

2019 Dare County Democratic Party Platform

Dare County Democrats take pride in our Democratic heritage as a party of diversity, inclusiveness, and patriotic values; of economic security, environmental stewardship, and educational opportunities; of compassion and social justice; of responsive and responsible leadership; and of fiscally-sound government. We proudly stand on the following principles:

Jobs and Economic Security

We believe all citizens should have access to a full-time job that provides a living wage and respects workers' rights; access to affordable child and senior care; and the opportunity for pension and retirement benefits. We also support a diversified economy, responsible regulation that allows local businesses to thrive, and a highly-trained workforce to meet market needs. Therefore, we support efforts to:

- Establish a new minimum wage sufficient to be legitimately classified as a "living wage" and maintained thereafter as a "living wage" through annual cost of living adjustments;
- Sustain our tourism industry while diversifying the economic base of the county;
- Encourage the development of year-around affordable housing by revising zoning laws, addressing insurance costs, and partnering with the private sector in order to provide a better lifestyle and reduce the commuting burden for working people of Dare County and their families;
- Ensure that technical and vocational training programs provide the job skills necessary to meet needs of Eastern North Carolina businesses;
- Preserve the economic vitality of our commercial and recreational fishing, boatbuilding aquaculture and other marine industries;
- Promote responsible public access to the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area;
- Reduce the state and local tax burden on the working poor by reinstating the State Earned Income Tax Credit; and
- Provide adequate funding to preserve a social safety net for the most vulnerable populations.

Environmental Stewardship

We recognize that climate change is a threat to our environment, economy and way of life. Dare County's pristine beaches, sounds, wetlands, and estuaries are the foundation of our prosperity and must be preserved. Further, environmental policy should be based in sound science. Therefore, we support efforts to:

- Oppose offshore drilling and seismic testing because of the potential catastrophic effect on the ocean and our vital tourism and fishing industries;
- Accelerate development of renewable energy projects focusing on wind, solar and geothermal energy, including offshore wind farms;
- Permit the local reinstatement of the single-use plastic bag ban in Dare County and other counties that wish to institute; encourage retailers, citizens, and visitors to use reusable bags and containers in Dare County;
- Require that all new construction and refurbishment of government buildings in Dare County be built to "green building" standards and use alternative energy technologies such as solar and wind power whenever practical and cost effective;

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- Institute a county program to improve water quality to protect public health, enhance our economy, and safeguard marine life, including controlling storm water runoff and maintaining clean and clear waterways;
- Develop a more coordinated approach to recycling and waste management throughout the county; and
- Promote the use of native plant species and smart landscaping, such as rain gardens and permeable drives, streets, and walkways, to protect the local environment and minimize the adverse impacts of storm water runoff.

Health Care

Every American should have access to affordable, high quality, comprehensive health care and to affordable prescription drugs. Therefore, we support efforts to:

- Provide a health care system that ensures access to affordable basic medical, mental health, vision, and dental services;
- Increase access to medical care through the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act;
- Repeal and oppose state legislation restricting women's health rights;
- Require parity of insurance coverage for medical care, mental health, and addiction treatment services;
- Expand treatment programs for people suffering from substance abuse by developing a comprehensive community response to the growing opioid epidemic; a response which would include the establishment of urgently needed detox and treatment centers here in Dare County ;
- Promote expansion of mental health services, including providing resources to the newly established Adult Collaborative to support mental health needs and strategies to meet gaps in service identified by local health care professionals;
- Support Dare County's 4,000-plus veterans by lobbying for creation of an urgently needed local VA Outpatient Clinic providing treatment for PTSD, Agent Orange health impacts, general healthcare, mental health services and drug counseling; and
- Examine ways to expand the availability of senior services throughout the county.

Education

Our public schools must provide an outstanding education to enhance the social, cultural and civic development of our diverse community. All students should have equal access to economic opportunity. Every student is entitled to receive an outstanding public education, and every student and educator should be safe at school. Therefore, we support efforts to:

- Provide teacher salaries and benefits that result in the recruitment and retention of high quality teachers;
- Support expanding the existing "tuition free" NC Pre-K Program so that it is made available to all 4-year olds throughout the state;
- Maintain programs in the arts, foreign languages, library media services, and advanced studies in the face of legislatively mandated funding cuts;
- Ensure broadband access for all areas of Dare County, including the most rural, thereby strengthening the fairness of educational and economic opportunity for all our residents;
- Support expansion of programs at the Manteo Campus of College of the Albemarle with an emphasis on responding directly to workforce needs in Dare County or otherwise preparing students for transfer to four-year colleges;

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- Enhance access for adults to technical and vocational programs, industrial training, and occupational retraining; and
- Encourage our schools to educate the whole child so that every student can be “healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.”

Public Safety

Our community must be safe from crime and prepared for natural and man-made disasters. Preparation should include the necessary tools for law enforcement, firefighters, and all emergency response personnel. Gun violence has become a threat to our communities, our schools and our families. Therefore, we support efforts to:

- Provide salaries and benefits that result in the recruitment and retention of high-quality personnel for law enforcement and other first responders;
- Support criminal justice reform, such as use of Recovery/Drug Courts, to increase the fairness, efficiency and effectiveness of the system;
- Improve and maintain the accessibility and usability of Highway 12 particularly on Hatteras Island;
- Support improvements and maintenance of Oregon Inlet and Hatteras Inlet to facilitate safer navigation for commercial fishing fleets and recreational uses;
- Concentrate law enforcement on the most critical areas of crime control and prevention, emphasizing crimes against people or property;
- Ensure that only trained law enforcement officers are permitted to carry firearms in schools;
- Promote common sense gun safety regulations, including closing the gun show loophole, and implementing universal background checks in order to keep guns out of the hands of the mentally ill or violent criminals;
- Enable research and the collection of data to understand the public health aspects of gun ownership and usage, and support the development of regulations that promote public safety without infringing on 2nd Amendment rights; and
- Expand sidewalks and bike paths throughout Dare County.

Human Rights

We believe in the full and equal protection of the lives, liberties, rights, and properties of all regardless of race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity. We encourage vigorous enforcement of existing civil rights laws and protection against unwarranted and unlawful interference in our private lives and personal decisions. Therefore, we support efforts to:

- Ensure that Dare County remains welcoming to all;
- Insist that the NC General Assembly pass the Equal Rights Amendment.

Immigration

Dare County is the home of some of the first immigrants to the New World. Immigration has long been a strength of our country. Foreign workers play an important role in Dare County’s labor force and are components of our culture and economic vitality. Therefore, we support efforts to:

- Reform our immigration laws to address the role of documented and undocumented workers in the economy and reflect the essential American values of openness and inclusion that have made this country strong; and

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- Implement a permanent pathway to legal status and citizenship for undocumented minors brought to the country by their parent (“Dreamers”).

Elections and Campaign Finance

We believe that every citizen’s right to vote should be exercised without fear of intimidation or harassment. Further, voters should have absolute confidence in the fairness of political campaigns and public elections. Therefore, we support efforts to:

- The Dare County Democratic Party supports the National Popular Vote, to replace the Electoral College, and it supports the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact;
- Create an independent, nonpartisan commission for all legislative redistricting;
- Encourage participation in elections and strive to ensure that strong, qualified candidates are on the ballot for all local, State and Federal elections that affect Dare County;
- Restore non-partisan elections for all state judges and the Dare County Board of Education;
- Advocate for the State to offer an extensive and comprehensive program for voters to easily obtain the required voter photo ID, especially in rural areas;
- Protect elections from outside interference;
- Provide voter registration processes that are open and accessible to all eligible voters;
- Protect and enhance voter access to the polls by providing Counties with the flexibility to set hours and days for early voting that serve the needs of its voters;
- Restore and expand public financing of elections including the statewide tax check off for political parties;
- Strengthen campaign finance laws and increase transparency in campaign finance reporting; and
- Impose reasonable limits on independent campaign expenditures.

Therefore, the preceding constitutes the 2019 Dare County Democratic Party Platform.