to assure community benefit, financial and geographic access to quality health care services based on need, not profit.

## **Labor & Employment**

Oppose Right to Work laws in Minnesota and support the freedom for all workers to join together in strong labor unions.

Support legislation that would provide up to 12 weeks of at least partial wage replacement leave in order that workers are able to take care of their own serious medical condition, that of their family member, or to bond with a new child.

Support strengthening refinery workforce safety and skills through construction trades registered apprenticeship programs.

Support an increase in pay and benefits for Personal Care Attendants and in-home health care workers who provide services to assist seniors' ability to stay in their homes; and raise the reimbursement rate to home-health agencies that employ PCAs to ensure a skilled and available personal care workforce.

Support a minimum wage of \$15.00/hour with no tip penalty, that keeps pace with inflation and provides full time workers with an income above the poverty level.

## **Media, Internet, & Information**

Support the implementation and expansion of the Border-to-Border statewide broadband initiative by providing stable multi-year funding, by eliminating corporate-monopoly sponsored restrictions, obstacles, and preemptions, by encouraging municipalities, facilitate stronger Native Nations broadband access, and go "the last mile" ensuring that no one is left behind.

## **Natural Resources and the Environment**

Supports eliminating the conflict of interest between mineral regulation and promotion in the Department of Natural Resources by reassigning responsibility for development and economic analysis of state minerals to the Department of Employment and Economic Development.

Oppose any effort to circumvent or weaken state or federal environmental laws or protections involving administrative procedures and permitting.

Support substantial investments to upgrade and expand our failing public water infrastructure including water, sewage and stormwater systems to assure safe drinking water and to protect aquatic ecosystems from pollution.

Support policies to reduce or eliminate the use of unsafe pesticides such as glyphosate, neonicotinoids, and chlorpyrifos in agriculture and on recreational land or lawns and require any business selling plants to let the public know whether or not the plant has been treated in any way with systemic pesticides from the neonicotinoid family.

Opposes wolf hunting/trapping including the use of snares, support grant programs to fund farmers' use of nonlethal prevention methods, fair streamlined reimbursement for livestock losses, and increase public education efforts as to how wolves live.

## **Public Safety & Crime Prevention**

Support common sense gun violence prevention measures to keep guns out of the hands of people who've proven themselves to be dangerous, including criminal background checks on all gun sales and extreme risk protection orders (often referred to as red flag laws).

Support ending the practice of "Qualified Immunity" for law enforcement personnel.

Support funding and implementation of programs to end the exploitation and murder of missing indigenous women.

Oppose any efforts to weaken or eliminate Minnesota's requirements for a permit to carry a handgun in public.

Support the prohibition of police officers from affiliating with, supporting, or advocating for white supremacist groups, causes, or ideologies.

Oppose "*stand your ground*" or "*shoot first*" laws which allow the use of deadly force anytime a person subjectively believes their life is threatened -- even if there is a clear and safe way to avoid the danger.

Support public school districts and charter schools (through collaboration with the MN Dept of Education and Dept of Justice) in providing families/guardians information related to child firearm access prevention and the existing Minnesota statute for safe storage of firearms.

Support evidence-based public safety policies that prioritize restoration/rehabilitation.

Support a model of public safety that includes more professionals who are trained in mental health issues.

## **Racial, Ethnic, Gender, LGBTQ, and Economic Justice**

Supports taking bold action to dismantle racial, gender and economic injustice in our democracy, institutions, and public programs.

Support legislation to require the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to mitigate the disproportionate impact of human health hazards on black, indigenous, communities of color, and resource-limited communities when making permitting decisions.

Support the rights of all to gender-affirming healthcare, that may be life-saving, and oppose gender-denying harassment and discrimination in schools, workplaces, and public accommodations.

Supports banning all medically unnecessary and irreversible surgeries that alter sex and gender on intersex individuals prior to the age of 12.

Support declaring Minnesota a sanctuary state for people seeking or providing gender affirming care.

## **Retirement Security**

Support the continued divestment from fossil fuel funds by Minnesota State Board of Investment to protect the pensions of Minnesota civil servants and educators from financial risk and to build an economy based on clean energy sources.

Support protecting and expanding our Social Security system by eliminating the regressive cap on taxable income, and expanding benefits across the board.

## **Tax & Budget**

Urge the Minnesota Legislature to pass a large bonding bill, leveraging federal funding from the bipartisan Infrastructure and Jobs Act to create thousands of family sustaining jobs.

Support a progressive education-funding tax levied on the wealthiest 1%, those with wealth starting at \$100 million, and the largest corporations.

## **Transportation**

Support investment in clean transportation options such as public transit, commuter rail, light rail, buses, bicycling, walking, electric vehicles, and other non-motorized transportation options. These must be racially just, economically competitive, safer, and accessible for users of all ages and abilities.

Support funding for rapid replacement of diesel-fueled school buses with electric school buses, and the construction of necessary charging infrastructure. This will reduce greenhouse gases and create a cleaner, quieter, and healthier environment for our children.

Support the development of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure throughout Minnesota, including rural areas, with adequate access.

Support the re-introduction of regional passenger rail service to rural Minnesota on the statewide network of existing rail lines as designated in the Minnesota Statewide Rail Plan as a powerful catalyst for rural economic development.

## **Veterans Affairs**

Support immediate and full funding of work to restore the 100 skilled care nursing beds to our Minnesota State Veterans Home.

Support fully funding and staffing the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Create a separate budget for the private sector Veterans Community Care Program (VCCP), which will be fully managed by the VHA. Require all VCCP healthcare personnel to meet the same competency standards required at VHA facilities, including treating PTSD, TBI, MST and risk for veteran suicide.

Support legislation to require Tri-Care, Medicare, VA Health Administration, and all private insurance to cover the cost of neuropathy care for Veterans, and all Americans who suffer from diabetic foot-related issues.