

# DRAFT - TOMPKINS COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY PLATFORM 2008

## I. PREAMBLE

The Democratic Party of Tompkins County stands for improving the quality of life for the people in Tompkins County. To this end, it seeks partnerships among people, governments and private organizations and it calls on county, city and village governments to work together by giving careful consideration to the effects of their local actions on the whole region. The Democratic Party opposes domination over people's lives by both governments and economic powers. The Democratic Party envisions both government and the private sector committed to the provision of good jobs and a decent life for all regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, ex-offender status, gender identity, nationality, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status. The Tompkins County Democratic Party affirms this historic commitment to all people in the area and this platform stands on these principles.

## II. ECONOMY and the ENVIRONMENT

**A. Economic development and jobs.** The Democratic Party is committed to promote economic development and the creation of jobs in Tompkins County. Many face continuing unemployment, underemployment, low pay and bankruptcy. While the level of unemployment in Tompkins County is low compared to other surrounding counties, the level of underemployment is high, and these levels are unacceptable to us. The Democratic Party believes in the obligation of governments at all levels to help provide all citizens the opportunity to earn a decent living at a useful job.

The Democratic Party supports:

- a living wage for all employees and encourages the adoption of living wage standards by area businesses and institutions.
- strengthening the skills of our labor force by increased use of existing job training and educational programs offered at TC3, BOCES, Ithaca College, Cornell, Empire State College, The Learning Web, Literacy Volunteers, and others, and working toward the development of national, state, county, and city programs in vocational and occupational training and retraining with special emphasis on programs for youth, older workers, women, and minorities;
- designing programs to encourage socially and environmentally responsible and stable industrial, high tech and agricultural employment in the county through planning generated from bringing together people from business, banking, commerce, education, trade unions, major employers, farmers, daycare councils and governmental agencies;

- using the county hotel-motel room tax for local tourism development, not only county promotion, but also for job and hospitality training in tourism-related industry careers, for child care and for other tourism-related support services;
- recognizing and seeking solutions to the growth of part-time, low-wage work without health insurance coverage;
- investing to preserve and increase the natural beauty of our area to create jobs now, encourage tourism, and maintain a high quality of life in the county to encourage business to locate here;
- micro-enterprise economic development and the creation of new local businesses;
- government policies which enhance the success of locally-owned businesses.
- local government action to make high bandwidth internet widely available and affordable;
- limiting consolidation of media ownership, which inevitably restricts the public's access to a broad spectrum of points of view;

**B. Environment.** Tompkins County is proud of its environment. The Democratic Party is committed to protecting and preserving this environment. It is committed to safeguarding this environment both to preserve its value locally and to play our part in the overall preservation of the planet. Moreover, the Democratic Party is aware that the resolution of most environmental problems requires considerable expertise, a balanced view of the needs of the community, and procedures that are clear, open, fair, just, and equitable.

The Democratic Party Urges:

- reducing dependence on fossil and nuclear fuels and increasing the local, sustainable production of energy, food and other basic necessities.
- a continuing vigorous outreach program on solid waste disposal based on reduce, reuse, recycle principles.
- federal and state legislation to create tax and other incentives for research and development of markets for recyclable materials to encourage local businesses to use recyclables generated by our new recycling facility;
- legislation to reduce toxic substances in products, and their manufacture;
- legislation to make 3rd class mail returnable to staunch the flow of junk mail, and to provide incentives for the reduction of packaging;
- federal, state, and county support for programs that help farmers profit by practicing conservation and sustainable agriculture.

- road salting only where absolutely necessary for traffic safety, and a continued search for more environmentally sound affordable alternatives, to avoid degradation of precious biological resources as well as deterioration of bridges and vehicles;
- strictly enforced standards for underground tanks, with regular state monitoring of compliance;
- development of intermunicipal cooperative growth management strategies for Tompkins County;
- an environmentally sound resolution of the conflict between state and federal regulation of wetlands;
- our local governmental bodies to petition the state for a comprehensive study of environmental aspects of land use and environmental problems affecting the Finger Lakes and cooperation between local government and the State to establish appropriate mechanisms to deal with these problems.

**C. Housing.** People deserve affordable, safe and healthy places in which to live. The Democratic Party remains committed to the provision and maintenance of good quality housing and the rehabilitation of substandard housing for all Tompkins County residents, whether urban or rural, of low or moderate income, older or younger, single or married, with families or without families.

The Democratic Party:

- encourages housing and building codes appropriate to each locality's residents;
- zealously supports fair housing policies for all citizens;
- supports efforts to encourage and require that substandard rental housing and apartments be upgraded to a safe and healthy condition;
- defends the rights of tenants and mobile-home occupants, as well as landlords and homeowners;
- supports the creation of affordable housing for area residents, and proposes that the County encourage denser housing in areas readily served by water and sewer systems;
- supports the development of building and zoning codes flexible enough to allow reasonably economic adaptive reuse of existing structures where needed;
- encourages restoration and rehabilitation of abandoned and underutilized buildings for commercial or residential purposes;
- supports public investment in mutual housing, where tenants put up part of the capital and control maintenance decisions, but are not allowed a speculative profit when they leave;
- seeks an expanded partnership between the private sector's financial and contracting institutions and the public sector (such as through Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services,

Historic Ithaca and Tompkins County, and Better Housing for Tompkins County) to develop innovative alternatives for quality and affordable housing for disadvantaged individuals and families;

- actively supports emergency measures to house the homeless which fully respect the human rights of the homeless while working for more permanent affordable housing.
- supports annual full-value county-wide assessment of real estate.

**D. Transportation.** The Democratic Party is committed to the provision of transportation for all people, urban and rural, including the handicapped, to travel in the most economical, safe, and least polluting fashion. This principle forces attention toward safer roads and bridges, adequate provisions for pedestrians and joggers and bicyclists, better public surface transportation, and competitive, safe air service.

The Democratic Party supports:

- implementing a long-range, sustainable transportation plan for reducing dependence on fossil fuels.
- strict enforcement of the rules of the road especially those against driving while intoxicated;
- identifying and promoting strategies to significantly increase the use of public transportation, bicycles, walking, vehicle-sharing, , and other innovative forms of transportation;
- safety improvements on Rte. 13 from Stewart Park to the Cortland County line;
- the creation of suitably sited park and ride lots to relieve the growing problem of commuting traffic, and to encourage car pooling;
- development of more, and faster, rail links between urban centers.

**E. Consumer Protection.** The Democratic Party has long supported consumer protection.

The Democratic Party recommends:

- legislative, administrative, and enforcement efforts to enable consumers to exercise their rights and safeguard their interests;
- more use of the Community Dispute Resolution Center in resolving consumer complaints.

**F. Energy.** The Democratic Party is committed to keeping local energy costs as low as possible. Energy costs are already high and continue to escalate.

The Democratic Party believes:

- in reducing dependence on fossil and nuclear fuels and increasing the local, sustainable production of energy.

- local governments should place a high priority on thorough energy conservation techniques in existing buildings and new projects, mandate such measures in any private project receiving public funds and actively encourage energy conservation in the private sector;
- in reducing dependence on fossil fuel and nuclear fuel which contribute to environmental degradation and public health risks such as global warming, ocean pollution or generation of long-lived nuclear wastes;
- a national carbon tax should be levied to help reduce dependence on fossil fuel and encourage development of new technologies and alternative energy sources.

**G. Labor.** Work is one of the primary activities affecting people's perspectives, satisfactions, and identities in life. The Democratic Party recognizes and respects the dignity and value of all work. It supports the rights of working people to receive a decent and living wage for work performed, to a meaningful and satisfying job, and to bargain collectively over the various conditions associated with their work life. It recognizes that in the American system unions are vitally important defenders of the rights of their members and believes that all employees should be able to choose freely to organize for collective bargaining.

The Democratic Party:

- supports a living wage for all employees and encourages the adoption of living wage standards by area businesses and institutions.
- urges employers to involve the community in seeking ways to preserve jobs and avoid massive layoffs;
- supports employees in their struggles to form and maintain effective and honest unions
- believes when costs need to be cut in firms and public agencies that labor should be included in the process of deciding how saving should be realized
- abhors poverty level wages and supports an adequate minimum wage, indexed to the cost of living;
- Will work to insure the safest possible workplace environments;
- urges elected office holders, in their capacity as employers, to provide a workplace for their employees that espouses and is indicative of these ideals;
- urges elected office holders, in their capacity as employers, to negotiate in good faith and in a timely manner with these employees.

**H. Agriculture.** The Democratic Party believes that a strong sector is essential to the nation's industrial strength and balance-of-payments export markets and to the state's people for employment and food needs.

The Democratic Party calls for;

- strengthening New York's farmland preservation legislation by trading tax relief for land protection to prevent further conversion of our best agricultural lands;
- the state's agricultural research institutions to put more emphasis on environmental problems related to agricultural production and further research on sustainable agriculture;
- advocating a living wage and decent working conditions for farmworkers;
- expanding aid to displaced farmworkers, including the strengthening of job opportunities.
- supporting laws protecting farmers' rights to employ currently acceptable and environmentally-sound farming practice;
- encouraging the development of a regionalized food system that decreases the fossil fuel use and supports our regional economy.

### III. QUALITY of LOCAL LIFE

**A. Neighborhoods and Rural Communities.** The Democratic Party seeks to preserve the integrity and diversity of the communities and neighborhoods throughout Tompkins County while ensuring that no one is excluded on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, ex-offender status, gender identity, nationality, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status, or because of any other kind of "invisible" discrimination. It supports local determination of land uses, and the involvement of the neighborhood community councils and associations in local planning and decision-making.

The Democratic Party recommends:

- county, town, village and city planning agencies provide technical assistance to local governments, and neighborhood associations and councils, to help in initiating and implementing locality and neighborhood planning proposals;

**B. Justice and Law Enforcement.** The Democratic Party advocates that courts, police departments and other law enforcement agencies take steps to insure that the rights and property of all citizens are protected equally regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, ex-offender status, gender identity, nationality, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status. It believes that all persons are entitled to due process and equal protection of the law, including those who are accused or suspected of committing crimes and those who have been victimized by crime. The failure to insure due process harms not only the accused but the society at large.

The Democratic Party recommends:

- adequate well-trained staffing of law enforcement bodies;
- efforts to improve the degree to which men and women of local law enforcement agencies are representative in terms of disability, ethnicity, gender identity, nationality, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status mix.

- increasing cooperation between law enforcement agencies and community groups in dealing with such issues as driving while intoxicated, drug use, domestic violence, rape, and child abuse;
- that the method for developing a pool of jurors be amended to assure that the pool is drawn from the whole community; that the methods include the use of utility, school district, local college and university, and other broadly drawn lists, and that members of a jury pool be summoned to duty whether or not they return the preliminary questionnaire;
- developing and implementing procedures that ensure the integrity of evidence produced by the police and other agencies, including the social agencies which regularly produce such evidence in court;
- developing systems for maintaining strong ethics in local police agencies including civilian oversight of citizen grievances about police conduct;
- increased support for victim's assistance programs to provide counseling and support to victims of crime before, during, and after legal proceedings, to assist them with medical bills and other financial matters, and to help them understand the legal process and prepare them for the witness experience;
- support of stronger, responsible, and strictly enforced gun control laws;
- more effective protection for individuals and organizations threatened with violence
- developing additional alternatives to incarceration at the state and local level consistent with a safe community, to encourage and assist offenders to become law-abiding members of society and limit the cost of incarceration. Therefore the Democratic Party encourages;
- discretionary instead of mandatory sentences, where appropriate, at all levels of government;
- having a sufficient number of parole and probation officers to permit a variety of supervised options in pre-sentencing and sentencing;
- developing and using treatment centers for substance abusers;
- expanding the Service Work Alternative Program (SWAP), and other community service options which allow restitution to the community or victim rather than retribution and punishment alone;
- opposing legislation to reinstate the death penalty.

**C. Historic Preservation.** The Democratic Party recognizes that maintenance and rehabilitation of older buildings in our communities -whether residences, schools, churches, stores, theaters, factories or agricultural building - enhance neighborhood pride and stability. Such rehabilitation for re-use is also a tool in economic development. Rehabilitation represents labor-intensive activities

that bolster local economies and achieve stronger tax bases, as well as leave distinctive visual results.

The Democratic Party will;

- seek means to promote more rehabilitation projects.

**D. Arts, Parks and Recreation.** The Democratic Party recognizes the need for leisure-time activities for all ages and for appropriate areas in which to pursue them. Support for the arts is important for our citizens and their personal development. Endeavors in recreation and the arts and the natural beauty of our parks and recreation areas are related to our educational and tourism businesses and in strategies to attract and keep industry in the county. Access to recreation is an important tool in combating obesity in children and adults, and maintaining the health of the population.

The Democratic Party recommends:

- government support for developing facilities and programs, based on consultation with various community groups through funds, publicity and other appropriate aid;
- government efforts to beautify public works, to control noise and advertising signs and to review building designs;
- local television cable systems be more responsive to the local community on issues of local arts and recreational activities;
- the preservation of our scenic and recreational heritage
- collaboration with NYS to implement planned improvements and enhancements to the State Park system and multi-use trail connections between State Parks.

## **IV. HEALTH and SOCIAL SERVICES**

**A. Health.** The Democratic Party believes that good, health-care should be available to all regardless of ability to pay. The continuing rise in health care costs requires that the Democratic Party at all levels work for a rational, compassionate health care system. It will approach this issue comprehensively and cooperatively to develop ways of making the considerable body of medical knowledge available to all our citizens and to insure that an appropriate level of care is available. Essential to a good health-care delivery system are fair wages for all health-care workers.

The Democratic Party supports:

- developing a universal-coverage national single-payer health-care system that stresses prevention and expands medical research including research and prevention funding for AIDs;
- continued development of locally available medical options, such as HMO's, hospices, and home care;
- expanding public health services in Tompkins County in basic areas of disease prevention;



- supporting programs to reduce local hunger and malnutrition and promote increased nutrition awareness in Tompkins County;
- expanding local substance abuse programs;
- programs for safe, healthy, and smoke-free environments in public and work places, (through measures such as environmental and workplace safety laws, air quality testing, and educational services).

**B. Education.** The Democratic Party supports and encourages public and private educational opportunities for all people regardless of educational level, age, disability, ethnicity, ex-offender status, gender identity, nationality, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status. It recognizes that adults have ongoing educational needs if they are to expand the base of knowledge and skills necessary for them to reach full potential and for the local economy to thrive.

The Democratic Party supports:

- programs in job training and retraining for the unemployed and underemployed, along with necessary support services to make such programs attractive and possible;
- vocational apprenticeship programs as well as academic vocational aptitude, and other programs at the high school level designed to ease the transition from school to work among young people;
- programs which support the on-going educational needs of adults, and teens, including parenting education, life-skills training, English as a second language, the Empire State College, Tompkins Cortland Community College, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and BOCES.

**C. Human Services.** The Democratic Party is committed to providing human services and humane treatment of all people regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, ex-offender status, gender identity, nationality, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status, or present condition, or length of residence in the community. The question is not whether we are able to afford these services.

The Democratic Party advocates:

- making programs and services maximally available and accessible to those persons in need of them;
- supporting the allocation of resources to address local human needs in such a way as to enhance rather than harm our economy;
- studying the dysfunctions of our society that cause poverty, alienation, crime, abuse, illiteracy and dependency, and to seek corrective actions.

**D. Caregiving.** The Democratic Party, continuing its concern for each individual human life, recognizes that all human beings are in need of care during certain periods in their lives. In the

development of the American economy, little economic value has been assigned to caregiving, thus inadequate provision has been made for paying for the day care of those who need it. This has caused an acute shortage in available care for children and the elderly, and people with disabilities. The effects of neglect of young children will be felt socially and economically far into the future. We cannot afford to neglect people who need care. As human beings, we cannot turn away from this crisis.

The Democratic Party will:

- encourage the business and educational communities to explore options for increased participation in day care activities, by donation of funds, space and services for example;
- seek support for sick-child and infant care and after-school programs;
- attempt to meet the needs of senior citizens by working for improved options, including home respite and day care.

**E. Children and Youth.** The Democratic Party recognizes that rearing children is the responsibility of the entire community and that the future of our country and our humanity depends on raising each generation to responsible, capable and compassionate adulthood. The increased incidence of child abuse and teenage suicide underscores the importance of appropriate community responses these enduring responsibilities.

The Democratic Party supports and will work to develop:

- programs to train and support parents and others working with children and youth.
- community programs which will help provide an atmosphere for the stimulation and growth of children and young people;
- community programs which will help provide transition to adulthood and the world of work for adolescents, such as mentoring, apprenticeship and parent-education training;
- a more extensive suicide prevention and substance abuse program aimed at children and youth.
- prevention of unwanted pregnancy.

**F. Senior Citizens.** The Democratic Party recognizes the desire of senior citizens to live a full life and to participate actively in the community.

The Democratic Party will:

- encourage all levels of local government to be more diligent in applying for state and federal funding for assistance to senior citizens in the areas of housing, nutrition and health care;
- encourage local governments to assist private organizations in their efforts to obtain state and federal funds to benefit senior citizens.

## V. HUMAN RIGHTS, GOVERNMENT, AND CITIZENSHIP

**A. Citizen Participation in Government.** The Democratic Party is committed to increase citizen participation in government affairs. Free exchange of diverse ideas is a prerequisite for citizen participation. Voting is the most basic form of participation. Voluntary participation on governmental review and advisory boards, committees and councils is another crucial feature of representative government. At present these boards are not broadly representative. Local government should utilize various means, including the media and the internet, to inform citizens of the structure of their local government and encourage their participation in it.

The Democratic Party will:

- encourage laws that favor the widest possible voter registration and encourage and assist with non-partisan voter registration drives in public buildings and elsewhere;
- encourage elected representatives to maintain regular contact with the public by holding regular meetings and office hours in their districts and to reach out to constituents who cannot come to them;
- assure broad publicity for advisory board positions through notices in community buildings, public offices, churches, etc., as well as through the mass media and the internet and apply affirmative action guidelines to appointments on these boards;
- assure that agenda of legislative and advisory boards are widely publicized through the media and the internet and results publicized afterwards;
- support provision of child care for legislators, school and advisory board members and people attending meetings and by timing meetings to fit work and family schedules;
- encourage public bulletin boards, defend community access cable TV and seek public access to radio and the internet;
- support meaningful national and statewide political reform legislation, including the concept of public campaign funding with limits on campaign spending and a stronger ethics bill for legislators and all other public officials.

**B. Conduct and Funding of Government.** The Democratic Party believes that elected officials are the servants of the people, and that they must conduct the people's business openly, honestly and responsibly. Operating government responsibly also means doing so in an economical and efficient manner, including treating public employees fairly and with respect. The Democratic Party believes that people should pay taxes based on ability to pay from their incomes, and that sometimes governments must spend money on some items (e.g. Head Start) in order to save more money on other items.

The Democratic Party advocates:

- studying every new issue coming before the county in terms of its cost-benefit ratio in relation to other programs;
- maintaining a reasonable level of local taxation, commensurate with humane and efficient provision of necessary services;
- not increasing property and sales taxes without giving serious consideration to alternative forms of revenue generation;
- evaluating the fairness of the property tax as compared with an income tax;
- studying every alternative to increasing taxes (e.g., user fees, contracting out or reducing cash reserves, in addition to tax abatements) in terms of its cost effectiveness for achieving desired goals;
- achieving more responsible budgeting, and making the budget easier for ordinary citizens to understand;
- greater cooperation among local governments, in areas like planning, purchasing, and law enforcement, when services can be provided at lower cost;
- pressing for a state takeover of funding for state mandated programs, especially Medicaid, and mandated educational programs;
- opposing new unfunded mandates from state and federal government to local governments, and the devolution of the costs of government to regressive local taxes.
- making the Social Security system more progressive in the way it collects revenues and maintain the Social Security system fund separate from the general federal account.
- secure voting machines that produce a voter-verifiable paper record.

**C. Equality and Civil Rights.** The Democratic Party reaffirms its commitment to equality, civil rights, and pluralism. Discrimination on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, ex-offender status, gender identity, nationality, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status is unacceptable. The Democratic Party:

- specifically opposes discriminatory practices based on gender identity or sexual orientation of the parent in child custody, and adoption or foster-parent legal decisions;
- strongly supports the enforcement of the 7/9/03 Antidiscrimination Ordinance #2003-13 of the City of Ithaca and encourages other jurisdictions in the county to adopt and enforce similar legislation;
- will strive for increasing diversity in employment in all levels of city and county government;

- will vigorously advocate economic development in the private sector to increase diversity in employment, both in existing firms and through the creation of more minority business ownership;
- will endeavor to make diverse voices more audible on county, town, village and city advisory boards;
- will work to make the Democratic County Committee both more diverse and inclusive;
- will encourage candidates from all sectors of our society to seek public office;
- supports domestic partner benefits for employees equivalent to those offered married couples; \*supports the freedom to marry for same-sex as well as opposite-sex couples.
- supports making all buildings open to the public accessible to the people with disabilities;
- supports the amendment of State Penal Law P4TY, known as the Hate Crimes Act of 2000, Article 485.05, Hate Crimes, to include, in addition to those already mentioned in the Act, ex-offender status, gender identity, and socio-economic status.

**D. Women.** The Democratic Party pledges to continue to redress the historic pattern of discrimination against women. Women are paid, on average, less than men. Women are penalized unjustly for parenting, in employment, and in Social Security. Women do not always receive due police and court protection from violence. The Democratic Party is committed to the autonomy and responsibility of the individual, opposes government intrusion into private lives, and stands in favor of each woman's right to choose on matters of reproduction.

The Democratic Party:

- commits itself to a policy of equal pay for comparable work and will work to implement this principle in local government;
- will vigorously pursue an affirmative action program;
- backs the right of an employee to be free from sexual harassment;
- asserts that crimes against women must be prosecuted, regardless of the social or marital status of the perpetrator.

## **VI. TOMPKINS COUNTY, and the WORLD**

The Democratic Party seeks to achieve a world free of exploitation, racism, sexism, imperialism, the imposition of one population segment's morality on others, and free of the threat of war, especially nuclear war.

**A. International Politics.** The Democratic Party:

- supports a foreign policy committed to a fair, amicable, and peaceful resolution of international and intranational conflicts worldwide, and the addressing of the issues now dividing the industrial and the predominantly agrarian, raw-material producing nations;
- supports the effort to reduce the number, proliferation, sale and resale of nuclear weapons, weapons grade material and chemical and biological weapons; moreover, so that those weapons will not be replaced by new, more terrifying and destabilizing weapons, the Democratic Party also supports efforts to freeze the technological arms race, by preserving the original intent of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, and by helping to achieve a comprehensive test ban treaty, and nuclear non-proliferation treaty;
- supports further reductions in conventional weaponry and the elimination of landmines throughout the world;
- believes that the so-called "war" on the supply of drugs can be waged most effectively and economically through partnership with Pan-American and other bodies without relying on unilateral military means;
- condemns the violation of fundamental human rights as defined by the international law of human rights, and supports multilateral intervention to protect civilian populations threatened by genocidal practices, gross human rights abuses, famine, or other catastrophic threats to human dignity.
- supports the right of all peoples to self determination;
- supports efforts to strengthen the United Nations to make it more internationally democratic and effective for furtherance of international security and the protection and promotion of human rights; to this end the Democratic Party urges timely payment of dues owed by the United States to the United Nations.
- recommends that our nation encourage trade with other nations whose governments arise from free and fair elections and are founded on principles of liberty and justice for ethnic, racial and political minorities and women;
- recommends foreign aid to low-income countries that demonstrate the will and ability to use such resources productively, and foreign aid to encourage and support the emergence of democratic institutions;
- calls on our government to end all military aid and sale of arms, and most-favored nation status to nations which grossly violate human rights;
- advocates strong, effective U.S. participation in global efforts to combat environmental threats to our planet, including climate change, and developing international cooperative methods for dealing with environmental threats, beginning with our compliance with international

conventions and treaties, and including technical facilities, and educational, and financial assistance to developing nations to help them meet their environmental responsibilities as well.

- opposes all use of torture, and supports the permanent closure of the prison at Guantanamo Bay.
- supports the ancient right to Habeus Corpus as a fundamental human right that the government cannot set aside.
- opposes the Bush administration's doctrine of "Pre-emptive Warfare".
- supports Americans' rights to privacy in their telephone and internet communications, and the constitutional requirement for court-approved search warrants. We oppose retro-active immunity for government officials or corporations guilty of violating the public's rights to privacy.
- favors the cessation of US involvement in hostilities in Iraq, and the orderly draw-down of all US troops from Iraq.
- demands the federal government re-commit to international treaties and national laws which prohibit the use of torture.
- advocates the elimination of the US prison for enemy combatants in Guantanamo Bay

**B. World Hunger.** The Democratic Party strives to end hunger and food insecurity on Earth.

The Democratic Party therefore supports:

- indigenous agricultural development projects to increase food self-sufficiency in low-income nations;
- establishing an international Food Reserve program, consisting of annual food contributions from food-surplus nations that will be available to food-deficit nations in times of crop failures;
- increased aid to those nations which seek to develop democratically determined programs for increased food production;
- curbing multi-national commercial agribusiness interests in exportable cash crops in the food-deficit nations which destroy these nations' capabilities for food self-sufficiency;

**C. Natural disasters.** The Democratic Party seeks to develop a national commitment toward an international relief capability to mitigate prolonged suffering, unnecessary deaths, and illness in the wake of natural disasters. While a genuine commitment to alleviate such suffering exists on the part of many nations inadequate coordination has hampered relief efforts.

The Democratic Party urges:

- the establishment of an international Rescue Force under the United Nations, supported by and composed of specialists from all nations;

- the development of an international system for timely distribution of relief supplies.