

PLATFORM of the DEMOCRATIC PARTY of COLORADO, 2006

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The platform committee's task has been to collect and summarize the resolutions coming in from all the counties across the State. The purpose of the 2006 platform report is to inform the delegates and the elected officials of the most current thinking of the grass roots and to generate discussion of the key issues that the grass roots consider most critical at the moment. We hope this will create a sense of participation and facilitate the campaigns. To this end we have computerized the resolutions by county and subject as an informational tool for the delegates and the campaigns. Candidates for office will as always run on issues they consider most appropriate for their districts. We hope that this platform report from the grass roots will be useful to you.

We have done our best to encourage as much participation as possible and to make the results as broadly available as possible. We all wish there were more time to consider platform resolutions and thank all those who have worked so hard to complete this report in the extremely limited time available.

Camilla Auger and Harvie Branscomb
Co Chairs of the State Platform Committee, 2006

NOTES:

The top 9 issues are listed in order of the priority of importance as passed by the counties and then voted by the working group. Resolutions in bold face are among the 27 which were identified as key by the working group. These appear at the top of each section.

Principles of Colorado Democrats, 2006

We the **DEMOCRATIC PARTY**, are the oldest political party in America and the youngest in spirit, and will remain so because we enjoy the possibilities of a government for, of, and by the people.

We **respect** all people and pledge to build and maintain a nation that is secure and respected worldwide for living up to the basic principles on which this nation is founded and for maintaining the same high standards for all international relations.

We **support** the equal right of all people to have freedom of expression, religion and the pursuit of happiness as well as a quality education, a clean and safe environment, a secure and healthy future, a fair living wage, secure retirement, equal opportunity, and access to quality health care.

We **honor** the privacy and security of every individual, and an ethical government and society that is fair, open and fully accountable to all people.

We **realize** that citizenship entails responsibility to the commonwealth of our nation and support the fair and just contribution of all citizens.

We **accept** our fundamental responsibility to all future generations and maintain a sacred trust to pursue only policies that are sustainable and maintain or improve global well-being. We reaffirm that the constitutional guarantee of separation of church and state is fundamental.

Top 9 Immediate Priorities for Colorado Democrats

(each represented by at least 20 to 50+ county resolutions)

1. The Iraq Invasion and Occupation

It is an unjustifiable act that has nothing to do with the prevention of terrorism. It has made us less secure, severely damaged our economy, foreign relations, and made terrorism more likely. Our troops should be safely pulled out as soon as possible with full concern for their welfare and that of the Iraqi people.

2. Civil Liberties

Our nation was founded upon the principles of individual rights and liberties. The current administration has violated our constitutional rights and we believe that the individual rights of liberty and freedom have priority over the power of government. We must ensure that all citizens are protected from the abuses and intrusions of government into our personal lives.

3. Censure and Impeachment

President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney and their administration have abused their power and appear to have repeatedly violated the Constitution. They should be investigated, censured or if appropriate, impeached.

4. Campaign and Election Reform

We will create public confidence in the government by restoring the integrity of the voting and campaign finance process.

5. Environment

Democrats believe that a clean and healthy global environment is vital for today and the future. We support sustainable policies for the development of affordable alternative energy and preservation of public lands. This administration has demonstrated contempt for the environment and the laws that protect it.

6. Immigration

We support safe and legal immigration that takes into account the safety of immigrants and the needs of our economy. We support control of our borders and the enforcement of our laws.

7. Education

Colorado State funding for public education is seriously inadequate. Democrats believe that public education must be fully-funded from preschool through college to ensure a competitive economy. Strengthened public schools provide the foundation of democratic community life. A state accountability system should be grounded in fair measurement of student progress over time.

8. Health Care

The health of our citizens is essential to the health of our nation. The lack of affordable, accessible health care is a burden on our economy and the quality of life of our citizens. We believe that quality universal health care is a basic right for all.

9. Reproductive Rights

We believe that abortion should be safe, legal, and rare. We support educational and legal initiatives to accomplish this without making criminals of women or doctors.

2006 Colorado Democratic Party Platform Detail

INTERNATIONAL

We believe it is imperative that the United States restore its reputation in the international community. To this end, we support:

immediate, safe, and responsible withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq; the closing of all U.S. bases in Iraq and the recognition of the United States' obligation to reduce the suffering of the Iraqi people; coordinated with multilateral and international political, military, financial, and humanitarian solutions that ensure regional stability;

renouncing the Bush doctrine of preemptive war;

only those free trade agreements that promote worker protections such as the right to organize, a grievance process with open third-party oversight, safe working conditions, fair workday length, a reasonable living wage, environmental protections, and limitations on child-labor; the right of sovereign nations to protect the economic, environmental, and physical health of their own citizens;

fair trade agreements that prohibit multinational corporations from privatizing community access to water or limiting community access to sustenance farming via patenting and genetically-modified cash crops; adherence by multinational corporations to labor and property laws;

the end of the U.S. embargo on Cuba and the normalizing of relations with this nation;

non-violent conflict resolution; and

Renunciation of the first use of nuclear weapons under U.S. control; a firm policy commitment to press for the worldwide halt of their development, production, and refurbishment; a movement of all nuclear weapons worldwide to the lowest activation status in preparation for dismantlement; a firm commitment to work with the international community to strengthen the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

We support full adherence to the Anti Land-Mine, Anti Cluster-Bomb, and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaties and full United States participation in the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court;

addressing the global threat of international terrorism at its source through education, the reduction of poverty, ethnic disputes, resource limitations, and extremism; in addition to the appropriate use of force as a last resort, extremism can best be fought by giving hope, eliminating injustice, lifting the blinders of ignorance, and promoting mutual respect that leaves no room for demonizing those from other cultures or questioning of their right to self determination.

We strongly reconfirm support for Israel and the right to self determination for the Palestinians and we look forward to joining with all parties to work towards peace;

strict adherence to the Geneva Convention and international human rights agreements for all persons detained by the United States regardless of status, nationality, or location;

the immediate and permanent cessation of the production and use of all depleted uranium weapons. These weapons emanate radiological poison into the environment and are classified as illegal weapons of mass destruction under international law. They have caused scientifically documented poisoning of United States military personnel, and the surface environment, water tables, and people of Iraq, Bosnia, the Balkans, and Afghanistan.

We support a Department of Peace, which focuses energy and resources towards working with communities on a global level to establish peace and unity;

United States pursuit of multilateral approaches to foreign policy and national security issues; renewing and strengthening the U.S. commitment to the United Nations and other international organizations; and

pressing the United Nations to develop an effective military force mandated to intervene rapidly against genocide when determined by expedited World Court rulings; and

the right to self determination for democratically elected governments.

HUMAN and CIVIL RIGHTS

Democrats believe in equal protection under the law. We believe

that all people are created equal. It is imperative that our laws fully protect the equality of every individual residing under the jurisdiction of the United States. In order to accomplish these goals, we support:

the affirmation of the importance of civil liberties contained in our Bill of Rights and demand that those portions of the USA Patriot Act that violate those civil liberties be repealed;

the Supreme Court decision Roe vs. Wade and oppose any law restricting access to affordable and well-informed reproductive choices such as abortion and contraception which should be available to all, thereby moving towards the prevention of unwanted pregnancies;

laws preventing Federal, state, and local governments from using eminent domain to usurp property rights for the economic gain of a private individual, organization, or corporation and a stricter definition of blight;

applying the principles of the Geneva Convention and habeas corpus to all prisoners and detainees, and oppose the use of torture in any circumstance.

We support a requirement that any domestic surveillance and spying shall be done only within the framework of the Constitution and FISA and only with judicial authorization. [Arapahoe] The continuing surveillance of U.S. Citizens by the Federal Government without appropriate warrants and judicial oversight is deplorable.

We request rejection of the Bush Administration overstepping of Presidential powers through excessive use of internal legal opinions (signing statements) which presume to allow the Executive Branch to diverge from the original intention of Congress in writing the act;

rejection of the Bush Administration principle of the "unitary executive" which significantly disturbs the balance of power between the three branches of our government;

restoration of checks and balances between the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branches of the United States Government; and

rejection of the Bush Administration claims of legal powers to fight terrorism in ways that violate the rights of U.S. citizens under the Bill of Rights. These excesses include the following: the use of secret, warrant-less searches and seizures of the persons, homes and private records of American citizens without required probable cause; the jailing of U.S. citizens by Presidential designation as an "enemy combatant"; intrusive surveillance and investigative practices that limit freedom of speech, peaceful assembly, privacy, and religion; and the imposition of secrecy or other obstacles to prevent U.S. citizens, their families and lawyers, from objecting to these excesses, or exercising their right to have these violations promptly reviewed by Federal courts.

We support civil unions for all couples with all the benefits, protections and responsibilities of married spouses; the defeat of the Federal Marriage Amendment and the Defense of Marriage Act;

joint adoptions and second-parent adoptions by same sex couples, ensuring that their children can enjoy the full benefits of having two legal parents;

legislation that extends basic protections such as health insurance, employment benefits, hospital visitation rights, property rights and pension coverage, to the GLBT community;

expansion of the current definition of civil rights and hate crime laws to include sexual orientation, gender identity and disability;

immediate and full implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibilities Guidelines, enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Housing Act, as amended, and the Architectural Barriers Act, to provide improved access to housing, transportation, medical assistance, education, and employment opportunities (the unemployment rate among the

disabled is 74%- we can do better);

the rights of people with disabilities to live freely in their communities, to receive services and supports independently, in the most integrated setting, without fear, abuse, or retaliation; understanding that all services should be provided with the maximum amount of consumer control and that people with disabilities are the experts on disability policy and must always be consulted about changes in policy; and

the separation of church and state to ensure that issues such as civil unions, individual and family medical decisions, and women's reproductive rights would be resolved in favor of personal privacy and civil liberties that are guaranteed by our Constitution.

HEALTH

In the United States, as a matter of social justice, we support a quality universal health care system not tied to employment, as a basic right of all citizens. The health of our citizens is essential to the health of our nation. We support:

financing through one agency (public or quasi-public) that pays the medical providers for the care they deliver, including prescription drugs;

patient choice of medical service providers and returning medical decisions to the patient and medical service provider;

reduction of administrative cost and strong cost-containment programs involving input from those who use the system and which cause no significant harm;

emphasis on prenatal and postnatal maternal care and complete health care for children;

health care that is no longer tied to employer health insurance coverage;

an emphasis on preventative health care including for those with disabilities and chronic illnesses;

increased funding and accountability for mental health care; government funded providers should have users of services on their staff and governing boards;

educating the public about scientifically sound policies regarding STDS/HIV/AIDS and comprehensive programs for their research, prevention, and treatment;

increasing availability of hospice care, and home and community based services that address the needs of all, including people with all levels of disabilities of any age;

providing for the long-term solvency of Medicare;

increasing availability of shelters and programs for victims of domestic violence;

federally-funded research and investigation involving stem cells for the purpose of seeking treatments and cures for heart disease, diabetes, cancer, diseases of the nervous system and renal failure; and

use of medical cannabis prescribed for a patient by a physician.

CAMPAIGN, ELECTION, & MEDIA REFORM

Democrats believe that trustworthy elections are a cornerstone of democracy. To ensure the effective functioning of our democratic government, we advocate effective campaign reform, public access to the full spectrum of political opinion, full voter registration and accuracy of voting with verification. To this end, we support:

free, fair, and publicly-financed elections;

a voting process that allows voters to hand mark or machine mark their votes onto full-text paper ballots,

including voting machines with paper-trail audits; voters must be allowed to check their votes before they cast them, to know that the votes on their paper ballot are what get counted, and to have access to proof that every ballot is accounted for and that every vote is correctly understood and counted;

H.R. 9, the bipartisan, bicameral "Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006", the bill which would renew sections of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that are set to expire in 2007;

preferential or instant runoff voting;

an independent media that fosters critical thinking on the part of all Americans in separating fact from propaganda, knowing that fairness and balance may be an illusion;

reinstating equal time requirements (the fairness doctrine) and the principle of fair and balanced reporting;

enforcement of Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules that promote multiple owners of media outlets to ensure the free expression of diverse opinions;

replacement of the Electoral College with the direct election of the President of the United States including adoption of the National Popular Vote Bill in a compact with other states as introduced by State Senator Ken Gordon;

that all machines employing Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) technology used for voting in any public election must, as a minimum, produce a voter-verifiable record, meet all National Institute of Science & Technology (NIST) requirements for data encryption and security, and that it be independently auditable with respect to source code, reliability, and vote integrity. Validation of DRE results should be performed by manual comparative audit of a random sample of between one and five per cent of the paper records. All recounts must be done strictly with paper records (ballots).

We support a statutory random audit that is a true audit of 5% (at least two) of the voting machines used where all of the ballots of each randomly chosen machine are hand counted and verified against the machine total; and

voter registration that is convenient for voters to complete and even simpler to renew, and that produces complete, accurate, and valid lists of citizens who are eligible to vote.

ETHICS & GOVERNMENT

Democrats support restoration of accountability, common sense ethics and integrity in all branches of government and lessening the influence of lobbyists in crafting legislation.

Democrats support prohibiting political candidates or office holders from accepting gifts/payments of any kind for any purpose from lobbyists.

The President of the United States is subject to the Constitution and Laws of the United States. The Constitution through the Bill of Rights protects American citizens from unreasonable searches and seizures and protects the privacy of American citizens. The US Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) provides a lawful, responsive, and secure mechanism for obtaining warrants for justified electronic surveillance. President George W. Bush has publicly admitted authorizing electronic surveillance inside the U.S. in violation of the FISA Act. Therefore it is resolved that the President of the United States be censured by the United States Senate as proposed by U. S. Senator Feingold.

The United States is in a crisis of failed leadership. We urge the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to fully investigate members of the Bush Administration and to

pursue impeachment and further prosecution of the President and Vice President if it is found to be appropriate.

We support a ban on former members of Congress or former senior Congressional staff lobbying or being in any way involved in lobbying Congress for four years after termination of association with Congress.

EDUCATION

Democrats believe that state public education policies should provide every student with an opportunity to reach his or her potential and that quality public education is an investment with real and tangible return for our economy. To this end, we demand:

full funding of education with public monies in public schools, supporting local control, and oppose vouchers and all unfunded mandates;

equal access to quality public education for all from early childhood through adulthood, including workforce preparation and re-training, focusing on closing socioeconomic, racial, linguistic and disability-related achievement gaps;

access to affordable quality public higher education for all residents of the state including the continuation of affirmative action programs; and

an adequate tax base for quality public education (both K-12 and higher education). This requires an increase in funding above and beyond Amendment 23, which, at a minimum, should remain in place with guaranteed annual funding increases to meet the state's long-term public education needs.

We support a state accountability system, grounded in fair measurement of student progress over time, that enhances student achievement in a safe and healthy environment which respects differences of sexual orientation, gender, and gender-identity and promotes the recruitment, retention and fair compensation of highly qualified educators.

We request repeal of NCLB ("No Child Left Behind") and replacement with responsible, effective legislation;

higher education funded at a level that allows it to maintain excellence in its mission; and

that charter schools should only be approved by the local elected school board.

ENERGY

Democrats believe that elimination of energy waste, conservation, and the use of renewable energy are significant components of responsible energy policy. We support:

development of renewable and alternative sources of energy sufficient to supply 25% of Colorado's power needs from renewable sources by 2020 while extending Amendment 37 requirements to all utilities in the State;

implementation of a national policy of energy independence which prioritizes practices that promote the development of renewable energy technologies, the installation of alternative energy systems and energy conservation -- including a significant increase in Federal Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards;

incentives or better yet requirements for manufacturers to produce street vehicles that achieve average mileage rates of 40 mpg by 2015;

regulating the oil & gas industry better so as not to adversely impact the lives of surface owners living near extraction & transportation sites; and

surface owners receiving fair compensation for damage or

disturbance done in the investigation, development, or extraction of minerals.

ENVIRONMENT

Environmental stewardship requires foresight, wisdom, and responsibility. Democrats also believe this makes economic sense. Providing a clean and healthy environment will improve economic development and not hinder it. To this end, we support:

ratification of and adherence to the Kyoto Protocols on global warming by the United States; and

an end to the policies of increased exploitation of national parks, monuments, forests and wilderness areas for private economic gain. We oppose selling public lands. We support studies to determine equitable and environmentally responsible guidelines for managing access to state and national parks and monuments. Public lands are a national treasure, and must be funded and stewarded in ways that will preserve them for future generations of Americans and ensure the survival of plant and animal ecosystems.

We support policies that direct Congress to ensure that the entire Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is maintained as an intact ecosystem off limits to development. Few places as untrammeled as the "1002 area" remain on the planet, and fewer still on the same magnificent scale. Any but the most transitory intrusions (e. g., visits for recreation, hunting, fishing, subsistence use, research, etc.) will create irreparable and permanent harm.

We support the Endangered Species Act;

water policies that prioritize water conservation, management of limited water supplies, and the protection of water purity for humans and natural ecology;

allowing new development only when adequate supplies of water exist;

prohibiting trans-basin diversions which are to the detriment of the basin-of-origin's economy and environment; and

the preservation of minimum stream flows to preserve the existing ecosystems. Recreational in-stream water use is a beneficial use and should have the same status in the water rights system as more traditional uses.

We support the protection and preservation of wildlife, wilderness and road-less areas;

strict enforcement of current environmental protections and increasing fines for polluters to exceed the cost of compliance;

restoration of critical environmental protections which have been removed by the Bush Administration;

seeking significant reductions in the emission of air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions; and

forest management and protection that is based on scientifically sound policies. Managing healthy forests requires ecological fire policies.

We support holding responsible for their cleanup all government agencies, businesses, organizations, or individuals who have caused a site to become contaminated;

open, secrecy-free, public hearings in Congress with regard to environmental issues on military bases;

repealing the 1872 Mining Act, an antiquated law used today by mining companies to obtain approval for mining projects that would not otherwise be considered, much less approved;

efforts to promote or require the recycling of all reclaimable materials; and

significant funding for environmental education. We must increase support and funding for research of conservation methods, more efficient use of energy, renewable energy, recycling, and environmental innovation.

The use of context sensitive design, local input, and impact mitigation for all transportation plans and public construction projects. The principles of environmental justice must be used to equalize impacts between stake-holder communities.

We support the conservation and preservation of land through open space programs.

IMMIGRATION

The United States is a diverse nation built by people from all parts of the world. In recognition of this fact, we support:

efforts to restore medical and other benefits to legal immigrants on the basis of equal protection of the laws. The 1996 welfare reform law made most legal immigrants, including those of long-standing residency, ineligible for health care, welfare and other essential programs. This exclusion must be reversed at local, state and federal levels.

We support repeal of the Clear Law Enforcement for Criminal Alien Removal (CLEAR) Act which denies undocumented immigrants a voice to report crime without fear of deportation;

reform of immigration and labor laws to provide protection for the labor force; to prevent exploitation; to provide stricter health and safety inspections; and provide the opportunity for farm workers to engage in collective bargaining;

extension of Colorado residency status to qualified undocumented individuals who seek to attend college, who will be Colorado high school graduates and who have resided in the state for at least 3 years;

streamlining the visa and citizenship application process to make it proceed in a timely and nondiscriminatory manner;

enforcement of existing legislation penalizing businesses who recruit undocumented immigrants;

opposition to institutionalization of undocumented immigrants as a marked and permanent underclass; and

funding for enforcement of existing border control laws and a guest worker program which is manageable for small businesses.

We support offering political asylum to include protection for individuals who would face persecution due to their gender or sexual orientation.

We support the Kennedy-McCain bill in Congress and the solutions it proposes.

We oppose the classification of illegal immigration as a felony.

AGRICULTURE

In as much as agriculture and ranching have long been a staple of the Colorado economy and our heritage, we support:

ranchers and consumers by implementing mandatory country-of-origin labeling so consumers can make an informed purchase of beef products;

balancing the needs for urban development, open space, and recreation with preserving agriculture and ranching as a traditional base of Colorado's economy;

encouraging expanding and strengthening local and state

conservation easement programs;

reducing waste runoff and reducing use of pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers and antibiotics;

encouraging the growth and development of organic farming and wind farming;

ensuring fairness to farmers and ranchers in their dealings with biotech companies that sell genetically engineered seeds, plants, and animals;

full disclosure of all ingredients, especially genetically engineered organic substances, in commercial products; and

the encouragement of farmers markets.

We encourage greater investment by U.S. government and the cattle industry in higher standards to prevent mad cow and other diseases.

The Democratic Party opposes the U.S. Army's attempted land grab of additional lands surrounding the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site in Southeastern Colorado.

JOBS & ECONOMY

We are committed to providing opportunities for all Coloradans to achieve economic success. We support the following:

workers' fundamental right to assemble, organize in accordance with the Employee Free Choice Act, bargain collectively, and jointly petition business and government for better working conditions; and

increasing the minimum wage indexed to inflation and set to exceed federal guidelines defining poverty. While compensation for executives and corporate profits have reached stratospheric levels, the average wage of the average worker has declined and costs for healthcare, housing, transportation and energy have skyrocketed. The Democratic Party considers this a national disgrace.

We support maintaining the Colorado Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) as an actuarially sound defined benefit plan, directed by a board elected by the membership, and establishing a 30-year actuarial period;

policies that will provide appropriate training for our workforce;

policies that improve the competitiveness of small businesses, and businesses owned by women, minorities, and individuals with disabilities;

preserving the long-term solvency of Social Security without privatization;

legislation that ensures all workers shall receive equal pay for equal work regardless of gender, race, religious affiliation, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or age;

the Employment Non-discrimination Act and Affirmative Action programs;

fiscal and monetary policies that promote full employment; and

balancing the federal budget by adopting a pay as you go policy, and stopping the borrowing from our children's future.

TAXATION

We support:

a progressive tax system as the fairest way to support governmental services;

not making the tax cuts permanent because of the record national debt incurred by a Republican controlled House, Senate and Administration who involved this country in an

endless war and resorted to budgetary gimmickry to disguise it's true cost;

rescinding those tax cuts which benefit only wealthy individuals and large corporations;

the estate tax as an essential part of a fair tax system, but with higher minimums;

making targeted tax cuts for lower and middle income earners and small business;

the elimination of tax incentives to move jobs offshore; and

collecting revenue from sales of alcohol to pay for alcohol and drug abuse education, prevention, treatment & rehabilitation.

GROWTH

The Democratic Party strongly supports county and municipal efforts to plan for and manage their growth and to protect their quality of life and the diversity of their communities. To this end, we support:

local governments balancing growth with preservation of quality of life, conservation of open space, thoughtful zoning, and involvement of the public in the planning process;

development paying its own way, and legislation permitting any jurisdiction to establish a real estate transfer tax;

the availability of affordable housing with affordable day care in close proximity for all people, especially for those with modest means and disabilities;

universal (disability accessible) design in all new housing; and

the creation of state and federal housing trust funds to increase affordable housing within the means of people with fixed and very low incomes.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

We support:

recognizing the inherent difference between children and adults. We advocate: separate trial and sentencing procedures for serious offenses; juvenile facilities, not prisons, as the best rehabilitation facilities; and a reasonable opportunity for parole and community corrections of convicted juvenile offenders currently serving life in adult prison;

a thorough overhaul of the current system of retributive justice that incarcerates prisoners with little hope for, or assistance with, rehabilitation;

programs of alternative sentencing and restorative justice, particularly for non-violent offenders, and a revision of sentencing guidelines to restore more discretion to judges;

elimination of, or strong public control over, for-profit private prisons that have no current incentive to rehabilitate or release prisoners;

recognizing the need for a major overhaul of the current probation system which is fraught with opportunity for abuse;

restoring the right to vote for felons who have served their time and informing them of their rights; and

full habeas corpus rights.

We believe that lifetime in prison without the possibility of parole should be the maximum penalty.

We call for the protection of the safety of all incarcerated persons.

MILITARY AND VETERANS

In recognition of their service to our country, we support our military and veterans and to this end advocate the following:

competitive pay for personnel in our armed forces;

supplying our troops with the equipment needed to protect them when put in harm's way;

protecting and increasing benefits to veterans and their families, and stopping the erosion of promised benefits;

improving educational benefits for veterans;

policies that fully fund VA hospitals;

lifting the ban on gays in the military;

the Rural Veterans Care Act of Senators Salazar and Thune; and

passing legislation that facilitates the Veteran's Administration's ability to contract with community health providers to provide the medical care that rural isolated veterans would have received at a Veteran's Administration medical facility.

Military personnel should be able to make an informed choice on experimental drugs or treatments.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, & INFRASTRUCTURE

Science and technology are tools of progress and help maintain a stable, educated workforce. To this end, we support:

expanding public transit, including rail, light rail, bus, and other alternatives. Road projects (avoiding toll roads) should only be one component of integrated, multi-modal links between local, regional, and national transportation. We advocate improving access along the I-70 central mountain corridor through the introduction of alternatives other than wholesale highway widening and support a Supplemental draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement to address the egregious bias and methodological deficiencies of the I-70 PEIS, as manifested in its disregard of environmental, cultural, and localized economic impacts.

We support open and equal access to the Internet with restrictions on large conglomerate control;

returning the freedom of inquiry to scientists, appointing qualified scientists to panels without regard to political or religious beliefs, and allowing scientists to publish their results without political interference in order that we may have open, honest debate on public policy;

public research and development programs and public/private partnerships to stimulate job growth; and

the fair and responsible use of technology that advances and promotes civil rights, justice, government services, culture, environment, public safety, health, transportation, communications and jobs.

We support the establishment of a National Deep Underground Science and Engineering Lab at the Henderson Mine Facility in Colorado.

We support the adequate funding of all public and academic libraries.