

## **2012 CYD Platform**

### **Fundamental Principles**

As young Californians, we see the mounting problems our country faces – reckless financial markets, increasing stratification and inequalities, rising costs of education and living, infringements of basic human rights – and demand preemptive and sensible political action. We believe in a just America, a fair America, a strong America, a responsible America that defends our shared human dignity. We young Californians choose to participate in the political process to improve the principles of our great country’s self-governance.

Equity begs us to address our mutual futures in the guidance of our policies. This awareness begins with the pursuit of economic justice and the acknowledgement that access equals the importance of freedom from unnecessary restrictions. We support the right of underprivileged individuals to have an effective and adequate safety net. We support the expansion of the middle class and revenue programs that advance a level playing field. And as young people, we support the right of every person to obtain an affordable quality education so that our nation reaps a bright future.

Freedom demands our careful vigilance to ensure that our fight for our dignity, safety, and inclusive prosperity does not encumber our individual free choice. Instead, we believe these principles reinforce each other as we overcome challenges that threaten to dehumanize our various marginalized populations. As Democrats, we strive to guarantee these principles through a fair, open, and free electoral process that safeguards all citizens’ right to vote. We find regulation and taxes necessary to minimize negative externalities and market failures in our 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

Efficiency, too, requires that we address these basic tenets without creating unnecessary waste that weighs down our country. We seek a system that optimally gears the diligent work of all toward a thriving democracy. Our basic principles and issue positions are well addressed in a quote by former Congresswoman Barbara Jordan: “What we want is very simple: we want an America as good as its promise.”

### **Civic Engagement**

Civic engagement is the foundation of American democracy. We young Californians hold our representatives accountable because democracy fails when the citizenry is disengaged. Civic engagement is rooted in community involvement. Therefore, we promote active participation on a local and broader level. Paying attention to how our governing institutions function and being involved in our communities is patriotic.

To overcome a lack of confidence in voting, elected officials, and our government, we demand our parties and elected officials – regardless of political affiliation – push for a greater degree of transparency, rational discourse, and civic involvement in government and beyond.

Our policy principles:

- Engage young voters in outreach and educational campaigns that make issues relevant to a new generation.
- Emphasize the importance of civic education in our schools through American government courses and community service projects.
- Greater ethical standards for our elected officials.
- Development of a sense of community and duty by initiatives on volunteerism and service.
- Adequate, unencumbered, well-staffed polling locations that serve all areas where voting occurs.
- Measures that restore voting rights to those who have been convicted of crimes but have paid their debt to society.
- A more comprehensive pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.
- Empowerment of voters to make informed decisions through accessible, clear, and accurate voter information in multiple languages.
- Early voting, same day registration, no-fault absentee voting, pre-registration, online voter registration, and voting by mail.
- Voting systems that ensure accuracy, fairness, and transparency while safeguarding privacy and accessibility.
- Strict criminal penalties for people who impede access to polling places, intimidate voters, and purposefully distribute false information about voting procedures or voting dates and times.
- Retain and prevent the purge of all voter rolls.
- Fair redistricting that avoids minority packing and dilution.
- Honest campaign advertisements, messages and materials.

**Civil Rights**

The promise of America to us young Californians contains a land free from inequality and persecution. We reaffirm the self-evident truth that all are created equal. Minority groups of any type demand our special vigilance to ensure this and popular will must never deprive anyone of human dignity. All persons, regardless of natural or social category, are entitled to the promise and protection to live free from discrimination. In particular, young people and students must not fear the threat of deportation based on their legal status.

Our policy principles:

- Persons of the same sex should have the civil right of marriage on the same legal basis as all other persons.
- Direct financial support for those below the poverty line, in addition to the sick, the disabled, the homeless, the hungry, the elderly, and the unemployed.
- Free choice of workers to form unions and collectively bargain in the protection of their persons and families.
- Public services available and equally accessible to all.
- Advancement of free and independent media to guarantee transparency and informed citizenry.
- Rejection of corporate entitlement to personhood and civil rights.
- Elimination of gender discrimination in labor and society at large.
- Policies in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and respect for the dignity of all.

## **Criminal Justice**

Abiding by the law is essential to the functioning of a civil society and a safe California. We recognize the demand for legal reform to ensure equality and human dignity while addressing the massive prison overcrowding crisis, fragmented policy over the war on drugs, and further aggravation by out-of-step immigration policies. California must return its focus to crime prevention and rehabilitation for the sake of our communities and our state's budget.

We are determined to address causes of cyclical violence and gang activity, drug and alcohol addiction, unemployment, poverty, and racism. We are dedicated to ensuring that our criminal justice system provides fair and equitable treatment and advances the principle that all people possess an inherent dignity and require due respect.

Our policy principles:

- An uncompromising opposition to and abolishment of the death penalty.
- Equal adjudication of all Americans by prohibiting discrimination based on race, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, ethnic background, national origin, immigration status, or disability.
- Safety of law enforcement officials and recognition that their service is vital to a safe and secure California.
- Decrease of crime rates by investment in education. This includes increasing high school graduation rates through evidence-based methods that include structured preschool for all, anti-truancy measures, and after-school programs.
- Open discourse surrounding the legalization, regulation, and taxation of marijuana, in a manner similar to that of tobacco or alcohol, and legislation that addresses the international and human consequences of the drug war.
- Enhanced victim-witness advocacy that supports and respects the rights of crime victims and provides therapeutic assistance and financial compensation.
- Reduction of prison overcrowding and economic drain through decreasing penalties for minor drug offenses and other victimless crimes.
- Better interaction between communities and police forces so that all parties are equal and vital partners.
- Restricted and responsible gun ownership and increase in gun safety.
- A ban on deadly automatic assault weapons.
- Rehabilitation and continuing education of juvenile offenders rather than mere punitive incarceration.
- Treatment of enemy combatants in a manner consistent with our human rights standards.
- Safeguards against unlawful searches and seizures and unethical profiling.

## **Economy**

We fight to repair a decade of damage and grow an economy based on hard work and responsibility, not greed and reckless speculation, an economy that strengthens our country and middle-class families for the long run. The current recession has touched us in particular as

young Californians entering the work force, as well as our country's promise in its resilience to overcome hardship. We are committed to helping all Americans defeat these hardships – spurring job creation, rebuilding our infrastructure, investing in our communications and broadband network, clean-energy technologies, and restoring fairness and opportunity to our economy.

Our policy principles:

- Support for our Attorney General's action in the protection of Californians from unscrupulous foreclosures and financial exploitation through predatory lending.
- Careful regulation of banking and financial industries.
- Financial security and prevention of future economic collapses.
- A strong and well-funded Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the reimplemention of Glass-Steagall provisions.
- Increased monitoring and accountability standards for the Federal Reserve.
- Harder penalties for those who cause significant damage to our economy through unreasonably high-risk tactics and illegal practices.
- Repeal of the Bush tax cuts through an increase in the upper bracket marginal tax rate.
- Limits to the amount of loophole tax exemptions for large businesses.
- Incentives for small businesses to promote innovation and remain competitive.
- Requirement that all government funded or subsidized programs use American labor and materials where possible.
- Proposals that expand job opportunities for young people.

## **Education**

Accessible high quality public education is a core value of the Democratic Party. We believe that the future prosperity of both the people and the state of California depends on investment in public education. Continued failure to properly fund our educational system will jeopardize the future economic prosperity, growth, and job creation in California as well as decrease socioeconomic mobility and social equality. It is our duty, not just as Democrats, but as Americans to fight to restore the gem that was once the California educational system.

California's students must have access to a free, fully accessible and equitable world-class K-12 public education. Postsecondary education must be available and affordable to all students. Our elementary, secondary, and postsecondary institutions must be well resourced and they must provide a well-rounded, balanced curriculum that will prepare students for success in a globally interconnected world.

Our policy principles:

- The principle set out in the California Higher Education Master Plan: that academic and not economic ability should determine the availability of higher education.
- Increased and consistent market adjusted funding to public K-12 and Higher Education institutions regardless of economic cycle.
- Reversal of cuts to K-12 or higher education funding, including the community college system and vocational programs that influence educational quality, accessibility, affordability, and availability, or that reduce pay for faculty and staff.
- No public funding or vouchers distribution to private K-12 education institutions.
- Guaranteed access to a public institution for students in K-12.
- Full funding of special needs and learning disability programs for every K-12 district in California, as well as infrastructure that accommodates for disabled persons.
- Increase of funding for Charter schools affiliated with local school districts that generate competition and encourage alternative learning styles. Additionally, accountability measures for both traditional and charter schools so they can be held to the same standards.
- Increase of funding to the community college system, vocational training, financial education, adult education and non-profit online education.
- Increases to financial aid and Cal Grants for higher education.
- The implementation and maintenance of the state and federal Dream Act.
- Availability of nurses and behavioral health professionals in every public education institution.
- Ensure that teachers are well compensated, have opportunities for professional growth, and are able to work in safe learning environments within modern facilities with access to up to date curricular materials and technology for their students.
- Expansion of English as a Second Language programs in areas with immigrant populations and non-English speaking persons.
- Comprehensive medically-accurate age-appropriate sex education that includes information on abstinence, contraceptives, and sexual transmitted infections.
- Provisions and adequate funding for the fine and performing arts, physical education, health and sports sciences, computer literacy, civic, vocational, career and technical education programs within K-12 public institutions.
- Reforms to standardized test hurdles and teaching methods. As well as an increase in project based Socratic learning.

- Support multiple means of evaluating efficacy of administrators, teachers, schools, and districts.
- The expansion of K-12 meal programs that offer healthy food and have subsidized meals for financially disadvantaged children.
- Diverse curriculum which addresses the histories and experiences of marginalized groups.
- A shift from local funding to state or federal funding of K-12 institution as to increase economic equality between schools.
- Increased transparency and monitoring of the finances within the public higher learning institutions in the state, in order to stop any corruption or inefficient use of funding.

## **Environment**

California's natural endowment with a vibrant environment must be protected for our fellow youth and our future. There is no doubt that climate change is a scientifically proven threat and we should work to reduce its effects. As our nation's leader in renewable energy, we look to our California leadership to put more people to work through improving our environment and setting the standard for national progress.

We must preserve our beautiful coastlines, strengthen our emissions standards, and protect our wildlife for future generations. At the same time, we must ensure that low-income people in industrial areas have the same air and water quality benefits the rest of the state enjoys. California is in a unique position to lead the way in creating more green jobs that grow our economy and we support working to become an example for the country of a green economy.

Our policy principles:

- Expansion of renewable and sustainable energy sources and research.
- A carbon restriction program that is just to people of all income levels and does not permit any polluter to maintain or increase present pollution.
- Sustainable development with an expansion of open spaces.
- Reasonable tax incentives to offset capital costs of going "green."

## **Healthcare**

Medical care is a right for all, regardless of ability to pay. It is a tragedy that a leading cause of bankruptcy is the inability to pay medical bills, and as young Californians, we support stemming this problem through the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and other reforms to our

health care system to advance towards universal coverage. Health is not just a function of medical service but of lifestyle. We believe initiatives intended to promote healthier lifestyles and provide healthier food choices need to be implemented.

Our policy principles:

- Universal healthcare that includes dental, ocular, and behavioral health.
- Elimination of intolerance toward behavioral health issues via health education in schools, communities, and medical offices including hospitals.
- Disease prevention methods, including supporting preventative care for all people.
- Elimination of “food deserts” in urban areas and better access to healthy food for all people regardless of income or lifestyle.
- Strong health education in public schools including but not limited to nutrition and physical education.
- Contracts between schools and higher education institutions with companies that provide healthy foods.
- Greater competition in the market for health insurance, driving down prices and increasing service quality.
- Culturally competent health care and maintaining funding for our community clinics that serves the neediest populations.
- Patient Centered Health Homes as a goal for all health care providers.
- Preventive care programs.
- Comprehensive sex education programs in our public schools.
- Prevention of healthcare industry collusion and lack of competition.
- Restoration and expansion of funding to Medi-Cal programs.

## **Immigration**

We young Californians dedicate ourselves to work for a world where the rights of all people are recognized as equal and inalienable, and where social justice and recognition of inherent human dignity paves the way for true peace. Moreover, we recognize and appreciate California’s rich

diversity. Indeed, our state is the most diverse in the country. We embrace and adore that quality about California. We seek to remedy the immigration conundrum through efficient, fair, humane, compassionate, just, and inclusive reforms.

Our policy principles:

- Everyone has the right to recognition as a person before the law and is entitled to equal rights and treatment.
- No arbitrary arrest or detention without charge, or local law enforcement usurping federal authority on immigration (i.e. SB 1070).
- Oppose laws that harass both documented and undocumented immigrants.
- Ensure that the fundamental rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution are applied to every person within our borders
- Expand opportunities for foreign student visas and ease the path to citizenship.
- Oppose the use of the word “illegal” and any other dehumanizing language to describe undocumented immigrants.

## **Infrastructure and Housing**

Renewed infrastructure provides the foundation upon which our economy and, as young people, our futures are built. With new and improved infrastructure we can improve efficiency, decreasing waste and maximizing output. Furthermore, investing in infrastructure promotes job creation.

Shelter is a basic human right. All families and individuals need safe and affordable housing in order to move forward in life. The problem of housing expense can be confronted and solved by our governing institutions.

Our policy principles:

- High speed broadband infrastructure to all Californians.
- Restoration of a reliable water supply that meets the needs of consumers and businesses and our future growth.
- Public works programs that stimulate the economy in the short-term and facilitate long-term economic growth.
- Development and full funding of affordable housing programs by continuing traditional housing programs while also encouraging rental assistance vouchers and housing subsidies.

- Controlled rent based on a fair assessment of local cost of living.
- No programs or policies that disenfranchise renters, low-income home-owners, or people experiencing homelessness.
- Strict opposition to discrimination in housing policies, practices, or laws.

## **National Security and International Affairs**

We, as the youth of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, demand a foreign policy that is appropriately tailored to meet modern complex challenges. Correctly approaching these nuances will entail a careful re-examination of how we define our national strategic interests. Today in a post cold-war era, we insist that old and contradictory approaches cannot solve new challenges. Although our military forces are an essential component of our national defense, using force against another country must be a last resort. Before large military action is used and American lives are jeopardized, it is essential to implement alternative strategies, such as diplomatic and economic ones.

We can best achieve a genuine, sustainable international peace by promoting our American values of freedom, equality, and democracy through a comprehensive diplomatic and economic foreign policy. Our leaders should actively reach out to people at all levels of foreign societies to confront human rights violations, oppression, poverty, racism, gender inequality, starvation, and disease.

Our policy principles:

- More technological support to and collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency to inspect uranium enrichment facilities, secure hazardous materials, and restrict the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
- U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in order to support greater international monitoring of nuclear explosions.
- A “resetting” of relations with Russia.
- A long-term two-state solution and peace agreement between Israel and Palestine and a respect for the dignity of all people in the region.
- More diplomatic engagement with China on matters of mutual interest, while maintaining pressure in such areas as human rights, the environment, and Tibet.
- Opposition to suppression of peaceful protests and the undermining of popular will by authoritarian regimes.
- Increase in soldiers’ pay and veterans’ benefits out of respect for the vital sacrifice that members of the military willingly undertake on behalf of all Americans.
- Better behavioral and physical health services for all those who have served our military.

## **Transportation**

A balanced, multi-modal transportation system that supports cycling, walking, and public transit is essential to building sustainable communities and decreasing the impact of pollution and carbon emissions. Everyone should have access to transportation, and affordable travel options should be available to all members of our society.

Our policy principles:

- Public transportation that is accessible, safe, affordable and Americans with Disabilities Act compliant.
- Funding pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure and programs at a level commensurate with need, especially in lower-income communities.
- Responsible funding for transportation projects that are sustainable.
- A high speed rail system that unites California and creates new jobs while reducing transportation's impact on the environment.
- New technologies for transportation operations that reduce costs, improve services, and reduce pollution.
- Rehabilitation of state roads, highways, and bridges to improve traveler safety and promote economic development.
- Public transit fare programs that consider an individual's financial capacity to pay and provide affordable access for youth, seniors and patrons with disabilities.
- Transportation projects and planning to improve access to transit while contributing to positive health outcomes for local residents.
- Create infrastructure to support the deployment of alternative-fueled vehicles throughout California to make our state a global leader in zero-emission travel.
- Promoting investment in California firms that hire residents to develop transportation infrastructure and programs in our state.
- A funding source for our state's transportation infrastructure that equitably balances fees levied on direct users of the system and fees charged to indirect users.

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### **Platform Committee**

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