

2016 Mesa County Democratic Party Platform

The Democratic Party has a long and proud history of hope, opportunity, and progress toward a better life for the citizens of these United States. The Democratic Party is rooted in the ideas set forth in the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution. The Democratic platform of Mesa County builds on these historic foundations.

Economy

The economy of Mesa County has historically relied upon extractive industries controlled by international political and financial authorities within a world economy. The inherent nature of the “Boom/Bust” cycles of extraction industries, is not controllable by Mesa County.

- Mesa County Democratic Party supports a diversified economy predicated on quality of life, a livable wage determined by real economic tenets and the development of sustainable, environmentally sound industries managed by an educated workforce.
- Mesa County Democrats support a change in emphasis of energy development from carbon based energies to renewable and sustainable energies.
- Mesa County Democrats support assisting workers displaced by the transition of energy sources to secure training and placement in new careers
- Mesa County Democrats assert that a locally based, distributed energy grid should be developed to support Mesa County during a national crisis.
- Mesa County Democrats support an entire repeal of the ad valorem tax credit.

Many of our highways and bridges are in need of repair and our over-crowded roads need expansion.

- Mesa County Democrats support raising the gasoline tax by at least 10 cents per gallon to solve this problem and create good jobs in Mesa County.

Tourism is a significant driver of Mesa County’s economy. Federal public lands occupy 80% of the County.

- Mesa County Democrats support strong partnerships and cooperation between public and private entities in the County and Federal land management agencies with the goal of developing and promoting recreational opportunities and facilities subject to regulations that will protect the significant natural and cultural resources Mesa County.

Mesa County Democrats believe access to information in the digital age is vital to economic competitiveness and individual success.

- Mesa County Democrats support efforts to improve the quality of internet service in Mesa County, and believe that every Mesa County citizen, regardless of age, has a fundamental right to access online business and learning resources.

The Mesa County Democratic Party believes that no Mesa County citizen with a full time job should be living below federal poverty standards.

Colorado is a modified “Right to work” state.

- The Mesa County Democratic Party believes that employees from any workforce merit respectful arbitration.
- The Mesa County Democratic Party supports open bargaining, with or without union involvement, without fear, intimidation, or retribution.
- Mesa County Democrats strongly support equal pay for equal work.

Mesa County Democrats support a “living wage” of a minimum of \$12.50 per hour.

- All businesses above a threshold will cover the following: sick time, family and pregnancy leave, healthcare benefits, vacation time and retirement options. This should apply to all employees, regardless of the status of their employment.

Mesa County Democrats urge Colorado legislators to support streamlining small business licensing and tax collections by establishing common licensing laws and tax rates for the whole state.

Mesa County Democrats recognize the scientific fact of Global Climate change.

Mesa County has traditionally been a strong agricultural region for the State of Colorado.

- Mesa County Democrats support the promotion of “farm to fork” for locally grown products
- the expansion of organic approaches to agricultural practices to ensure the ongoing health of our air, water and land for future generations.

The Grand Junction VA Hospital is a great asset to western slope Veterans.

- Mesa County Democrats support the expansion of VA facilities and services, including programs for job training and employment of Veterans, rehabilitative and mental health programs, and community support for homeless Veterans.

Government

Voting is a citizen’s most important constitutional right.

- Mesa County Democrats support same day registration and oppose all efforts to suppress voter participation and to block access to the voting process.

Mesa County Democrats believe a caucus nominating system be replaced by a more accessible primary system.

Mesa County Democrats support campaign finance reform through:

- rescission of the Supreme Court’s “Citizens United” decision and
- fair and publicly-funded elections.

The fundamental principles of freedom of religion and separation of church and state must not be compromised.

The right to equal treatment is guaranteed under the law.

- Mesa County Democrats believe equal treatment must be available to all persons regardless of race, religion, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation and gender identity.

The fiscal crisis in Colorado has been precipitated by the intersection of the Gallagher (1982) and the TABOR (1992) Amendments to the Colorado Constitution. The consequences can only be addressed by constitutional reform.

- Mesa County Democrats support repeal/reform of TABOR and Gallagher Amendments.

Immigration is vital to America's economic health and cultural dynamism (vitality). Democrats believe that our immigration system is badly broken and fails to meet the needs of our economy and our employers while inflicting a costly human toll on people caught between global market forces and outdated laws.

- Mesa County Democrats support a fair and equitable pathway to citizenship.

With public input, Mesa County has created a credible and thoughtful Master Land Use Plan that protects our historical agricultural heritage, accommodates the needs of population growth and new industries, while protecting the vital environmental qualities and natural resources that make Mesa County a desirable place to live and work.

- The Mesa County Democrats support the Mesa County Master Land Use Plan and encourage all citizens to actively participate in any future revisions in order to maintain the integrity of land use and environmental protection within the county.

Mesa County Democrats strongly oppose any attempt to transfer our public lands managed by federal agencies to the State of Colorado or any other public or private entity.

Health Care and Quality of Life

Healthcare is a fundamental human right.

- Mesa County Democrats support the Colorado Care Initiative. At the federal level we support efforts to build upon the achievements of the Affordable Care Act, including the introduction of a public option.
- Mesa County Democrats also support efforts to provide legislators with ability to negotiate cost-savings for the benefit of consumers.

Mesa County Democrats believe that the Constitutional guarantee to a right of privacy extends to decisions made between a woman and her medical provider regarding a woman's reproductive healthcare.

- Mesa County Democrats believe reproductive information, services, and family planning must be readily accessible to both males and females.

Mesa County Democrats believe that Mesa County and its municipalities should continue to provide and expand access to low income housing.

The Mesa County Democratic Party believes in the individual right to die with dignity.

Mesa County Democrats support more rigorous enforcement of current legislation, and expansion of that legislation, to ensure the health and protection of our elderly and other vulnerable populations.

Mesa County Democrats strongly support the construction of a community recreation center in Grand Junction, as well as further improvements and additions to the county's walking and bicycle trail system.

Mesa County Democrats support background checks and gun safety education for all gun buyers.

- Mesa County Democrats support the development and implementation of "smart gun" technology.

Mesa County Democrats believe that non-violent offenders should not be incarcerated in the same place as violent offenders.

- Mesa County Democratic Party supports changes to our criminal codes that reduce the length of incarceration for non-violent offenders.
- Mesa County Democrats also support development of applicable programs that prevent crime, reduce recidivism, provide for monitored rehabilitation, and identify and treat mental illness in the incarcerated.

The future of our community lies with our young people whose future is jeopardized by a lack of support services for children. The high rates of suicide, homelessness, substance abuse and other self-destructive behaviors; physical and sexual abuse of children; and human trafficking in Mesa County emphasize the importance of giving greater attention to the needs of our children, including the expansion of mental health services.

Education

The funding shortage precipitated by the Gallagher and TABOR Amendments to the Colorado Constitution have resulted in a serious shortfall in funds to support the facility and education needs of Colorado's growing student population. Amendment 23 (2000) was passed to mitigate the damage and guarantee a revenue stream for the schools, but requisite goals have never been achieved.

- Mesa County Democrats strongly support and call for constitutional reform requiring repeal of the Gallagher and TABOR Amendments and restoration of Amendment 23 in order to reestablish adequate funding for Colorado's ailing public education system.

A strong public education system, pre-school thru college, with adequate and equitable funding and must be independent from political influences is a core element of modern American society.

Fair and equitable funding for education statewide, and especially for Mesa County, is not being provided and needs to be addressed by the legislature. Enhanced early childhood education and better identification of programs for students of all abilities, including programs for minority students and those who fall within the parameters for Title 1 funding, will benefit all citizens and the State of Colorado.

In today's world, post-secondary education is critical in order to create the opportunity for success.

- Mesa County Democrats support two years of free post-secondary and/or vocational education.

On-the-job training is also critical for retaining employees and for the overall health of the workforce.

- Mesa County Democrats support efforts to mobilize the community by encouraging contracts and agreements between the school district and local businesses.

Mesa County Democrats support the efforts of teachers to negotiate for better working conditions such as equitable pay and benefits and compensation for experience and additional education.

- Mesa County Democrats support educators' freedom to exercise autonomy and creativity in the classroom to meet students' needs.
- Mesa County Democrats support only the most judicious use of standardized testing, because it unnecessarily stresses financial and human resources.

Educational vouchers and tax credits for private schools divert tax dollars away from public education, thus diminishing financial support for Colorado's public schools.

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