



INDIANA DEMOCRATIC PARTY

2020 INDIANA DEMOCRATIC PARTY PLATFORM

Building Stronger Communities Together

Fellow Democrats,

Hoosier Democrats are fighting for an Indiana where Hoosiers come first. Where leaders rise to meet challenges head-on. Our candidates, from township office to governor, will fight for common-sense initiatives so Hoosiers can thrive in the 21st-century economy, earn a livable wage, provide for their families and retire with dignity. They will advocate for policies like paid leave and childcare tax credits to lower the cost of living for working families and invest in quality of life initiatives.

We stand for freedom: the freedom to cast a ballot, freedom from the fear of a pre-existing condition bankrupting you or worse, freedom to live in a big city, small town, or anywhere between and have access to good-paying jobs and good schools, and the freedom to pursue your dreams free from discrimination.

Our Party will provide the resources, know-how and grassroots training to help elect Hoosier Democrats at every level who live our values.

Our vision for Indiana is a state led by Hoosier Democrats, where residents live in vibrant communities they are proud to call home. Where they earn the Midwest's highest wages, send their children to top-ranked schools, and live healthy, fulfilling lives.

Hoosier Democratic candidates from the local level to Washington are already putting our principles to work, building stronger communities. They are finding new and innovative ways to train Hoosier workers and to grow well-paying jobs in their communities. They are putting more money in the pockets of working Hoosiers by lowering the cost of health care and expanding coverage. And they are investing to create places where families want to live and where Hoosiers want to start businesses. From Hammond to Gary, South Bend, Lafayette, Indianapolis, Sullivan, New Albany, and everywhere between, Hoosier Democrats are leading. At the Indiana Statehouse and in Congress, Hoosier Democrats fight for common-sense policies that put the Hoosiers they represent first. It's our job to build on their work and to elect more Democrats to offices at every level.

Livable wages. Early childhood and strong public education. Protecting access to affordable health care across the state. Safety, security, and equality. Fairer elections. Democrats are fighting for these principles to build stronger communities.

Let's build on their progress. Let's get to work.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John C. Zady". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chair

AN ECONOMY THAT WORKS FOR ALL HOOSIERS

The facts don't lie. The Indiana economy is leaving Hoosiers behind. The cost of living keeps rising, but Hoosiers' incomes haven't kept up.

Hoosier Democrats are committed to ensuring families do not just make ends meet but thrive. The unemployment rate is not the ultimate barometer of a successful economy because not all jobs are created equal. Too many Hoosiers work more than one job just to put food on the table.

An economy that works for Hoosiers grows good-paying jobs but also proactively provides opportunities for workers to retrain and retool to compete for 21st-century jobs.

An economy that works for all Hoosiers lowers the barriers for Hoosier entrepreneurs to take risks and start businesses right here. Hoosier women earn just 75 cents for every dollar men make. For African American women: 64 cents, Hispanic women: 56 cents, and for Asian women: 77 cents. Lost wages mean fewer resources to spend or save and make the rising cost of living even more difficult to navigate.

To restore this vision for the Indiana economy, Hoosier Democrats will fight to:

- Work to raise incomes in our state, including incrementally increasing the minimum wage to \$15/hour to ensure no person working 40 hours a week lives in poverty while minimizing the impact to small businesses. Earning a sustainable, livable wage allows working families to provide for their families, save for retirement, and get ahead.
- Continue the fight for equal pay for equal work, period.
- Institute a pay equity commission and highlight Indiana businesses that promote pay equity.
- Make two years of community college or technical training tuition-free for high-demand, high-wage positions aligned with local employers' needs for any individual.
- Look beyond renaming existing workforce development programs and target existing workforce training dollars to career-ready programs that teach the skills employers need now.
- Focus high-wage, high-growth economic development efforts to communities with high unemployment or that are underrepresented in traditional economic development efforts.
- Expand broadband internet access to lower barriers for businesses, families, and students in rural areas and study allowing municipalities to be internet service providers.
- Support education on women's rights and work with our women's organizations that support these efforts.
- Incentivize our state's best and brightest to call Indiana home by creating tax incentives for those graduating with degrees in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math).
- Increase the Earned Income Tax Credit and other savings vehicles for low-income Hoosiers.
- Invest in manufacturing to help small businesses purchase equipment and hire new workers through initiatives such as Manufacturing Reinvestment Accounts.
- Promote economic innovation through sustained investment in research and development.

- Ensure Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals can continue to work and access educational opportunities in Indiana, while recognizing the \$500 million in economic activity DACA recipients generate for the Hoosier economy.
- Support small businesses and startups in our state – especially those engaged in technological innovations that help diversify the Hoosier economy.
- Incentivize employers to hire unemployed and underemployed Hoosiers.
- Encourage an extensive evaluation of tax incentives, as well as the establishment of rigorous job creation and accountability standards for economic development tools offered by the state. Claw back any incentives or taxpayer dollars used by companies to offshore Hoosier jobs, and continue to hold accountable those members of the General Assembly who vote against these clawbacks.

A FAIR DEAL FOR INDIANA WORKERS

Too often, incentives and tax breaks flow to corporations all too willing to chase profits by moving Hoosier jobs overseas. Communities in Indianapolis, Huntington, and across the state know the economic uncertainty that comes with companies shipping jobs out of Indiana towns. We must put Hoosier workers before the corporations who do not look out for the best interests of Hoosier families in our state.

We also must recognize organized labor’s critical role in building Indiana’s middle class. Labor unions have fought for fair wages, good benefits, and safer workplaces. As a result, every Hoosier worker enjoys the benefits organized labor fought so hard to win.

Stronger labor unions strengthen the entire workforce. They are instrumental in raising wages for Hoosiers across the economy.

The right of workers to bargain collectively drives wages higher and fuels the growth of the middle class. “Right to Work” laws and other attempts to diminish Hoosier workers’ rights have led to stagnant income growth. Ensuring Indiana has a robust prevailing wage law will help turn lagging wage growth around. It’s time to end Republicans’ war on working families.

The Indiana Democratic Party stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the efforts of our partners in organized labor to remain the foundation of the American marketplace. We’ll fight to repeal efforts to purposefully undermine Hoosier workers’ right to organize and demand fair wages and safe working conditions.

We will:

- Support efforts that close tax loopholes that encourage some corporations to ship American jobs overseas. It is unacceptable that our tax code awards incentives or taxpayer-funded contracts to companies that send Hoosier jobs to other countries.
- Crack down on unfair practices that lead to a loss of Hoosier jobs, including currency manipulation and other tactics that put Indiana manufacturers on an unfair playing field.
- Fully staff the Indiana Occupational Safety and Health Administration to enforce workplace safety guidelines that protect Hoosier workers.
- Enforce vigorous oversight of apprenticeship and work-based learning.
- Oppose unfair trade deals that ship American jobs overseas. We need fair trade, not agreements that have the potential to put American companies at a disadvantage and Hoosiers out of work.
- Support the passage and enforcement of state and federal laws ensuring workers the right to bargain collectively, including those who work in the public sector and simplify the process for workers to organize unions.
- Repeal “Right to Work” and restore the Common Construction Wage and make it stronger to increase working Hoosiers’ incomes and boost local economies.
- Encourage strong and swift penalties for violating labor laws and support banning permanent replacements of workers who strike responsibly.
- Ensure that any new trade agreements include strong standards on labor, the environment, and currency manipulation.
- Oppose any efforts that cancel labor agreements or any measure that endangers workers on the job.
- Work to restore workers’ rights to overtime, combat wage theft, fight the repeal of dues deduction laws, work to restore and enhance prevailing wage protections, and stop companies from mislabeling employees as “independent contractors” to avoid paying benefits and taxes.
- Empower the Indiana Civil Rights Commission to proactively fight pay discrimination at every level and once and for all ensure equal pay for equal work.
- Protect whistle-blowers reporting unsafe or unfair working conditions.
- Reform workers’ compensation to provide injured workers the resources they need to rejoin the workforce and increase compensation.
- Ensure out-of-work Hoosiers have access to adequate unemployment insurance to help them return to the workplace.
- Enforce “Buy American” provisions and ensure no waivers to Buy American procurement procedures.
- Fight for fair scheduling. Providing advance notice of schedules, allowing employees to request days and times without penalty, and providing premium pay for last minute changes or sending workers home early are a few of the strategies that would allow workers to better align their work schedule with childcare.

A WORLD-CLASS PUBLIC EDUCATION

Indiana's Constitution guarantees a quality public education for every Hoosier child.

Indiana ranks dead last in teacher salary increases over the last decade.

Public schools are the center of urban, suburban, and rural communities alike. And Republicans have put their promise in jeopardy. It's time to focus on what's best for student learning again. Indiana is mired in a teacher shortage crisis. For too long, political considerations have outweighed what is best for students. It starts with respecting teachers, educational best practices, and returning the emphasis to the classroom. Average teacher pay in Indiana dropped by 15 percent between 2000 and 2017, the largest drop in the nation.

We will work to:

- Secure fair and adequate funding increases for public schools to ensure access to a balanced curriculum for all students and ensure access to highly effective teachers regardless of their ZIP code.
- End the practice of Hoosier taxpayer dollars funding private or for-profit schools.
- Invest in educators by funding a significant, across-the-board raise in the 2021 budget and ensure classrooms across the state are equipped with the resources – both material and staff – to provide a top-quality learning environment. That includes funding for school counselors, psychologists, preschool educators, and social workers. Indiana should pursue providing the highest median teacher salaries of neighboring states by no later than 2025.
- Promote a positive learning climate for all students. End bullying so all students feel included regardless of their race, color, religion, creed, national origin, economic status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
- Demand access to universal preschool across the state, including the expansion of preschool programs in all public school corporations beginning in the 2021 budget.
- Abolish ISTEP and all other high-stakes tests.
 - Make streamlined, individualized assessments that provide quick feedback to students, families, and educators that show performance and growth over the course of a school year optional.
- Balance teacher evaluations with more meaningfully derived criteria like locally-determined outcome goals.
- Restore collective bargaining on days and hours educators work while cutting down on schools' abilities to use false claims of deficit financing to restrict bargaining.
- Individualize high school graduation plans and expand access to college and career-ready pathways. Ensure all students have a clear pathway to graduation that supports their ability to enter college or begin their career.

- Foster an environment of trust that embraces great teachers and encourages the best and brightest to enter the teaching profession.
- Engage families to increase the literacy rates of Hoosier children by embracing tried-and-true best practices.
- Ensure our schools continue to be safe for all Hoosier children by providing the resources and flexibility for local administrators to develop security solutions that work in their communities while providing adequate state funding.
- Close the digital divide to ensure all students have equal access to technology and resources at school and at home through expanding broadband internet access, especially in rural and underserved areas.
- End the practice of charging fees for public school textbooks and computers.
- Ensure affordable and no-cost meals are available to public schools as needed and end the practice of meal debt-shaming.
- Promote the affordability of higher education for all Hoosiers by ensuring that tuition, textbooks, and other material costs remain as low as possible.
- Expand the *21st Century Scholars* program.
- Offer in-state tuition rates to DREAMers who received DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) status from the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Service.
- Promote prevention and education programs that teach age-appropriate sex education. These programs should focus on medically accurate information for Hoosiers to protect themselves and others.

INVESTING IN HOOSIERS, REDUCING THE COST OF LIVING AND DEVELOPING A 21ST-CENTURY WORKFORCE

Our state’s most valuable resource has always been Hoosiers. Time and again, Hoosiers have proved, with the right tools, our work ethic, ingenuity, and creativity are second to none. To compete in the 21st-century economy, we must invest in Hoosiers and build strong communities.

Hoosier businesses count on a talented workforce but Indiana ranks 45th in labor supply. No matter how low taxes are, businesses won’t relocate or expand if they lack a supply of workers with the right skills.

We need comprehensive approaches that:

- Re-invest in higher education at the state level while encouraging colleges to lower costs. Hoosier Democrats believe students can go to college or receive training that best meets their career goals without being saddled with student loan debt for years to come.
- Allow Hoosiers with student loan debt to refinance at the lowest rate possible and simplify and

expand income-based repayment options.

- Develop an Indiana public service loan forgiveness program that offers a percentage of debt relief for up to five years of public service – including teaching.
- Ensure that any individuals making \$25,000 or less will not accrue interest on student loans and not be required to make payments.
- Action must be taken to address the burgeoning student loan debt crisis, which prevents Hoosiers from achieving critical milestones like homeownership and saving for retirement. Borrowers who have made good faith payments on student loans after 20 years should have the balance of those loans forgiven.
- Incentivize Indiana higher education institutions to develop wraparound support services that increase on-time graduation of students.
- The state shall create a plan and dedicate resources to close by 2030 the racial/ethnic gaps in postsecondary education completion and adult degree/certificate attainment.
- The state shall monitor and publish the student persistence and completion rates at public and private postsecondary institutions, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, Pell grant status, and Indiana county of residence, and offer financial incentives to institutions that are making progress in closing certificate and degree completion gaps of undereducated subgroups.
- Vigorously pursue federal grants for higher education/training programs in high-demand, high-wage jobs.
- Find ways to encourage start-up investment and remove barriers to capital for Hoosier entrepreneurs.
- Provide income-based tax credits to help offset the cost of childcare and reduce Hoosiers' cost of living with the goal of making Indiana the most affordable state for childcare. Incentivize stakeholders to create options in childcare deserts and for second and third shift workers.
- Create a comprehensive paid family leave program that allows new parents – both mothers and fathers – to spend time with their newborn or newly adopted child and for family members to care for an aging or sick loved one without the fear of losing a paycheck or failing to cover bills.
- Ensure that every Hoosier worker has access to a minimum of two weeks of paid sick days.
- Fight to provide stable, affordable housing for Hoosiers in communities across the state. Stable housing is vital to success in employment and education. Reduce evictions by strengthening renter protections and develop incentives to increase affordable housing stock in rural, urban and suburban areas.

SAFE AND STRONG COMMUNITIES

Public safety is vital to thriving communities and providing our children the future they deserve, and it takes an all-hands-on-deck approach. Building safe and strong communities means examining past practices and ensuring every stakeholder has a seat at the table. For too long, Indiana has failed to look inward and evaluate our efforts. It's time to move Indiana forward.

We firmly oppose the practice of racial profiling in all potential applications, especially as a law enforcement tool. Police stops or arrests should be based on evidence of criminal conduct, not on a person's demographic or physical characteristics. More work must be done to correct systemic racism in housing, workplace, health care, environment, and safety policies. For too long, these issues have been addressed at the margins and must be confronted head-on.

We will:

- Make it clear that Indiana does not condone acts of hate by strengthening Indiana's statewide hate crimes law.
- Work with the Indiana General Assembly to ensure that local law enforcement agencies have the resources and tools available to them to keep Hoosiers safe.
- Attack Indiana's opioid epidemic by mustering state and local agencies to track, investigate, and prosecute pill mills and dealers. We will also focus on preventing and treating addiction.
- Expand on recent criminal code reforms to explore ways in which penalties can be more fairly assessed and ensure the criminal justice system is centered on rehabilitation and redemption.
- Study policies requiring that bail be set using evidence-based risk assessments to ensure low-income, low-risk offenders don't remain in jail simply because they can't afford bail, fines, or fees.
- Provide grants for local law enforcement agencies to institute de-escalation and bias training and fully fund public defenders' offices.
- Close the gun show and terrorist watch-list loophole and ensure every transaction involving the sale of a firearm includes a comprehensive background check. Strengthen child access prevention laws to ensure the safe storage of firearms.
- Take steps to reduce recidivism including expanding work release and education programs to help ex-offenders find jobs and reintegrate into society.
- Streamline the criminal record expungement process and make expungement assistance available at Department of Workforce Development Work One locations.
- Work with law enforcement agencies, health care groups, and other stakeholders to legalize medical marijuana, decriminalize the possession of small amounts of marijuana, and automatically expunge the records of Hoosiers convicted of marijuana possession.
- Protect survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, harassment, and stalking through legislation.

HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES AND LOWERING THE COST OF QUALITY CARE

The United States is the richest country on earth, yet we rank near last among industrialized countries in health care coverage.

As Democrats, we believe health care is a right, not a privilege. The Affordable Care Act was an enormous step forward. More Americans than ever before now have the peace of mind and security that comes with knowing their family is covered.

Pre-existing conditions no longer mean a lifetime of medical debt, a loss of coverage, or worse.

But there's much more to be done. We must curb the rising cost of premiums and prescription drugs, preserve Medicare, and fight any efforts to decrease access to affordable health care. The Affordable Care Act isn't perfect and it's up to Democrats to work together to make universal health coverage a reality for every American. Lower costs. better care.

We must also stem the rising tide of opioid addiction in our communities. Indiana's opioid overdose death rate has quadrupled since 1999. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates there are 109 opioid prescriptions for every 100 Hoosiers. And Indiana lags neighboring states in access to treatment. We must take proactive steps to end this scourge.

We must:

- Lower health care costs by making premiums more affordable, reducing out-of-pocket expenses and capping prescription drug costs while maintaining protections for those with pre-existing conditions and prohibitions on lifetime coverage caps.
- Fight attempts to cap, block-grant, or eliminate critical funding for the Healthy Indiana Plan or HIP 2.0.
- Guarantee insurance companies cover basic health services, like mental health coverage, substance abuse coverage, maternity care, and prescription drugs.
- Expand tax credits to more middle-class Hoosiers, including those with incomes above 400 percent of the federal poverty level.
- Adequately fund outreach programs to ensure Hoosiers know which health care options are available to them.
- Block any Republican effort to privatize, "voucherize," or phase out Medicare.
- Expand access to mental health and addiction treatment by preserving and expanding care options through HIP 2.0 and the Affordable Care Act. This includes supporting efforts to address the shortage of workers in the addiction treatment field.
- Develop a HIP 2.0 buy-in option for Hoosiers earning more than the allowable limits so they can retain health care coverage. This program allows working people to earn more income without the risk of losing vital health care coverage or provides an alternative for those with expensive employer-provided coverage. Any Hoosier with employer coverage whose premiums exceeds 9.86 percent of their income could instead purchase individual market coverage with financial assistance.
- Work with stakeholders and relevant state agencies to create opioid treatment benchmarks to determine progress and success for those participating in treatment so the state can direct resources to the most successful options.

- Invest in community health centers, especially in traditionally underserved and rural areas. Expand coverage to cover the 16 Indiana counties without a hospital.
- Incentivize health practitioners, doctors, and nurses to work in rural and underserved areas through tuition forgiveness and other methods.
- Promote the health and safety of women and their families, including access to vital health services and care to obtain preventive and family planning services, including all forms of birth control and abortion.
- Work to stop harmful legislation that puts women and Hoosier families' safety at risk by putting lawmakers between women and their doctors and endangering the doctor-patient relationship.
- Support efforts to reduce Indiana's high infant and maternal mortality rate, including the fight to ensure access to affordable and ongoing medical and prenatal care, expanding postpartum coverage, and targeting implicit biases that contribute to higher mortality rates for women of color.
- Fight against legislators forcing doctors to perform unnecessary medical procedures on patients.
- Fight for legislation that promotes medically accurate information be given to patients.
- Stand with Hoosier women against legislation that further erodes any rights that have been gained and continue efforts for more protection under the law towards equality and preservation of their health care choices.

EQUALITY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL: PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF ALL HOOSIERS

The Indiana Democratic Party is proud of our longstanding commitment to and support for civil rights and equality. We support making the promise of “equal protection under the law” a reality for all.

As the Party of inclusion, we strongly oppose the restriction of opportunities to Hoosiers based on race, religion, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, economic background, or as a person with a disability.

A key step forward is electing more public officials that reflect the communities they represent. Hoosier Democrats are committed to providing the resources, training, and tools to those candidates.

We reaffirm our commitment to fully embrace Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, as well as full enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 for Hoosiers with disabilities and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act.

As Democrats, we believe that older workers are a vital part of the workforce and that prohibitions against age discrimination should be enforceable in the same manner and to the same extent as any

other discrimination. We also continue to support legislation that would protect the freedom of all Hoosiers and create tougher penalties for those who infringe, criminally or otherwise, on those freedoms.

We are concerned with accessibility issues for those with disabilities, including personal income limits and attaining and sustaining personal care when needed. We also believe that a state Family and Medical Leave Act should be ratified and that meaningful remedies be available when a person is subjected to discrimination and seeks redress under our state's civil rights statute. Further, Hoosiers should not be bound by their disabilities. Therefore, Democrats will advocate for a better environment for entrepreneurship and small business opportunities for Hoosiers with disabilities.

We believe those who wish to make a life for themselves and their families in Indiana should be afforded the opportunity to do so. Furthermore, it is unconscionable for any human being to be exploited or abused. Every Hoosier deserves to be treated with basic human decency and should be allowed to pursue the American dream.

We believe that state and local governments, as well as the private sector, should create a truly diverse and inclusive economic infrastructure by making it a priority to buy goods and services from minority contractors.

Republican leaders at the Statehouse have invested too much time and taxpayer resources focused on divisive social issues that send an unwelcoming message to those around us.

This is simple. As Democrats, we believe in full rights and protections for all people in our country, regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or ability. These are our neighbors and any effort to reduce or restrict their rights and protections will ultimately hobble the Hoosier economy and send a signal that Indiana is an unwelcoming state.

The Indiana Democratic Party opposes all forms of discrimination based upon sexual orientation or gender identity and all efforts to enshrine discrimination in our state's Constitution. As Democrats, we oppose discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodation and we strongly support the adoption of a statewide policy barring discrimination against LGBTQ+ Hoosiers.

Democrats are working to ensure that every Hoosier gets a fair shot to achieve the American dream. For the sake of current and future generations, we feel it is our duty to put an end to any injustices that threaten that goal. In the Indiana Democratic Party, everyone has, and always will have, a voice.

ELECTION REFORM AND REDISTRICTING

To restore trust in government, the Indiana Democratic Party supports the right of every eligible Hoosier citizen to register to vote and cast a ballot without undue burden, fear, or intimidation.

Voting is our most fundamental right as citizens, one that preserves all other rights and ensures the legitimacy of our political system.

As Hoosier Democrats, we:

- Vehemently oppose any politically-motivated efforts aimed at disenfranchising any voter of our state, including efforts to make it difficult for voters to obtain identification or restricting access to polling locations.
- Support expanded access to early voting through sufficient early voting sites across the state.
- Extend the hours polls are open to 6am-9pm on Election Day. Indiana has some of the shortest Election Day voting hours in the nation.
- Automatically register all eligible US citizens with an Indiana driver's license unless they choose to opt out and allow for same-day voter registration.
- Support the opportunity to vote by mail for all Hoosier voters without requiring an excuse to do so.
- Support redistricting reform to maximize voter participation and end the practice of gerrymandering, where politicians choose their voters, instead of the other way around.
 - The Indiana General Assembly must immediately create an independent redistricting commission that will draw maps based on legitimate legal factors and exclude political considerations.
- Advocate for reforms to campaign finance laws that disrupt the ability for all Hoosiers to participate in the political process and allow undue influence from outside interests and those with the deepest pockets. It's time for dramatic changes in campaign finance laws to eliminate the extraordinary influence exercised by special interests and the wealthy.

SECURING THE FUTURE OF OUR MOST VULNERABLE HOOSIERS

Every Hoosier deserves a fair shot at success, economic security, and earning a good living. The Indiana Democratic Party has a long and proud tradition of championing policies that provide Hoosiers with a launching pad to achieve their full potential.

We know that children live better lives when their families are strong.

We know that families are stronger when they reside in communities that connect them to economic opportunities, social networks, and services. These connections include employment, health care, education, adequate nutrition, housing, technology, culture, and safe child care.

We are committed to enabling the economic stability of all Indiana families by minimizing barriers to employment. Transportation, childcare, education, discrimination, and eldercare are all potential obstacles that can prevent individuals from reaching their full potential in the workforce. The Indiana Democratic Party supports policies that will assist Hoosier workers with these issues and provide opportunities to earn success.

- Fully-fund the Department of Child Services (DCS) to achieve a meaningful decrease in child abuse and neglect and a significant reduction in deaths of abused and neglected children.
- Ensure family case managers are properly trained and compensated and develop a tuition forgiveness program for college graduates who work for DCS.

We have a moral obligation to take care of our nation's seniors, and after a lifetime of paying into these programs, we have a responsibility to ensure that both Medicare and Social Security are preserved for current and future retirees. We must ensure the state programs designed to help protect and support our Hoosier seniors are adequately funded.

The Indiana Democratic Party believes that vulnerable Hoosiers, including senior citizens and low-income families, must not be the victims of those who would take advantage of them through risky mortgages, loans, or identity and investment schemes. Hoosier families must be free from the fear of losing money to predatory lenders or dubious commercial enterprises. We should also recognize the importance of consumer protections by supporting efforts to bolster cybersecurity and fraud reduction.

As the Party that advocates for all Hoosiers, we:

- Fully support adequate funding for substance abuse treatment and prevention services, including programs for prenatal substance abuse prevention. Indiana must adequately address the needs of people with HIV/AIDS, while at the same time provide access to education and prevention services to reduce the number of new infections following the previous administration's trepidation in response to the outbreak in Southern Indiana.
- Fight food insecurity and make clear we are committed to a guarantee that, in the richest country in the world, no Hoosier should go hungry.

CONSERVING OUR LAND, PROMOTING ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

The Indiana Democratic Party believes in a strong, balanced approach to energy production and environmental stewardship and is keenly aware that our state's economy depends on healthy land. We believe a responsible and comprehensive energy policy should provide clean, affordable energy to Hoosier families and businesses while promoting domestic production and national security. We also must face the existential threat climate change poses to every element of our lives.

Hoosiers have a tremendous opportunity to contribute to the evolving energy economy. The production of renewable and alternative energy sources could create jobs and compete with conventional sources of power to drive down the cost of power, spur innovation, and preserve our land.

We also recognize Hoosier communities and our economy are built on the foundation of our natural resources—from Lake Michigan and the Hoosier National Forest to our rivers and streams and fertile farmland.

As Hoosiers continue to innovate, we should acknowledge that our land, the air we breathe, and the water we drink are critical elements of the Hoosier economy and must be maintained and protected.

The Indiana Democratic Party believes that we must:

- Modernize and retool our state's economy to replace the manufacturing jobs that have vanished from Indiana. We must utilize the skills of our workforce to attract “green” manufacturing and invest in renewable energies, both of which will sustain the environment and provide high-skilled, high-paying jobs.
- Renewables are the fastest-growing segment of electricity generation. Align subsidies and regulations to accelerate the transition from dirtier and more expensive fuels to cleaner, less costly alternatives. The transition to renewables can help reduce the cost of living for working Hoosiers.
- Target investment to communities disproportionately impacted by offshoring or environmental injustice.
- Partner with labor to protect and expand jobs by developing apprenticeship pipelines and funding for retraining. We owe it to workers and communities who powered generations of economic growth. We will not leave workers behind.
- Identify and reduce Indiana's carbon footprint.
- Protect our state forests from unnecessary lumber harvesting and regularly audit our state’s natural resources for long-term environmental sustainability.
- Promote energy efficiency programming across the state by restoring programs such as the Energize Indiana program.

Several counties across Indiana that have high concentrations of industry — northwest along Lake Michigan, southwest along the Ohio River and in Central Indiana — have some of the highest rates of asthma emergency department visits, according to state data.

- Promote an all-of-the-above energy strategy to decrease our dependence on foreign oil, which poses a serious threat to our economy and our national security. Fluctuating gas prices create economic insecurity and force Hoosier families to make difficult sacrifices.
- Support measures that will ensure and protect our supply of clean water and encourage comprehensive water consumption and groundwater protection plans.
- Communities of color are more likely to live in neighborhoods with higher concentrations of air pollution. They are disproportionately impacted by violations of clean water and air standards.

Strengthen environmental justice by increasing the enforcement of clean air/water quality standards and providing the Indiana Department of Environmental Management the resources they need to rehire the appropriate staff.

- Restore funding cuts to IDEM’s hazardous waste management program, Office of Water Quality, and inject \$35 million to return IDEM to its funding level from a decade ago, adjusted for inflation.

Indiana is a heavy industry state and already a top emitter. Based on data from EPA’s Toxic Release Inventory, Indiana has the most releases of toxic chemicals nationwide per square mile.

- Promote programs that encourage waste reduction and recycling.
- Increase investment in sustainable farming, fishing, forestry research, and best practices.
- Become a leader in farmland preservation, air quality improvement, and economic growth.

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO THE CROSSROADS OF AMERICA

Indiana’s infrastructure is crumbling. From outdated bridges to dial-up internet, Indiana lacks a true foundation for faster and more efficient modes of transportation. Local communities struggle to maintain what they have - let alone the capacity to improve or expand.

Indiana’s location, at the “Crossroads of America,” is a strategic advantage that Republicans are forfeiting through underinvestment and wasteful spending.

Strong communities and a growing economy depend on a comprehensive approach to infrastructure. This approach should go beyond roads and bridges to include railways, ports, airports, transit, waterways and internet access.

The Indiana Democratic Party strongly backs making significant and strategic investments in Indiana’s infrastructure through the targeted use of federal and state dollars. Construction of highways and bridges must be adequately financed with a combination of resources to ensure that everyone pays a fair share of the burden. We support developing and expanding public mass transit initiatives to reduce congestion and pollution, especially for high-density population centers with disproportionately low-income residents. Better transit options mean better access to good-paying jobs. Infrastructure investment is as critical to the Indiana economy as it is to Hoosier communities. In addition, we must:

- Develop a comprehensive approach that targets dollars to projects where investment leverages future growth, like expanded broadband internet access in rural communities or investment in water and wastewater infrastructure, where some communities still rely on wooden pipes.
- Ensure Hoosier taxpayers receive a fair share of federal transportation funding by maximizing available funding. Indiana currently receives 91% of its share of Highway Trust Fund contributions. We need to increase the rate of return on our tax dollars by leveraging federal funds so the State of Indiana and local governments have the infrastructure to support and attract businesses to Indiana.
- Study alternative methods to fund future infrastructure needs and move away from regressive funding mechanisms that place a higher burden on low-income and working Hoosiers.
- Attach stiff penalties to private sector partners that fail to uphold their end of any infrastructure deals or do not meet an agreed-upon timetable.
- Achieve our long-term infrastructure investment goals with an eye on Indiana’s future, environmental sustainability, and the prosperity of our state for generations to come.

HONORING OUR VETERANS

The Indiana Democratic Party honors those who serve in the United States Armed Forces, as well as the Indiana National Guard and Air National Guard. The dedication of an individual in this endeavor is the ultimate selfless act on behalf of one’s state and country.

We continue to applaud the sacrifices of these individuals and their families to serve our nation and to defend and protect the principles of democracy.

It is our steadfast belief that we must continue to be committed to giving our brave men and women the tools to succeed in whatever endeavor our nation faces, whether it’s at home or abroad. We must help bridge the gap between military families and the benefits they’ve rightfully earned.

Our Party is committed to providing our aging and newly-returned veterans the benefits they have earned. Our duty to those who serve our nation does not end when they leave that service. We must guarantee that our veterans have access to the health benefits, education, and job opportunities we promised them.

This includes championing legislation that:

- Gives veterans assistance in the job market and makes it easier for businesses to hire those who serve our country.
- Incentivizes veterans to start new businesses and gives preference to veteran-owned businesses for state contracts.
- Manages services for women veterans and military families.

- Removes restrictive timeframes to give military families as much access to needed assistance as possible.
- Continues to focus on the growing problems of PTSD, traumatic brain injuries, and prevention of military suicides. It is imperative that we respect, care, and prepare for new sets of challenges met by our veterans so that they may come home to Indiana and be successful.

RESTORING TRUST AND BALANCE IN GOOD GOVERNMENT

In today's hyper-political environment, the premise behind "good government" can easily get lost. Trust in government is dangerously low and leaders at the highest levels of government are more interested in creating problems than solving them.

The Indiana Democratic Party is working to restore trust in good government by sharing an aggressive, results-based vision for how the Indiana government can do much, much better.

Through our principles of fiscal responsibility, common sense, and inclusion, we can renew our focus on building opportunities for working Hoosiers, rather than on an ideology that plays to the politics of division and fear.

Hoosiers deserve leadership that will consider the full impact of fiscal decisions instead of elected officials who chase headlines to score cheap political points.

The Indiana Democratic Party believes ethical governance is rooted in honesty, accountability, and transparency. We believe that high ethical standards must be restored and put in place at every level in state government. Values based upon the highest principles must be commonplace in the Governor's Office, the General Assembly and all state agencies and elected offices.

Government ethics should be applied and enforced with an objective standard, and investigations should be conducted independently, thoroughly, and publicly to make certain that violators are handled accordingly and all questions raised are answered.