

Writing the History of Our Generation

Each of us is called to help a huddled few...



College Democrats --- OF AMERICA

**The College Democrats of America
2006 Platform**

As presented and ratified by the College Democrats Assembled on July 22, 2006 by Adam Kirsch

2006 National Platform Committee

Adam Kirsch, Chairman

Laura De Castro

Kristen Fine

Morgan Nolan

The committee would like to send a special thanks to the following people, without whom, this document would not have come to fruition.

Aaron Keyak
LaToia Jones
Jay Elan
Jeremy Bernton

Table of Contents

Preamble	4
Affirmative Action	5
Church and State	6
Civil Liberties	7
Democracy Building	8
Economic Policy	9
Education	10
Environment	12
Foreign Policy	13
GLBT Rights	15
Health Care	16
Homeland Security	18
Immigration Policy	19
Judiciary	20
Labor	21
Native Alaskans/American Indian	22
Reproductive Rights	23
Social Security	24
Stem Cell Research	25
War on Terror	26
Women's Rights	27

Preamble

“Working Together With Pride and Promise”

The College Democrats of America believe that the action of our generation, working together with all those who desire change, forever mindful of our pride in the past and the promise in our future, we will build a better tomorrow.

Today, while young people in America look to politics with a curiosity and fervor like no time since the presidential aspirations of Robert Kennedy were cut tragically short, the College Democrats of America understand that their hard work must be joined hand-in-hand with the great divine spirit of the progressive Robert Kennedy.

In 1968, this country was mired in a terrible war on shores far beyond our own. While thousands of brave souls went to fight, too many never returned to their worldly home and now stand with their God. History has an awful way of repeating itself.

But, out of that tragic, difficult national struggle, the great leaders of today matured. Many of our comrades, in ideology, if not generation, now serve as leaders in all modes, familial, social and political. The same will be true of our generation.

But, despite the historical truth that some of our humble number will rise to great heights, few will have the greatness to bend history itself. Each of us is called to help a small huddled few, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation on the tablets of time. And, when succeeding generations look back to the tablets of this time, they will see humanity slowly reaching for the heavens.

Affirmative Action

“Fair Equality of Opportunity”

The College Democrats of America believe that the nation's minorities, who have had a long and painful history of discrimination, must be given equal opportunity to succeed and make a living in America's colleges and workplaces. Ensuring diversity in the United States is paramount to creating a culture of acceptance and respect for minorities. As such, we are committed to defending Affirmative Action programs on the local, state, and federal level and will fully oppose efforts to scale back these initiatives. Striving for this diversity does not discriminate against the majority of our citizens; it only helps to provide a quality-learning environment for students and an atmosphere conducive to work on an equal playing field.

Church and State

“A Jeffersonian Wall of Separation”

The College Democrats of America know that millions of Americans find their strength in and from Religion. Be they Catholics or Muslims, Evangelicals or Jews, Buddhists or Agnostics, Americans are entitled to freely practice their religion. The College Democrats of America recognize the importance of Religion in many American’s lives and will protect the right of an American to practice their own religion freely.

The College Democrats are proud of the strongly religious and tolerant past of America, and promise to maintain the same tolerance in the future. It is important to remember that all Americans, regardless of their religion, are linked in humanity, dignity and hope.

The Importance of Church and State Separation

The College Democrats of America support the Jeffersonian wall of separation between church and state. In the interests of protecting religion, it is important that we not subordinate it to the state, for at the moment religions come under the civil gavel of the state they lose their divine inspiration.

Religion’s Influence on Education

The College Democrats of America call for a national cause of action to establish world religions education, to give all Americans a more complete worldview.

The College Democrats of America know it is important that established scientific theories be taught in America’s classrooms. As our constitution prohibits any religious test for our political leaders, there can be no such test for our scientific ones. Science must be tested in the laboratories, colleges and hospitals of America, without being subjected to.

Religion’s Influence on Citizen’s Lives

The College Democrats of America understand that various religions have various teachings and traditions. It is imperative that Americans not allow religious teaching to become civil law.

The College Democrats of America believe that prayer must be a personal decision and must never be compelled (either by direct action or influence) in a public domain.

The College Democrats of America know religion is the core of millions of Americans’ lives. We support the right of those Americans to safely practice their religions and be not compelled to act, or abstain from action because of the tradition of another American’s religion.

Civil Liberties

“Liberty and Security”

The College Democrats of America believe that now more than ever it is essential that we remain steadfast in our resolve to protect our cherished civil liberties.

The College Democrats of America decry the passage of the USA PATRIOT Act in just forty-five short days following the September 11th terrorist attacks. The sweeping legislation was enacted with virtually no debate and authorized a broad expansion of federal power to intrude into the lives of citizens and non-citizens alike. We call on Congress and the President to bring this legislation back in line with the principles enshrined in our Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

The College Democrats of America believe that coordination and cooperation between intelligence gathering and law enforcement agencies is an important component of securing our nation, but are concerned that many other sections of the USA PATRIOT Act unnecessarily infringe on fundamental civil liberties and should be eliminated. We oppose so-called “sneak and peak” searches and secret searches of individual library records, buying habits, medical history, and hotel visits. Legislation aimed at protecting the United States from the threat of terrorism need not erode the Bill of Rights. We believe that America can be safe and free.

The College Democrats of America know the erosion of civil liberties is by no means limited to the USA PATRIOT Act alone. We condemn efforts to detain individuals indefinitely when termed enemy combatants or otherwise without access to legal counsel or the justice system. We oppose racial profiling and the mandatory registration of visitors and students from certain nations based on their nationality alone. We support the freedom of the press, and while we are mindful of national security concerns, we believe that journalists must be able to give their sources an assurance of confidentiality in order to be a meaning check on government in a free society. We oppose a federal constitutional amendment banning the burning of the American flag and other odious restrictions on the freedom of speech.

The College Democrats of America know that in 2006 the ever-present threat of terrorism calls on us, as Americans, to define ourselves in contrast to those who would do our nation harm. Respecting the founding principles of our nation, enshrined in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, sets us apart from those who would impose tyranny over liberty.

Democracy Building

“Liberty and Justice for All”

The College Democrats of America know that as democracy in the world continues to expand, the people of nations around the world are pressuring their governments towards democratic changes. Values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law are ones which should be enjoyed by all people. With the spread of democracy comes a safer, more secure world for Americans and the international community. The promotion of democracy abroad is one of the United States government’s greatest responsibilities and one of its greatest challenges.

The College Democrats of America are committed to spreading the principles of democracy to the world through peaceful means. To do this, America must work with the world, not against it, to ease the difficult process of democratic transition. We condemn the policies of the current administration in attempting to install democracies through violent unilateral regime change, rather than through the strategic use of alliances, economic pressures and international organizations.

The College Democrats of America must seek to aid non-consolidated democratic regimes, in order to more deeply root democratic institutions. Contributing to organizations which promote accountability, educate on democratic principles, and civic institutions can further that goal. Additionally we must work in conjunction with international organizations, such as the United Nations, to make sure all our actions are viewed as legitimate and credible by the people of the nation. To be successful in expanding democratic principles, we must show we value them ourselves, by deliberating, forming alliances, and following consistent and legitimate foreign policy decisions.

Middle East Democracy

The College Democrats of America realize the Middle East is now the main front in the global struggle for democracy, and we stand behind the efforts of the people in that region to become free. We saw Lebanon expel the 20-year long Syrian occupying forces in a quest for freedom. Although Lebanon still has a long way to go, they have shown commitment to their futures.

The College Democrats of America support Egypt in the beginning stages of its student-led revolution. The announcement that they will amend their constitution to allow for free and democratic elections is a crucial first step. Even in Iran, one of the most oppressive regimes in the world, there are people standing up for their individual civil rights. The younger generation is looking for something more, and is hoping for the democracy and civil rights we have in America.

Economic Policy

“The Great Promise of America”

The College Democrats of America understand the great promise of America: a better life for all who work for it. No matter who you are, from where you come, or in what you believe, as an American, you live in a land that offers you all the possibilities your hard work and God-given talent can bring.

The College Democrats of America understand the opportunity to build a better future starts with a good job. It has always been that way. However, outsourcing places a huge obstacle to the creation of such jobs. It is the job of the United States as well as the respective states to discourage outsourcing. While the Democratic Party offers its full support for free trade, free trade must also be fair trade. From the time when most people worked in the fields, through the Industrial Revolution and into the Information Age, the opportunity for work, the rewards from work, and the dignity of work have made Americans successful and America strong.

The College Democrats of America know that a strong America keeps the promise of opportunity for all and heeds the warning of special privileges for none. That’s the America in which we believe. That’s the America we’re fighting for. And that’s the America we can build together.

The College Democrats of America realize that we should look to fill the ocean of prosperity, not by trickle-down economics in which the super wealthy get more and the working-class, America’s greatest strength, gets left behind. No, the economy must not be reduced to the drip of trickle-down economics, but instead be overflowed by build-up economics. Economics that gives a tax break not to the CEO, but to the cashier.

The College Democrats of America call for a return to the fiscal responsibility of our last Democratic administration. For six years, Americans have operated under President Bush’s budgets unrestrained by arithmetic, saddling today’s college students, tomorrow’s workers, with the bill.

Education

“Building for Success”

The College Democrats of America know education is a necessary tool in the return to the new patriotism. Be it the importance of an early head start in a child’s education, or making the high cost of a college education easier to bear, the College Democrats of America are committed to improving education for all who seek it.

The College Democrats are proud of the educational past of America, of making education an inalienable right. But understand that perhaps in no prior age has the importance of education been at the forefront of the Global psyche. Alvin Toffler observed, “The illiterate of the twenty-first century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who can not learn, unlearn and relearn.”

Early Childhood Education

The College Democrats of America feel it is necessary to begin education as early as possible, and call for the continued funding of early childhood education programs. Children who attend preschool are at a lifelong advantage, both academically and socially. All qualified students have the right to attend Head Start and the Head Start program must continue to be federally funded. All students must have the right to attend pre-school.

Full Day Kindergarten

The College Democrats of America support the continued expansion of full-day kindergarten as a way to improve the educational system. With preschool is the foundation of a child’s education, full day kindergarten is the framing. It is important that states look to expand access to full day kindergarten as a way to improve educational systems from kindergarten through the twelfth year.

A National Commitment

The College Democrats of America know it is necessary to improve public schools through better teacher pay and smaller class sizes. Using federal subsidies directed at overcrowded and under-financed school systems, the nation would improve schools one at a time. The monies could be used to reduce class size by hiring more teachers; smaller classroom size enables students to have more individual attention from teachers, allowing them the means to achieve at a faster pace.

Life Skills Education

The College Democrats of America believe that practical knowledge is equal in importance to abstract concepts. We unequivocally support a strong health curriculum in public schools. It is necessary to address family planning, prevention of STDs, alcohol and drug prevention. We support sex education in public schools. While we do recognize abstinence as an integral part of an effective sex education program, we recognize the absolute failure of abstinence-only programs and call for an evaluation to promote the best sexual education possible.

The College Democrats of America understand that education allows children to make better choices for themselves, as they are more aware of the consequences to their actions. Education must be ethical, it must teach laws, and it must equip Americans to act in an ever-changing world.

Higher Education

The College Democrats of America realize the importance of continuing one's education as far as one wishes. For this reason, we support increased funding and access to state and federal funds through loans and grants so that college education is made possible for students of all economic backgrounds. We support adding additional federal funding to the Pell Grant program for economically disadvantaged students who enroll full-time in college.

The College Democrats of America want to make the high costs of college bearable for all families. College is a formidable experience, and one that puts citizens on the path towards success. America should push for increased collegiate attendance.

Reversing the Raid on Student Aid

The College Democrats of America decry the Republican-majority Congress cutting \$12 billion from the federal student aid programs, putting college further out of reach, early this year, despite the critical need to boost affordable college opportunities in order to ensure America's security and global competitiveness.

The College Democrats of America have a different idea. We support Democrat-introduced legislation to cut interest rates on student and parent loans in half, saving the typical student borrower \$5,600 over the life of his or her loan.

Making Public Schools Better

The College Democrats of America believe that we must fix our public schools by active investment. For this reason, we oppose school vouchers. Our concentration should be on providing the best public education possible not taking money away from our public schools to benefit private school education.

The College Democrats of America are proud of the various educational programs in American history that have had the effect of holding high-achieving students at a natural level, stunting their intellectual growth. For this reason, we support federal funding to provide advanced placement classes to low-income students.

The College Democrats of America understand that education is the rock on which a citizen builds his life. Education is important to America and important to Americans.

Environment

“To Ensure a Beautiful and Healthy Future”

The College Democrats of America recognize the tremendous role that humanity plays in influencing and shaping the world. For this reason, we support full American acknowledgement of the scientific facts of global warming and the institution of steps to curb those effects. Americans should be in the forefront of innovative technologies that will allow businesses and the economy to continue growing without continuing the damaging toll industry is currently taking on the environment. We therefore support increases in funding for the research of alternative fuels and the implementation of economic advantages for businesses that curtail the amount of pollution that they are producing.

The College Democrats of America recognize the economic costs of rising oil prices, we stress the importance of looking towards developing inexpensive alternate fuels. We believe that drilling on the coastlines, the Great Lakes, or in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge will ultimately prove to be more costly than developing clean fuels as it may destroy the environment.

The College Democrats of America are proud of America’s history of innovation and ingenuity. We would like to see this same attitude applied to improving the way America interacts with our environment through rapidly advancing technology, research and generally rethinking the way we approach the world in which we live.

Foreign Policy

“Ensuring Security with Strength, Promoting Democracy Through Peace”

The College Democrats of America clearly see the Bush administration’s handling of world affairs disastrous effects on the United States, and the rest of the world. Ongoing crises in Iraq, a nuclear-prone Iran, a threatening North Korean crisis, and turmoil between the Israelis and Palestinians, have all steadily worsened. Our economy as a result of these foreign policy crises has also suffered. Gas prices are skyrocketing at the pump, our country is further more relying on Middle East oil, and the cost of the Iraq war has indebted our country for generations to come.

Victory in Iraq

George W. Bush’s decision to go into Iraq alone has left our country in the middle of a global crisis. With billions of American taxpayer dollars spent each day, terrorist attacks in Baghdad on the rise, and an insurgency that does not quit, it seems that our struggle for creating stability has not been promising. Unlike his father in the first Gulf War, building an international coalition with a larger amount of troops was not the choice of George W. Bush. The only solution that remains is a change of course as to how we do business, and a way to come out of Iraq that leaves our legacy there a success.

Democrats believe we need to sit down with our European and other NATO allies around the world and create a plan that will lead us out of Iraq. The Bush administration from the beginning has created these ongoing tensions with our allies because of its ignorance of disregarding the United Nations Security Council. Democrats will include each nation in the struggle to preserve democracy in Iraq and stabilize that region, and each nation will have an important part in this struggle.

Second, we need a phased redeployment plan to get our troops out of harm’s way. This is simply foreign policy that is tough and smart. It is a way to gradually bring our troops home and send them to other parts of the world to help with the fight on terror. While we must implement this plan as soon as possible, we will never leave the job unfinished in Iraq that our soldiers have sacrificed for.

Third, we must help the Iraqis help themselves. To this day, there are not enough Iraqi police and military battalions in Iraq, and this fault lies with the Bush administration and the three years they have had to get the ball rolling. Democrats know that the more security there is in Iraq, the less likely terrorists will strike and hurt innocent civilians.

Fourth, we must help the Iraqi government develop a plan that will outline their needs and goals to garner more security in Iraq. The Iraqis need a strategy to stop insurgents coming from other countries like Syria and Iran, and they must get tough with both those countries as well.

In the end, victory in Iraq can only be complete with a different approach than that of the Bush administration’s.

NATO Expansion

The way to help increase the probability of success in Iraq, as well as the global War on Terror, is to increase membership of other countries into NATO. While NATO originally was designed to

counter the Soviet threat during the Cold War, NATO should be redesigned to counter the growing threat of radical Islam and states that sponsors terrorism. NATO can also be an effective tool to help counter the growing threat of nuclear proliferation. As partners of NATO, nations can act as teammates and make it easier to take on such problems like North Korea and Iran.

We should begin expanding NATO as soon as possible, and attracting former Soviet nations in Eastern Europe is a strategic place to start. Any nation that attacks a member nation of NATO, is an attack on all members of NATO. This is why Democrats believe in the cause of collective security and using it to stop growing threats from happening.

Israel and Palestinian Conflict

Recently, the Israelis and Palestinians have entered into a heightened conflict that has the potential to reach further out of the Middle East. Yet for years, these two sides have fought and died for each of their freedoms. While we respect all freedom loving people, and promote democracy for all individuals, we condemn Hezbollah and other terrorist organizations for ruthless killings inside of Israel. Democrats would like to see two neighboring countries, Israel and Palestine, living peacefully after a two-state solution. However, we demand that Hamas and its leaders recognize Israel as a sovereign state and work to develop a new free Palestine peacefully.

Not Rushing into War

George Bush's policy of preemption has proved to the world that the go-it-alone strategy will not work in the long run. Colin Powell rightfully said that when, "you break it, you own it." In future conflicts in our new war, we must have a strategy to not only defeat the enemy, but win the peace as well. We must have the necessary troops to stabilize countries, fully equipped with the tools they need to win.

Because of our turmoil in Iraq, we are losing the War on Terror. Afghanistan in the last few months has seen a resurgence of Taliban fighters. Iran shows no signs of giving up its nuclear ambitions, simply because they know the United States has other problems to deal with. North Korea has declared that they will not hold back with their new missile tests. Most recognizably, we have still not caught the mastermind behind the September 11, 2001 attacks—Osama bin Laden.

The North Korean Dilemma

Democrats believe that the United States should not allow North Korea to have the upper hand when it comes to foreign relations. The Bush administration has stubbornly refused to engage in direct talks with the North Koreans, and as a result, have made America more vulnerable to missile or nuclear attack from the Korean peninsula. We should solve the North Korean issue in a manner that is responsible, and not allow countries like China to have more of a say than we do.

GLBT Rights

“Full and Equal”

The College Democrats of America are firmly committed to full and equal rights for all Americans, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. Since our current government insists on being the proprietor of marriage licenses, the civil rights of marriage in the United States make it incumbent upon the government to extend full equality of marriage rights to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Americans. In extending these rights, the College Democrats of America understand that a loving, caring home being the best for a child’s upbringing; GLBT couples must be allowed to adopt children without any undue interference. GLBT Americans must be welcomed into our society and the workplace with open arms, and therefore the College Democrats of America fully stands behind the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. We believe that crimes motivated by sexual orientation or gender identification are hate crimes and should be condemned as such. Full equality of rights and privileges under the Constitution remains a core principle of the Democratic Party, and the College Democrats of America will always stand to protect these rights.

Health Care

“Universal Health”

The College Democrats of America recognize that providing universal access to quality health care is imperative in fulfilling the American people’s desires for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We realize that health care is a human right, not a business commodity that is available only to those who can afford it. At present, the United States is the only industrialized nation that does not provide access to health care for all of its citizens. As a result, there are more than 43.6 million Americans without health insurance. The College Democrats of America find this fact unconscionable.

Health Insurance

The College Democrats of America believe that the “HMO culture” that has emerged in the United States since the 1970s has failed to provide Americans with the health insurance that they demand and deserve. The time has come for the United States to join the rest of the industrialized world by developing a single-payer universal health care system.

The elements of such single payer, universal health insurance include, but are not limited to:

- Coverage of prenatal vitamin treatments, Lamaze classes, and extended postpartum hospital stays for pregnant women.
- Coverage of psychiatric and psychological treatment beyond the two session limits imposed by many HMOs.
- Coverage of all costs associated with catastrophic emergency treatment.
- Coverage of cutting edge prescription drugs, sans those that are available as generic drugs, with a maximum \$10 co-pay.
- Coverage of all abortion procedures, even for minors.
- Coverage of all dental procedures, sans cosmetic procedures not considered reconstructive in nature.
- Coverage of all surgeries, sans cosmetic procedures not considered reconstructive in nature.
- All aforementioned and additional services provided through annual, supplemental, and trust fund generated governmental appropriations, coming from tax revenue. Those with incomes below the poverty line will not be charged co-pays or tax surcharges.
- Access under Medicaid and Medicare to Cutting Edge Cancer, AIDS, and Diabetes Clinical Trials.

Comprehensive Prescription Drug Benefits

The College Democrats of America believe in a full rollback of the “Medicare Modernization and Prescription Drug Act.” In its present form it does not provide a substantial prescription drug benefit to those who needed assistance the most. Instead it provided a \$400 billion windfall to pharmaceutical companies. Prescription drugs should instead be provided as part of a comprehensive universal health care system including single-payer universal health insurance. Under a single payer system, the Federal Government will:

- Negotiate lower prices with the drug companies directly.
- Allow re-importation of prescription drugs from Canada.

- Reduce the duration of patent rights given to the drug companies, to provide an incentive to lower prices.
- Provide tax breaks to pharmaceutical companies that provide free prescription drugs to South Africa, India, and other nations hit hard by AIDS.
- Repeal the McCarran Ferguson Act and subject pharmaceutical companies to the Clayton Anti-Trust Act.

Furthermore, the College Democrats of America believe that parity must be provided for mental health care and that contraceptives and other family planning programs and services should be treated equitably under a universal health care system. As college students we are acutely aware of the need for greater access to health care services on college and university campuses across America. State and federal officials should do everything in their power to improve student access to such coverage and services.

The College Democrats of America oppose the efforts to limit access to the judicial system for victims of medical malpractice. We oppose caps on medical malpractice jury awards. It is our position that the high insurance costs of physicians in America are the fault of insurance companies that have jointly raised premiums not for cost, but for profit. For this reason, those states that have placed caps on jury awards have seen little to know effect on insurance costs. State governments should rescind the licenses of all medical professionals convicted three times of medical malpractice and malpractice case histories should be made easily assessable to the public. Policy makers, physicians and other medial professionals should work together to improve the safety of the medical practice and remove incentives for abuse of the system from law and custom.

Homeland Security

“Securing our Home”

The College Democrats of America and all Americans learned on September 11th that our country was neither safe nor immune from attack within our borders. The first and foremost responsibility of government is to protect its citizens from harm. We have not done nearly enough to accomplish this task. Our intelligence services remain fragmented and lack coordination. Millions of massive shipping containers arrive at American ports every year without being searched and without even a reliable list of their contents. Our borders are full of holes. Our chemical plants are vulnerable to attack. Across America, police officers, firefighters, and other first responders still lack the information, protective gear, and communications equipment to do their jobs safely, successfully, and effectively.

The College Democrats of America know we need a new strategy for homeland security that addresses five major challenges. We need to improve our ability to gather, analyze, and share information so we can track down terrorists and stop them before they cause harm. We need to do a better job securing our airports, seaports, and borders. We need to make likely terrorist targets more secure. We need to improve domestic readiness. We must win the war on terror without losing the values of freedom and justice for all that make us so proud to be Americans. We also need to make sure that as we work to secure our nation that we do not infringe more than absolutely necessary on our citizen’s civil rights.

The College Democrats of America believe that only through facing these challenges and giving homeland security the financial attention that it deserves, can we truly secure our nation’s borders.

Immigration Policy

“A Nation of Immigrants”

The College Democrats of America recognize first and foremost that we are a nation of immigrants. We also understand that immigration is an issue concerning many Americans. The College Democrats of America believe that a long-term comprehensive solution is necessary.

Democrats have consistently fought for the rights of working immigrants. Immigrants are vital to our country’s progress. We, as a nation, should provide access to important information about Federal and State services and benefits in the primary language of legal immigrants.

While we recognize that immigration laws are enacted at the federal level, State government and grassroots citizens can impact such policies by influencing our federal representatives to strengthen our national borders, protect homeland security, and to enforce existing laws. We strive for a just and comprehensive immigration law which includes a path to citizenship for hard-working, tax-paying immigrants. The Democratic Party supports strengthening our borders, protecting U.S. workers and their wages, reuniting families, and allowing those who pay taxes and obey the law earn the opportunity to apply for the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

The College Democrats of American will continue fighting for the American worker, protecting our borders, and maintaining our country’s rich tradition of inclusiveness.

Judiciary

“Anchor to Which our Democracy is Moored”

The College Democrats of America understand the Judiciary was intended to be the anchor to which our democracy is moored; able to find justice however well she may hide herself, able to make the difficult decisions and refrain from participating in the daily ideological shifts of the legislature. The constitution is perhaps more protective of the independence of the judicial branch than any other – this is a sure sign of the framers’ understanding of the future lacking of forbearance that might be exhibited when judges performed their duties.

The College Democrats of America are proud of America’s past, in which her judiciary has been the fulcrum on which the legislative and executive checks balance. In 1954, many Americans decried the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, and, yet hindsight demonstrates the wisdom of the court.

The College Democrats of America understand that judges are not infallible, but that we should not be afraid of mistakes in the search for truth America and Americans have stumbled, fallen, been hurt, got up and fallen again. It is in our darkest hours that we are reminded just how bright the light of freedom is. The judicial mistakes are not causes for censure, impeachments or no-confidence votes, but causes for further debate.

The College Democrats of America call for an understanding of the importance of judicial non-partisanship – a very difficult task in an increasingly partisan world. Judges are not partisan actors, acting as a lagging powerbase for a newly minted minority. Judges should be impartial and judge cases, issues on the basis of benefits for democracy, justice and freedom.

The College Democrats of America are proud of our past, and believe that the judiciary is the most essential characteristic of a truly free society.

Labor

“Power to Working People”

The College Democrats of America have always supported the working Americans who are striving for the American dream. In order to support those dreams, the College Democrats of America strongly support Labor unions and the work they do for working Americans. The College Democrats realize that economic growth is consistent with fair employment practices, fair wages and a safe, clean and healthy work place. Maintain and improving America’s role as an international economic powerhouse can and should be accompanied by training and retraining workers so that everyone’s American dream can become an American Reality.

We strongly support the expansion of apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs to help our young people and displaced workers to develop marketable job skills. We believe that special care should be taken to expand job opportunities for the disabled. We believe the federal government can play a key role in expanding these opportunities.

We again stress the importance of collective bargaining in the workforce. Labor unions have created the workplace that we are privileged to have today and are constantly working to improve the laborer’s life. Through collective bargaining, the interests of public and private employers and employees can be best served.

The College Democrats of America repudiate the idea that “Right-to-Work” laws serves any employees in any state. These laws allow people to enjoy the benefits of labor unions at their work place without asking for anything in return. States with these laws tend to have higher workplace injuries and a working class with a very low quality of life. The College Democrats of America support all who advocate preventing or repealing “Right-to-Work laws.”

The College Democrats believe in the utmost importance of ensuring equality in the workplace. We support equal access to employment opportunities for women and men of all working ages and are committed to equal pay for comparable work. The College Democrats advocate that the Department of Labor play a leading role in these endeavors.

The College Democrats request a revision of the minimum wage to a living wage. The current federally mandated minimum wage has not been revisited in ten years and is not enough for America’s families. Our economy is able to provide for people by ensuring that individuals earn enough to live.

We support access to employment without discrimination of any kind. We support vigorous enforcement of existing anti-discrimination laws to ensure that all persons have access to good jobs at fair wages and benefits.

Native Alaskans/American Indian/Pacific Islander

“Too Often Forgotten”

Democrats agree that each of the three groups identified above have not had their fair share of representation by the federal government. As Democrats, we feel it is in our nation’s interest to help those in need, and those that need assistance. The American people understand that we must protect the rights of the minorities in this country, and separating them from the rest would be wrong. We support economic assistance to helping them create a better future for their families.

Reproductive Rights

“Safe, Legal, and Rare”

The College Democrats of America believe that every woman has a right to make her own decisions regarding her own body. We therefore believe that women should have access to all available medically accurate information, regardless of age, socioeconomic status, or region of the country. With that goal in mind, we support the implementation of comprehensive sexual education programs in all American public schools to ensure that women and men of all ages can make educated, healthy decisions regarding their own bodies and sexuality. With better education and access to contraception we can ensure that fewer abortions occur.

The right to privacy is a constitutionally guaranteed protection that cannot be taken for granted or overlooked by legislators. For over thirty years women have enjoyed the liberty to control the direction of their lives, with medical decisions, to go along with choices in their education, profession, and family. Our constitutionally guaranteed right to privacy is being undermined by a radical right wing minority. The College Democrats of America support the strengthening and reinforcement of *Roe v. Wade* based on the constitutionally assured right to privacy.

The College Democrats of America understand that the right to make decisions over one’s own body, however, must extend past knowledge about contraception and protection. We believe that all women have a right to choose whether or not to seek an abortion. This is an indiscriminate right that should not be obstructed by parental notification laws that can create an undo burden on minors or with mandatory waiting periods which primarily hinder women of lower socioeconomic status. The College Democrats of America firmly believe that violence directed at health care facilities which perform abortions is terrorism and should be condemned as such. With safe and fair access to abortion women can be guaranteed their medical procedures are safe.

Social Security

“A Federal Program”

Democrats will always fight to protect Social Security, an institution created by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, that was designed to give financial security to millions of Americans in the Great Depression. Today however, the Bush administration has tried to undercut this historic and successful program. We will never allow for the privatization of Social Security to happen, and instead will work to protect and strengthen the program.

Privatization

The privatization of Social Security would be disastrous for millions of Americans that retire and look forward to a check in the mail to help them pay their bills. President Bush would rather roll the dice and invest the taxpayer’s money into the stock market. Thus, Democrats will never allow this to occur.

Fixing the System

Democrats know that by repealing the tax breaks for the richest 1% of Americans, we can fix and save Social Security for future generations to come. Cutting Social Security spending is simply not an option for the Democratic Party.

Stem Cell Research

"A Real Culture of Life"

Stem Cell research could be the cure for many diseases that afflict millions of Americans on a daily basis. Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, diabetes, transplant rejection, and even cancer can be resolved by this research. The College Democrats of America believe that this has great potential to be a wonderful breakthrough for many people. There is great potential for helping the masses by using stem cell research.

The College Democrats of America believe that as a country we should take the lead on any scientific research, including stem cell research. The United States is losing the fight on this research right now due to the lack of funding. The Democratic Party feels that anytime you have a chance to help millions fight cancer, spinal injuries, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis, and countless other diseases, we have a moral obligation to lead this research. We must have federal funding and research freedom for stem cell research.

The Democratic Party believes in doubling current federal funding for stem cell research, using both existing and new stem cell lines of both adult stem cells and embryonic stem cells. Hospitals seeking to initiate research using embryonic stem cells will be given a substantial tax credit to help alleviate overhead costs of constructing research programs. Furthermore, we believe that it is necessary to provide an incentive for pathologists, embryologists, and microbiologists to enter the field of stem cell research and will create an incentive to do so. This incentive involves federal student loan forgiveness for each year of research conducted. We support government funding for stem cell research since it is a moral obligation of the Democratic Party to advance the search for cures of many afflictions that effect millions of Americans.

War on Terror

“An International Struggle”

The College Democrats mourned on September 11, 2001 with our entire nation. It was a day that reminded Americans that our oceans could not protect us from enemies abroad. In this global struggle to defeat terrorism and nations that harbor terrorists, we must hold nothing back and use whatever means necessary to win the War on Terror.

Supporting Our Troops By Protecting Them

It should have been a wake up call to the Pentagon when a soldier in Iraq asked Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld why there was a lack of body armor in his combat unit. Still today, our soldiers fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan must combat a ruthless enemy without the proper protection that can save their lives. Democrats believe this is wrong and dangerous, and advocate the need for the swift deliverance of armor to our troops in harm's way.

Destroy al Qaeda

Five years after September 11th, 2001, al Qaeda remains a growing threat to not only our nation's security, but global security as well. This is clearly evident with the terrorist bombings seen in England, Spain, Southeast Asia, and recently in Iraq. What is more frightening is the lack of focus by the Bush administration to hunt down bin Laden. This administration has recently allowed the stoppage of a CIA unit that was designed to track down Osama bin Laden and his terrorist thugs. We believe this is unjust. Democrats agree that we cannot rest until we catch or kill bin Laden, bring all of his associates to justice, and root out every terrorist cell around the world that poses a threat to democracy and freedom.

No More Safe Havens

For us to win the War on Terror, we must not allow any more “comfort zones” for terrorist groups to hide and plan future attacks. We must use all force necessary to root all of them out, and help bring democracy to countries lacking the necessary freedom that people deserve.

We are extremely troubled by the recent emergence in Somalia by an Islamic right-wing fundamentalist government that is now in control of the country. They impose harsh rule on their people the same way the Taliban in Afghanistan had done. We cannot let this go unnoticed, especially due to the emergence of terrorist cells in Africa. Yet the Bush administration has done nothing to resolve this growing regional threat, and every day that goes by without action increases the greater probability of terrorist attacks on our soil.

Increase the Number of Special Forces

As Senator John Kerry rightfully stated in 2004, America needs to get serious about having a stronger military. We thus believe that we need to increase the amount of Special Forces troops that we have in our military. We can pay for this by repealing some of the richest 1% of Americans tax breaks that George Bush gave to them in 2001 and 2003. America's security is more important than tax cuts for the wealthy.

Women's Rights

"Fulfilling our Promise"

The College Democrats of America consider women's rights as paramount. Women today care about a myriad of issues, included but not limited to are unfettered access to birth control, universal healthcare, and affirmative action for women.

The College Democrats of America know that emergency contraception has proved successful in preventing unwanted pregnancies and abortions. The emergency contraception pill must receive Food and Drug Administration approval to be sold over-the-counter. All public hospitals must provide rape victims information regarding emergency contraception within twenty-four hours.

The College Democrats of America believe that all Americans regardless of sex, health status, physical or mental disability, age or sexual orientation should be entitled to healthcare and the healthcare industry should not have the right to refuse coverage based on discriminatory policy.

The College Democrats of America believe all Americans must have access to all contraceptive methods, so that they able to make the best individual choice for themselves. We believe it is entirely unacceptable that medical professionals are permitted to deny dispensation of birth control medication and the practice should be made illegal throughout the country.

The College Democrats of America support the repeal of the global gag rule on the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) population program. The global gag rule prevents NGO's that receive USAID family planning funds from even using their own, non-U.S. funds to provide legal abortion services, lobby their own governments for abortion law reform, or even provide accurate medical counseling or referrals regarding abortion. 78,000 women die every year from unsafe abortions – a level that could be drastically reduced with the repeal of the global gag rule.

The College Democrats of America know affirmative action for women is necessary to break the glass ceiling that still exists in our culture. Women deserve equal consideration in regard to corporate, labor, education, and general employment and leadership roles. The National Democratic Party and progressive political organizations need to recruit, support and endorse more women for elected office.

The College Democrats of America believe that women should not be discriminated against in any setting. This includes the United States military where we support the right of women to serve in the military in all capacities - both combat and non-combat.

The College Democrats of America believe that the current gender disparities in salary rates are intolerable. It is time that the women of this country receive equal pay for equal work. We encourage federal and state legislation to require corporations to level the playing field and require equal pay for equal work.

The College Democrats of America believe creating affordable accessible childcare is a national priority. We fully support the Family and Medical Leave Act and believe that emergencies and family crises should not cause undue loss of employment. We also believe that medical leave should be paid leave.