



# 2013-15

## Platform and Principles

The Socialist Party stands for the abolition of every form of domination and exploitation, whether based on social class, gender, race/ethnicity, age, education, sexual orientation, or other characteristics.

We are committed to the transformation of capitalism through the creation of a democratic socialist society based on compassion, empathy, and respect as well as the development of new social structures. Socialism will establish a new social and economic order in which workers and community members will take responsibility for and control of their interpersonal relationships, their neighborhoods, their local government, and the production and distribution of all goods and services.

For these reasons we call for social ownership and democratic control of productive resources, for a guarantee to all of the right to participate in societal production, and to a fair share of society's product, in accordance with individual needs.

As we pursue a socialist transformation of society, we join with others in making radical demands on the existing system: demands that challenge the basic assumptions of a capitalist market economy while pointing the way to a new society. Although reforms will not in themselves bring about socialism, the fight for them will advance the cause by demonstrating the inherent limitations and injustice of the capitalist system. As we build the socialist movement, we organize around a platform committed to our common and interdependent struggles and aspirations.

## ECONOMICS

The Socialist Party stands for a fundamental transformation of the economy, focusing on production for need not profit. So-called fair trade is meaningless as long as the world economy is dominated by a few massive corporations. Only a global transformation from capitalism to democratic socialism will provide the conditions for international peace, justice, and economic cooperation based on the large-scale transfer of resources and technology from the developed to the developing countries.

- We demand the immediate withdrawal of the United States from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), and oppose the creation of a widened Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).
- We call for worker and community ownership and control of corporations within the framework of a decentralized and democratically determined economic plan.
- We call for a minimum wage of \$15 per hour, indexed to the cost of living.
- We call for a full employment policy. We support the provision of a livable guaranteed annual income.
- We call for all financial and insurance institutions to be socially owned and operated by a democratically-controlled national banking authority, which should

include credit unions, mutual insurance cooperatives, and cooperative state banks. In the meantime, we call for re-regulation of the banking and insurance industries.

- We call for a steeply graduated income tax and a steeply graduated estate tax, and a maximum income of no more than ten times the minimum. We oppose regressive taxes such as payroll tax, sales tax, and property taxes.
- We call for the restoration of the capital gains tax and luxury tax on a progressive, graduated scale.
- We call for compensation to communities-- and compensation, re-training, and other support service for workers-- affected by plant and military base closings as stop-gap measures until we reach our goal of creating a socialist society totally separate from the global capitalist economy.
- We oppose the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization as instruments of capitalist oppression throughout the world.
- We demand cancellation of Third World debt.
- We call for a National Pension Authority to hold the assets of private pension funds, and a levy against corporate assets for any pension fund deficits.

- We call for increased and expanded welfare assistance and increased and expanded unemployment compensation at 100% of a worker's previous income or the minimum wage, whichever is higher, for the full period of unemployment or re-training, whichever is longer.
- We support a program of massive federal investment in both urban and rural areas for infrastructure reconstruction and economic development.
- We support tax benefits for renters equal to those for homeowners.
- We call for the elimination of subsidies and tax breaks that benefit corporations and all other forms of corporate welfare.
- We oppose the court-created precedent of "corporate personhood" that illegitimately gives corporations rights that were intended for human beings.

## INTERNATIONAL

The United States is the sole remaining global superpower. The U.S. government uses its overwhelming military power to consolidate its strategic hold over the entire world and to defend and advance the interests of U.S. owned corporations as they exploit the working people and natural resources of the entire planet. We stand in total opposition to U.S. imperialism and the current "war on terror" which is just another subterfuge for U.S. imperialism.

- We call for the closing of all U.S. military facilities at home and abroad that train foreign military and paramilitary personnel.
- We call for the United States to immediately and unconditionally withdraw its forces from Iraq and Afghanistan.
- We call for an end to the U.S. occupation of the province of Guantanamo, Cuba.
- We call for an end to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank-East Jerusalem and Gaza, and an end to all U.S. aid to Israel, as a precondition for peace.
- We support an immediate cut off of all U.S. military aid to Colombia, and all other recipients.
- We call for the abolition of the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and all other institutions of covert warfare.
- We stand for unconditional disarmament by the United States.
- We call for an international treaty outlawing all weapons of mass destruction, including the use of depleted uranium in conventional weapons.
- We call for an immediate 50% cut in the military budget, followed by additional cuts, with the aim of rapidly reducing the military budget to less than 10% of its current level, with the "peace dividend" directed to essential social services and to the cost of cleaning up contaminated military sites.
- We call for the disbanding of NATO and all other aggressive military alliances, and the closing of all overseas bases.
- We call for an end to U.S. arms sales throughout the world.
- We call for the U.S. to pay off its debt to the United Nations, an end to veto power in the UN, and an end to permanent membership on the UN Security Council.
- We call for a constitutional amendment requiring a binding vote of the people on all issues of war or military intervention.
- We support the right of soldiers to form unions to represent their views and interests.
- We call for the end of manufacturing and the use of Unmanned Aerial Devices (drones) for the purpose of domestic and international spying and warfare.

## LABOR

The Socialist Party stands for the right of all workers to organize, for worker control of industry through the democratic organization of the workplace, for the social ownership of the means of production and distribution, and for international solidarity among working people based on common opposition to global capitalism and imperialism.

We believe that the international organization of labor is the only way of combating the exploitation of workers in a global capitalist economy. Working people have no country, but rather an international bond based on class. Workers throughout the world have far more in common with each other across national boundaries than with their bosses in their own countries. Ultimately a socialist revolution must be an international revolution that cannot survive if confined to individual countries amidst capitalist imperialism.

- We support the right of any number of interested workers in a workplace to form a union with no limits on the subjects upon which employees and unions may bargain with employers.
- We support the right of public sector workers to strike.
- We call for recognizing a union based on cards signed.
- We call for the democratic control of all unions by their membership, and independent of employer domination and influence.
- We support the right of all workers to engage in collective action and self-representation regardless of union status.
- We support militant, united labor action including hot cargo agreements, and boycotts, factory committees, secondary and sympathy strikes, sit-down strikes, general strikes, and ultimately the expropriation of workplaces.
- We support the right of workers to hold shop meetings on company premises, elect their immediate supervisors, and administer health and safety programs through the formation of shop councils.
- We call for the repeal of the Hatch Act and the Taft-Hartley Act, the "hot cargo" provision of the Landrum-Griffin Act, and all so-called "right-to-work" laws.
- We call for the same benefits for part-time workers as for full-time workers.
- We call for increased health and safety regulation of business, and for increasing the size and enforcement power of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).
- We support the creation of a fund for workers which would pay a worker's full wages and health insurance as well as necessary educational and/or retraining costs if that worker loses a job due to environmental transition, down-sizing, corporate dismantlement, or capital flight.
- We call for a 30 hour work week at no loss of pay, with six weeks annual paid vacation.
- We call for unions to stop using union funds for electing candidates from the Democratic and Republican parties.
- We call for the end of the decades-long exclusion of farm workers and domestic workers from receiving overtime pay.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

### *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer People*

The Socialist Party recognizes the human and civil rights of all, without regard to sexual orientation.

- We call for the end of all anti-gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBTQ) restrictions in law and the work place, the repeal of all sodomy laws, and the legalization of same-sex marriage.
- We call on all schools to adopt policies and procedures to address and prevent student violence and to ban discrimination against GLBTQ people throughout the educational system.
- We call for a federal ban on all forms of job discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.
- We are committed to confronting the heterosexism that provides the fertile ground for homophobic violence, and support all efforts toward fostering understanding and cooperation among persons and groups of differing sexual orientations.

### *People of Color*

The Socialist Party recognizes the intimate link between racism and capitalism and demands the elimination of all forms of discrimination in housing, jobs, education, health care, etc. We are committed to the creation of a pluralistic society that defends and promotes a multicultural/multiethnic presence in both the public and private spheres. The Socialist Party rejects the social construction of race and we commit ourselves to the eradication of racism.

- We strongly support affirmative action, civil rights, and anti-discrimination laws and programs to end institutional racism.
- We call for reparations from the federal government for its role in the slave trade and the genocide of Native American nations, with the reparations programs administered by the oppressed communities themselves.
- We support the efforts of people of color to self-defense, self-determination, and to organize independently for their liberation.
- We oppose all efforts to declare English an official language, and call for an end to all language discrimination. We demand that all public and private institutions provide services and materials in the languages of their communities.
- We call for enforcement of Native American treaty rights, support for tribal schools and colleges, living wages on Native American reservations, and democratization of power and wealth in tribal governments.

## **People with Disabilities**

The Socialist Party recognizes the human and civil rights of all, without regard to physical or psychological differences. We deplore media stereotypes that focus on a person's disability rather than on their strengths and abilities, and the physical and social barriers that prevent the full participation by people with disabilities in vital spheres of life.

- We call for full enforcement of all sections of the Americans with Disabilities Act so that all public and private buildings, facilities, and modes of transportation are accessible to disabled people, and every effort is made to employ persons with disabilities.
- We oppose any effort to limit the protections of the Americans with Disabilities Act by restricting the definition of who is considered a person with a disability, and we call for an amendment to the act that would permit punitive damages for the complainants in ADA cases.
- We call for enforcement of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that mandates equal employment practices and physical accessibility for entities receiving federal funding; and call for the removal of the prohibition against the right of private action presently contained in Section 504.
- We call for full funding for a network of support for people with physical, mental, and developmental disabilities, including home assistance, recreation centers, guaranteed income, voting access, and quality control in residential facilities; and for the inclusion of people with disabilities on all local and state governing boards and commissions.
- We call for the continuation of full Social Security benefits for people with disabilities who are able to work part-time, and affirmative action quotas for hiring people with disabilities at union wages.
- We oppose any efforts of the federal government to further limit access to SSDI (Supplemental Security Disability Income Insurance) by restricting their definitions of who is considered a person with a disability.
- We call for the full funding of high-quality education and training programs for people with disabilities, and an expansion of the Individuals With Disabilities In Education Act (IDEA) which would include greater funding for the hiring of paraprofessionals in public schools.
- We call for an amendment of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) to include a prohibition against the denial of credit based on disability.

## **Seniors**

The Socialist Party recognizes the right of seniors to a dignified life, free from economic hardship, social isolation, and discrimination in employment and credit.

Sufficient income, housing, health care, medication, and access to social services must be guaranteed to all elders.

- We oppose the privatization of the Social Security system and the use of Social Security trust funds for any other purpose, such as offsetting the federal deficit.
- We demand that the Social Security system remain entirely within the public sector, with funding derived from a steeply graduated income tax on all income, earned and unearned.
- We call for the inclusion of all state and local government workers within the Social Security System.
- We call for the right of retirement at age 55 a minimum annual retirement income of \$25,000, tax free, and protected from inflation by cost of living increases.
- We call for a cap on Social Security benefits so that no beneficiary receives more than three times the income of those receiving the minimum.
- We support an increase in home service, including home-delivered quality meals and the provision of personal aid devices and physical therapy, so that older people can remain independent in their homes and community.
- We call for jobs and training for seniors who do not wish to retire.
- We support the formation of publicly funded and democratically controlled senior centers that provide opportunities for social and recreational activities and community involvement.
- We call for the election of advocates and ombudspersons by assemblies of seniors and caregivers to ensure the protection of residents' rights in nursing homes and a stimulating environment in group and nursing home situations.
- We support hospice care, and a person's right to die with dignity in a manner of their choosing.

## **Women**

The Socialist Party is a socialist feminist organization that recognizes that a struggle against habitual male dominance and patriarchy must go hand in hand with any struggle against capitalism. Therefore, we pledge our opposition to all forms of sexism, and demand equality in all aspects of life.

- We demand full support for every woman's right to choose when, if, and how to have children, including the right to free abortion on demand at any stage of pregnancy, without interference or coercion. Clinics providing abortion services must have the full protection of the law.
- We call for the repeal of the Hyde Amendment and all other legislation that limits access to abortion services, thus denying "the right to choose" to millions of women, particularly low-income women,

women of color, and young women. We demand full reproductive freedom for all women by removing all discriminating barriers to reproductive rights and reproductive health care.

- We call for the banning of all involuntary sterilizations. We oppose the performing of any medical research or medical procedure without a woman's full knowledge and consent.
- We demand that local governments place a priority on preventing violence toward women, with coordinated programs to educate, provide shelter for women and children, and vigorously protect women from their abusers.
- We call for the decriminalization of prostitution and demand that sex workers, just like all women workers, are guaranteed a full range of health, social, and legal services; and working conditions free from harassment, violence, and exploitation
- We call for 16 months paid leave to be shared by new parents or in its entirety by a single parent, and the expansion and full-funding of high-quality child care facilities.
- We support comprehensive educational and training opportunities, comparable worth laws, and affirmative action for women. We believe that women should be able to enter any occupation they choose, without hindrance.
- We believe that women should be free to improve their working lives through unions and other organizations, and that work at home, including child care, should be shared to enable women to fully participate in society.
- We call for organizational structure based on mutual consideration and respect, rotating leadership, gender balance, and processes that welcome and enable open and equitable participation in discussion and decision-making.

## **Youth**

The Socialist Party believes that the right of all children to nurturing, protection, and education by caring adults must be staunchly upheld, and that a young person does not have fewer rights because he or she is a minor. Therefore, we believe that all Constitutional and human rights belonging to older people belong to younger people as well, and must be defended with equal vigor and determination

- We support the immediate ratification by the United States of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- We call for children's allowances that will help ensure that every child's basic rights and needs are satisfied in a stimulating, empowering, and caring environment. We support free, quality care and education for all children and young people, federally financed and community controlled through democratically elected local boards that will include youth members.
- We support the rights of minors to be free of any kind of child abuse or neglect

whether physical, mental, emotional, or sexual.

- We oppose measures that increase responsibilities and penalties on youth ostensibly to curb crime.
- We call for an end to military draft registration, and an end to military recruiting in educational institutions.
- We call for the abolition of parent consent and notification laws for reproductive health services, including abortion.
- We call for the right to comprehensive sex education in school that includes birth control methods, STD protection, and information about being GLBTQ.
- We call for the lowering of the voting age to 15
- We oppose age-based curfew laws.

## HUMAN NEEDS

### *Arts and Culture*

The Socialist Party believes that art is an integral part of daily life, and should not be treated as a commodity produced by the activity of an elite group. All members of society should have ample opportunities for participation in art and cultural activities.

- We support the formation of collectives, arts centers and schools, independent media, theaters and festivals to advance such cultural endeavors as music, poetry, prose, drama, dance, storytelling, visual art, and videography.
- We support guaranteed incomes and grants for artists and performers.
- We support making schools and workplaces available as cultural centers.
- We call for full funding of community and school arts programs for people of all ages.
- We call for full funding to keep libraries, museums, cultural centers, and historic sites open and accessible to all.
- We call for the preservation of literature art, music, dance, oral traditions, and audio and video recordings that have arisen out of people's experiences: young and old, of all nationalities and colors, sexual preferences, working, un- and under-employed, and disabled.
- We support the autonomy of artists of color, women artists, and disabled artists in their creative work.
- We support the right of artists to join and form unions to protect their labor rights and to form collectives to advance common artistic visions.

### *Education*

The Socialist Party recognizes the right of students of all ages to a free, quality education in a safe and supportive environment, and of all school employees to good wages, benefits, and working conditions

- We call for full and equal funding of public education; for the restoration of a comprehensive K-12 curriculum, including art, music, world languages, and physical education; for an end to all public funding of private schools; and for free tuition and full-time teachers with full benefits (not "adjuncts") at the post-secondary level.
- We demand equal access to higher education for all people and support publicly funded higher education.
- We call for the forgiveness of all outstanding federal student loans and believe that students should not be saddled with decades of debt simply because they pursue higher education.
- We support public child care starting from infancy, and public education starting at age three, with caregivers and teachers of young children receiving training, wages, and benefits comparable to that of teachers at every other level of the educational system.
- We oppose merit pay for teachers, standardized testing, competition between schools within the same district, the sale of on-campus advertising in order to raise funds, and the increasing dependence of post-secondary institutions on corporate funding.
- We call for an egalitarian educational system with teaching methods that accommodate the wide range of teaching and learning styles, and that provides all students with the means to obtain the post-secondary education they desire. We call a maximum of 15 students per teacher for grades K-12, and a maximum of 50 students per teacher at the post-secondary level.
- We call for vigorous affirmative action programs so that the faculty and student-body of all schools reflect the community at large in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, and economic background. We support multicultural, multilingual, experimental education at all levels.
- We support student, parent, and teacher control of curriculum formation, and in the hiring and dismissal procedures of school personnel, through the formation of local school/community committees.
- We call for student representation on school boards, and for those boards to be fully accountable to students, parents, teachers, and school workers.
- We call for opportunities for lifelong self-education, with retraining programs and transitional financial support for workers displaced by technological advances.
- We support full and unrestricted health education programs, including sex education, with curriculum input from parents, students, teachers, and health care professionals.
- We oppose school-sponsored prayer or any other religious practice in public schools, and all efforts to limit the teaching of evolution or to combine it with non-scientific theories.

- We call for free and open access to information, including the public ownership of all large databases.

### *Health Care*

The Socialist Party stands for a socialized health care system based on universal coverage, salaried doctors and health care workers, and revenues derived from a steeply graduated income tax.

- We give critical support to the demand for the immediate abolition of all private health insurance companies through the creation of a single-payer health system. We see single-payer as an important step in the direction of a fully socialized national health program with full standard and alternative medical, dental, vision, and mental health coverage for all. This system would be publicly funded through progressive taxation and controlled by democratically elected assemblies of health care workers and patients. The National Health Program should improve, and replace, Medicare and Medicaid.
- We call for a health care system that emphasizes preventive care, respects patients' privacy, gives special attention to the needs of the physically and mentally disabled, and conducts treatment and research unimpaired by sexism, racism, or homophobia.
- We call for full funding for AIDS research, prevention, and treatment. We demand full civil rights for people living with AIDS.
- We call for public ownership and worker and community control of the pharmaceutical industry.
- We call for educational programs to help prevent drug addiction; for voluntary treatment programs for addicts and alcoholics; and for the availability of free, sterile needles for those still using IV drugs.
- We call for the reinstatement of funding to community mental health services so that low-cost or no-cost treatment is available on a voluntary basis, with clients' rights respected. We oppose involuntary incarceration for treatment without due process.
- We support the right to choose or refuse medical treatment, the right to die, and the right to assisted suicide.
- We call for full community decision-making regarding the creation, organization or elimination of public health care facilities.

### *Housing*

The Socialist Party recognizes the right of all people to high quality, low cost housing.

- We call for a vast increase in Section 8 housing subsidies as one element of major public investment in the construction of low cost, scattered site, community-based, high quality housing.
- We call for rent control for all rental units, and the right of tenants to organize.
- We support the formation of non-profit land trusts and of socially owned, tenant controlled housing cooperatives.

- We call for the organization of a housing rehabilitation program aimed at renovating and remodeling existing homes to bring them up to housing and safety codes, as part of a broader public works program.
- We call for an end to home fore-closures

### **Transportation**

The Socialist Party calls for extensive public transportation in both urban and rural areas.

- We call for the creation of a fully funded high-speed national rail system with fares set low enough to be a viable alternative to the use of the automobile.
- We call for an end to the expansion of the interstate highway system and the reduction of combustion engine/auto based transport.
- We call for government subsidized programs to expand safe routes for foot and bicycle paths.
- We call for pedestrian ways, accessible by mass transit, which exclude vehicles from the downtown area of cities and towns.
- We support publicly funded development of renewable fuels.
- We support federally funded auto insurance.
- We call for public ownership and worker control of the airline industry.

## **CIVIL RIGHTS**

### **Bill of Rights**

The Socialist Party is committed to the rights of free speech, free press, free assembly, and personal privacy, and the freedom of religious choice through the separation of church and state.

We condemn the so-called War on Terrorism and call for the immediate repeal of the U.S.A.P.A.T.R.I.O.T Acts and the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act.

We call for the elimination of the Dept. of Homeland Security and the sweeping police powers accorded to it.

We demand the exclusion of the military from domestic law enforcement.

We call for the abolition of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

We oppose so-called anti-terrorist measures and criminal code reforms that restrict legitimate dissent.

We oppose all forms of censorship both legislative and institutional.

### **Immigration**

The Socialist Party works to build a world in which everyone will be able to freely move across borders, to visit and to live wherever they choose. We recognize the

central role global capitalism plays in forcing the immigration of people from the less developed to the more industrialized countries, often leading to further economic and social injustice.

- We support secular democratic states, assuring equal rights to every citizen and resident in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- We oppose the militarization of the United States/Mexican border, and an increase in the service budget instead of the "military" budget of the INS.
- We defend the rights of all immigrants to education, health care, and full civil and legal rights and call for an unconditional amnesty program for all undocumented people. We oppose the imposition of any fees on those receiving amnesty.
- We call for an end to the use of "secret evidence" in deportation hearings, a ban on all immigration detentions and military tribunals, and full due process and habeas corpus rights in U.S. courts for all non-citizens on U.S. territory or in U.S. custody.

We demand an end to police raids in areas where immigrants congregate.

- We oppose "guest worker" programs. We call for full citizenship rights upon demonstrating residency for six months.

### **Free and Fair Elections**

The Socialist Party stands for political activity independent of the two major corporate parties. We view electoral activity as an important component of the struggle for fundamental social change. Participation as socialists in local, state, and national elections is a valuable way to clarify our position on a wide range of issues, of broadly disseminating our principles and programs, and of asserting and reaffirming our commitment to the democratic process. We believe that capitalism is fundamentally incompatible with democracy and that true democracy can only be achieved with society's transformation to socialism.

- We support the public financing of candidates for public office as long as this funding extends to the candidates of alternative political parties.
- We call for strict limits on the use of personal funds in elections, either for one's own campaign or for that of another candidate.
- We support the public financing of candidates for public office as long as this funding extends to the candidates of alternative political parties.
- We call for strict limits on the use of personal funds in elections, either for one's own campaign or for that of another candidate.
- We oppose representation based on anything other than population.

- We support the introduction of proportional representation at every level of government.
- We call for uniform ballot access laws for all states that give all political parties a chance to have their candidates on the ballot.
- We call for the closing of the loophole sanctioned by the Supreme Court which allows candidates to spend an unlimited sum of their personal wealth on their own campaigns.
- We call for the elimination of the Electoral College and support instant run-off voting of all elected officials.
- We stand opposed to the disenfranchising of any U.S. citizen by the federal, state, or local government.
- We demand greater access to media for all political parties and free, equal access to all forms of mass media for all candidates
- We call for full representation for the U.S. territories of Guam and Puerto Rico, all Native American reservations, and the District of Columbia.
- We call for the restoration of the right to vote for all citizens incarcerated in jails and prisons
- We call for a mandatory paper trail of all votes to allow for recounts and verification.

### **Legal Justice**

The Socialist Party recognizes the right of all people to equal treatment under the law, and to a humane criminal sanction system based on prevention, mediation, restitution, and rehabilitation rather than on vengeance, forced labor, and profits for the prison-industrial complex.

- We call for free, quality, legal and court services with skilled and experienced attorneys of choice for all.
- We call for prosecution of the criminal activities of politicians, corporate managers, and other privileged individuals, rather than the over-emphasis on minor infractions by working class people and for a sliding scale of fines based on income
- We call for the expansion of community release programs and other alternatives to prisons, and for a moratorium on new prison construction.
- We call for support services for prisoners and prisoners' families to reduce ostracism, maintain family ties, and provide for non-degrading visitation policies.
- We call for the immediate closure of all "Supermax" prisons and abolition of "prisons for profit".
- We call for the abolition of prison labor for profit, forced labor ("chain gangs") and the use of prison labor to perform state services.
- We call for the right of prisoners to organize unions and cooperative groups to negotiate for better living conditions
- We call for the immediate establishment of completely independent and democratically elected police control and oversight councils, with full power to fire police and to arrest, detain, and indict police officers who brutalize or abuse people or who commit any violation of laws or civil rights and liberties.

- We call for the ultimate replacement of the police with community residents trained in conflict resolution who live in and serve the community under community control.
- We call for community response services for crime victims, including the establishment of crisis centers and shelters for victims of domestic violence, spousal and child abuse, and rape and incest.
- We support federal buyout programs for arms, federal safety standards and licensing for arms, and community-based public training for gun owners.
- We call for the decriminalization of drug use and the regulation of narcotics by doctors through the use of prescriptions rather than by the criminal justice system.
- We call for the redirection of funds spent on the "war on drugs" to comprehensive community-based, client-controlled rehabilitation programs.
- We call for the abolition of the death penalty.
- We call for the dismantling of the prison industrial complex through reductions and dismantling of existing prisons, and an end to mass incarceration of people of color.
- We call for the immediate amnesty for all non-violent offenders currently incarcerated.
- We call for disallowing employers from inquiring about an applicant's past criminal record not directly related to the occupational task to be performed, including eliminating the check off box for felons.
- We call for the automatic restoration of voting rights for current convicted felons, end the revocation of civil rights for anyone convicted of a felony.
- We call for conversion of the prison industrial economy to ecologically sound production for use not for profit.
- We call for an end to all "3 strikes laws"
- We call for abolition of all prisons for children and juvenile detention centers, to be replaced with meaningful educational, social, and economic supports.
- We call for a constitutional change to the 13th Amendment striking the language regarding slavery "except as a punishment for crime"
- We oppose incarceration as an alternative to assessment and treatment of mental health issues.

### **Media and Intellectual Property**

An ever-smaller band of huge corporations controls virtually all news and entertainment media. The Socialist Party stands for the right of ordinary people to

express opinions and communicate freely by vastly extending the public sector of all forms of mass media. Ultimately, a genuine democratization of the mass media will require a democratic socialist transformation of society. Within such a society, free expression will flourish, allowing for the broadest expression of viewpoints and perspectives.

- We support the breakup of large media companies so that no one company or individual owns more than one newspaper, radio or television station, or television channel. We call for the re-regulation of the communications industry (in particular, the assertion of public ownership rights over radio and television frequencies).
- We call for government ownership of satellite and cable companies with revenues generated by these operations allocated to a publicly controlled fund to finance innovative visual and audio programming (including movies), over the air radio and television, and cable and satellite programming. The fund would also greatly increase the money going to community cable programming.
- We support public funding of newspapers and magazines. Any non-profit organization that publishes a journal would receive public funding in proportion to its paid subscriber list.
- We oppose all efforts to trim "fair use" rights, such as the right to excerpt a copyrighted work in a review.
- We call for the repeal of all existing copyright extension laws.
- We oppose legislation to force electronics manufacturers to build "Digital Rights Management" into computers and appliances.
- We oppose private ownership of the Internet backbone. We call for direct public ownership of at least 50% of the total bandwidth and for democratic ownership and control of the Internet domain naming system.

## **ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY**

### **Environment**

- We call for public ownership and democratic control of all our natural resources in order to conserve resources, preserve our wilderness areas, and restore environmental quality.
- The U.S. must immediately return to participation in international agreements, such as the Kyoto Protocol, limiting carbon emissions, and accept a major role in worldwide efforts to control global warming.
- We call for placing full financial responsibility on private companies for prevention and clean up of their own toxic wastes and for full compensation of workers and residents adversely affected by environmental hazards.

- We oppose policies that target minority communities for placement of local landfills, toxic waste disposal sites, or incinerators.
- We call for strong, enforceable endangered species protection that focuses on habitat-centered protection for plants and animals.
- We oppose any new nuclear power projects and call for the rapid phasing out of all nuclear power plants, and a ban on the export of nuclear technology.
- We support the recycling of glass, metals, plastic, paper, and chemicals and the use of recycled materials for public works projects such as roadways, parks, and playgrounds.
- We call for shutting down waste incinerators and phasing out landfills and especially oppose targeting minority communities for hazardous waste disposal sites.
- We oppose open-pit mining operations and support the reclamation of land used by mining operations at the company's expense.
- We support large-scale environmental restoration efforts.

### **Energy**

The Socialist Party stands for municipal ownership and control of energy plants, in a non-profit and decentralized, but coordinated, system that ensures the most careful use of natural resources.

- We call for the development of alternative energy sources including solar, geothermal, wind, hydropower, and biomass to end dependence on fossil fuels.
- We call for a sliding-scale index which favors low-income people, to ensure that all people have access to utility services.
- We call for mandatory vitrification (encapsulation) of all spent nuclear fuel, control rods and other waste.
- We call for a ban on all imports of nuclear materials, whether they are vitrified or not.

## **AGRICULTURE**

The Socialist Party supports a system of ecologically based, sustainable, organic agriculture based on family farms and farming cooperatives that guarantee full workers' rights to their employees, uphold all environmental and safety standards, and treat their live-stock in a humane manner. We support the creation of socially owned enterprises in the areas of transportation, storage, and processing of agricultural goods, controlled by boards comprised of farmers, farm workers, and community members.

- We call for strong organic standards, gradually lessened government price supports for non-organic food production, and strong government incentives for conservation initiatives.

- We call for public ownership and worker control of existing corporate farms, support exiting state bans on corporate farms, and support a federal ban on the establishment of new corporate farms.
- We call for the repudiation of all current farm debts for working farmers.
- We call for family farmers whose land was taken in foreclosures to be given their land and equipment back, or be given comparable land and equipment or monetary compensation
- We call for a total ban on Genetically Engineered crops.
- We encourage plant diversity, and oppose the creating, patenting, and licensing of life forms.7. We oppose industrial meat production in all its environmentally destructive forms, including hog confinements, cattle feedlots, and industrial poultry production.
- We call for a ban on irradiation of food. We particularly condemn the 2002 Farm Bill which allows irradiated food to be mislabeled "pasteurized."
- We support the right of farm workers to negotiate contracts with canneries.
- We call for country-of-origin labeling on agricultural products.
- We call for the elimination of the use of pesticides.
- We call for low-cost loans, grants, and technical help to farmers including help shifting farm production from non-essentials to staple foods and fibers.
- We encourage the reintroduction of hemp farming.
- We call for legislation banning the practice of plowing under fields in order to manipulate market forces so as to increase price.



The following points represent the key ideas of agreement of the Socialist Party USA. We encourage you to read and discuss them, and if you agree consider joining the Socialist Party:

- 1) The Socialist Party is a democratic socialist organization. We see socialism as a new social and economic order in which workers and consumers control production and community residents control their neighborhoods, homes and school and the production of society is used for the benefit of all humanity, not the private profit of a few.
- 2) We see the working class as in a key and central position to fight back against the ruling class and its power. The working class is the major force worldwide that can lead the way to a socialist future – to a real radical democracy from below.
- 3) We stand in opposition to all forms of oppression including but not limited to racism, sexism and homophobia.
- 4) We are a “multi-tendency” organization. We orient ourselves around our principles and develop a common program, but our members have various underlying philosophies and views of the world. Therefore we reject vanguardism and democratic centralism.
- 5) We advocate for independent political action outside the Democratic and Republican parties.
- 6) Our tactics in the struggle for radical democratic change reflects our ultimate goal of a society founded on principles of egalitarian, non-exploitative and non-violent relations among all people and between all peoples.

## ANIMAL RIGHTS

The Socialist Party recognizes the rights of animals to live free from unnecessary pain and suffering, and the responsibility of people to protect those rights.

- We support the spaying and neutering of pets to prevent the massive extermination resulting from overpopulation.
  - We oppose entertainment that causes pain to animals.
  - We call for the banning of the fur trade.
  - We support greater inclusion and enforcement of the Endangered Species Act.
- We call for a ban on animal experimentation for product development, and for an oversight board to examine and limit the use of animals in scientific and medical research.
- We oppose factory farming practices of overcrowding, drugging, and otherwise cruelly treating animals.

# Socialism as Radical Democracy

## Statement of Principles of the Socialist Party USA

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY** strives to establish a radical democracy that places people's lives under their own control -- a non-racist, classless, feminist, socialist society in which people cooperate at work, at home, and in the community.

Socialism is not mere government ownership, a welfare state, or a repressive bureaucracy. Socialism is a new social and economic order in which workers and consumers control production and community residents control their neighborhoods, homes, and schools. The

production of society is used for the benefit of all humanity, not for the private profit of a few. Socialism produces a constantly renewed future by not plundering the resources of the earth.

Under capitalist and authoritarian "Communist" states, people have little control over fundamental areas of their lives. The capitalist system forces workers to sell their abilities and skills to the few who own the workplaces, profit from these workers' labor, and use the government to maintain their privileged position. Under authoritarian

"Communist" states, decisions are made by Communist Party officials, the bureaucracy and the military. The inevitable product of each system is a class society with gross inequality of privileges, a draining of the productive wealth and goods of the society into military purposes, environmental pollution, and war in which workers are compelled to fight other workers.

People across the world need to cast off the systems which oppress them, and build a new world fit for all humanity. Democratic revolutions are needed to dissolve the power now exercised by the few who control great wealth and the government. By revolution we mean a radical and fundamental change in the structure and quality of economic, political, and personal relations. The building of socialism requires widespread understanding and participation, and will not be achieved by an elite working "on behalf of" the people. The working class is in a key and central position to fight back against the ruling capitalist class and its power. The working class is the major force worldwide that can lead the way to a socialist future – to a real radical democracy from below.

***Radical democracy is the cornerstone not only of our socialism, but also of our strategy. Here are the main features of each:***

## **Socialist Society**

### ***Freedom & Equality***

Democratic socialism is a political and economic system with freedom and equality for all, so that people may develop to their fullest potential in harmony with others. The Socialist Party is committed to full freedom of speech, assembly, press, and religion, and to a multi-party system. We are dedicated to the abolition of male supremacy and class society, and to the elimination of all forms of oppression, including those based on race, national origin, age, sexual preferences, and disabling conditions.

### ***Production For Use, Not For Profit***

In a socialist system the people own and control the means of production and distribution through democratically controlled public agencies, cooperatives, or other collective groups. The primary goal of economic activity is to provide the necessities of life, including food, shelter, health care, education, child care, cultural opportunities, and social services.

These social services include care for the chronically ill, persons with mental disabilities, the infirm and the aging. Planning takes place at the community, regional, and national levels, and is determined democratically with the input of workers, consumers, and the public to be served.

### ***Full Employment***

Under welfare capitalism, a reserve pool of people is kept undereducated, under-skilled and unemployed, largely along racial and gender lines, to exert pressure on those who are employed and on organized labor. The employed pay for this knife that capitalism holds to their throats by being taxed to fund welfare programs to maintain the unemployed and their children. In this way the working class is divided against itself; those with jobs and those without are separated by resentment and fear. In socialism, full employment is realized for everyone who wants to work

### ***Worker & Community Control***

Democracy in daily life is the core of our socialism. Public ownership becomes a fraud if decisions are made by distant bureaucrats or authoritarian managers. In socialist society power resides in worker-managed and cooperative enterprises. Community-based cooperatives help provide the flexibility and

innovation required in a dynamic socialist economy. Workers have the right to form unions freely, and to strike and engage in other forms of job actions. Worker and community control make it possible to combine life at work, home and in the community into a meaningful whole for adults and children. Girls and boys are encouraged to grow up able to choose freely the shape of their lives and work without gender and racial stereotyping. Children are provided with the care, goods and services, and support that they need, and are protected from abuse.

### ***Ecological Harmony***

A socialist society carefully plans its way of life and technology to be a harmonious part of our natural environment. This planning takes place on regional, national, and international levels and covers the production of energy, the use of scarce resources, land-use planning, the prevention of pollution and the preservation of wildlife. The cleanup of the contaminated environment and the creation of a nuclear-free world are among the first tasks of a socialist society.

## **Socialist Strategy**

### ***Socialist Feminism and Women's Liberation***

Socialist feminism confronts the common root of sexism, racism and classism: the determination of a life of oppression or privilege based on accidents of birth or circumstances. Socialist feminism is an inclusive way of creating social change. We work against the exploitation and oppression of women who live with lower wages, inferior working conditions and subordination in the home, in society and in politics. Socialists struggle for the full freedom of women and men to control their own bodies and reproductive systems and to determine their own sexual orientation.

We stand for the right of women to choose to have a safe and legal abortion, at no cost, regardless of age, race, or circumstance. Women's independent organizations and caucuses are essential to full liberation, both before and after the transformation to socialism. Women will define their own liberation.

### ***Liberation of Oppressed People***

Bigotry and discrimination help the ruling class divide, exploit, and abuse workers here and in the Third World. The Socialist Party works to eliminate prejudice and discrimination in all its forms. We recognize the right of self-defense in the face of attacks; we also support non-violent direct action in combating oppression. We fully support strong and expanded affirmative action programs to help combat the entrenched inertia of a racist and sexist system which profits from discrimination and social division.

People of color, lesbians and gays, and other oppressed groups need independent organization to fight oppression. Racism will not be eliminated merely by eliminating capitalism. value synthesis and cooperation rather than conflict and competition.

### ***International Solidarity & Peace***

People around the world have more in common with each other than with their rulers. We condemn war, preparation for war, and the militaristic culture because they play havoc with people's lives and divert resources from constructive social projects. Militarism also concentrates even greater power in the hands of the few, the powerful and the violent. We align with no nation, but only with working people throughout the world.

### ***Internal Democracy***

Socialism and democracy are one and indivisible. The Socialist Party is democratic, with its structure and practices visible and accessible to all members. We reject dogma and promote



internal debate. The Socialist Party is a "multi-tendency" organization. We orient ourselves around our principles and develop a common program, but our members have various underlying philosophies and views of the world. Solidarity within the party comes from the ability of those with divergent views on some issues to engage in a collective struggle towards social revolution. We strive to develop feminist practice within the party.

#### **Cultural Freedom**

Art is an integral part of daily life. It should not be treated as just a commodity. Socialists work to create opportunities for participation in art and cultural activities. We work for the restoration and preservation of the history and culture of working people, women, and oppressed minorities.

#### **The Personal as Political**

Living under domination and struggling against it exact a personal toll. Socialists regard the distortion of personal life and interpersonal relations under capitalism as a political matter. Socialism must ultimately improve life; this cannot be accomplished by demanding that personal lives be sacrificed for the movement. We cherish the right of personal privacy and the enrichment of culture through diversity.

#### **Electoral Action**

Socialists participate in the electoral process to present socialist alternatives. The Socialist Party does not divorce electoral politics from other strategies for basic change. While a minority, we fight for progressive changes compatible with a socialist future. When a majority we will rapidly introduce those changes,

which constitute socialism, with priority to the elimination of the power of big business through public ownership and workers' control.

By participating in local government, socialists can support movements of working people and make improvements that illustrate the potential of public ownership. We advocate electoral action independent of the capitalist-controlled two-party system.

#### **Democratic Revolution From Below**

No oppressed group has ever been liberated except by its own organized efforts to overthrow its oppressors. A society based on radical democracy, with power exercised through people's organizations, requires a socialist transformation from below. People's organizations cannot be created by legislation, nor can they spring into being only on the eve of a revolution.

They can grow only in the course of popular struggles, especially those of women, labor, and minority groups. The Socialist Party works to build these organizations democratically.

The process of struggle profoundly shapes the ends achieved. Our tactics in the struggle for radical democratic change reflect our ultimate goal of a society founded on principles of egalitarian, non-exploitative and non-violent relations among all people and between all peoples.

To be free we must create new patterns for our lives and live in new ways in the midst of a society that does not understand and is often hostile to new, better modes of life. Our aim is the creation of a new social order, a society in which the commanding value is the infinite preciousness of every woman, man and child.

## **Socialist Party USA**

**339 Lafayette St. #303**

**New York, NY 10012**

**[www.socialistparty-usa.org](http://www.socialistparty-usa.org)**