

**Hays County Democratic Party Approved Resolutions
March 24, 2018**

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Resolution Calling for Repeal of the Death Penalty To Be Retained in the 2018 Texas Democratic Party Platform

WHEREAS the death penalty carries a high risk of executing an innocent person, and in fact 161 people have been released from death rows across the country due to evidence of their wrongful conviction, including 13 in Texas; and

WHEREAS there is significant evidence that Texas has already executed innocent people; and

WHEREAS the death penalty has been documented to be exorbitantly more expensive than life without the possibility of parole; and

WHEREAS juries and prosecutors across Texas are opting against death in favor of life in prison without parole, with death sentences remaining at record-low levels, with just 10 death sentences imposed statewide in the past three years; and

WHEREAS application of the death penalty remains racially biased and arbitrarily imposed, with just six counties in Texas accounting for more than half of all new death sentences imposed in the past five years; and

WHEREAS Texas continues to lead the nation in the number of executions carried out each year; and

WHEREAS other states are increasingly turning away from the death penalty as evidenced by the legislatures in New Jersey (2007), New Mexico (2009), Illinois (2011), Connecticut (2012), Maryland (2013), and Nebraska (2015) repealing the death penalty and the Supreme Court of New York and Delaware ruling it unconstitutional; and

WHEREAS the 2012, 2014, and 2016 Texas Democratic Party platforms endorsed abolition of the death penalty;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the following language be retained in the Capital Punishment subsection of the Public Safety section of the 2018 Texas Democratic Party platform:

Texas Democrats call for the passage of legislation that would repeal the death penalty in this state and replace it with the punishment of life in prison without the possibility of parole.

— Submitted by Lauralee Harris, Precinct 221

Resolution in Opposition to Arrest and Jail for Non-Jailable Minor Offenses Like Traffic Tickets

WHEREAS the Democratic Party of Texas is committed to freedom and the equitable application of laws; and

WHEREAS people who violate traffic laws and certain other minor misdemeanor offenses are not usually jailed as a punishment because the law says the punishment for these violations is a fine; and

WHEREAS police officers who pull someone over for such violations have been allowed to arrest and book them nonetheless, leading to jail time for non-jailable offenses; and

WHEREAS officers have used that discretion disproportionately when stopping people of color, according to studies of arrests in Harris and Travis counties; officers have been caught on video threatening drivers who don't believe they can be arrested for a non-jailable traffic ticket and don't get out of the car fast enough; and

WHEREAS Sandra Bland was guilty only of failure to signal a lane change when she was forced out of the car, brutally arrested, and dumped in a Waller County jail, where she died; and

WHEREAS Texans jailed for infractions that do not have jail as an allowable consequence spend hours and sometimes days in jail, with incalculable consequences to themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS a study of arrests in Harris County found that 11% of all arrests were for Class C misdemeanors punishable only by fine, mostly traffic violations, and disproportionately black drivers; and

WHEREAS an unnecessary arrest for something as minor as a traffic infraction takes officers off the road for hours, prevents them from investigating more serious crimes, costs county taxpayers a steep price in booking and magistration, and makes traffic stops less safe for both officers and drivers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Democratic Party of Texas calls upon the Texas Legislature to authorize the arrest and jailing of individuals only for offenses for which jail is a punishment or to prevent family violence.

— Submitted by "TDP Allies"

Resolution in Opposition to “Consent” Searches at Traffic Stops

WHEREAS the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution protects “the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures ... and no Warrants shall issue but upon probable cause”; and

WHEREAS police conduct thousands of “consent” searches of motorists and their cars each year; and

WHEREAS most people don’t understand their rights or don’t feel like they can reasonably say “no” when asked for consent to search by an officer at a roadside stop; and

WHEREAS consent searches are disproportionately requested of black and brown drivers in many jurisdictions;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Democratic Party of Texas calls upon the Texas Legislature to require officers to get written or recorded consent to conduct a search and inform people that they have a right to decline to give such consent.

— *Submitted by “TDP Allies”*

Resolution in Support of Closing Unsafe Juvenile Prisons

WHEREAS the Democratic Party of Texas is committed to public safety and support for families; and

WHEREAS Texas’ juvenile prisons, located mostly in distant rural areas, are seriously understaffed and suffer from a staff turnover rate of 40% per year; and

WHEREAS disastrous conditions in understaffed state juvenile prisons led to the recent scandals in which eight guards allegedly sexually assaulted juveniles under their control; and

WHEREAS Texas county facilities are currently being upgraded to meet new federal rape-elimination standards, better protecting youth; and

WHEREAS a majority of youth imprisoned in violent and dangerous state juvenile facilities will eventually be released back into their communities; and

WHEREAS juveniles incarcerated in violent and dangerous state facilities can become more dangerous by the time of their release;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we urge the Texas Legislature to close Texas’ five remaining youth prisons, shifting youth to smaller youth facilities closer to family and focused on rehabilitation.

— *Submitted by “TDP Allies”*

Resolution in Support of Ending Debtor's Prison in Texas

WHEREAS there are millions of arrest warrants issued annually in Texas for tickets, fines, and fees; and

WHEREAS arresting, booking, and jailing people who could not afford to pay a traffic fine takes police officers away from duties related to more serious crimes; and

WHEREAS 95% of all arrest warrants are for Class C misdemeanors, the lowest-level criminal charge, for which the maximum punishment is a \$500 fine; and

WHEREAS the United States abolished imprisonment for unpaid tickets, fines, and fees in 1833, and the Supreme Court declared 100 years later that imprisoning people for being poor was unconstitutional under the Fourteenth Amendment; and

WHEREAS hundreds of thousands of Texans can't renew expired licenses until their fines and fees are paid off; many Texans have no choice but to pay fine-only misdemeanor cases in whole or in part with "jail credit," which involves sitting in jail to pay off tickets, fines, and fees; and

WHEREAS the cost of housing an individual in county jail is an average of \$59/day, and the cost of the "pay or stay" practice is an unnecessary waste of taxpayers' money;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we urge the Texas Legislature to enact laws that end the unconstitutional incarceration of individuals because they can't pay tickets, fines, or fees for minor infractions including traffic violations.

— Submitted by "TDP Allies"

Resolution in Support of Pretrial Release

WHEREAS historically Texas counties use money bail to determine who stays in jail and who is released while a criminal case is pending; and

WHEREAS money bail allows dangerous people with resources, such as Robert Durst, to be released and free to commit more crimes; and

WHEREAS money bail also keeps tens of thousands of Texans who are not a public safety threat jailed for months or even years just because their families don't have money; keeping people who don't need to be jailed in jail costs Texas millions of dollars in police time, jail expenses, lost productivity, and tax revenue; and

WHEREAS states like New Jersey provide judges with information about the risk of flight or likelihood a defendant will commit a crime to help make release decisions, improving public safety and saving taxpayers money;

WHEREAS a recent Texas A&M study of two urban Texas counties found that the county using a risk assessment tool to help judges decide who to release had fewer defendants who committed violent crimes while on pretrial release and none who had committed homicide in the 3.5 years studied; in the same study, defendants released simply because they could afford to pay bail committed 53% more violent felonies while out on bail, including 18 homicides in the 3.5 years studied; and

WHEREAS states with risk-based systems, such as Kentucky, maintain a very high rate of court appearances and low rates of rearrest before trial;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Democratic Party of Texas calls upon the Texas Legislature to ensure jurisdictions rely on data about risk in making release decisions and set the least-restrictive release conditions on each defendant eligible for pretrial release.

— Submitted by “TDP Allies”

Resolution in Support of Raising the Age of Criminal Responsibility from 17 to 18 Years

WHEREAS the Democratic Party of Texas is committed to public safety and the welfare of children; and

WHEREAS under Texas law, all 17-year-olds are prosecuted as adults when they break the law, regardless of the violation or any extenuating circumstances; in all but four other states, teens are prosecuted as adults starting at 18 or even 19; and

WHEREAS if Texas law doesn't change, taxpayers must pay for significant renovation of county jails to accommodate 17-year-olds prisoners under the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act; and

WHEREAS when a 17 year old is arrested, officers are not required to notify his or her parents, because the teen is treated as an adult even if still living at home and attending high school; and

WHEREAS we now know that the human brain continues to develop into a person's 20s, particularly the portions of the brain associated with risk assessment and cognitive reasoning; and

WHEREAS teens prosecuted in the adult system are at high risk of suicide; and

WHEREAS research shows teenagers who commit crimes are far more likely to rehabilitate and age out of crime than older people, but those incarcerated in inappropriate adult facilities can instead become more dangerous by the time of their release;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Democratic Party of Texas calls upon the Texas Legislature to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 17 to 18 years.

— Submitted by “TDP Allies”

Resolution in Support of Reforming Penalties for Marijuana Offenses

WHEREAS enforcement of marijuana prohibition takes law enforcement resources away from more urgent public safety priorities and yet fails to achieve success in reducing marijuana use and availability; and

WHEREAS in 2016 police logged more than 66,000 arrests for simple possession of marijuana, an arrest every eight minutes; and

WHEREAS taxpayers pay hundreds of millions each year to arrest, book, magistrate, incarcerate, release and supervise people for simple marijuana possession; and

WHEREAS youth are disproportionately arrested for simple possession of marijuana, and the criminal charge can limit the young person’s access to jobs, educational loans, and much more. States that have created legal and regulated markets for marijuana have seen use among young people decline as a result; and

WHEREAS Austin and Houston have launched local initiatives to redirect people picked up by police for possession of a small amount of marijuana to a “prebooking” system that authorizes alternative punishment, with no criminal charge when the requirements are completed; and

WHEREAS whether or not a Texan faces a criminal penalty for an act should not depend on which county he or she happened to be in at the time;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Democratic Party of Texas supports a change in the law to make it a civil, not criminal, offense to possess an ounce or less of marijuana for personal use, punishable by a fine of up to \$250, but without jail time or the creation of a permanent criminal record.

— Submitted by “TDP Allies”

Resolution in Support of Defending the Rights of Citizens Accused

Increasing public funds for indigent defense and creating and supporting a new public defender office

WHEREAS under the United States Constitution, the rights of the individual are protected from government intrusion by the right to a defense attorney; and

WHEREAS even the most respected law enforcement agencies from the FBI on down have engaged in examples of overreach, violating people’s constitutional rights and sometimes

resulting in the conviction of innocent people. Texas courts have falsely convicted hundreds of Texans, some who served more than 20 years before being exonerated, and Texas has most likely executed innocent people as well; and

WHEREAS prosecutors, protected by absolute immunity, have hidden exculpatory evidence and cut deals with shady informants leading to the conviction of innocent people; and

WHEREAS the U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly overturned death-penalty sentences because the convicted person was poor and did not get reasonable representation by a lawyer at trial; and

WHEREAS the Office of Capital and Forensic Writs has helped identify people who might be innocent due to now-invalidated “junk science” and provides critical support for indigent people who can’t afford a lawyer; and

WHEREAS every Texan has a right to an attorney in a criminal case, even if he or she can’t pay for one, under the Sixth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution; and

WHEREAS the due process requirements for capital cases have nearly bankrupted some Texas counties, and a public defender system for such cases would reduce the cost to local property tax payers; and

WHEREAS the Texas Association of Counties cites indigent defense costs as one of the biggest unfunded mandates driving up local property taxes;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Texas Legislature should increase state funding for indigent defense to match county expenditures, create a public defender office for death-penalty appeals, and fully fund the Office of Capital and Forensic Writs.

— Submitted by “TDP Allies”

Resolution in Support of Reducing Penalties for Certain Drug-Related Offenses and Providing Treatment

WHEREAS Texas currently addresses all forms of drug addiction primarily through punishment by felony sentencing and incarceration; and

WHEREAS Democratic states like California, Massachusetts, and Vermont and swing states like Pennsylvania and Colorado have passed legislation to reduce simple possession of a small quantity of addictive drugs to a misdemeanor; and

WHEREAS Texas taxpayers spend more than \$70 million each biennium to incarcerate addicts over and over, and the system provides little or no treatment to most inmates; and

WHEREAS everyone incarcerated for a drug possession offense will be released back into the community and almost two-thirds will be rearrested and cycle back through the system; and

WHEREAS a felony drug possession charge permanently limits people's job prospects, access to education and much more, making it harder to recover from addiction. Addicts are less likely to relapse if they get treatment locally, close to family, church, and the people who care most for them; and

WHEREAS reduced relapse rates combined with increased job opportunities for people addressing their addiction will significantly reduce the need for prison beds;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we call upon the Texas Legislature to reclassify possession of very small quantities of addictive drugs from a felony Class A misdemeanor and use some of the savings to support increased access to drug treatment.

— Submitted by "TDP Allies"

Resolution in Support of Expanded Reportage of Use of Force Incidents

WHEREAS law enforcement is rightly trusted with the ability to legally use force; and

WHEREAS there have been many recent examples of force being used inappropriately, leading to the escalation of a situation and the loss of life. Many of these situations could have been avoided if best practices were in place through both training and policy; and

WHEREAS officers are legally allowed to use deadly force in a wide range of circumstances that may violate emerging community standards and expectations; and

WHEREAS officers are almost always "no-billed" by grand juries because of the breadth of their legal discretion, creating anger and mistrust in the communities they serve; and

WHEREAS Texas law authorizes deadly force even against unarmed and compliant individuals if they are suspected of a violent offense; and

WHEREAS it is critical to identify departments that are using use-of-force best practices for praise and those that are not offering additional training;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Democratic Party of Texas calls upon the Texas Legislature to expand current statewide use-of-force reporting to include all incidents resulting in injury to either a civilian or an officer, require de-escalation as a matter of policy as well as training, and review state use-of-force statutes to ensure that lethal force cannot be abused.

— Submitted by "TDP Allies"

ECONOMY AND JOBS

Resolution in Support of a Living Wage and the “Fight for 15”

WHEREAS the federal minimum wage and the Texas minimum wage remain at \$7.25 an hour — far below what is needed to allow full-time workers to afford basic necessities; and

WHEREAS the pathetically low minimum wage has not risen since 2009, and Congress has taken no action to improve the wage floor; and

WHEREAS the Texas Legislature made no progress in raising the state minimum raise, which mirrors the federal level; and

WHEREAS polls consistently show a large majority of Americans and Texans support a minimum wage hike, and a recent poll suggested widespread support for raising the minimum wage to at least \$12.50 an hour; and

WHEREAS while governments around the nation have been taking the matter into their own hands, that is not possible in Texas because state law preempts local governments from enacting general minimum wage increases, taking away “local control”; and

WHEREAS fast-food strikers and the “Fight for 15,” as well as Wal-Mart workers, have repeatedly engaged in actions, including one-day strikes, aimed at raising wages to at least \$15 an hour in the fast-food, retail, and other industries; and

WHEREAS tipped workers are often in an even worse position, receiving just \$2.13 an hour from employers while they depend on the generosity of customers to reach the minimum wage level; and

WHEREAS wage inequality is at levels not seen since the Great Depression;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Democratic delegates reaffirm our support for a federal minimum wage increase to a living-wage level, including a cost-of-living adjustment that would maintain the wage floor’s buying power.

— *Unsigned*

Resolution in Support of Earned Paid Sick Time

WHEREAS approximately 40% of workers in Texas lack paid sick time, and low-income and part-time workers are especially unlikely to be covered; and

WHEREAS most workers in Texas will at some time during each year need limited time off from work to care for their own health and safety needs or the health and safety needs of a close family member; and

WHEREAS denying earned paid sick time to employees is detrimental to the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the state of Texas;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Senate Districts 21 and 25 support policies that require employees in Texas be provided with earned paid sick time for use if an employee needs to be absent from work because the employee or the employee's family member experiences illness or injury or otherwise requires medical or health care, including preventative care and mental health care.

— *Submitted by "TDP Allies"*

Resolution in Support of Public Employee Pensions

WHEREAS defined benefit pension plans are the cornerstone of the retirement system for firefighters, police, teachers, nurse, and other public employees in Texas; and

WHEREAS defined benefit plans afford public employees the ability to build and safeguard income security in retirement, making use of the professional asset managers exercising sound judgment, procuring lower investment fees and obtaining representative returns; and

WHEREAS a large percentage of the Teacher Retirement System, the Employees Retirement System and other state and local pension funds come from the paychecks of workers themselves; and

WHEREAS virtually all Texas retirement funds are actuarially sound and prepared to pay retirement benefits for all who are vested in the system for decades to come; and

WHEREAS certain interests based in Texas are running a national campaign to convert traditional pension systems that have served public employees well to 401(k)-style plans that transfer all investment risk to working people; and

WHEREAS the "grand bargain" for public employees is that while they may be paid less than their counterparts in the private sector, they will enjoy decent health plans and a pension that makes possible a secure retirement; and

WHEREAS proposals to blow up the state and local pension system are based on ideology, not the best interests of government, taxpayers, or the working people who are affected;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Texas Democrats fully support protecting and strengthening existing public employee pension funds and benefits such as those under TRS, ERS, and county and municipal public pension systems.

— *Unsigned*

Resolution Opposing Efforts to Ban Public Employee Payroll Dues Deduction

WHEREAS firefighters, police, teachers, nurses, and other public employees in Texas benefit from the freedom to schedule deductions from their paychecks for union dues, charitable purposes, and support of other organizations of their choosing; and

WHEREAS such voluntary deductions are part of the ordinary course of business for a broad range of employers, both public and private, and are appropriate for governments to facilitate in their role as an employer; and

WHEREAS voluntary payroll deductions come from the pockets of public employees who have earned their pay and at that point have the economic freedom to spend the funds as they see fit; and

WHEREAS by law in Texas, voluntary payroll deductions for dues to labor organizations cost taxpayers nothing; and

WHEREAS by law in Texas, no worker is required to join a labor organization, pay dues, or sign up for payroll deduction, and all workers may get in or out of a payroll deduction arrangement at any time;

WHEREAS payroll deduction supports organizations that run the gamut in their viewpoints, many of which lobby the legislature from diverse perspectives according to the democratically expressed wishes of dues-payers and contributors; and

WHEREAS a national campaign to ban payroll dues deduction for labor unions alone — singling out organizations that firefighters, police, teachers, nurses and other working people voluntarily choose to support — has resulted in failed legislation in Texas both in 2015 and 2017 but is expected to return for another try when the Texas Legislature convenes in 2019;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that delegates OPPOSE any legislation that would single out public employees and deny them their economic freedom to choose which organizations they may support through payroll dues deduction.

— *Unsigned*

EDUCATION

Resolution in Support of Allowing the Substitution of a Government Course on Mexican American Politics for Government Course Requirements in Section 301, Chapter 51, of the Education Code

WHEREAS Texas Democrats seek to increase Democratic representation of Hispanics at all levels of government; and

WHEREAS there is a high correlation between education levels and political knowledge and political participation; and

WHEREAS young Hispanics are increasingly alienated from the political history and thus ignorant of the struggle for significant social, educational, political, and economic advancements for Mexican Americans and other Americans throughout Texas, the Southwest, and nation; and

WHEREAS dissemination of such knowledge will lead to a new generation of Hispanic political leaders who are educated about this political history and thus lead to greater participation in the political process by Hispanics of the next generation;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Hays County Democratic Party supports modification of Chapter 51 of the Education Code to allow a course on Mexican American politics to be substituted for the core curriculum requirement of Texas Politics.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Texas Democratic Party include in the Education section of the Texas Democratic Party platform of 2018 this modification of Chapter 51 of the Education Code.

— Submitted by Michael Sanchez, Precinct 129

ELECTIONS

Resolution Calling for a Requirement that Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates Release Their Tax Returns

WHEREAS the President of the United States may have personal and business interests that conflict with his duties of loyalty and fiduciary responsibility to those of the United States; and

WHEREAS the President is empowered by law to execute the laws, including those related to taxation and regulation that may impact the President's individual interests; and

WHEREAS the President may develop and advocate for policies affecting those competing interests; and

WHEREAS tax returns can reveal conflicts of interest that may not appear in financial disclosure statements; and

WHEREAS until now every United States presidential candidate since Jimmy Carter had made their tax returns public;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Texas Democratic Party take a formal position in support of legislation requiring all candidates for the offices of the President of the United

States and Vice President of the United States make available for public view their income tax returns for at least the previous five years for that candidate's name to appear on any general or primary election ballot.

— Submitted by Diana Robinson, Precinct 230, SD-25

Resolution to Elect the President by Popular Vote, Joining the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact

WHEREAS the Electoral College was established in the U.S. Constitution to delegate the choice of president to a handful of elite citizens and magnify the political power of slaveholding states; and

WHEREAS it has long since ceased to accomplish either purpose; and

WHEREAS it has been responsible for the election of five presidents who lost the popular vote; and

WHEREAS the American people deserve and demand to elect the president by popular vote; and

WHEREAS presidential campaigns typically pass by the majority of states where the votes are not likely to be close; and

WHEREAS the present system discourages voting by citizens who believe their votes will not matter; and

WHEREAS the difficulty of achieving popular election by constitutional amendment necessitates a more practical method; and

WHEREAS such a method is at hand in the form of the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, by which state legislatures commit their electors to vote for whoever wins the popular vote nationwide; and

WHEREAS ten states and the District of Columbia have joined the Compact, accounting for 165 of the 270 electoral votes needed to put it into effect; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the Texas Democratic Party supports our state joining the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Texas Democratic Party commits its full support and resources to joining the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact and calls upon all members of the Texas Legislature to work for passage of House Bill 496, introduced by Rep. Ina Minjarez.

— Submitted by Diana Robinson, Precinct 230, SD-25

Resolution in Support of Modifying Voting Age for Primaries

WHEREAS the 26th Amendment guarantees the right to vote to anyone over 18 but does not prohibit it for anyone who may be younger; and

WHEREAS Democratic primaries and caucuses in Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Virginia, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming allow 17 year olds who will be 18 on the day of the general election to participate in the process; and

WHEREAS Texas State Representative Donna Howard (D) of Austin has drafted legislation in support of allowing 17 year olds to vote with bipartisan support; and

WHEREAS in light of recent events in solidarity with the youth of our state and country, banning 17-year-old voters from participating in the primary would silence their voices when nominating candidates that they would vote on later in the year; and

WHEREAS we stand with the youth of Texas advocating for a safer community and the right to express their dissent by voting; and

WHEREAS studies show that when voters get involved early, they stay involved; and

WHEREAS these voters are already allowed participation in the convention process;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Texas Democratic Party supports allowing anyone who will be 18 on Election Day to participate in any related primaries, including voting prior to turning 18 years of age, and shall add language to the official platform to support this goal.

— Submitted by Jen Ramos (SD-21), Tim McDaniel (SD-31),
and Celia Morgan, president of the Texas Young Democrats

ENVIRONMENT

Resolution to Protect Texas from High-Level Radioactive Waste Risks

WHEREAS protecting the health, safety, security and financial well-being of the people of Texas is of prime importance; and

WHEREAS Waste Control Specialists has applied to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for a license to build a “Consolidated Interim Storage” facility to store up to 40,000 tons of nuclear reactor waste, also called “high-level radioactive waste” and “spent fuel,” for

40 years or longer in Andrews County, and a similar facility is proposed by Holtec for nearby New Mexico; and

WHEREAS the radioactive waste would come from nuclear reactors from around the entire country; and

WHEREAS exposure to dangerous levels of radioactivity is know to lead to birth defects, genetic damage, and cancers, and unshielded exposure to high-level radioactive waste could be lethal; and

WHEREAS this waste could soon be shipped by rail through major cities and rural areas of Texas from other states, and if an accident should occur during transport of this reactor waste, even a small radioactive release could contaminate a 42-square-mile area. A Department of Energy study found that cleanup could cost \$620 million in a rural area and in an urban area could cost up to \$9.5 billion in the most heavily contaminated square mile; and

WHEREAS our lives, land, and aquifers must be protected from radioactive contamination that could result from accidents, radiation releases, leaks, or terrorist actions during the thousands of high-level radioactive waste shipments that could occur for at least 20 years if temporary consolidated storage is licensed;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Hays County Democratic Party in Texas is opposed to Consolidated Interim Storage and transport of high-level radioactive waste in and through our state; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission should delay the licensing process so that the state legislators have time to host hearings on health, safety, transportation, and financial liability issues related to high-level radioactive waste storage in Texas.

— Submitted by Karen Hadden, executive director of the Sustainable Energy and Economic Development (SEED) Coalition

EQUAL RIGHTS AND FAIR REPRESENTATION

Resolution in Opposition to Separating Asylum-Seeking Family Members at U.S. Points of Entry

WHEREAS the current administration has sought to intimidate asylum seekers at our international border by separating family members and particularly by threatening to take children from their parents; and

WHEREAS in the recent past many cases of such family separations have been observed and documented by immigrant advocacy organizations; and

WHEREAS this inhumane separation of child from parent, traumatic to both, can diminish their strength and hope for due process by which they might claim their legal rights as refugees; and

WHEREAS this unconscionable treatment of the vulnerable discourages them from entering at official points of entry so as to request asylum, as is their legal right by international and U.S. constitutional law, and thus increases their entering other than legally, which can lead to death by exposure and victimization as well as to further problems connected to illegal entry;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we are opposed to any policy or practice of separating family members seeking asylum at our borders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we are opposed to threats of family separation for purposes of deterring asylum seekers from escaping the violence and related conditions of servitude in the countries from which they have fled.

— Submitted by Diana Robinson, Precinct 230, SD-25

Resolution in Support of Protecting Dreamers

WHEREAS the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program under President Obama offered protections for undocumented immigrants who arrived in the U.S. as young children; and

WHEREAS “DREAMers” covered by the program know only the United States and have made a positive mark on the nation; and

WHEREAS Texas leadership has sadly been at the forefront of an order by the White House to repeal DACA, leaving the future of tens of thousands of young people in legal limbo and in fear of deportation; and

WHEREAS federal courts have suspended a previous March 5 deadline for DACA repeal, finding that President Trump likely did not follow the law in announcing the repeal — a ruling that is on appeal; and

WHEREAS Congress has failed to produce legislation that continues legal protections for DREAMers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that delegates call for Congress to take action to protect DREAMers so they can move forward with their lives and put an end to the fear that they will be deported; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress should debate comprehensive immigration reform to address issues that affect the larger community of immigrants.

— Unsigned

Resolution in Support of Nondiscrimination Legislation

WHEREAS we believe every Texan has the right to participate fully and equally in society and enjoy its benefits and freedoms; and

WHEREAS lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) Texans suffer pervasive discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and education because of homophobia, transphobia, and a lack of legal protections; and

WHEREAS the State of Texas does not have a statewide, nondiscrimination policy covering sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression; and

WHEREAS protecting vulnerable members of our state from unwarranted discrimination is fully consistent with the goals, aspirations and values of the Texas Democratic Party and Texans in general; and

WHEREAS nondiscrimination laws help to ensure that LGBTQ people have equal access to the same opportunities and protections granted to others, such as the ability to work in an environment where people are judged by their job performance, not by their sexual orientation or gender identity or gender expression;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Texas Democratic Party supports the passage of comprehensive nondiscrimination legislation that would make discrimination based upon sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression illegal in employment, housing, public accommodations, and education, while providing exceptions to these protections for religious employers, and small family-run businesses.

— Submitted by Diana Robinson, Precinct 230, SD-25

Resolution Opposing Discrimination in the Guise of “Religious Liberty”

WHEREAS we are proud that Texas is a religiously diverse state; and

WHEREAS the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and the Texas Constitution protect each Texan’s ability to practice the faith of their choice, or none at all; and

WHEREAS Texas has enacted additional statutory protections of religious liberty; and

WHEREAS we respect the right of every Texan to worship — or not — according to their own conscience; and

WHEREAS invoking religious liberty to justify discrimination against LGBTQ Texans or to undermine the rights of others is a perversion of the freedoms granted by the First Amendment and the Texas Constitution; and

WHEREAS granting some people a license to discriminate under the guise of religion is inconsistent with our civil rights laws and the democratic principle of equality; and

WHEREAS we Texas Democrats and Texans generally believe that both religious liberty and equality are our birthright, guaranteed by the Constitution; and

WHEREAS we Texas Democrats and Texans generally believe that religion should never be used to divide people; and

WHEREAS we Texas Democrats and Texans generally believe that no one should be refused service because of who they are;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Texas Democratic Party opposes the passage of any legislation that hides behind religion to create a license to discriminate against LGBTQ Texans in the workplace, at school, in access to health care, in public accommodations, in access to housing, or in access to government services.

— Submitted by Diana Robinson, Precinct 230, SD-25

Resolution in Opposition to Civil Asset Forfeiture

WHEREAS the United States is unique in the world, both in terms of adherence to the rule of law and due process; and

WHEREAS the people of Texas celebrate a rich history of transparency and government accountability; and

WHEREAS under current law the state can permanently take a person's property without so much as an allegation of criminal conduct, a practice known as civil asset forfeiture; and

WHEREAS when the government takes property, a person has to go to civil court to get it back; and

WHEREAS most people cannot afford to fight the government in civil court and end up forfeiting their cars, cash, or other property in what is called a "default judgment" against them; and

WHEREAS the total value of assets forfeited directly to government agencies through federal, state and local civil asset forfeiture is now greater than the value of property stolen in burglaries nationwide; and

WHEREAS civil asset forfeiture is counter to the most fundamental traditions of our criminal justice system and individual liberties;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Democratic Party of Texas calls up the Texas Legislature to abolish civil asset forfeiture and to ensure private property only be forfeited upon a criminal conviction.

— Submitted by “TDP Allies”

HEALTH CARE

Resolution in Support of State-Funded Universal Access to Pre-Exposure and Post-Exposure Prophylaxis to Prevent Transmission of HIV

WHEREAS approximately 5,000 Texans are diagnosed with HIV infection every year, with the highest rates of new infection occurring in economically vulnerable populations, including uninsured youth and people of color; and

WHEREAS a new pharmaceutical prevention tool exists, known as Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), which is more than 95% effective at preventing HIV transmission when used consistently; and

WHEREAS the economically vulnerable communities at most risk for becoming HIV positive are the least likely to have access to high-quality medical care that would facilitate access to this prevention tool;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Democratic Party supports increasing funding to both county health clinics and private organizations providing indigent health care services to ensure that every Texan who is at risk for becoming HIV positive has the opportunity to choose this tool as a component of his or her HIV-prevention strategy without regard to financial hardship;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call on the state legislature and the Texas Department of State Health Services to develop a plan and make funding available without delay for universal access to pre-exposure and post-exposure prophylaxis to prevent transmission of HIV.

— Submitted by “TDP Allies”

Resolution in Support of Legalizing Medical Marijuana

WHEREAS physicians, in conjunction with their patients, should be allowed to make medical decisions and explore all potential treatment options, including medical cannabis/marijuana; and

WHEREAS 29 states have passed medical marijuana freedom laws with several more likely to do so by the end of 2018; and

WHEREAS the Texas Legislature passed the Texas Compassionate Use Program during the 2015 legislative session, providing access to low-THC cannabis oil for patients with intractable epilepsy. The Department of Public Safety set license fees at \$488,000 per company and issued only three licenses, all in central Texas, after 43 companies across the state applied. These actions have limited access to the Compassionate Use Program, causing Texas parents to take their children to other states to obtain marijuana to effectively treat epilepsy; and

WHEREAS one recent study reported survey data from patrons of Michigan medical marijuana dispensary suggesting that medical cannabis use in pain patients was associated with a 64 percent reduction in opioid use. The US is facing an unprecedented opiate epidemic. Studies have shown significantly fewer (25%) opioid-related deaths in states that allow medical marijuana; and

WHEREAS the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) have found that marijuana has been shown to help cancer patients with chemotherapy-induced vomiting and nausea, while other studies show it can help with chronic pain in adults and reduce prescription medication use; and

WHEREAS polling has shown a large majority support medical marijuana, including up to 93% support in a recent Quinnipiac poll. The New England Journal of Medicine found 76% of doctors support medical marijuana; and

WHEREAS according to the United States Sentencing Commission and the FBI, 99 out of every 100 cannabis arrests in the United States are made under state law rather than under federal law. Consequently, changing Texas law will have the practical effect of protecting from arrest the vast majority of seriously ill Texans who have a medical need to use cannabis, also those who produce or are a caregiver supplier of cannabis;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Texas Legislature should improve the Compassionate Use Program to allow doctors to determine the appropriate use of cannabis for their patients; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Public Safety should reduce excessive licensure fees and authorize more companies to enter the market so that medical dispensaries can open and ensure reasonable access for patients all across the state.

— Submitted by "TDP Allies"

Resolution in Support of Quality Health Care, Including Abortion

(edited details for length)

WHEREAS the Texas Democratic Party is committed to a quality healthcare system that meets the needs of all of its citizens, and affordable abortion care is an essential component of this system; because approximately 3 in 10 women will have an abortion in their lifetime, it is one of the most common medical procedures in the United States; and

WHEREAS abortion is one of the safest medical procedures in the United States; aspiration abortion, for example, causes no complications in 99 percent of cases, and medication abortion causes no complications in more than 99.9 percent of cases, making it safer than Tylenol, aspirin, and Viagra; and

WHEREAS abortion has become less accessible in Texas; the number of abortion clinics has declined since the Republican-dominated legislature passed unconstitutional laws in 2013, from 40 to 22 clinics serving the 5.4 million women of reproductive age; and

WHEREAS medication abortion has become less accessible; in 2014 the number of women able to obtain medication to induce abortions plunged 70 percent, and the number of women having surgical abortions increased by 7 percent, including a 27 percent increase in second-trimester abortions between 2013 and 2014; and

WHEREAS the number of abortions in Texas decreased in 2014 by 14 percent, the number of Texas women getting abortions out of state increased by 11 percent. Women have been forced to travel to clinics in Kansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Colorado at great expense and cost to their families, creating significant financial and logistical barriers; and

WHEREAS abortion is an essential component of health care because it provides all women the ability to plan and space their pregnancies, which clearly improves women's physical, psychological and economic well-being; and

WHEREAS abortion is an essential component of health care for women with lower incomes because they can't afford to have a child, and having the ability to plan for the families that are right for each individual woman affords her greater economic opportunity; and

WHEREAS abortion is an essential component of health care for women who face medical problems such as cancer;

WHEREAS abortion is an essential component of health care for young teenagers who become pregnant and could risk enduring severe lasting damage to her physical health without an abortion; and

WHEREAS abortion is an essential component of health care for women who experience major problems in pregnancy; and

WHEREAS the practice of abortion care, like all health care, should be driven by evidence-based standards developed and supported by medical professionals without having to overcome barriers such as waiting periods, so-called "counseling" requirements, bans on insurance coverage, and limits on who can perform abortions; and

WHEREAS according to a 2018 study by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, abortion in all forms is safe and effective, and abortion is safer when it's performed earlier in gestation, so delaying care can actually worsen the safety of abortion;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Texas Democratic Party shall recognize that abortion is an essential component of women's health care and that abortion care be made affordable and accessible throughout the state of Texas and integrated into the healthcare safety net, shall promote policies and take steps to increase access to abortion care, shall promote policies that ensure both public and private health insurance cover abortion care, shall promote policies that ensure that facilities providing abortion care or healthcare professionals providing abortion care not be subjected to regulations more burdensome than those imposed on facilities or healthcare professional that provide medically comparable procedures, shall promote policies that ensure that all qualified healthcare professionals be able to provide abortion care, shall promote policies that ensure that all healthcare professionals providing abortion care be able to follow best medical practices developed and supported by scientific evidence.

— Submitted by "TDP Allies"

SAFETY

Resolution in Support of March for Our Lives

WHEREAS today, in communities across our state, Texans of all ages and backgrounds will march together in unified, resolute protest to send a message to legislators in Austin and Washington D.C.: not one more life will be lost at the hands of a mass shooter in America; and

WHEREAS [published studies from Gun Violence Archive indicate](#) that there have been more than 200 school shootings in the United States and more than 400 school shooting deaths since the unspeakable tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, in 2012. Sixteen of those incidents are classified as "mass shootings"; and

WHEREAS by prioritizing the passage of controversial open carry laws, concealed carry mandates for college campuses and "school marshal" legislation, Texas Republicans have proven time and again that campaign contributions from the National Rifle Association and the Texas State Rifle Association are more important than passing popular reforms that would effectively safeguard Texas' schoolchildren; and

WHEREAS by participating in the convention process, Texas Democrats reaffirm their commitment to a Texas value system that represents the promise made to Texas families by their elected representatives. Texas parents work hard and pay taxes so Texas children can attend high-quality and safe public schools;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Hays County Democratic Party on this day of the convening of local Democratic party leaders, candidates, activists and volunteers, enrolls this resolution urging our state and federal legislators to support [broadly popular](#), common-sense legislation that strengthens federal background checks, requires background checks at gun shows, bans the sale of assault rifles, high-capacity magazines, bump stocks, and all modification devices which make a weapon fully automatic, eliminates agency loopholes allowing for the sale of firearms to criminals, increases the minimum age for firearm purchases to 21, and voids state-level open carry laws;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Hays County Democratic Party stands side by side in solidarity with student leaders, concerned parents, and activists involved in March For Our Lives demonstrations happening across the country this weekend;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Hays County Democratic Party enrolls this resolution in memory of the victims of tragic gun violence across the State of Texas and our nation.

— Submitted by “TDP Allies”

Resolution Addressing Gun Rights, Violence, and Responsibility

WHEREAS a large and vocal group of Americans are fervent supporters of the Second Amendment; and

WHEREAS the National Rifle Association insists that privately owning, storing, and using guns (even military-grade and assault rifles) must continue and can be done safely and responsibly; and

WHEREAS we continue to see entirely too many mass shootings in schools, movie theaters, night clubs, outdoor concerts, churches, downtowns, and other places where people should be able to feel safe; and

WHEREAS it is simply not fair or right that victims and their families have to bear the huge financial costs of ambulance, hospital, other medical, and funeral costs; and

WHEREAS criminal prosecution (regardless of how severe the legal penalties involved) are not an effective deterrent to shooters who do not survive their attack, whether by suicide or being taken down by first responders, SWAT teams, or the like; and

WHEREAS some people feel an ongoing need for small personal weapons for their sincerely felt needs for personal defense; and

WHEREAS sportsmen want to have one or more guns for sporting, hunting, shooting range, and other reasonable uses; and

WHEREAS we urgently need to find a common ground that can allow both of these two deeply partisan and determined groups to reach an agreement to protect the reasonable interests of both sides;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Hays County Democratic Party supports legislation requiring that all guns must be licensed and insured (with the first year's insurance coverage paid in advance) before an owner can take possession of the gun. The insurance policies must cover liability for accidental, malicious, and/or terrorist attacks potentially carried out with that weapon. The policies must cover settlements imposed by the courts for misuse of the covered weapon, whether by the licensed owner or by someone who manages to steal, borrow, or otherwise acquire it from the licensed and insured owner.

— *Unsigned*