

New Haven Democratic Town Committee Platform

Preamble:

The 18 member Platform Committee has been working since October 2016 to write a platform document for our town committee. The goal is to create a platform that represents our shared values and our policy priorities as a Town Committee. We do not expect every endorsed candidate to agree with us on every issue, but we hope that they will support our platform as much as possible. So far we have completed the first two of our planned four platform planks: Education, Economic Justice, Environmental Priorities, and Racial Justice. We are proud to take a progressive stand and hope that the state and national Democratic Parties follow our leadership on these issues.

Education Platform

To Strengthen Public Schools:

Support equitable and adequate funding for public education at every level of government, expanding Title I funding for schools that serve a large number or have a high concentration of children in poverty and ending curriculum gaps that maintain and exacerbate achievement gaps.

Eliminate Opportunity Gaps:

Every student should be taught to the highest academic standards. In particular, low-income students, students of color, English Language Learners and students with disabilities. This includes investments in after school and summer learning programs as well as adequate resources to provide programs and support to help meet the needs of every child. Appropriate staffing levels for teachers and manageable class sizes throughout the year are essential.

Break the School-to-Prison Pipeline:

Utilize restorative justice techniques and eliminate exclusionary discipline (suspensions, expulsions and arrests) for all students pre-K through 12th grade. This applies particularly for vague and subjective behaviors including willful defiance, disrespect, insubordination, obnoxiousness and disturbing the peace. Fully fund restorative programs and support for students in crisis in educational settings. Remove police from schools and replace them with positive alternatives to discipline and safety.

Guarantee Universal Preschool:

Invest in early childhood programs such as Early Head Start and provide every family with access to high-quality childcare and high-quality preschool programs. We support efforts to raise wages for childcare workers and provide training to insure that these educators and caregivers are experienced and of high quality.

Do Not Give Public Resources to For-Profit Schools:

We believe high quality public charter schools should provide options for parents, but should not replace or destabilize traditional public schools. Charter schools must reflect their communities and accept and retain a proportionate number of students of color, students with disabilities and English Language Learners in relation to their neighborhood public schools. All charter schools must be transparent in their policies, financing and be accountable to the community.

School System Transparency to all Stakeholders:

We define stakeholders as all residents of New Haven, including students, parents and teachers. We support democratically governed, great neighborhood public schools and high-quality public charter schools that are transparently run and accountable to all of the above stakeholders.

There should be no conflicts of interest nor perception of conflict of interest at any level in the entire school system. The Mayor should not serve as the President of the Board of Education.

The Board of Education must recognize the community as an asset and an ally in collaboration with its constituents.

Make Debt-Free College a Reality:

All post-secondary school should be debt free. In addition, the New Haven Promise opportunity should be expanded to include qualified students who want to pursue a technical Education (example: Branford Hall) and not be limited to academic college degrees.

Support Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority-Serving Institutions:

Provide further assistance to students at these schools as well as other students across the country by restoring year-round Pell funding so low and middle income students from all backgrounds can get the support they need to make progress toward a college degree.

Economic Platform

An Economy That Works for All:

Many New Haven residents are suffering economic hardship and economic inequality is growing locally and nationally. To achieve lasting economic growth that benefits all people, especially the most economically marginalized, we support the following:

Good Jobs:

- Creating a federal and state jobs program for all people, especially the most economically marginalized to include training for sectors with high growth potential and training for sectors that are environmentally sustainable.

- Creating jobs through investments in public transit and infrastructure which would modernize schools, upgrade our airports, roads and bridges and would invest in technology, broadband, and renewable energy.
- Assuring the right of workers to organize in public and private sectors, and to earn a living wage. Benefits such as paid sick leave, family leave and health care including protections for workers in unregulated industries and for those who remain unprotected, ie, undocumented, non-unionized and unregulated are also essential.
- No one who works 40 hours a week should be living in poverty.
- Building strong and reliable incentive programs for small and start-up businesses.
- Streamlining and modernizing the process of creating and registering new businesses.
- Local hiring by anchor institutions.
- Any conversation about the economy and jobs must include an emphasis on dismantling institutionalized racism and overcoming interpersonal racism.

Zoning and Development:

- Ensuring local control over local development.
- Strong neighborhood input into development proposals that consider density, traffic and parking and character of the neighborhood.
- Giving priority to development proposals that meet the needs of New Haven residents, particularly people living in low-income neighborhoods, African-American and Latino neighborhoods, neighborhoods that are at risk of being gentrified.
- Expanding the city's tax base.
- Developments that include green space and community-accessible amenities.
- Creating an equitable solution to the large percentage of non-taxable property owned by nonprofit organizations.

Housing:

- Making New Haven more affordable for both homeowners and renters.
- Affordable housing that is safe and close to transit and services.
- Measures to lower the mill rate.
- First-time homebuyers' programs, such as Yale University's.
- Extending relief to those threatened by foreclosure, and ban the abusive practices of some mortgage servicing firms.
- Increasing the number of affordable apartments in the city. Removed affordable housing should be replaced with an equal number of affordable units.
- Providing the resources and oversight to ensure all existing regulations are enforced and hold absentee landlords responsible for maintaining their properties in a safe and orderly fashion.
- An end to redlining and racially discriminating policies.

- Continuing and creating community owned credit unions, and local and minority control of financial institutions.

Progressive Taxation:

- Requiring wealthy individuals and large corporations to pay their fair share in taxes.

Cutting the Military Budget and Prioritizing Human Services:

- Dramatically cutting the military budget and transferring funds to create jobs providing human needs.
- Preventing the US from engaging in wars without a formal Congressional Declaration of War as required by the Constitution of the US.
- Ending unconstitutional spying on US residents.
- Negotiating a treaty banning cyber warfare.
- Respecting and abiding by international peace treaties.