

Elko County Democratic Party County Platform - 2020

As do all good citizens of this country, the Elko County Democrats fully support all parts of the United States Constitution as the supreme law of this land. The preamble to our U.S. Constitution states, "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." The planks of this platform represent the most pressing issues we must face at this time in achieving a more perfect union and justice for all, in maintaining domestic tranquility, promoting the general welfare, and above all else, securing the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity. For the purposes of this platform preamble the pronouns "us, we, ourselves," and "our" refer to not just Democrats or Republicans, urban or rural people, those of any given ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or religion but rather to all citizens and residents of the United States.

Section 1 – Elections

A. Dark Money – Removing money funneled into campaigns from outside interests will help restore our democracy which has been corrupted by its undue influence.

The Elko County Democrats support the elimination of campaign funding from all outside sources to be replaced by publicly financed elections.

B. Electoral College Reform – In both the 2000 (Bush v Gore) and the 2016 (Trump v Clinton) presidential elections, the current Electoral College system advanced the loser of the national popular vote to the U.S. Presidency. In both cases the results have been very weak Presidential administrations.

The Elko County Democrats strongly support reformation of the Electoral College to fully reflect the national presidential popular vote.

C. Spanish Language Voting Ballots and Questions – In Nevada 15 of 17 counties do not provide Spanish language ballots. Only two counties are currently required by Nevada Revised Statutes to provide Spanish language ballots. The remaining 15 counties have the option to provide this service but have chosen NOT to do so. This decision has resulted in the disenfranchisement of 24.6% of the eligible voters in Elko County. The Elko County Democratic Party firmly believes voting is a right for all citizens. The Spanish language speakers should have the right to have a ballot in their primary language so they can fully exercise their voting rights as citizens.

Beginning with the 2018 election all counties in the state of Nevada shall provide ballots and voting information in Spanish for all registered Spanish speaking citizens.

Section 2 – Environment, Public Lands, & Natural Resources

A. Oil & Gas Leases in the Ruby Mountains – We urge the Nevada State Democratic Party to stand in opposition to the current administration’s plan to open public lands in and adjacent to the Ruby Mountains to drilling leases.

The Elko County Democrats are opposed to any oil and gas drilling in our precious Ruby Mountains as it would desecrate a national treasure that needs to be preserved as such.

B. Protect Wild Areas from Mining Roads and Contamination by Other Species – All terrain vehicles, 4x4s, are frequently not washed off between uses as boats are required to be, and these 4x4s are not inspected by Fish and Wildlife personnel. These 4x4s can contaminate pristine lands and spread bark beetles and invasive plant species.

The Elko County Democrats affirm the current policy that no roads or trails through wilderness areas shall be available for use by 4x4s. Only horses and hikers should be allowed to use these areas.

C. Environmental Regulations – The current administration seems determined to roll back environmental protections regardless of need or efficacy.

To protect all our health and the health of our environment we must follow rigorous science as previous administrations have done. Furthermore, we must adequately fund the EPA and other agencies working to understand and protect our climate and environment. In addition, we urge reinstating the environmental regulations undone by Trump and safeguard those still in place.

D. Public, Forest Land & Wilderness – If the titles to public lands are transferred to private interests there is no going back.

The Elko County Democrats support keeping federal lands under federal management. We oppose the transfer of federal land to states or their sale to private parties. Furthermore, we encourage sound science and public input into effective and appropriate management of federal lands[, and adequate funding to the managing agencies].

E. National Parks and Monuments – National Parks, National Monuments, and Wilderness Areas belong to all Americans, both those currently alive as well as those in future generations. These lands are part of our heritage, our culture, and our way of life.

Adequately fund the management of National Parks and Monuments. Establish entrance/visitor fees for National Parks and Monuments at levels that encourage public use. Retain, enhance, and add to our National Parks, National Monuments and wilderness areas. National Parks, National Monuments and wilderness areas belong to all people currently alive as well as future generations. They are our heritage, culture, and way of life.

Section 3 – Education

A. Great Basin College Funding – The Great Basin College has one of the largest service areas of any college in the United States and includes most of rural Nevada. The college offers numerous four-year degrees critical to the growth of rural economies, yet is only funded at the lower community college rate according to the current higher education funding formula used in Nevada.

Therefore, the Elko County Democrats strongly urge granting state college status and commensurate increased funding for Great Basin College.

Section 4 – Health Care

A. Veterans Health Services – Many rural veterans as well as others eligible for federal health benefits must travel great distances to access these health services. Funding for veterans, federal workers, and Native Americans in sparsely populated rural areas is often too limited for any one agency to establish rural clinics.

The Elko County Democrats support the establishment of a Regional Federal Clinic to provide health services to all eligible veterans, Native Americans, and federal workers in Elko/Lander/Eureka Counties similar to those in other parts of Nevada.

B. Mental Health in Rural Nevada – All of Nevada’s rural counties are suffering from an extreme shortage of mental health workers. This is reflected in Nevada’s suicide rate which is one of the worst in the country.

The Elko County Democrats support the establishment of a program that would provide all Nevada counties (except for Carson/Ormsby, Clark and Washoe) with funds to pay mental health counselors with at least five years’ experience who come to these counties a 10 percent salary bonus and a \$300 monthly housing subsidy for five years.

C. Mental Health Screening – These are critical to prevent students from harming themselves and others.

The Elko County Democrats support requiring that all Nevada schools include mental health screening along with other routine screenings currently performed in the schools.

Section 5- Infrastructure

A. Roads & Highways in Elko County – Currently none of the diesel fuel taxes collected in Elko County are returned to the county for much needed local road construction and maintenance.

The Elko County Democrats believe a portion of those funds should be returned for the Elko County Commissioners to use for local road and bridge maintenance priorities.

B. AMTRAK Service to Rural Nevada – Elko County residents, like most rural Americans, have

limited public transportation options to major population centers. These options became even more limited since Greyhound eliminated service in Elko. Many rural residents rely on such public transportation to meet with medical specialists, etc.

The Elko County Democrats support continued federal funding of AMTRAK assistance for operating the California Zephyr.

C. Quality Cell Phone Service in Schools – If there is an emergency, such as a school shooting, children and teachers need adequate cell service to call or text first responders and loved ones.

Cell phone companies shall be required to provide high quality cell phone service in all schools.

Section 6 – Government Affairs

A. Marijuana Tax Benefit – Some local jurisdictions are refusing to allow marijuana dispensaries within their boundaries.

No county or municipality shall receive any tax dollars from the state that are generated by the sale of medical or recreational marijuana if they have banned the sale of marijuana in their jurisdiction.

B. Emergency Response in Elko County – Elko County lacks full coverage of 911 services and upgrades are desperately needed to improve response times for the health and safety of our residents.

The Elko County Democrats support the installation of a next generation 911 service system.

C. Search and Rescue – Currently the Elko County Sheriff must take money from the Sheriff's general fund to use for Search and Rescue operations. This is not a sound practice and could lead to budget shortfalls.

The Elko County Democrats support making Search and Rescue a separate line item in the county budget.

Section 7 – Immigration

A. Keeping the Dreamers Legal – The young people currently covered under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) are important contributors to our society and provide valuable services in our communities as teachers, members of the armed services, and employees.

The Elko County Democrats urge passage of the Dream Act to finalize DACA legislation at the federal level.

Section 8 – Responsible Gun Ownership

A. Semi-Automatic Weapons – Since semi-automatic and automatic assault weapons are

designed solely for the purpose of killing human beings (specifically in war) and serve no legitimate purpose outside of warfare we feel they threaten the domestic tranquility and general welfare of our country outside the bounds of the duly authorized military.

The Elko County Democrats support a ban of [automatic and semi-automatic] assault-style weapons as well as those options and parts designed to convert weapons so that they can operate in a manner similar to automatic weapons.

B. National Gun Database – In the further interests of insuring domestic tranquility, we want to make certain that only responsible individuals can obtain fire arms.

The Elko County Democrats urge the creation of a state-of-the-art, searchable computerized national gun database. This system would form the basis for an efficient background check system whose use would be required prior to the purchase or transfer of any firearms.

C. Researching Gun Violence – Valid scientific research of the issues contributing to gun violence must be conducted so that we, as citizens, and our lawmakers can better understand these factors. Lawmakers could then make informed decisions on how best to address gun violence in our society.

The Elko County Democrats urge the repeal of any laws, regulations, and understandings that prevent or discourage the Centers for Disease Control from researching gun violence. We support fully funding a CDC mandate to perform such studies.

D. Gun Liability Insurance – Just as automobile liability insurance is required for all vehicle owners to be sure resources are available in the event of tragedy; requiring liability insurance of gun owners protects the public without unduly hindering the exercise of a person's Second Amendment rights.

The Elko County Democrats support requiring all gun owners to maintain adequate liability insurance for every gun they possess with substantial penalties for non-compliance. The funds from these fines shall be used for mental health programs, and to compensate victims of gun violence.

New Proposals:

Reproductive Rights

Whereas:

Reproductive rights are under continuous threat in Nevada and elsewhere in the country.

Therefore, be it resolved:

We will: Provide a safeguard of reproductive rights in Nevada, opposing medically unnecessary restrictions and other attempts to push reproductive care out of reach of many women in our state. We will protect the constitutional rights of women to control their own bodies, no matter where they live.

Equal Rights for Women

Whereas:

Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

Therefore, be it resolved:

Nevada will stand by its ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, and will continue to support its adoption by the U.S. Congress.