

Green Party Platform 2000

This is the official Association of State Green Parties' platform for the 2000 elections.

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A call to action

The GREEN PLATFORM is an evolving document, a living work-in-progress that expresses our commitment to creating meaningful and enduring change in the political process.

Our Party's first priority is to value-based politics, in contrast to a system extolling exploitation, consumption, and non-sustainable competition. We believe in an alternative, independent politics and active, responsible government.

We believe in empowering citizens and communities.

We offer hope and a call to action. In this platform we make our case to change the way our government operates - to change the quality of our everyday lives - to build a vision that brings new and lasting opportunities.

Green key values

1. GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY

Every human being deserves a say in the decisions that affect their lives and not be subject to the will of another. Therefore, we will work to increase public participation at every level of government and to ensure that our public representatives are fully accountable to the people who elect them. We will also work to create new types of political organizations which expand the process of participatory democracy by directly including citizens in the decision-making process.

2. SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

All persons should have the rights and opportunity to benefit equally from the resources afforded us by society and the environment. We must consciously confront in ourselves, our organizations, and society at large, barriers such as racism and class oppression, sexism and homophobia, ageism and disability, which act to deny fair treatment and equal justice under the law.

3. ECOLOGICAL WISDOM

Human societies must operate with the understanding that we are part of nature, not separate from nature. We must maintain an ecological balance and live within the ecological and resource limits of our communities and our planet. We support a sustainable society which utilizes resources in such a way that future generations will benefit and not suffer from the practices of our generation. To this end we must practice agriculture which replenishes the soil; move to an energy efficient economy; and live in ways that respect the integrity of natural systems.

4. NON-VIOLENCE

It is essential that we develop effective alternatives to society's current patterns of violence. We will work to demilitarize, and eliminate weapons of mass destruction, without being naive about the intentions of other governments.

We recognize the need for self-defense and the defense of others who are in helpless situations. We promote non-violent methods to oppose practices and policies with which we disagree, and will guide our actions toward lasting personal, community and global peace.

5. DECENTRALIZATION

Centralization of wealth and power contributes to social and economic injustice, environmental destruction, and militarization. Therefore, we support a restructuring of social, political and economic institutions away from a system which is controlled by and mostly benefits the powerful few, to a democratic, less bureaucratic system. Decision-making should, as much as possible, remain at the individual and local level, while assuring that civil rights are protected for all citizens.

6. COMMUNITY-BASED ECONOMICS AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

We recognize it is essential to create a vibrant and sustainable economic system, one that can create jobs and provide a decent standard of living for all people while maintaining a healthy ecological balance. A successful economic system will offer meaningful work with dignity, while paying a "living wage" which reflects the real value of a person's work.

Local communities must look to economic development that assures protection of the environment and workers' rights; broad citizen participation in planning; and enhancement of our "quality of life". We support independently owned and operated companies which are socially responsible, as well as co-operatives and public enterprises that distribute resources and control to more people through democratic participation.

7. FEMINISM AND GENDER EQUITY

We have inherited a social system based on male domination of politics and economics. We call for the replacement of the cultural ethics of domination and control with more cooperative ways of interacting that respect differences of opinion and gender. Human values such as equity between the sexes, interpersonal responsibility, and honesty must be developed with moral conscience. We should remember that the process that determines our decisions and actions is just as important as achieving the outcome we want.

8. RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

We believe it is important to value cultural, ethnic, racial, sexual, religious and spiritual diversity, and to promote the development of respectful relationships across these lines. We believe that the many diverse elements of society should be reflected in our organizations and decision-making bodies, and we support the leadership of people who have been traditionally closed out of leadership roles. We acknowledge and encourage respect for other life forms than our own and the preservation of biodiversity.

9. PERSONAL AND GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY

We encourage individuals to act to improve their personal well-being and, at the same time, to enhance ecological balance and social harmony. We seek to join with people and organizations around the world to foster peace, economic justice, and the health of the planet.

10. FUTURE FOCUS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Our actions and policies should be motivated by long-term goals. We seek to protect valuable natural resources, safely disposing of or "unmaking" all waste we create, while developing a sustainable economics that does not depend on continual expansion for survival. We must counterbalance the drive for short-term profits by assuring that economic development, new technologies, and fiscal policies are responsible to future generations who will inherit the results of our actions.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Our overall goal is not merely to survive, but to share lives that are truly worth living. We believe the quality of our individual lives is enriched by the quality of all of our lives. We encourage everyone to see the dignity and intrinsic worth in all of life, and to take the time to understand and appreciate themselves, their community and the magnificent beauty of this world.

Platform preamble

As the year 2000 approaches, we look back with somber reflection at how we have been as a people and as a nation. Realizing our actions will be judged by future generations, we ask how with foresight and wisdom, we can renew the best of our past, calling forth a spirit of change and participation that speaks for a free and democratic society.

We submit a bold vision of our future, a PLATFORM on which we stand:

An ethic of KEY VALUES leading to

a POLITICS OF ACTION -

A hopeful, challenging PLAN FOR A PROSPERING, SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY -

A call to CREATE AND CONSERVE A RICH, DIVERSE ENVIRONMENT CHARACTERIZED BY SENSE OF COMMUNITY.

What we are proposing is a vision of our common good that goes beyond special interests and the business of politics.

What we are proposing is an INDEPENDENT POLITICS, a democratic vision that empowers and reaches beyond background and political loyalty to bring together our combined strengths as a people.

We, the GREEN PARTY, see our political and economic progress, and our individual lives, within the context of an evolving, challenging world. As in nature where adaptation and diversity provide key strategies of survival, a successful political strategy is one that is diverse, adaptable to changing needs, and strong and resilient in its core values:

DEMOCRACY, practiced most effectively at the grassroots level and in local communities -

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, emphasizing personal and social responsibility, accountability, and non-violence -

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY, balancing the interests of market- and value-driven business, of the community and land, of living and future generations. Looking to the future with hope and optimism, we believe we can truly change history — that together we can make a real difference in the quality of our lives and environment. Our common destiny brings us together across our nation and around the globe. It is for us to choose how we will be remembered. It is for us to choose the future we are creating today.

Green Party platform 2000

I. Democracy

A. POLITICAL REFORM

1. The Green Party, proposes a COMPREHENSIVE POLITICAL REFORM AGENDA calling for real reform, accountability, and responsibility in government.

2. Political debate, public policy, and legislation should be judged on its merits, not on the quid pro quo of political barter and money.

3. We propose comprehensive CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM, including caps on spending and contribu-

tions, at the national and state level, and partial public funding to remove undue influence in political campaigns.

4. We will work to ban or greatly limit POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES.

5. We support significant LOBBYING REGULATION, strict rules that disclose the extent of political lobbying via "gifts" and contributions.

6. Broad-based reforms of government operations, with CONGRESSIONAL REORGANIZATION and TERM LIMITS at the national level and ETHICS LAWS at the state level, must be instituted. At every level we support "Sunshine Laws" that open up the political system to access by ordinary citizens.

7. We recognize individual empowerment, full citizen participation, and PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION as the foundation of effective democracy.

8. We demand choices in our political system. This can be accomplished by proportional voting systems such as: 1) Limited Voting; 2) Cumulative Voting; 3) Preference Voting; 4) Mixed Member Voting; and/or 5) Party List Proportional Representation. All are used throughout the free world to increase democratic representation. We call on local governments to lead the way toward more electoral choice and broader representation.

9. We encourage building alternative, grassroots institutions that support participatory and direct democracy at the local level. Political reform goes beyond elected politics, ultimately residing in choices each of us make in our own lives.

10. Using our voice to help others find their voice, a national Green Party should spring from state and local Green electoral and individual efforts and through political efforts and direct action at every level. As Greens, we look toward forming bioregional confederations to coordinate regional issues based on natural and ecosystem boundaries, instead of traditional political ones.

B. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

1. Greens advocate direct democracy as a response to local needs and issues, where all concerned citizens can discuss and decide questions that immediately affect their lives, such as land use, parks, schools and community services. We would decentralize many state functions to the county and city level and seek expanded roles for neighborhood boards and associations.

2. We call for a change in the practice of "unfunded federal mandates", and for more flexibility by states and local decision-making

3. We advocate maintaining and enhancing federal guarantees in the

areas of civil rights protections, environmental safeguards, and social "safety net" entitlements.

4. We endorse and advocate citizen rights to INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM and RECALL.

5. We call for citizen control of REDISTRICTING processes and moving the "backroom" apportionment process into the public light. Minority representation must be protected and secured in order to protect minority rights.

6. We will act to broaden voter participation and BALLOT ACCESS, urging UNIVERSAL VOTER REGISTRATION and an ELECTION DAY HOLIDAY.

7. We believe that a binding "None of the Above" option on the ballot should be considered.

8. We believe that providing free television and mail under reasonable conditions for every qualified statewide, congressional, presidential candidate and party can move the political process toward increased participation.

9. Individual participation in the life of our local community - in community projects and through personal, meaningful, voluntary activity - is also political and vital to the health of community.

10. We support citizen involvement at all levels of the decision-making process and hold that DIRECT ACTION can be an effective tool where peaceful democratic activism is appropriate. We support the right to non-violent direct action that supports green values.

C. COMMUNITY

Community is the basic unit of green politics because it is personal, value-oriented and small enough for each member to have an impact. We look to community involvement as a foundation for public policy. Social diversity is the well-spring of community life, where old and young, rich and poor, people of all races and beliefs can interact individually and learn to care for each other, to understand and cooperate. We emphasize a return to local, face-to-face relationships that humans can understand, cope with, and care about.

Within the Greens, as we look at community issues, it is a guiding principle to "think globally, act locally". Community needs recognize a diversity of issues, and LOCAL CONTROL recognizes a variety of approaches to solving problems, one that tends to be "bottom up" not "top down." Green politics does not place its faith in paternalistic "big government". Instead face-to-face interactions are essential to productive and meaningful lives for all citizens.

The Green vision calls for a GLOB-

AL COMMUNITY of communities, recognizing our immense diversity, respecting our personal worth, and sharing a global perspective. We call for "A POLITICS OF 2000", which acknowledges our endangered planet and habitat. Our politics responds to global crisis with a new way of seeing our shared INTERNATIONAL SECURITY.

We conceive of a new era of international cooperation and communication, a set of responses nurturing CULTURAL DIVERSITY, recognizing the interconnectedness between communities, and promoting opportunities for cultural exchange and assistance.

1. We call for increased public transportation, and convenient playgrounds and parks for all sections of cities and small towns, and funding to encourage diverse neighborhoods.

2. We support a rich milieu of art, culture, and significant (yet modestly funded) programs such as the National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities.

3. We call for social policies to focus on protecting FAMILIES. The young, the citizens of tomorrow, are increasingly at risk. "A CHILDREN'S AGENCY" should be put in place to focus attention and concerted action on the future that is in our children.

4. Programs must be encouraged to ensure that children, the most vulnerable members of society, will receive basic nutritional, educational and medical necessities.

5. A universal, federally funded CHILDCARE program for pre-school and young schoolchildren should be developed.

6. Family assistance, available to working poor families in which the parent supports and lives with the children, such as the EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT, should be maintained and increased to offset regressive payroll taxes and growing inequalities in American society.

7. We support successful PRE-NATAL programs and "HEAD START."

8. It is our realization that "a living family wage" is vital to the social health of communities.

9. The actuarial protection of SOCIAL SECURITY is essential to the well-being of our seniors, and the maintenance of the social security system's integrity is an essential part of a healthy community.

10. We support the leading-edge work of NON-PROFIT PUBLIC INTEREST GROUPS, and those individuals breaking out of "careerism" to pursue NON-TRADITIONAL CAREERS in public service.

D. FOREIGN POLICY

As we look back at the wars and deprivations of the past, and set our minds to overcoming continued con-

flicts and violence, we realize the difficulties inherent in encouraging democracy, and of advancing THE CAUSE OF PEACE. With THE END OF THE COLD WAR has come a more complex set of challenges in how our nation defines its "NATIONAL SECURITY".

Our present task is to rid ourselves of the residue of the geopolitical conflict of East versus West - with its bloated defense budgets, thousands of unneeded nuclear weapons and major troop deployments overseas. Greens support sustainable development and social and economic justice across the globe. Reduced militarism and reliance on arms policies is the key to progress toward collective security.

1. We will strive to cut the DEFENSE BUDGET by 50 percent by the year 2000, from approximately \$300 billion (aggregate spending) in 1996. We must maintain a viable American military force, foreign policy doctrine and strategy that takes into account real, not hollow, threats to our people, democratic institutions and interests.

2. We call for our foreign policy establishment to engage in a national debate on how we can convert to a "PEACETIME ECONOMY". We believe our nation's ultimate strength is in its people and a healthy economy, which will best protect our national security interests over the long-term.

3. We endorse a reordering of priorities as to how our nation can best achieve "National Security." The Green Party asserts that security and liberty prosper together. HUMAN RIGHTS are the foundation of EMERGING DEMOCRACIES and international relations. We argue that the support of democracy, human rights and respect for international law should be the cornerstone of American foreign policy.

4. We endorse ending support for repressive regimes; we believe the US and all nations should abide by World Court decisions; we support the right of Habeas Corpus be available to any person, anywhere, whose imprisonment violates fundamental norms of international law.

5. It is our belief that the massive debt owed by the Third World is causing immense misery and environmental destruction. FOREIGN AID must be addressed in the context of retiring this debt and not forcing, via the INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND (IMF) and WORLD BANK, "structural adjustments" on the economies of the underdeveloped world.

6. We call for a more enlightened policy on the part of INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES and their financial arms which takes into account the impact of international debt management. The US should rein in the IMF and World Bank, whose policies have

wreaked havoc, and demand that loans be conditional on human and labor rights records, social and environmental impact statements, and the providing of basic health and education.

7. INTERNATIONAL LAW and INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS are inseparable. We do not support a world-view that relies on accommodation of tyranny or repressive regimes.

8. We encourage policies that work to assist the FORMER SOVIET UNION in its move toward a government based on rights and a more open political and economic system.

9. We support peace in the MIDEAST based on respect for civil liberties and human rights.

10. We endorse human rights policies in regard to relations with CHINA, SOUTH AFRICA and other nations with a history of rights violations.

11. We support the end of the economic blockade of Cuba. Unjust economic coercion by one state against another constitutes a violation of human rights.

12. We believe in the core "RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION"; of the special character and needs of INDIGENOUS PEOPLES; of the essential importance of balancing economic development in the THIRD WORLD with a respect for the "old ways".

13. We trust that NON-VIOLENCE provides a road to PEACE. We understand the right of self-defense, yet believe we must move beyond behavior that perpetuates violence. We oppose structural and direct violence of all kinds - assaults against individuals, families, nations and cultures, the environment and biosphere.

14. We endorse an EXPANDED PEACE CORPS.

15. We encourage the important work of NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS (NGO's), much in evidence at the UN "Earth Summit" in 1992.

16. Essential in any broad definition of SECURITY, whether defined in national, international or global terms, is that we must find ways to secure and preserve our common earth which sustains all life. We must look to domestic and international regulation to protect the global ecology, utilizing the UNITED NATIONS AND RELATED AGENCIES and regional associations to advance our mutual interests.

17. We must build on the "Earth Charter" which came out of the 1992 UN environmental "Earth Summit." New definitions of what constitutes real security between nations must be debated and adopted by the foreign policy community.

II. Social Justice and Equality

A. EDUCATION

The failing report card of American education is troubling for most every American. Who fails to see the connection between our investment in education and our success as a people? Who believes there is no relation between personal achievement and a quality education - an education that teaches creative and critical thinking skills and a respect for lifelong learning?

Where can we best make a difference in our future? The Green Party maintains that restoring community is central to expanded opportunity, and access to quality education for all Americans is the difference that will lead to a strong and diverse community. The Green Party seeks fundamental change in our priorities, at the national and local levels, within the public and private sectors, in the classroom and at home, to make education our first priority.

1. Greens support EDUCATIONAL DIVERSITY. We do not hold any dogma absolute. We believe we must continually strive for truth in the realm of ideas. We open ourselves, consciously and intuitively to truth and beauty in the world of nature. We view learning as a lifelong process to which all people have an equal right.

2. Education starts with CHOICE and within public education we believe in broad choices. "Magnet Schools", "Site-Based Management", "Schools within Schools", alternative models and parental involvement are ways in which elementary education can be changed to make a real difference in the lives of our children. CURRICULUM should focus on SKILLS, both basic skills that serve as a solid foundation for higher learning, and exploratory approaches that expand horizons, for example, distance learning, "interactive" education, computer proficiencies, perspectives that bring an enriched awareness of nature ("biological literacy"), intercultural experiences, and languages.

3. We advocate creative and non-competitive education at every age level, and the inclusion of cultural diversity in all curricula. We encourage "hands on" approaches that encourage a multitude of individual learning styles.

4. PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY should be encouraged by finding ways to help support parents in their efforts to help support their children, as more families confront economic conditions demanding a greater deal of time be spent away from home. Parents should be as involved as possible in their children's education; values do start with parents.

5. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY is also key to developing intrinsic capabilities. Greens hold strongly to empowerment of individuals and therefore we support each student recognizing his or her own personal responsibility - to strive to achieve their fullest potential as individuals.

6. FEDERAL POLICY over education should act principally to ensure equal opportunity to a quality education.

7. Educational funding formulas at the STATE LEVEL need to be adjusted as needed to avoid gross inequalities between districts and schools. Educational grants should provide necessary balance to ensure equal educational access to minority, deprived, special needs and exceptional children. In higher education, federal college scholarship aid should be increased and aimed at excluding no qualified students.

8. Our teachers find they are underpaid, overworked and that they are rarely supplied with the resources necessary to do the work most are sincerely trying to do to reach their students. It is time to stop disinvesting in education, and start putting education at the top of our social and economic agenda.

9. We call on all Greens to include education as a regular part of our meetings so we can be clear about what unites us as well as what divides us.

10. We call for more equitable state and national funding of school education and the creation of NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS controlled by parent-teacher governing bodies.

11. We support after-school programs for "latchkey" children.

12. We advocate state funding for DAY CARE that includes school children under the age of ten when after-school programs are not available.

13. Classroom teachers at the elementary and high-school levels should be given PROFESSIONAL STATUS, and salaries comparable to related professions requiring advanced education, training and responsibility.

14. Principals are also essential components in effective educational institutions. We encourage State Departments of Education and School Boards to deliver more programmatic support and decision-making to the true grassroots level - i.e., the classroom teacher and school principal.

15. Greens respect the need for a multiplicity of educational alternatives, including PRIVATE, COOPERATIVE and PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS, for which communities should help find resources to support their essential work.

16. We call for the teaching of non-violent conflict resolution at all levels of education.

17. We recognize the viable alternative of HOME-BASED EDUCATION.

18. We support a host of innovative and critical educational efforts, such as BI-LINGUAL EDUCATION, CONTINUING EDUCATION, JOB RETRAINING, MENTORING AND APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS.

19. The teaching of meaningful trades should be given a greater priority within middle and high schools, and students who choose technology training, or school-to-career or school-to-work paths, should be given the same degree of respect given to academic students.

20. We are deeply concerned about the intervention in our schools of corporations that promote a culture of consumption and waste. Schools should not expose children to commercial advertising. Schools must safeguard students' privacy rights and not make available private student information upon corporate (or federal government) request.

21. Within higher education, we oppose military and corporate control over the priorities and topics of academic research.

22. We support tuition-free post secondary (collegiate and vocational) public education.

Greens view learning as a lifelong and life-affirming process to which all people should have access. We cannot state more forcefully our belief that in learning, and openness to learning, we find the foundation of our Platform.

B. HEALTH CARE

Fundamental reform of our nation's health care system is necessary to provide affordable, quality and accessible health care for all Americans.

Currently, we are the only industrialized country without a national health care system. Unfortunately we have a private insurance system that insures only the healthiest people, systematically denying coverage to individuals with "pre-existing" conditions and routinely terminating coverage to those who become ill.

The current system's high costs and widely recognized failures demand that bold, not incremental steps, be taken.

1. Alongside the many Americans who are calling for action which makes clear that health care should be a right, not a privilege, the Green Party states with a clear voice its strong support for UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE.

2. We call for passage of legislation at the national and state level that guarantees comprehensive benefits for all Americans. A single-insurer system funded by the federal government and administered at the state and local levels remains viable and is an essential barometer of our national health and well-being.

3. We support maintaining private medical providers including doctors, hospitals, clinics and health maintenance organizations (HMO's).

4. We support cost savings by small business and it is estimated that businesses will save significantly compared to their current premiums, an estimated \$900 billion by the year 2000, under a proposed SINGLE-PAYER "National Health Trust Fund" plan.

5. We endorse NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE and demand that Congress again propose and act to support the practical and moral imperative of Universal Health Care. Major features of this health care legislation should include -

a. UNIVERSAL ACCESS without concern for work status or health history;

b. FREEDOM OF HEALTH CARE CHOICE so patients can choose their own clinics, doctors or other health care professionals;

c. substantial COST SAVINGS through annual, global budgets, national fee schedules, and streamlined administration which acts to eliminate the waste of the current system;

d. COMPREHENSIVE BENEFITS, without insurance premiums, deductibles or co-payments, including hospital and physician care, prescription drugs, dental and vision care, reproductive and preventative care, and defined mental health benefits;

e. a focus on RURAL HEALTH SERVICES;

f. and continued support of MEDICAL RESEARCH into the quality, effectiveness and appropriateness of medical care.

6. Medicare provides health care for nearly 40 million Americans over the age of 65. Medicare: Part A is financed by the Medicare Trust Fund which is replenished by payroll taxes. With the Medicare Trustees now reporting that the trust fund will be insolvent in 2002, it is evident that Medicare is at risk. In order to correct this unbalance we would direct initial savings and cuts toward reporting inefficiencies; waste and fraud; toward eliminating costly, unnecessary services that benefit providers more than patients; and toward reining in pharmaceutical industry rip-offs.

7. Medicaid - which pays for basic medical assistance for the disabled, blind, pregnant women, and children in families who have no insurance - also must be protected and put on a firm financial footing.

8. Successful reform of our health care system must start with WELLNESS education; that is, PREVENTIVE health care. It is each of our responsibilities to tend to our own health through EDUCATION, DIET, NUTRITION and EXERCISE.

9. The US Surgeon General has stated that a large percentage of illness is diet related; therefore improving the quality of our nation's FOOD SUPPLY and our personal eating habits will go a long way toward improving our health care system - by reducing the need for care.

10. We support a wide-range of health care services, not just traditional medicine which too often emphasizes "a medical arms race" relying upon high-tech intervention and surgical techniques.

11. We support the teaching of holistic health approaches and, as appropriate, the use of complementary and alternative therapies such as herbal medicines, homeopathy, acupuncture, and other healing approaches.

12. As a matter of appropriate professional responsibility, we support INFORMED CONSENT LAWS to educate consumers to potential health impacts.

13. PRIMARY CARE, through a renewed attention to family medicine as opposed to increased medical specialization, is appropriate and necessary.

14. Special attention must be given to WOMEN'S HEALTH ISSUES, including reproductive rights and family planning.

15. We believe the right of a woman to control her own body is inalienable. It is essential that the option of a safe, legal abortion remains available.

16. Medical research must be increased, and alternative therapies actively sought, to combat breast cancer.

17. We call for adequate SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES being made available to those who have special needs - the mentally ill, the handicapped, those who are terminally ill.

18. We call for wider implementation of hospice care.

19. We believe an all out campaign must be waged against AIDS AND HIV, and we will press for the implementation of the recommendations of the National Commission on AIDS. We call for prevention awareness and access to condoms to prevent the spread of AIDS. We condemn HIV-related discrimination; would make drug treatment and other programs available for all addicts who seek help; would expand clinical trials for treatments and vaccines; and speed up the FDA drug approval process.

C. WELFARE / WORKFARE

The passage of the 1996 WELFARE ACT by Congress, and its signing by the President, confronts us with hard choices. Democrats and Republicans seem to be saying we cannot afford to care for children and poor mothers. In ending over fifty years of federal policy

guaranteeing cash assistance for poor children, Congress has set in motion a radical experiment that will have profound impact on the lives of the weakest members of our society. How will the states, city and county governments, local communities, businesses, churches - all of us - respond?

We believe we have a special responsibility to the health and well-being of the young. Yet we see the federal safety net being removed and replaced with limited and potentially harsh state welfare programs. How will social services be adequately provided if local resources are stretched thin already? We believe our community priorities must first protect the young and helpless. Yet how will state legislatures and agencies, under pressure from more powerful interests, react? We believe local decision-making is important, but we realize, as we learned during the civil rights era, that strict federal standards must guide state actions in providing basic protections. As the richest nation in history, we should not condemn millions of children to a life of poverty, while increasing corporate welfare to historic highs.

The transition of power to states, as both major parties restructure the extent of future welfare for children and the poor, brings great risk as it promises to completely change the welfare system. Although providing alternatives to public assistance through WORKFARE, as it is being called, is postured as the solution to poverty, and blaming the poor for their condition has become a popular political tactic, we ask what of those who cannot find employment because of job unavailability; who cannot work because of disability, because of age, because of illness, or accident? What of mothers who have inadequate skills, no child care, no support from family, or their child's father?

Meaningful employment, education, job training, intervention programs, financial incentives, a parent's ability to stay at home with their child, and affordable, quality child care assistance - these must be the basis of real welfare reform.

Without decent paying jobs for all those able to work, fiscal and monetary policies that promote full-employment and new, creative employment practices including shorter work weeks, welfare reform and workfare will not provide a better way for children, mothers, and impoverished in our communities. We need to increase spending on education, job training, and child care programs. The Green Party challenges both Democrats and Republicans. Blaming the victim is not the answer. Advancing social justice, children's rights and a "Children's Agenda" is.

D. TAX JUSTICE / FAIRNESS

Middle-class and poor people are paying an ever greater proportion of federal taxes, and too often local and state taxes are unfair and regressive. The tax code is a labyrinth of deductions, loopholes, exemptions and write-offs; the result of insider- and industry-lobbying that has damaged our economy as it has served the interests of big business and financial institutions.

1. We call for SYSTEM-WIDE TAX REFORM that acts to simplify the tax system.

2. We call for a tax policy that moves to eliminate loopholes and other exemptions that favor powerful interests over TAX JUSTICE. Small business, in particular, should not be penalized by a tax system which benefits those who can "work" the legislative tax committees for breaks and subsidies.

3. We support substantive and wide-ranging reform of the tax system that helps create jobs, economic efficiencies and innovation within the small business community.

4. We believe fiscal and tax policies should confront and end destructive large "corporate welfare" and subsidies. Smaller businesses are America's great strength - Greens believe government should have a tax policy which encourages small- and socially responsible business.

5. Where corporations act with corporate citizenship, that is, with "fiduciary responsibility" that includes the interests of their community and employees, as well as shareholders, we support appropriate tax incentives.

6. We call on new approaches to taxation, such as ENVIRONMENTAL TAXES as a partial substitute for income taxes. Taxing industrial pollution is an idea long overdue. Environmental taxes of this type, and "true-cost pricing", will aid in transforming major industries from being non-sustainable in their use of natural resources to being sustainable in character.

7. We believe that we must take a closer look, in addition, at the costs and benefits of consumption and VALUE-ADDED TAX approaches.

8. We do not support a FLAT TAX, but agree that the host of deductions and adjustments to income, dividends and miscellaneous revenue afforded under the current system to those at the top produces cynicism on the part of most Americans toward their tax system and government.

9. Greens support progressiveness in taxation as a matter of principle, believing that those who benefit most from the system have a responsibility to return more, their "fair share."

10. We believe a central goal of tax policy should be "transparency", that

is, a system that is simple, understandable, and resistant to the machinations of special interests.

E. MANAGEMENT- LABOR RELATIONS

1. In the PRIVATE SECTOR, we acknowledge the many challenges responsible SMALL BUSINESS must overcome to remain competitive with big business, and we support addressing these obstacles by creating cooperative relationships and effective communication in the workplace.

2. The concepts of ECONOMIC AND WORKPLACE DEMOCRACY must be expanded in management-labor negotiations because the decisions a company makes affects its employees, its consumers, and the surrounding communities. In order to protect the legitimate interests of these various constituencies, as well as the natural environment, people in each of these groups must be empowered to participate in economic decision-making.

3. There should be no compromise of basic WORKER RIGHTS.

4. We support a fair MINIMUM WAGE (at least \$1 above the minimum passed in August by Congress, which was at a forty year low in purchasing power.)

5. We endorse federal legislation to address problems associated with large plant closings; WORKPLACE SAFETY and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) reform; and National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) reform.

6. We particularly support substantive reforms toward "workplace democracy" in large corporations, especially reform that impacts socially and environmentally irresponsible big business.

7. We endorse legal rights to organize and join unions with democratically elected leadership.

8. We encourage the use of mediation as a tool for resolving disputes in the workplace.

9. We support the right to strike without being "permanently replaced".

10. We support employee stock ownership plans (ESOP's) with functioning, democratic structures; and cooperative ownership and management.

11. In the PUBLIC SECTOR, Greens are concerned with an employees right to join a union, and associated COLLECTIVE BARGAINING rights.

12. "Good" government demands effective and efficient management, that is, wisely spending the people's hard-earned tax dollars. We support initiatives between management and labor that produce "better" government through performance, productivity and accountability.

13. We believe government is truly

the "people's business" and serious reform proposals, such as "REINVENTING GOVERNMENT" and "Report on Government Efficiency", should be given close attention.

F. CRIMINAL JUSTICE

1. A plan to revitalize our economy must be a central element of any overall plan to reduce crime. Fear of violent crime is growing and it is our belief that the breaking of the bonds of community, the economic and social root causes of crime, must be addressed in the same way politicians today propose putting more firepower on the streets; threatening criminals with harsher sentences ("three strikes and you're out"); and building more prisons.

2. Any attempt to combat crime must begin with restoration of community; positive approaches that build hope, responsibility and a sense of belonging.

3. Young men and women must have access to work that pays a family a living wage.

4. We would initiate social programs that are alternatives to gangs, such as "Gang Intervention Units." Practical education with a real promise of a future is needed if we are to expect long-term success in this struggle.

5. We encourage our political leaders to remember that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." With the costs of maintaining a prisoner far outstripping the costs of educating a child, or the costs of providing job training, or job creation incentives, or providing adequate social services and a "social net" to those in need, we believe it is only appropriate to focus on where our societal intervention can be most successful and effective.

6. At the same time, we must develop law enforcement approaches that are firm and directly address VIOLENT CRIMES, street crime and hard drug abuse. Violence that creates a climate of further violence must be stopped.

7. While toughening penalties for violent crimes, it is inappropriate to have a de facto policy of leniency to "WHITE COLLAR CRIME." We believe broad corporate crime legislation should be enacted and enforced. We support efforts that target the worst cases of corporate (and governmental and defense industry) illegality, and we support resultant sentencing (and fines) that acts "with teeth" as an effective deterrent.

8. We respect the fundamental American principle that law enforcement is primarily local. We support grants for COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD POLICING PROGRAMS. Police participation in the local communities they patrol is

becoming increasingly popular and helps establish better communication.

9. We recommend establishing CIVILIAN COMPLAINT REVIEW BOARDS and appropriate forums for public input.

10. We believe in a citizen's right to self defense and to bear arms as constitutionally protected - we also believe it is inappropriate for criminals to have access to "killing machines", that is, assault rifles, automatic weapons, armor-piercing and "anti-personnel" ammunition. Therefore, we support the "Brady Bill" and thoughtful, carefully considered GUN CONTROL.

11. We endorse PRISON EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINING.

12. We support innovative approaches to rehabilitation, and transitioning of non-violent criminals back into their communities.

13. We do not support, as a matter of conscience, the DEATH PENALTY.

14. We support JUDICIAL REFORM that opens up the court system, makes it affordable and convenient to ordinary citizens, and provides for more efficient administration of justice.

15. We support tough DWI laws.

16. We call for "zero-tolerance" for, and consistent policy of protection against, VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS.

17. We endorse federal funding for RAPE CRISIS CENTERS and DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTERS. We call for rape and domestic violence prevention and education programs and stiffer sentences for people convicted of domestic violence.

18. VICTIMS' RIGHTS must be guarded and protected. Victim-impact statements are appropriate vehicles for achieving full justice and restitution should be considered in many cases to ensure victims will not be lost in the complexities of criminal justice.

19. We support initiatives to move toward decriminalization of "VICTIMLESS" CRIMES, for example, the possession of small amounts of marijuana.

20. We call for a debate on the many productive uses of hemp, for example, as a major potential source of pulp and paper substitute.

21. We oppose the illicit activities of the international drug trade and the illicit money laundering that often accompanies the drug cartels. We call for a revised view of the "drug problem" and the "war on drugs" recognizing that, after over a decade of strident law and order posturing, the problems with hard drugs have only worsened.

22. We call for expanding drug counseling and treatment for those who need it.

23. We believe mandatory drug testing violates civil rights and as a result we oppose mandatory testing.

24. We favor innovative sentencing

and punishment options, including community service for first-time offenders and "Drug Court" diversion programs.

G. CIVIL AND EQUAL RIGHTS

The foundation of any democratic society is the guarantee that each member of society has equal rights. Respect for our constitutionally protected rights is our best defense against discrimination and the abuse of power. We should treasure and celebrate our people's differences and diversity.

We recognize an intimate connection between our RIGHTS as individuals and our RESPONSIBILITIES to our neighbors and the planet. The balance between rights and responsibilities is found as we provide for the maximum participation of everyone in the decisions affecting our well-being, our economic security, our social and international policies.

1. We, as Greens, are committed to establishing relationships that honor diversity; that support the self-definition and SELF- DETERMINATION of people; and that consciously confront the barriers of racism, sexism, homophobia, class oppression, ageism, and the many ways our culture separates us from working together to define and solve our common problems.

2. We affirm the right to openly embrace SEXUAL ORIENTATION in the intimate choice of who we love.

3. We support the rights of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people in housing, jobs, civil marriage and benefits, child custody; and in all areas of life, the right to be treated equally with all other people.

4. We affirm the right to worship or not to worship as each one chooses.

5. We support affirmative action to remedy discrimination, to protect constitutional rights and to provide equal opportunity under the law.

6. We support effective enforcement of the "VOTING RIGHTS ACT", including language access to voting.

7. We will resist discriminatory English-only pressure groups. We call for a national language policy that would encourage all citizens to be fluent in at least two languages.

8. We strongly support the vigorous enforcement of CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS; the aggressive prosecution of hate crimes; and the strengthening of legal services for the poor.

9. We support the full enforcement of the "Americans with Disabilities Act" to enable all people with disabilities to achieve independence and function at the highest possible level. Government should work to ensure that children with disabilities are provided with the same educational opportunities as those without disabilities.

10. WOMEN'S RIGHTS must be protected and expanded to guarantee each woman's right to be a full participant in society, free from sexual harassment, job discrimination or interference in the intensely personal choice about whether to have a child.

11. We support the "EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT".

12. The EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION (EEOC) should actively investigate and prosecute sexual harassment complaints. Women who file complaints must not be persecuted and should be protected under federal and state law. We must enshrine in law the basic principle that women have the same rights as men, and promote gender equality and fairness in the work force to ensure women receive equal pay for jobs of equal worth.

13. Consumers have the right to adequate enforcement of the federal and state CONSUMER PROTECTION LAWS. Health and safety is paramount and we oppose lax or inappropriate regulatory actions.

14. Consumers have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives and protect their interests beyond simply voting on election day. We support the creation of CONSUMER ADVOCACY AGENCIES (for example, along the model of the Illinois Citizen Utility Board) to protect the interests of consumers against the corporate lobbyists who have essentially (and too often successfully) argued against the rights of consumers before the regulatory agencies. We would require that legal monopolies and regulated industries (for example, electric, gas, water, and telephone utilities) set-up statewide CONSUMER ACTION GROUPS to act on behalf of and advocate for consumer interests.

15. We call for consumer legislation to outlaw the use of animals in cosmetics and household product testing; in tobacco and alcohol testing; and in weapons development or other military programs.

16. We call for reforms to better inform consumers about the products they are buying; and where and how they are made. We endorse "truth in advertising", including the clear definition of words like "recycled" and "natural".

17. We call for the restoration of consumers' rights to file class actions suits against manufacturers of unsafe products and restrictions on secrecy agreements that act to prevent lawsuits by not revealing damaging information.

18. We support "whistleblower rights" laws.

19. We support a citizen's right of access to justice. Our system of justice must be made convenient to rich and poor alike, guarding it against big

business attempts to regulate and, in effect, control our civil justice/civil jury system.

H. FREE SPEECH

As we look to the foundation of our freedoms, it should be remembered that the Constitution of the United States is not only "the supreme law of the land", it is also the original source of other laws. In Article I, the Constitution spells out the "legislative powers" that are vested in Congress, which ultimately affect the personal and business lives of us all. In the Bill of Rights, the Constitution sets forth the fundamental rights and freedoms of all people, rights and freedoms that cannot be denied or abridged by Congress, or by any other branch or level of government.

An informed electorate is critical to good government. The scope of the First Amendment is extensive and prohibits any law which would abridge the freedom of speech, or of the press, most clearly in reference to political matters. Our legal right to criticize government is essential to the effective working of democracy.

1. We support openness in government, not secrecy, and endorse the "FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT" (FOIA) as a way of guaranteeing access to government decision-making.

2. We recognize that access to information has profound consequences to our democracy, and we have concerns regarding the concentration of information in the hands of fewer and fewer corporations. The FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (FCC) must promulgate telecommunications policies that assure the First Amendment rights of viewers and listeners. New and existing technologies must provide outlets for scientific and cultural expression and enhance the electoral process. The "affordable access" and "universal access" provisions of the "Telecommunications Act of 1996" should be interpreted by the FCC for what they are - a clear mandate for the telecommunications industry to make advanced communications systems affordable and equitably available to all American schools and libraries.

3. The concentration of power that has characterized the telecommunications industry must be limited. A wide span of programming and information, genuine citizen access, diversity of views, respect for local community interests, news, public affairs and "QUALITY CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING" - the FCC should closely monitor applications for license renewals to the public airwaves to ensure that these public interest criteria are met.

4. Although we see regular assaults on the freedoms of speech enshrined in our Nation's founding documents, we

oppose censorship in the arts, media (including the World Wide Web and Internet), and press. We encourage individual and social responsibility by artists, creative media, writers - and all citizens.

I. NATIVE AMERICANS

Native American culture is worthy of protection and special respect. As Greens we feel a special affinity to the respect for community and the earth that many Native peoples have at their roots.

1. We recognize both the SOVEREIGNTY of Native American tribal governments and the government's trust obligation to Native American people.

2. The federal government must renew its obligation to deal in good faith with Native Americans; to honor its treaty obligations; adequately fund programs for the betterment of tribal governments and their people; affirm the RELIGIOUS RIGHTS of Native Americans in ceremonies ("American Indian Religious Freedom Act"); provide funds for innovative economic development initiatives, EDUCATION and public HEALTH PROGRAMS; and respect land, water and mineral rights within the borders of reservations and traditional lands.

3. We support those efforts to broadly reform the BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS (BIA) to make this vast agency more responsible, and responsive, to tribal governments.

4. We support the just settlement of the claims of the thousands of Native American URANIUM MINERS who have suffered and died from radiation exposure. We condemn the stance of secrecy taken by the Atomic Energy Commission during this era and its subsequent claim of "government immunity", taken knowingly (and immorally) at the expense of Native peoples' health and safety.

5. We support the complete clean-up of those mines and tailing piles that are a profoundly destructive legacy of the Cold War era.

6. We recognize that Native American land and treaty rights often stand at the front-line against government and multinational corporate attempts to plunder energy, mineral, timber, fish, and game resources, polluting water, air, and land in the service of the military, economic expansion, and the consumption of natural resources. Therefore, we support legal, political, and grassroots efforts by and on behalf of Native Americans to protect their traditions, rights, livelihoods, and their sacred spaces.

J. IMMIGRATION / EMIGRATION

Our nation was built with a rich tapestry of immigrants and we must continue to respect the potential con-

tributions and RIGHTS of our new immigrants.

1. Preferential quotas based on race, class, and ideology should be abandoned for immigration policies that promote fairness, NON-DISCRIMINATION and family reunification.

2. We support policies that reflect our constitutional guarantees of freedoms of speech, association and travel.

3. We find particular attention should be given those minorities who are political exiles and refugees, including Russian Jews, mid-east Kurds, Tibetans and Haitians.

4. Our relationship with our neighbor to the south, Mexico, needs to be given added attention. Our border relations, and reciprocal economic opportunities, should be a central concern of government that is looking to improved economic, environmental and social conditions for both peoples.

5. We oppose those who seek to divide us for political gain by raising ethnic and racial hatreds, blaming immigrants for social and economic problems.

K. HOUSING

1. Decent, AFFORDABLE HOUSING for every American must be a component of a campaign at the federal, state and local level.

2. We hold that government should play an activist role in the availability of housing. A COORDINATED HOUSING PLAN that is broad and inclusive should devote resources to non-profit community housing projects, private sector investments and appropriate public housing initiatives that encourage individual ownership over time.

3. We encourage low-density, low-impact, site-specific designs that encourage human-scale development and environmentally sensitive planning.

4. Pension funds and community development banks can be targeted and can become important sources of new funding. Subsidies, trade-offs with developers, and the creative use of city and county zoning ordinances should be emphasized to increase the affordable housing stock available within local communities depending on need.

L. NATIONAL SERVICE

1. We must create new opportunities for citizens to serve their communities. ALTERNATIVE SERVICE to the military should be encouraged.

2. We advocate the formation of a CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS (CCC) with national leadership, and state and local affiliates, to spearhead efforts to work on the tasks of environmental education, restoration of damaged habitats, reforestation, and cleaning up polluted waterways. Providing land and resource management skills

will challenge young people while encouraging social responsibility.

III. Environmental sustainability

A. ENERGY POLICY

If we do not alter our energy use soon and drastically, the ecological crisis may be exacerbated past a point where it can be resolved. A comprehensive energy policy must be a critical element of our environmental thinking. Investing in ENERGY EFFICIENCY and RENEWABLE ENERGY is key to sustainability.

1. We call for the development of STATE ENERGY POLICIES that include taxes and/or fines on energy "waste", and the funding of energy research, including credits for alternative and sustainable energy use such as solar, wind, hydrogen and biomass.

2. We encourage the creation and design of human environments that are as energy-efficient as possible. We support the phasing out of the most ecologically harmful sources of energy.

3. We urge that new construction be required by the year 2000 to achieve one-quarter to one-half its heating energy from the sun. Incentives/disincentives should be put in place to move utilities toward establishing SOLAR POWER STATIONS to augment and eventually supplant fossil-fuel generated electricity. We note that recent technological breakthroughs have made central solar power cost-competitive. Greens support economies of scale in production that would greatly reduce the price of this "clean" energy.

4. "TRUE-COST PRICING", which reflects the "realistic" cost of products including ecological damage and externalities caused during the manufacturing process, must be adopted to achieve accurate financial accounting. Only with a shift in the way we are seeing, can we accurately assess our energy choices and costs - and the long-term impacts of the energy decisions we are making.

B. NUCLEAR ISSUES

1. We call for cancellation of the WASTE ISOLATION PILOT PROJECT (WIPP), the nation's first weapons complex nuclear dump, in southern New Mexico.

2. We believe environmentally sound alternatives to underground storage can be developed and we oppose the transport of nuclear waste until such alternatives are found.

3. In the meantime, we call for permanent above-ground, continuously MONITORED RETRIEVABLE STORAGE (MRS) of nuclear waste at or near the sites where it is generated.

4. It is evident that the Nuclear

Regulatory Commission, with its goal of promoting nuclear energy (most recently via so-called "fast track licensing" designed to avoid community opposition) should be replaced with a nuclear decommissioning board charged with the phase-out of nuclear power.

5. The import and export of nuclear and toxic wastes should be banned and a heavy fine imposed for violators.

6. We call for independent, public-access radiation monitoring at all commercial and military nuclear facilities.

7. We support applicable environmental impact statements (EIS) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis with citizen participation at all nuclear sites.

8. We support an immediate and intensive CAMPAIGN TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC about nuclear problems, including disposal, clean-up and long-term dangers.

C. WASTE MANAGEMENT

1. Legal requirements and standards for businesses applying for zoning permits should be formulated to require disclosure of toxics which may be used.

2. Past violations, illegal use and misuse of hazardous materials have to be remedied appropriately. Those responsible for toxic waste dumping, spills, and contamination on or off their sites should be responsible for costs of complete clean-up. In addition, we call for levying sizable fines on those found guilty of violating such standards.

3. We endorse a revisiting of "Super-Fund" legislation to make these clean up laws more effective.

4. Waste management is a critical challenge to the survival of the modern world. Real reductions in per capita consumption of materials, and significant increases in the efficiency with which materials are used, is a problem that must be faced sooner rather than later. We support RECYCLING at every level of the economy. We endorse SOURCE REDUCTION and municipal programs that particularly focus on household recycling.

5. We oppose INCINERATION of municipal solid waste, sewage, non-biological medical waste, and toxic waste. We support a moratorium on any new incinerators that burn such materials and a rapid shutdown of existing incinerators that do so.

6. We oppose shipping of toxic wastes across national borders, and the SHIPMENT OF TOXIC/HAZARDOUS OR RADIOACTIVE WASTES, without regulation, across any political borders.

7. We oppose the exportation, under any circumstances, of chemicals that are prohibited in the United States.

D. FOSSIL FUELS

1. We are aware of the environmental hazards that accompany the use of fossil fuels and of their non-sustainability and eventual depletion. We call for TRANSITION ENERGY STRATEGIES, including the use of relatively clean-burning natural gas, as a way to reorder our energy priorities and over-reliance on traditional fuels.

2. We call for a gradual phase-out of gasoline and other fossil fuels. Until gasoline driven cars can be replaced, we advocate FUEL EFFICIENCY standards, a "gas guzzler" tax on new low mileage vehicles, and a "gas sipper" rebate on high mileage vehicles.

3. We advocate fair "buybacks" of the most polluting and least efficient vehicles to remove these vehicles from the road.

4. We oppose further development of our nation's outer continental shelf for oil drilling or exploration.

5. We acknowledge the relative benefits that can be achieved in the production of and use of NATURAL GAS in current economic alternatives and transition strategies.

6. Public ownership and/or strong public regulation of UTILITIES should be encouraged to advance energy efficient policies. Appropriate tax-exempt bonds should be authorized to finance public ownership in utilities. Tax-exempt bonds should be authorized to allow publicly owned utilities to finance conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy projects.

E. RENEWABLE ENERGY

1. Overall, it is essential in the long-term that ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SYSTEMS be put in place that produce goods that are durable, repairable, reusable, recyclable, and energy-efficient, using both non-toxic materials and nonpolluting production methods.

2. We call on regulatory agencies to include "life-cycle" considerations in their standard-setting process for product approval. We promote citizen participation in this process.

3. Ultimately, environmentally destructive technologies, processes, and products should be replaced with alternatives that are environmentally benign. Producers/manufacturers must look to redesigning their products. Legislation that will assist this transition (including bans, taxation, recycled content standards and economic incentives/disincentives such as taxation, special fees, and/or deposits) will be required in a any concerted move toward system-wide sustainability.

F. TRANSPORTATION POLICY

1. We encourage providing a broad range of incentives for ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION, including natural gas vehicles, solar and electric vehi-

cles, bicycles and bikeways, and MASS TRANSIT.

2. As a nation we must push for motor vehicle fuel efficiency, raising the standard to a minimum of 45 miles per gallon by 2005.

3. We must require that an increasing percentage of the Federal motor fleet is converted to natural gas and aims at being pollution free over the next decade.

4. We must expand our country's network of rail lines, high speed regional passenger service, and urban light rail systems.

5. We support efforts to develop inexpensive, efficient solar cells, chips and panels via "industrial grade" silicon and other advanced materials.

6. We endorse converting our nation's weapons complex and labs toward civilian RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. We are especially interested in public/private partnerships that work to create breakthrough battery technology which would enable electric cars (and all solar electric applications) to become energy efficient and market competitive.

G. CLEAN AIR / GREENHOUSE EFFECT / OZONE DEPLETION

1. The strict, comprehensive protections of the "Clean Air Act" must be maintained and enhanced if we are to keep in place effective federal programs that deal with urban smog, toxic air pollution, acid rain and ozone depletion. State and local clean air initiatives should advance and improve national efforts. As an example, California has taken the lead in legislation moving forward stricter clean air and fuel efficiency standards, and vehicle and fleet conversions. These programs should serve as a model for other local, regional and state initiatives.

2. It is said that US industries emit over 20% of greenhouse gases globally. As a nation, we must implement public and private initiatives at every level to support the "GLOBAL CLIMATE TREATY" signed at the "Earth Summit" in 1992, committing industrial nations within a time framework to reducing emissions to 1990 levels.

3. The earth's atmosphere, according to informed scientific opinion, is in great danger due to man-made chemicals and hydrocarbon emissions. Chloro-fluorocarbons (CFC'S), hydrochloro-fluorocarbons, and other related ozone-depleting substances should be banned as soon as is possible.

4. GREENHOUSE GASES and the threat of GLOBAL WARMING must be addressed by the international community in concert, through international treaties and conventions, with the industrial nations at the forefront

of this vital effort.

H. LAND USE

Greens are advocates for the Earth. All the rivers, lakes, shorelines, wildlife. This is our birthright and our home - the green Earth.

When we see the first picture ever taken of our green oasis from space, photographed from the window of the Apollo flight, we marvel at the preciousness of life.

We remember John Muir's and Edward Abbey's call to protect what is critical to our spirit. Experiencing the wilderness calls us to preserve pristine nature. We are advocates for our home. Our advocacy is based on our love of nature and our recognition that it is beyond us.

1. Greens look to the future and support "conservative" conservation practices as well as "liberal" approaches and programs, both having a place as long as good land stewardship is in evidence.

2. We take a BIOREGIONAL VIEW of the ecosystem, acknowledging political boundaries while noting that the land, air and water, the interconnected biosphere, is a unique and precious "community", deserving careful consideration and protection.

3. We encourage social ownership and use of land at the community, local, and regional level, particularly in the form of community and conservation LAND TRUSTS, under covenants of ecological responsibility.

4. Appropriate land-use PLANNING should serve to prevent activities that adversely affect public and adjacent lands (for example, mining operations and oil and gas extraction cannot be permitted to cause water pollution - and timber cutting cannot be allowed to destroy habitat and streams, while producing severe soil erosion).

5. We call for repeal of the "Mining Act of 1872". We demand a halt to federal mineral, oil and gas, and resource give-aways, "royalty holidays", and flagrant concessions to the mining, energy and timber industries; and an immediate crackdown on their evasions and reporting fraud draining billions of dollars annually from the public treasury.

6. We believe special attention must be given to the restoration and protection of RIPARIAN AREAS, which are critical habitats in healthy ecosystems.

7. We call for strict CLEAN-UP ENFORCEMENT of industrial activities, for example, of tailings, pits and run-off from mining operations via agreements with companies that can include posting of site-restoration bonds prior to commencement of operations.

8. We call for a halt to all current international funding policies that promote destruction of forest ecosystems

and we call for an end to the trade in endangered hardwoods.

9. We support laws that promote paper recycling and mandate SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY practices.

10. We urge protection of "old growth" forests, careful restrictions of commercial cutting on federal and state lands, a ban on all clearcutting, and a reduction of road building on public lands.

11. We are sensitive to the needs of local and rural communities and do not endorse overly restrictive or punitive restrictions on local logging.

12. We support restoration of degraded forest ecosystems through the development of "value-added" economies, second-growth logging, and certified wood products.

13. We advocate raising grazing fees on public land to approximate fair market value and encourage GRAZING REFORM that brings together traditional users and concerned local citizens in new working relationships.

14. We support policies that favor small-scale ranchers over corporate operations (which are often used as tax write-offs, a practice which undermines family ranches.) Eliminating large corporate allotments will ensure more sustainable levels of grazing, benefiting the land and community.

15. We oppose any selling off of our National Parks; the commercial "privatizing" of public lands; and/or cutbacks or exploitation in our nation's wilderness areas.

16. Effective land and resource management practices must be founded on stewardship, such as incorporated in a "LAND ETHIC" as articulated by Aldo Leopold. Additional public involvement via active and well-funded RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DISTRICTS and COUNCILS will aid this long-term process on the use of federal and state trust lands (which are currently controlled by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), National Forest Service, National Park Service, and State Land Offices).

17. We support state bans on ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL (ADC), the federal agency that has been killing wildlife indiscriminately in the West since 1931.

18. We urge comprehensive, baseline mapping of our nation's biodiversity resources; consideration of "wildlife ranching" and policies that desirably increase native big-game populations; and implementation of extensive soil erosion control programs.

19. Our future is in the hands, and eyes, and dreams of our children. Recreational opportunities are the beginning of lifelong appreciation of our natural environment. We should all have opportunities to experience nature firsthand. The "call of the wild" is in all of us. Outdoor recreation,

sports, hiking, adventuring, educational programs for children, nature study - these are essential to the wholeness of life.

I. WATER

Together we must look ahead and plan for future water uses, as well as today's needs. Who can disagree that clean and sufficient water resources will determine what kind of future we have?

1. With the longer term in mind, we call for elimination of wasteful subsidies on the use of water in agriculture and for municipal water rates to be set high enough, or that other INCENTIVES/DISINCENTIVES be set in place, to discourage the wasteful use of water.

2. We support the federal "Clean Water Act" setting strict requirements for sewage discharges, wetland protection and water quality standards. Recent moves to rollback protections would in effect create a dirty water act. Our right to clean water is non-negotiable.

3. Given the profound importance of clean water, we support the establishment of federal, state, and local GROUNDWATER PROTECTION agencies with authority to establish standards for the use of water; to provide tough and timely enforcement of laws enacted; and to protect our aquifers from overuse, depletion and contamination.

4. We endorse alternative solutions to water treatment and clean-up, for example CONSTRUCTED WETLANDS and biological remediation.

5. We acknowledge Native American rights regarding water, and urge fair and equitable solutions with tribes on the part of the courts and State Water Engineers.

J. AGRICULTURE

The human species is at the top of the food chain and is, therefore, very vulnerable to the degrading of the environment and the loss of species. If for no other reason than our own preservation, we should work to protect our environment and the diversity of our region's and planet's rich life forms.

1. We call for the establishment of an ecologically based sustainable agricultural system that moves as rapidly as possible towards regional/bioregional self reliance.

2. An adequate FOOD SUPPLY is tied to many of our nation's domestic, export, foreign aid, geopolitical and related overseas goals. We support anti-hunger and "Food Stamp" programs at home, and support assistance to foreign countries and their people that moves them toward SELF-SUFFICIENCY and sustainability in food production.

3. WORLD HUNGER can be best addressed by FOOD SUPPLY INDEPENDENCE. Population growth and accompanying deprivation, which has led to increased poverty and environmental destruction in the Third World, can be replaced by a decent standard of living, and sustainable populations and growth. Goals and policies that aim at sustainable production to end hunger while preserving the environment are crucial for success of these efforts. Food security is a base-line necessity.

4. We call for phasing out the use of man-made pesticides and artificial fertilizers, and funding for research to find acceptable alternatives.

5. We support "Integrated Pest Management" techniques, as an alternative to current chemical-based agriculture.

6. We support the adoption of "organic certification standards" and support regional efforts to broaden this effort by reaching out to and identifying growers and buyers of organic produce.

7. We call for a reconsideration of the potentially far-reaching and unforeseen effects of seed and plant hybridization and especially of genetic engineering in agricultural systems. We are particularly concerned about loss of and increasing threat posed to plant diversity, which must be saved, maintained and enhanced if we are to have an authentic ALTERNATIVE GREEN REVOLUTION, based on diversity, sustainable agriculture and local self-empowerment.

8. We generally oppose the patenting of life forms, including gene-splicing techniques, and call for a moratorium on agricultural genetic engineering while an evaluation of its effects on ecological and social sustainability is carried out. The implications of a corporate takeover, and resulting monopolization of genetic "intellectual property" by the bioengineering industry, are immense. With the recent introduction of the world's first genetically engineered (and duly patented) tomato, we need to reexamine our government's oversight of this untested, unproven field.

9. We advocate REGIONALIZING our food system and decentralizing agricultural lands, production, and distribution.

10. We support research, within the public and private arenas, including educational institutions, for sustainable, organic, and ecologically balanced agriculture.

K. BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Ecological systems are diverse and interlocking, and nature's survival strategy can best be found in the adaptability that comes as a result of biological diversity. Although many

people may think first of tropical rain forests in reference to the richness of (and threat to) biological diversity, we believe that diversity close to home is worthy of saving, as are the myriad species within the rain forest and its teeming canopy.

1. The Green Party supports a strong, enforceable "ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT" based on the principles of conservation biology.

2. We look to the "CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY", first adopted at the "Earth Summit" in 1992, as a primary statement of purpose regarding how we can act to preserve and sustain our common genetic resources. Greens emphasize conservation of "natural" populations and ecosystems, and we seriously question the demands of the US to amend this unprecedented international agreement on behalf of the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries, with their insistence upon protection of their "intellectual property" and technology transfer rights. Within these demands are inconsistencies which can threaten the Convention's overall goals.

3. We encourage support of and public access to seed banks and seed collections that emphasize "DEEP DIVERSITY", particularly through traditional and heirloom seeds.

4. We call for wide-spread education on the critical importance of efforts being made (including "backyard biodiversity" gardening) to replant indigenous plant life where it has dwindled or been lost.

5. Corporate agribusiness is founded on F-1 hybrid seeds, proprietary products that cannot be saved season-to-season and have to be bought from the company store at each new planting. We discourage monopolistic production of high-tech, hybrid seeds, the basis of the evolving industry of "MONOCULTURE" agriculture - i.e., agribusiness which relies on NON-SUSTAINABLE METHODS (single crop varieties bred with industrial traits, and grown with high energy, chemical and pesticide inputs).

6. We know that agriculture and food comprise the world's largest economic market. We find it of great concern that the practices of corporate agribusiness are leading, as scientists are beginning to point out, to diminishing yields; increasing petro-chemical fertilizer and pesticide costs; serious top-soil loss; non-point, run-off pollution of waterways and aquifers; and the return of resistant pests and blights requiring ever-larger doses of environmentally harmful pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, and/or miticides.

7. Monocultures have also led to a massive loss of biodiversity as they have displaced traditional varieties

and seed stocks. We encourage the use of diverse natural varieties, those passed down over many generations, called "open-pollinates" because they can be grown out, the best plants' seeds being saved season-to-season. In practice, we support this as the basis of an "Alternative Green Revolution", sustainable agriculture that is closely connected to the environment, and not dependent on outside companies and their industrial monopolies.

8. We oppose in principle international trade agreements (GATT and NAFTA in particular) which have precedent-setting provisions protecting trans-national, corporate control of the "INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY" of their genes, hybrid seeds and proprietary products.

9. Greens call for a move away from corporate control of agriculture (and the resultant extinction of traditional plant varieties) and instead envision a healthy and sustainable food system, based on crop diversity, community empowerment, self-sufficiency, cooperative marketing, recycling, seed saving, local (and fresh) production, and organic methods.

10. The struggle over the production and quality of our food supply is critical and has yet to be determined. The outcome of this struggle will have an intimate connection to our personal health and the future biological diversity of our environment. We believe strongly that we must work to bring this message every community throughout the world.

11. Finally, as Greens, we must add that the mark of a humane and civilized society truly lies in how we treat the least protected among us. To extend rights to other sentient, living beings is our responsibility and a mark of our place among all of creation. We find cruelty to animals to be repugnant and criminal. We call for an intelligent, compassionate approach to the treatment of animals.

IV. Economic Sustainability

A. ECO-NOMICS

We can learn from indigenous people who believe that the earth and its natural systems are to be respected and cared for in accordance with ecological principles. Concepts of ownership should be employed in the context of stewardship, and social and ecological responsibility. We support environmental and social responsibility in all businesses, whether privately or publicly owned.

To create an enduring society, we must devise a system of production and commerce where every act is sustainable and restorative. We believe that all business has a social contract

with society and the environment (in effect a "fiduciary responsibility"), and that "socially responsible business" and "shareholder democracy" can be models of prospering, successful business.

1. We call for an economic system that is based on a combination of private businesses, decentralized democratic cooperatives, publicly owned enterprises, and alternative economic structures, all of which put human and ecological needs alongside profits to measure success, and are accountable to the communities in which they function.

2. Greens support a major redesign of commerce. We endorse "true-cost pricing." We support production that eliminates waste. In natural systems, everything is a meal for something else. Everything recycles, there is no "waste". We need to mimic natural systems in the way we manufacture and produce things. "Consumables" need to be designed to be thrown into a compost heap and/or eaten, for example. "Durable goods" would be designed in closed-loop systems, ultimately to be disassembled and reassembled. "Toxics" would be safeguarded and could have "markers" identifying them as belonging, in perpetuity, to their makers.

3. We need to remake commerce to encourage diversity and variety, responding to the enormous complexity of global and local conditions. Big business is not about appropriateness and adaptability, but about power and market control. Greens support small business, responsible "stakeholder capitalism", and broad and diverse forms of economic cooperation. We argue that economic diversity is more responsive than big business to the needs of diverse human populations.

Sustaining our quality of life, economic prosperity, environmental health, and long-term survival demands that we adopt new ways of doing business.

B. CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

Currently, corporations possess rights no human beings do. Namely, they are seldom held liable for the personal or environmental harm they cause. We support reforms that hold the executives of a corporation directly liable for the harm resulting from their decisions.

When we look at the HISTORY OF our states, we learn that citizens intentionally defined CORPORATIONS through charters - the certificates of incorporation. In exchange for the charter, a corporation was obligated to obey all laws, to serve the common good, and to cause no harm. Early state legislators wrote charter laws to limit corporate authority, and to ensure that when a corporation caused

harm, they could revoke its charter. In the late 19th century, however, corporations claimed special protections under the Constitution. Large companies used legal power to assert legal authority over what to make and how to make it, to move money, influence elections, bend governments to their will. They insisted that once formed, corporations may operate forever, with the privilege of limited liability and freedom from community or worker interference in business judgments. It is inappropriate for the investment and production decisions that can shape our communities and lives to be made essentially from afar, in boardrooms, closed-door regulatory agencies, and prohibitively expensive courtrooms.

It is unacceptable to have the level of influence now being exerted by corporate interests over the public interest. We challenge the propriety and equity of "corporate welfare" in the form of tax breaks, subsidies, payments, grants, bailouts, giveaways, unenforced laws and regulations; and historic, continuing access to our vast public resources, including millions of acres of land, forests, mineral resources, intellectual property rights, and government-created research. We call for revisiting what one Supreme Court Justice called, when referring to the history of constitutional law, "the history of the impact of the modern corporation upon the American scene." We believe that corporations are neither inevitable nor always appropriate. Judicial and legislative decisions that have made it possible for big business to stay beyond the reach of democracy need to be reexamined.

Legal doctrines must be continually seen in light of the changing needs of society. Huge trans-national corporations are artificial creations, not natural persons uniquely sheltered under Constitutional protections. It is time to look at STATUTES and PRECEDENTS to HOLD CORPORATIONS ACCOUNTABLE, even to the point of revoking charters. One point remains unequivocal - because corporations have become the dominant economic institution of the planet, they must address and squarely face the social and environmental problems that afflict humankind.

C. LIVABLE INCOME

1. We affirm the importance of access to a livable income.

2. Job banks and other innovative training and employment programs, which bring together the private and public sectors, need to become federal, state and local priorities. People who are unable to find decent work in the private sector should have options through publically funded opportunities.

3. Workforce development programs must aim at moving people out of poverty - a "living wage" campaign and "living wage" standard will go a long way toward achieving this goal.

4. We urge that a national debate be held and broad public mandate be sought regarding (fiscal and monetary) economic strategies and policies- as they impact wages. This debate is long overdue. The growing inequities in income and wealth between rich and poor; unprecedented discrepancies in salary and benefits between corporate top executives and line workers; loss of the "American dream" by the young and middle-class - each is a symptom of decisions made by policy-makers far removed from the concerns of ordinary workers trying to keep up.

5. A clear living wage standard should serve as a foundation for trade between nations, and a "floor" of wage protections and worker's rights should be negotiated and set in place in future trade agreements. The US should take the lead on this front - and not allow destructive, corporate predatory practices under the guise of "free" international trade.

D. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Reforms to allow communities to have influence in their ECONOMIC FUTURE should be implemented, including:

1. Locally owned small businesses, which are more accessible to community concerns.

2. Local production and consumption where possible.

3. Consumer co-ops, credit unions, incubators, microloan funds, local "currencies", and other institutions that help communities develop economic projects.

4. Allowing municipalities to approve or disapprove large economic projects case-by-case based on environmental impacts, local ownership, community reinvestment, wage levels, working conditions.

5. Allowing communities to set environmental, human rights, health and safety standards higher than federal or state minimums.

6. We support a national program of INVESTING IN THE COMMONS; to rebuild the infrastructure of communities; to repair and improve transportation lines between cities; and to protect and restore the environment. A federal capital budget should be put in place and applied in a process that assesses federal spending as capital investment.

7. We endorse DIRECT DEMOCRACY through TOWN MEETINGS, which express a community's wishes on economic decision-making directly to local institutions and organizations.

E. SMALL BUSINESS AND JOB CREATION

1. Greens support an economic pro-

gram that combats concentration and abuse of economic power. We support many different initiatives for forming successful, small enterprises that together can become an engine (and sustainable model) of job creation, prosperity and progress. Small business is where the jobs are. Over the past decade and a half, all new net job growth has come from the small business sector.

2. The Green economic model is about true prosperity - "Green means prosperity". Our goal is to go beyond the dedicated good work being done by many companies (which is often referred to as "SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS" or "VALUE-DRIVEN BUSINESS") and to present new ways of seeing how business can help create a sustainable world, all the while surviving in a competitive business climate.

3. We believe that conservation should be "profitable" and employment should be creative, meaningful and fairly compensated.

4. ACCESS TO CAPITAL is often an essential need in "growing" a business. There should be a comprehensive set of approaches to making loans available to small business at rates competitive to those offered big business. Financial institutions unfairly favor large corporations and the wealthy when determining how to "work" their loan portfolios.

Government needs to reform current lending practices. We support "disclosure laws", "anti-redlining laws" and a general openness on the part of the private sector as to what criteria are used in making lending decisions.

5. As lending institutions have obligations to the health of their local communities, we oppose arbitrary, or discriminatory practices which act to deny small business access to credit and expansion capital. We oppose "disinvestment" practices, in which lending and financial institutions move money deposited in local communities out of those same communities, in effect often damaging the best interests of their customers and community.

6. The present tax system acts to discourage small business, as it encourages waste, discourages conservation, and rewards consumption. Big business has used insider access to dominate the federal tax code. The TAX SYSTEM needs a major OVERHAUL, to get it up and running in a way that favors the legitimate and critical needs of the small business community. RETENTION OF CAPITAL, through retained earnings, efficiencies, and savings, is central to small business remaining competitive. Current tax policies often act to unfairly penalize small business.

7. Government should reduce wherever possible unnecessary restrictions,

fees, and "red-tape". In particular, the "Paper Simplification Act" should be seen as a way to benefit small business and it should be improved in response to the needs of small businesses.

8. We support the full deductibility of health insurance premiums paid by the self-employed.

9. Overall we believe that Federal and State government must pay more attention to putting forward policies that work on behalf of small business, and break their cycle of excessive welfare for big business.

10. State and local government should encourage where appropriate businesses that especially benefit the community. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES should include citizen and community input. The type and size of businesses provided incentives (tax, loans, bonds, etc.) should be the result of local community participation.

11. Pension funds, the result of workers' investments, should be examined as additional sources of capital for small business. Definitions of "fiscally prudent" need to be broadened within acceptable margins of safety to include investments beyond the current practices (and a credit rating system) almost exclusively benefiting large corporations. Investment managers need to be given discretionary powers to channel these monies, now in the trillions of dollars, into productive small and mid-sized businesses at the local level.

12. Insurance costs need to be brought down by means of active engagement with the insurance industry. Insurance pools, for example, of the kind offered businesses in the association, "Business for Social Responsibility", need to be expanded.

13. "One-stop" offices should be set-up by government to assist individuals who want to change careers, or go into business for the first time.

14. HOME-BASED BUSINESSES AND NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED BUSINESSES need to be assisted by forward-looking planning, not hurt by out-of-date zoning ordinances. "Telecommuting" and "home offices" should be aided, not hindered, by government.

F. TRADE

1. We reject trade agreements negotiated in secret and unduly influenced by corporate attorneys and representatives. In particular, we oppose the GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE (GATT) and current NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (NAFTA). Both are threats to the constitutional power of Congress and local sovereignty, and they effectively limit the participation of citizens in decisions. Instead, they create administrative bureaucracies

which will be run by corporate interests and, in many ways, will be unaccountable to public input or even legal challenge.

2. We demand that these agreements be updated to include more specific environmental, worker, health and safety standards in the text itself, not as "side agreements", and full funding of existing environmental/health commitments (for example, the North American Development Bank and Border Environmental Cooperation Commission).

3. We reject any agreement which threatens the authority of states and local communities to establish more stringent health, safety and environmental standards.

4. We reject agreements that negotiate downward our basic environmental, human rights, health, safety and labor standards, including the right to bargain collectively, a reasonable minimum wage, and prohibitions against child and forced labor. The historic role of the United States has been to raise living standards, not to be dragged down by the lowest common denominator abroad.

G. RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Economic development in rural areas spans many agencies of government, but eventually comes back to prospering, healthy farms and ranch lands. Recreation, local business, schools and education, health care and energy availability; all are necessary to support diversified, successful rural economies.

1. RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY should begin with the local people. FAMILY FARMS are the backbone of a sustainable rural economy. They are more likely than corporate agribusiness to follow ecological practices that enrich the land; to use labor-intensive rather than energy-intensive farming methods; and to support agricultural biodiversity. Because of their smaller scale and production methods, they are more likely to produce food products that are healthier for consumers. Federal, state and local governments should provide financial assistance to small farmers to help them compete against agribusiness.

2. Price-fixing and anti-competitive actions of the corporate agricultural giants, must be confronted aggressively.

3. Programs must be implemented by the federal and state government that add value to the production from family farms to help them remain competitive.

4. Government should encourage BANK POLICIES that spread their loan portfolios beyond corporate agriculture and ranching, and the big, subsidized grazing permit holders, in order to diversify local economies.

5. We support COOPERATIVE VENTURES to broaden markets of local producers.

6. We encourage state-assisted PRODUCT MARKETING EFFORTS and RURAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS.

H. BANKING FOR PEOPLE

1. We support a broad program of reform in the banking and savings and loan industry that acts to ensure that their "COMMONWEALTH" OBLIGATIONS to serve all communities are met. We understand that the present system is skewed to service first and foremost large businesses, transnational corporations and wealthy individuals. Since lending institutions are chartered by the state to serve the best interests of communities, the privileges that come with being given power at the center of commerce carry special responsibilities.

2. The government should take serious steps to ensure that low- and moderate-income persons and communities, as well as small business, have access to banking services, affordable loans and small-business supporting capital.

3. We support the extension of the "COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT ACT" and its key performance data provisions to provide public and timely information on the extent of housing loans, small business loans, loans to minority-owned enterprises, investments in community development projects and affordable housing.

4. We believe Congress should act to charter COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BANKS, which would be capitalized with public funds and work to meet the credit needs of local communities.

I. INSURANCE REFORM

1. We endorse wide ranging INSURANCE INDUSTRY REGULATION to reduce the cost of insurance by reducing its special-interest protections; collusion and over-pricing; and excessive industry-wide practices that too often injure the interests of the insured when they're most vulnerable and in need.

2. We call for actions at the federal and state level to rein in "bad faith" insurance actions - including the standard practice of attempting legal avoidance of obligations; and the current widespread practice of price fixing.

3. We support recent federal legislation that acts to make policies "transportable" from job-to-job and seeks to prevent insurance companies rejection of applicants for "prior conditions". This is a move in the right direction but in no way addresses the scope of the problem, whether in health insurance, life insurance, business, liability, auto or crop insurance.

4. We support initiatives in secondary insurance markets that work to expand credit - for economic development in inner cities; affordable housing and home ownership among the poor; "transitional" farming to sustainable agriculture; and for rural development maintaining family farms.

J. PENSION REFORM

1. Working people, who own over \$3 trillion in pension monies (deferred wages in effect), should have financial options for where their money is invested apart from the current near-monopoly exerted by a handful of managers, banks, insurance companies, and mutual funds. We do not believe the over-use of pension funds for corporate mergers, acquisitions and leveraged buy-outs is appropriate or productive.

Yet, the current system has allowed vast amounts of American workers' hard-earned money to be squandered on job-ending, plant-moving, corporate downsizing. The irony of investing pension funds in corporate decisions that undercut workers rights, employment, and retirement while hugely rewarding non-productive speculation should no longer be ignored.

2. PENSION FUNDS are gigantic capital pools that can, with government support, be used to meet community needs and benefit workers and their families directly.

3. Corporate-sponsored pension funds (the biggest category of funds) should be jointly controlled by management and workers, not exclusively ruled by management.

4. Federal law must be changed so that pension funds need simply seek a reasonable rate of return, not the prevailing market rate which greatly restricts where investments can be made.

5. A secondary pension market set up by the government, to insure pension investments made in socially beneficial programs, needs to be considered as one method that could greatly expand the impact of this capital market, as has been demonstrated in the case of federally insured/subsidized mortgage lending.

6. "Prudent" pension fund investing can and should be made on behalf of those whose best interests are served by having their money both make money and do good work. Creating jobs and supporting employment programs in public/private partnerships can become a priority as we seek to expand opportunities "where the jobs are" (toward small business not transnational business). Why not look to targeting the under- and un-employed? We believe there are myriad opportunities for a profound shift to occur in how the capital of America's workers is best put to use.

K. ANTI-TRUST ENFORCEMENT

1. We support strong and effectively enforced ANTI-TRUST REGULATION to counteract the concentration of economic power that carries a severe toll on the economy. The anti-trust division of the Justice Department has had its scope and powers reduced over the past decade. Media mergers concentrating power in the hands of media giants have been ineffectively challenged. An explosion of unregulated mergers and acquisitions, spin-offs and leveraged buy-outs has overwhelmed the federal government's capacity to provide effective oversight. Financial and trading markets have become particularly vulnerable to "insider trading". Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) regulation of these markets has seriously fallen short. Overall, what we see in unchecked market power is corruption, self-serving abuse of the democratic, political process, price gouging, loss of productivity and jobs, reduced competitiveness, and an array of predatory market practices that history has documented in detail about monopolies-at-work.

2. Although the pressure on Congress from the trans- and multi-national corporations is fierce when it involves effective oversight and accountability, we call for the federal government to step up and enforce the existing anti-trust laws and regulations - and as necessary tighten the laws.

3. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) must vigorously oversee mergers where the combined sales of the company's exceed one billion dollars.

4. The Justice Department must redefine its definition of relevant market share in assessing mergers.

5. The Congress must enact its calls for "competitiveness" by stopping illegal monopolistic practices.

6. We oppose the largesse of government in the form of massive corporate entitlements.

L. ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AND DEFENSE CONVERSION

The conversion of defense-related technologies to a peacetime technology-based economy is a major challenge. We must ask ourselves what we are to make of our nation's defense-related industrial base in the face of the collapse of the Soviet threat to our vital interests and resultant need for a winding down of "national security" spending.

1. CONSOLIDATION of the nuclear weapons complex should move toward alternative civilian technologies and non-proliferation work, not toward a new generation of nuclear weapon design and production.

2. We generally support defense TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER efforts,

particularly new INDUSTRIAL APPLICATIONS and developments in the areas of advanced communications, alternative energy, and waste management.

3. Let us go forward with government and civilian space programs; RESEARCH INITIATIVES in transportation, advanced products and manufacturing; industrial applications, appropriate technologies and technology transfer; environmental sampling and monitoring; systems testing; laser communications; high speed computers; genetic mapping (with "Genome" project results in the "public domain").

4. Let us devote a larger percentage of our Nation's research and development budget, both private and public, toward civilian use and away from military use. Let us become more competitive in developing consumer products and addressing our chronic trade imbalance in this fashion - not by increasing exports of military weapons and technologies.

5. Advanced telecommunications technologies (many of which came originally from defense applications) such as fiber optics, broadband infrastructure, the "net" and "web", hold great promise for education, decentralized economies, and local control of decision-making. We believe we must move toward decentralization in these efforts - carefully protecting our individual rights as we go forward. Advanced and high definition TV, digital communications, and wireless communications hold promise and challenge. For example, the public airwaves that will accommodate the new generation of telecommunications technology should not be free giveaways to media giants. An auction and built in requirements that attach to these licenses to act "in the public interest" is needed. Technology provides a tool - we must use these tools appropriately and ethically. Myriad opportunities for technical excellence and continued economic achievement, apart from strategic, tactical and defense-related weapons systems, are in front of us. We urge Congress, all of government, and a forward-looking private sector to take up this challenge.

M. THE NATIONAL DEBT

Every year the federal government borrows hundreds of billions of dollars. Money that should be going into new business and jobs, research and development, roads and bridges, schools and the technologies of tomorrow, has been lost to servicing the national debt (which is currently over \$4 trillion dollars). Increases in the national debt are the most regressive taxes of all, the interest on the national debt passed on to the next generation.

We cannot ignore the consequences

of our nation's deficits and the related costs of debt service. Foreign holdings of our debt have increased greatly and money markets have seen a large percentage of available capital flow away from productive investments, primarily due to federal borrowing.

1. We agree that actions to reduce the debt and federal deficits are in order. We do not agree that working people and small business community should disproportionately shoulder the burden, when the incurrence of the federal debt was, to a large degree, the end product of those who were on watch during the Cold War and military-defense industry buildup. We do not agree that it is an obligation of working people to pay for the hundreds of billions lost in the savings and loan bailout; the billions upon billions being lost on loopholes, tax breaks, and trans-national/multi-national corporate tax avoidance; or the hundreds of billions lost due to a failed tax code that has been, in effect, held prisoner to special-interests and has produced historic gross inequities between corporate America and working Americans.

2. During the 1980's our national debt grew from approximately \$1 trillion to its current size. As we move into the next century, we must continue to move toward reduction in the national debt.

3. We believe a comprehensive approach that forms a basis to a realistic DEFICIT PLAN would include: tax increases on mega-corporate and wealthy interests; defense reductions to levels approximately \$100 billion below the current Administration's planned budget for the year 2000 - a viable mix of major conventional forces and a substantial reduction in nuclear forces could bring the defense budget to between \$150-\$200 billion); and entitlement reductions to those who can afford reductions most (entitlement spending is over 1/2 the federal budget; one way to reduce costs substantially would be by "means testing", i.e., by scaling back payments to the six million citizens in families with incomes over \$50,000 annually.

4. As our nation considers the hard choices needed to continue DEBT and DEFICIT REDUCTION, we add our voice to the debate on the side of those who do not support or consider necessary any deep cuts in domestic and discretionary spending that is our nation's essential "safety net", protecting those most in need. We will continue to oppose spending cuts in the one-fifth of entitlement benefits, including food stamps, family assistance, Medicaid, and supplementary security income, that go to the children, the lowest income, aged, blind and disabled.