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DEMOCRATIC FREEDOM CAUCUS

Purpose:

The Democratic Freedom Caucus (DFC) is a progressive, pro-freedom caucus in the Democratic Party. The purpose of the DFC is to promote individual liberty, constitutional democracy, and social responsibility. Activities of the DFC include electoral campaigns, legislative advocacy, and education of the public.

Principles:

A) Personal Liberty

Freedom of speech, press, religion, belief, philosophy, lifestyle, and political activity. Individuals should have the freedom to engage in any activity that does not violate others' freedom. Liberty also includes the right to legitimate self-defense.

B) Economic Liberty

1) *Property rights based on justice.* There are two forms of property:

a) human-made products, such as cars, houses, and machinery; and

b) land, which refers to spatial locations, along with the natural resources within those locations. Each individual has the right to keep the rewards from his or her labor. However, since no person made the land, property in land needs to be treated somewhat differently from other types of property, to prevent over-concentrated ownership of land and natural resources.

Taxes on income, sales, or buildings all take away the rewards of labor, so they are the most harmful kinds of taxes. The least harmful tax is a tax on land location value or on extraction of natural resources, because those are not products of labor, but are fixed resources.

2) *End corporate welfare.* Government should not subsidize special interests. Licensing laws should not be monopolistic.

3) *Consumer protection.* There should be strong laws against business fraud and false advertising.

4) *Worker protection.* There should be strong laws against fraud in employment practices, such as misleading workers about the safety of work environments.

5) *Environmental protection.* There should be strong laws against polluting the air or water that others must use. Government should not subsidize developers.

6) *Free trade between free countries.* We should phase in free trade with other free countries at the same time that we are phasing in freedom within our own country, by removing the obstacles that hinder productivity here. It is unjust to allow imports of foreign products made with slave labor (in countries with very little freedom, the workers' lack of freedom can sometimes border on slavery).

C) Limited Government.

1) *Essential government services.* Government should only provide those services that cannot be provided adequately by the non-government sector at this time, and which are necessary for the public interest. Government should not provide any services that can be provided adequately by the non-government sector.

2) *Government incentives.* For those essential services that need to be provided by government, we should attempt to

introduce incentives for government efficiency.

3) *Constitutional democracy.* The U.S. Bill of Rights (the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution) should be enforced. Government at any level should have a clear bill of rights, which should be enforced.

4) *Jury rights.* The right to a genuine trial by jury is one of the most important means of preventing government from violating its constitution and individual rights. Juries should be informed of their traditional right to judge the constitutionality of a law, in addition to judging the facts, as applied to a specific case. Neither prosecution nor defense should be allowed to pack a jury so as to make it biased or unrepresentative.

5) *U.S. defense, not world police.* The military should defend the territory of the U.S., rather than being the world's policeman. Our military should certainly not be used to prop up foreign dictators, or to subsidize multinational corporations.

D) Social Responsibility

In cases of essential services, such as infrastructure or assistance for the needy, there should only be cuts in these services if adequate services can be provided in the non-government sector. Recipients of government assistance also have a responsibility to help themselves if they are able. A goal of government assistance should be to try to get people to the point where they can take care of themselves, if at all possible.