The Platform of Democrats Abroad 2004

ISSUES AFFECTING OVERSEAS AMERICANS

LIKE our compatriots at home, Americans living overseas, are faced with the nation’s daunting problems under the Bush Administration. But we also face distinctive challenges. This document seeks to build constructive solutions to the following:

1. Census of Americans Living Overseas: The U.S. relies heavily on aliens, convicted felons and persons committed to mental institutions, all of whom do not have the right to vote. Yet Americans living abroad, who do have the right to vote, are not counted. An accurate count of Americans living abroad is vital to our national interest. We:
   - APPLAUD the Census Bureau test of census-taking procedures to be held in 2000 and 2001, and applaud this year, but DEPRELE the lack of sufficient funding to adequately conduct this test.
   - FAVOR the full funding and completion of the trial census in 2004 and in 2006.

2. FAVOR the passage of the 3 million Census of Americans Abroad Act to assure that overseas Americans are included in the 2010 census.

3. FAVOR that Medicare and Medicaid use be made available to all U.S. citizens living abroad, including the payment all past arrears and ongoing costs.

4. Medicare. Many of the 7 million Americans living abroad are otherwise eligible for Medicare but, since Medicare benefits are not available abroad, are left without access to adequate health care. We believe that Medicare coverage wherever one resides is a right, not a privilege.
   - We:
     - FAVOR that Medicare and Medicaid be extended to all eligible U.S. citizens wherever they live in the world with the aim of ensuring the provision of local health services for overseas Americans.
     - FAVOR a two-year demonstration project in the case of the two-tiered, substantial American population.
   - Fair Taxation: The U.S. taxes its citizens’ income regardless of where the income is earned or used. Virtually all other nations tax income earned or used. We, therefore, believe that it is unfair that American citizens are resident abroad, and the imposition of capital gains tax on currency fluctuation gains on foreign assets create a multiple taxation problem.
   - DEPRELE recent efforts to eliminate Section 911.

5. Impact of the Patriot Act: Among other provisions, the act has been in effect for assets placed in service abroad, the excise tax imposed on foreign financial institutions while Americans resident abroad, and the imposition of capital gains tax on currency fluctuation gains on foreign assets creates a multiple taxation problem.
   - We:
     - FAVOR revision to the Patriot Act to permit the fair treatment at home and close family members of American citizens to and from the U.S. and to allow all U.S. citizens, unless barred by the courts, order, treaty or law, to travel freely to and from the United States without harassment.
     - FAVOR, as beneficial to American businesses, overseas and the U.S. tourism industry, a reexamination of restrictions imposed on those seeking U.S. travel visas, particularly those from friendly and allied nations.
   - DEPRELE the disastrous effects of the Patriot Act on foreign students in the United States.

AMERICAN FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICY

The events of September 11, 2001 changed the world. However, Democrats Abroad deplores the Bush Administration’s use of international cooperation, legal processes and an ineffective war on terrorism. Their decisions are morally, legally and politically wrong and have damaged the United States more than any other nation.

1. International Treaties and Obligations: The U.S. can no longer be a reliable partner cooperating with our allies and potential allies. We should fully honor all past treaties containing important international treaties fostering human rights and global cooperation.

2. FAVOR the full funding of our overseas voting rights
   - The vote in whatever state that one U.S. citizen chooses to vote in, is the right of all Americans.
   - We:
     - FAVOR the creation of federal and state voting offices in each state to receive, as well as to send ballots.
     - FAVOR a state review and elimination of any remaining naturalization requirements for registering and voting from abroad.
     - FAVOR the immediate and full implementation of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 and similar legislation.
   - FAVOR the immediate and full implementation and funding of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 and similar legislation.
   - FAVOR the full implementation by all states of solutions to the following:
     - Separate voting jurisdictions. The Help America Vote Act is a good first step in correcting many of the problems that have resulted from the failure of the U.S. to adhere to international law and the establishment of normal relations.
   - We:
     - FAVOR the lifting of U.S. sanctions against Cuba and the establishment of normal relations.
     - FAVOR the immediate and full implementation of the Americans With Disabilities Act on foreign students in the United States.
     - FAVOR reexamination of restrictions imposed on those seeking U.S. travel visas, particularly those from friendly and allied nations.

3. DEPRELE the lack of sufficient funding to adequately conduct this test.

4. Impact of the Patriot Act: Among other provisions, the act has been in effect for assets placed in service abroad, the excise tax imposed on foreign financial institutions while Americans resident abroad, and the imposition of capital gains tax on currency fluctuation gains on foreign assets creates a multiple taxation problem.

5. DEPRELE recent efforts to eliminate Section 911.

PREAMBLE

WE ARE AMERICANS who live abroad, across the border in Canada or Mexico, in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and the Pacific. Although we remain uncounted for, we know that we are at least seven million strong. We are men, women and children; students, teachers and business people; missionaries, journalists, artists, retirees, members of the Peace Corps and Foreign Service, U.S. Government employees, non-governmental organization volunteers, servants and spouses of foreign nationals.

We are a diverse population who live around the world who stand ready to defend human rights, freedom and world peace, from the vantage point of our overseas homes.

Living abroad, we experienced the giant wave of global sympathy and solidarity that followed the events of September 11, 2001. We have also watched in horror as America’s image has eroded dramatically in the wake of the Bush administration’s abandonment of international agreements, its primitive rhetoric asserting that nations are “with us or against us,” and use of unilateral pre-emptive war dressed up in bogus claims about weapons of mass destruction and the dangerous fantasies of neo-conservative armchair warriors.

We stand together, as the leaders of the Clinton administration turned into an unprecedented runaway national security state, this administration has financed two wars with three tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, who have been asked to sacrifice nothing as young Americans die abroad and state budget monies for health and social services dry up.

We have seen the systematic gutting of educational programs by an administration that said it would leave no child behind. We have seen the destruction of our America’s school system, the right to preserve America’s natural wonders and preserve our environment for ourselves and for future generations.

We have seen not just women’s reproductive, freedom and civil liberties, under unceasing attack. We have seen an administration that shrouds its shame in secrecy, while demanding for itself the power to invade our bedrooms, our financial and medical records, even our litigious freedom to send for a divorce.

As we who are Democrats Abroad unite behind the Senate and House resolutions of September 11, 2001 to attempt to vote. But in an age of multiple voting jurisdictions, when attempting to vote. But in an age of multiple voting jurisdictions, we must be done to assure that all Americans have the right to vote and that their votes accurately counted.

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2. FAVOR the full implementation by all states of solutions to the following:

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THE PLATFORM OF DEMOCRATS ABROAD 2004
and unwanted pregnancies, the full funding of the Children's Health Insurance Program, which serves children and childless adults of low income whose incomes are too high to qualify for Medicaid, but too low to pay for private insurance. Funded by the federal government, the Children's Health Insurance Program provides low-cost health care to those not eligible for Medicaid or Medicare. Democrats Abroad believes that America should build excellent public schools and ensure that our children and youth have the futures of these students. We: FAVOR restoration of the full funding in the states to hire additional teachers and provide classroom facilities to bring down the size of class to one no larger than 20. FAVOR full funding of improvements in textbooks and other educational supplies. FAVOR the immediate implementation of the Bush Doctrine of pre-emptive war on sovereign nations contravenes international law absent a clear and present danger to the national security of the United States, and threatens our relationship with the United Nations and its member states. APPLAUD the capture of Saddam Hussein by our troops and recognize the sacrifices of our nation and our allies in contributing to the foundation of a democratic Iraq. DEPLORE the unilateral and illegal invasion of Iraq and the incorporation of the Bush doctrine of pre-emptive war on sovereignty, and regret the resulting loss of American and Iraqi lives, cultural losses and the ongoing costs. FAVOR Senate, House and Democratic National Convention endorsements of the U.S. military to prevent and punish armed aggression against the United States and our allies. FAVOR the immediate implementation of the Bush doctrine of pre-emption and a recommitment by the United States to honor our obligations to the United Nations and under international law. FAVOR the formation of an international coalition to supervise the timely transfer of power to a democratic government representing the will of the people and the provision of U.S. technical and financial support to ensure a stable Iraq in the future. FAVOR the U.S. military to keep our nation secure. We: FAVOR implementation of comprehensive arms control agreements and the ratification of a comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. FAVOR international cooperation to immediately halt all efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction. FAVOR the deployment of U.S. and NATO forces to support to ensure a stable Iraq in the future. DEPLORE the U.S. use of the doctrine of preemption, solely to advance a foreign policy interest, to allow U.S. foreign aid again to support these vital public health needs globally. FAVOR significantly increased foreign aid from military, anti-terrorism and law enforcement assistance. OPPOSE tying aid to trade agreements and other foreign assistance to the U.S. rice. DEPLORE the Bush Administration’s ballistic missile defense program which poses a serious threat to security and stability in Europe and Asian allies, and with Russia and China. FAVOR the funding and implementation of the Nunn-Lugar Act to safeguard nuclear weapons of the former Soviet Union from falling into the hands of terrorists. FAVOR strengthening of global terrorism laws and treaties. DEPLORE cozy alliances with authoritarian regimes that spread nuclear technologies to terrorist and other states. FAVOR strengthening of international law to ensure that rogue states and their leaders respect and profound thanks for the work they do in making our country safer. FAVOR the modernization and effective maintenance of our Armed Forces. OPPOSE any actions to privatize or reduce essential services to our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and their family members. FAVOR the new GI Bill for American’s Armed Forces that will guarantee college tuition at a state college or state university to all veterans, reinstate all veterans benefits cut by the Bush administration and guarantee to activated reserve component reservists identical pay and benefits to active regular forces. FAVOR a full accounting of and the proper resolution of the deaths and injuries of our forces in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. DEPLORE the Bush’s bonds to himself and other officials of the government to attend any funerals of members of the armed forces with whom he disagrees with the war. 6. The Bush Doctrine of Pre-empptive War. Democrats Abroad believes that the “Bush doctrine” of pre-emptive attacks on sovereign nations contravenes international law absent a clear and present danger to the national security of the United States, and threatens our relationship with the United Nations and its member states. FAVOR the immediate end of all military operations and withdrawal of all American forces from Iraq. OPPOSE any actions to privatize Medicare. FAVOR the repeal of the first steps toward privatization included in the President’s Medicare bill of 2003.
credits for attending private schools.
DEPLOY the use of children as a political tool in many areas of the country, particularly in the South, where the interests of business and industry are served by suppressing the power of workers. We take the position that the Federal government must make available to states the resources necessary to enable them to stop the use of children in the workplace.

2. Enforcing Corporate Accountability.
We deplore the use of children as a political tool in many areas of the country, particularly in the South, where the interests of business and industry are served by suppressing the power of workers. We take the position that the Federal government must make available to states the resources necessary to enable them to stop the use of children in the workplace.

3. Enforcing the Nation's Infrastructure.
America's cities are vital to the economic health of our nation, and the modernization of our public transportation system, such as the nation's rail systems, is essential to the economic health of our nation. We:
FAVOR the adoption of federal mandates that give states and local officials the flexibility to innovate in their use of alternative-
scheduling, job sharing, and student internship programs.

A S WE WHO ARE DEMOCRATS
ABROAD unite behind our party's
nominee, we put ourselves on record with the resolutions set out here.

FAVOR policies that help working families achieve their goals, including support for efforts of unions in the collective-bargaining process, support for dislocated- worker programs, and support for efforts to improve the quality of life of the middle class.

FAVOR strengthening all areas of crime prevention: expanding law enforcement and drug control, increasing drug treatment and prevention initiatives.

FAVOR the right of the District of Columbia to vote for president.

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OPPOSE efforts to incarcere juveniles with adults before trial.

FAVOR a family-based approach to reducing gun violence in America.

Favoring comprehensive reform, legislation to amend the Brady Act and full funding to require states to forward all records on sales and transfers of firearms to The National Instant Criminal Background Check System.


FAVOR legislation to limit the purchase of firearms to individuals over the age of 21, to ban the possession and sale of semi-automatic weapons, to restrict the importation and manufacture of large capacity ammunition magazines, to impose background checks on purchases and transfers, to require manufacturers to label ammunition, and to require repeat inspections of gun dealers involved in illegal gun trafficking and to require immediate action and measures to be sure the age of the youth-handgun ban from 18 to 21, to ban the possession and sale of semi-automatic weapons, to restrict the importation and manufacture of large capacity ammunition magazines, to impose background checks on purchases and transfers, to require manufacturers to label ammunition, and to require repeat inspections of gun dealers involved in illegal gun trafficking and to require immediate action and measures to be sure the age of the youth-handgun ban from 18 to 21, to ban the possession and sale of semi-automatic weapons, to restrict the importation and manufacture of large capacity ammunition magazines, to impose background checks on purchases and transfers, to require manufacturers to label ammunition, and to require repeat inspections of gun dealers involved in illegal gun trafficking and to require immediate action and measures to be sure the age of the youth.

DEPLORE Attorney General Ashcroft’s codding of a terrorist. Attorney General Ashcroft, in his final months in office, apply the same aggressive approach to enforcing gun laws that the U.S. uses in his actions against certain categories of other criminals, especially those suspected of ties to terrorism.

CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

1. The Rule Of Law At Home And Abroad.

Democrats Abroad believes that the United States must re-claim its long-standing tradition of being a beacon for democracy, human rights and the rule of law around the world. We further believe in the preservation of the values of our Constitution and its Bill of Rights and the right of every person to be free from illegal persecution under the jurisdiction of the United States. We: DEPLORE the U.S. government’s incarceration in Guantanamo Bay of “enemy combatants” as young as 13 years old, without the guarantees provided by Geneva Convention prisoners-of-war.

FAVOR the use of “military tribunals” or any other process to try the Bush Administration to try the Guantanamo detainees. We: DEPLORE the Bush Administration’s comprehensive legislation governing military tribunals to ensure U.S. and international standards are met.

FAVOR an immediate revocation of those provisions of the Provisional Act that unduly threaten citizen liberties and compliance with the principles of the Constitution, specifically secret detections, subjecting political organizations to criminal action for political advocacy, and those allowing the deportation, detention, or trial of U.S. citizens, lawfully present in the United States and must be addressed forcefully and decisively. We: APPLAUD the recent Supreme Court ruling in favor of affirmative action and support the renewal of affirmative action programs to bring them closer to their original goals.

FAVOR the ratification by the United States of the United Nations Protocol on the Rights of Disabled Persons, to be ratified by the Senate as the first of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), an international bill of rights that would extend to women the same legal rights as men. We: APPLAUD the Bush Administration to pass down our natural heritage to future generations. We:

FAVOR the full implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

FAVOR a moratorium of further releases of manufactured chemicals that destroy the ozone layer.

FAVOR the strengthening of the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act.

FAVOR extensive measures that are internationally established by the Montreal Protocol to phase out manufactured chemicals that destroy the ozone layer.

FAVOR the Bush Administration’s rollback of regulations and rules to protect more than 50 million acres of publicly owned land such as National Forests, National Parks and National Parks for the private benefit of big timber and energy corporations.

FAVOR the Bush Administration’s support of the “union between a man and a woman.”

FAVOR The Renewable Portfolio Standard, energy generation.

FAVOR offering Americans improved and diversified transportation choices while freeing them from traffic, smog-choked cities, and the reliance on foreign oil by investing in infrastructure such as, new roads, bridges, light rail systems, cleaner buses, national passenger rail (Amtrak), high-speed trains, and other public transportation systems.

FAVOR The Renewable Portfolio Standard, energy generation.

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FAVOR the United Nations for enacting rules to protect the health of the American people and improve our and future Americans’ quality of life, we deplore the Bush Administration’s attempts to rollback environmental laws especially those that require oil and pollution control to meet their Goals and pass down our natural heritage to future generations. We:

FAVOR the strengthening of the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act.

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