



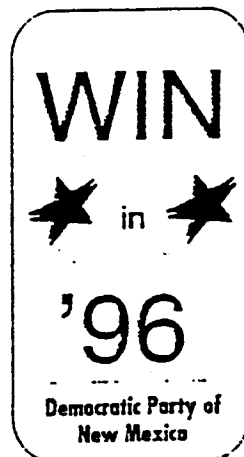
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Democratic Party of New Mexico

1996 Platform

(including vision statement and action plan)

Approved by the State Democratic Convention
June 22, 1996



Earl Potter, State Chair
Sheryl Williams, Vice Chair

Submitted by Members of the State Resolutions Committee

- Ed Moreno, Chair
- Michael Banks
- Charles Dorame
- Pauline Eisenstadt
- George "Jeb" Gilliland
- Gregory Greene
- Lorene Mervis
- Bianca Ortiz-Wertheim
- Dennis Quintana
- Cliff Reed
- Judge Stephen Ryan
- Judy Stubbs
- Frances Williams

Democratic Party of New Mexico 1996 PLATFORM

Families & Communities

Healthy families mean healthy communities. Parents, individuals, groups, schools and governments all have a role in keeping and making families strong. These roles are carried out in different ways in every aspect of public policy, from health care and jobs to education and crime. We recognize the responsibility and the right of parents to raise their children according to the values and traditions of their culture, and we support laws that insure that the best interests of the child are placed first.

Healthy families can be supported and ailing families can be healed through parenting skills, pre-natal care, teen pregnancy prevention, access to both quality health care and quality day care.

Parents, individuals, groups and governments should work together to come up with innovative and cost-effective ways to offer assistance in all of these areas to families, regardless of their composition.

The public welfare system must be reformed. The cycle of dependence damages individual self-esteem, family cohesion and social strength. Reforms must reward work and reward those who help themselves. Child care and health care are essential components.

The Democratic Party recognizes that the poor have always been with us. Those who need public assistance should be treated with dignity and should not be shunned by society.

Planning for the Future

We can achieve the best for all of our citizens by developing consensus of what is best for New Mexico. Public policy decisions that can attract this kind of broad support will result from a single, statewide planning process that has credibility, support and participation from all sectors of New Mexico.

Education

The key to a higher standard of living and better quality of life for all of New Mexico's citizens lies in a system of public education that challenges, inspires, and demands excellence of its students.

We recognize the many accomplishments of our schools, teachers and students, and dedicate ourselves to continued progress. We support higher teacher salaries, high academic performance standards, emphasis on children at risk of failure, life-skills education, and the expansion of fine arts and athletic programs that inspire and broaden the outlook of students at all level of education.

We must pay fairly and equitably for the educational system we seek, and we recognize that a better public-school system will involve hard choices and thoughtful compromise.

We oppose publicly-funded vouchers for use at private schools. Though we support the right of parents to choose a private- or home-school education for their children, we believe such a voucher system threatens the

existence of public education, which benefits the vast majority of our state's children

Crime

One of the fundamental roles of government is to protect the safety and well being of citizens from criminals. Those who commit crimes against people and property must be swiftly and vigorously prosecuted, punished and offered treatment.

The ultimate solution to crime is prevention by fostering the strengthening of families, quality education and opportunity for youths to mature in a healthy way.

We recognize that economic dislocation, the breakdown of the family, and substance abuse play an enormous role in the crime rate and that strong families, jobs, education and substance abuse treatment will prevent crime.

People convicted of crimes should serve the sentences imposed by law. Enhanced sentences should be imposed for the illegal use of firearms, domestic violence, and for all forms of hate crimes. Presently illegal drugs should not be legalized.

More police officers are needed in New Mexico's communities as an integrated part of the society. President Clinton's crime bill has done this in communities across America.

We deplore the rising rate of juvenile crime and urge all government officials to seek out and implement the most promising programs to curb juvenile violent crime. We support a combination of prevention and punishment, such as the legislation adopted by the New Mexico Legislature in 1996.

Drug treatment programs for youths should be expanded, and most youth offenders should be provided treatment and an opportunity to mature without incarceration. However, incorrigible and dangerously violent youths should be housed in secure facilities and offered treatment.

Health Care

Every New Mexican should have ready access to high-quality health care. This can be accomplished through a system of private and public health insurance, maximum flexibility and choice for individuals and arrangements between government and the health care industry to ensure everyone has access to basic health care.

A key part of health care is disease prevention and health promotion, which can be readily advanced through public schools curriculum on wellness and nutrition, early screening and continuation of full funding for Medicare and Medicaid.

Economy, Business, Jobs and Trade

State and local governments should actively support business by streamlining, without weakening, regulatory practices, and by creating an atmosphere that encourages business. Labor and management should continue to build innovative partnerships that develop the economy for the benefit of all New Mexicans.

Small business is the heart of New Mexico's economy. Government policy should encourage development of small business.

State and local tax incentives are appropriate to attract quality, environmental-friendly businesses to New Mexico. We also support and encourage the formation of partnerships between business and government to address some of the state's most pressing needs, including those in education, job training and retraining, and health care.

Public sector and private sector workers alike have the right to organize and to bargain collectively for wages, benefits and conditions of work. No law should restrict those rights. We oppose laws such as "right to work," and we believe the Public Employee Bargaining Act should be made permanent. The existing law that requires adequate wages for workers on publicly funded projects should be preserved.

We support an increase in the federal minimum wage to at least \$5.15 an hour.

We support free and fair trade with Mexico.

We support technology-transfer efforts that give private industry access to technology developed by the federal laboratories based in New Mexico. These partnerships create jobs and ensure a continued, important role for the laboratories.

Employees who report violations of public health, worker safety, environmental and consumer protections should be protected by law.

Environment & Energy

Protection of our state's natural beauty and natural resources is essential. Citizens, organizations, government and industry must all work together to conserve clean water, air and land, and the expansive vistas that define the Land of Enchantment.

We support the continuation and enhancement of the environmental regulatory progress of the past 30 years.

The public school curriculum should include sections on the environment and conservation.

Our goal is a sustainable society: a society that can satisfy its own needs without jeopardizing the prospects of future generations; a society in which individuals can be assured of enough pure water, clean air, fertile soil and sufficient sources of renewable energy to provide for its needs.

Long-term planning is essential toward conservation of our natural resources, particularly water. Immediate, concentrated attention should be given to sustainable development and to the environmental problems of colonias and other substandard housing developments. Everyone should have access to the highest quality drinking water. Drinking water legislation should be strengthened, not weakened.

Alternative and renewable energy resources should be developed, particularly natural gas, geothermal, solar and wind energy. Recycling must be accelerated.

Civil/Human Rights

All discrimination must be eliminated in housing, education, employment and public services, including

discrimination based on race, gender, religion, mental or physical handicap, national origin, age, or sexual orientation.

A woman has the right to choose safe, appropriate and legal medical procedures in the privacy of her conscience and with her medical care counselor. We also support women who choose to carry pregnancies to term by helping provide medical care, job placement and child care services.

Native Americans

New Mexico must continue to recognize and acknowledge tribal sovereignty and to develop strong and respectful government-to-government relationships with the 23 resident Indian tribes. State and federal governments should work in partnership with tribal governments to improve Native American health, education, housing, and appropriate and sustainable economic development.

Taxation

Taxes in New Mexico should be imposed at a level to achieve the goals New Mexicans have set for themselves through their elected representatives, and no more.

No government services are free of charge. Elected officials must inform citizens of the cost of providing government services, and account to the public for their expenditures.

The Democratic Party supports a fair taxation policy - progressive and based on ability to pay, including property tax relief for eligible, low-income New Mexicans.

Budget Reform

The federal budget must be balanced in a way that does not disproportionately place the burden of any budget cuts on the poor, working poor, sick, young, old, disabled or otherwise disadvantaged.

Political Reform

Political and community leaders must work to restore public confidence in this era of cynicism and frustration. Voters should be encouraged to impose term limits on ineffective representatives through the ballot box.

Campaign reforms must be enacted that minimize the influence of corporations and well-funded special interest groups, increase the influence of individual citizens, and allow more citizens to participate as candidates.

The Arts

All New Mexicans benefit from the arts. We encourage public support for enhancement of the arts.