



## Platform

We, the Independence Party of Minnesota, stand for government and political leadership that serves the highest long-term interests of our state. We oppose politics based on self-interest, extremism, or special interests. We are advocates for public policy that prepares Minnesota for a better future and we support political leaders who embrace the values and goals described in this platform.

### Core Values

We believe defined values are essential to guiding political reform and assuring policies that benefit all. These are our core values:

1. A democratic process with integrity and broad citizen participation
2. A justice system that is fair, wise, unambiguous, swift, affordable, and accessible to all
3. A society that is inclusive, embraces diversity, and protects everyone's rights
4. Government policies which encourage and expect personal responsibility
5. Government that is fiscally responsible: equitable in its collection of taxes, careful in its spending, and honest in its financial reporting
6. Government that is a good steward: protecting the environment, preserving our public institutions, prudently managing public assets, and leaving for our children a better world
7. Government that is controlled locally whenever possible
8. Rights of privacy and personal liberties under the US Constitution, the Minnesota Constitution, and the Bill of Rights of the United States shall be strongly defended
9. An educated citizenry with the knowledge and understanding to preserve our freedoms and maintain our prosperity
10. Political leadership that acts for the greater good and prepares us for the future

## **Responsible Governance and Leadership**

We believe in honesty, even when it has a political cost. We support fiscal responsibility and oppose mortgaging the future for short-term political gain. We promote policies for clean, fair and open politics. We believe that serving the interests of all the people should be a higher priority than serving the interests of a powerful few. We assure our own party's independence from special interests by restricting the contributions that our party and candidates may accept from Political Action Committees (PACs).

### ***Taking Care of Our Tax Dollars***

We believe in completely and straightforwardly reporting the cost of government. We believe that these costs should not be placed upon the shoulders of future generations. We believe that government should be as responsible with each and every tax dollar as would be our most financially responsible citizens.

1. We support the use of budget projections that honestly report the future costs of government programs, including future liabilities like public pensions. We believe the national debt of the United States should be reported accurately, including the sum of all debt owed to public bondholders and all debt owed to federal trust funds such as the Social Security Trust Fund.
2. We denounce the use of tricks and gimmicks, such as calling taxes "fees" and delaying expenditures until just after the end of the year in order to claim that a budget is "balanced". We support government budgets that are structurally balanced and avoid shifting of expenses or borrowing to make them appear balanced.
3. We believe it should be a priority to gradually reduce the total national debt as a percentage of the gross national product.
4. We insist that the government fully fund the mandates it places on other units of government or otherwise allow governmental units to "opt out" of unfunded mandates.

### ***Making Government Work for the People***

Government should be accountable to its citizenry, respectful of private property, and responsible in its management of publicly-owned resources.

1. We believe the success of our government should be measured by the results it achieves. Therefore, in addition to budgeting financial expenditures, we favor associating time-specific, measurable goals with government programs and then monitoring actual progress towards achieving them.
2. We believe the government must be prudent and responsible to citizens and private landowners when it buys, sells, or leases natural resources (including land,

- minerals, timber, grazing, environmental carrying capacity, and broadcast airwaves). We believe that government should make every effort to assure that such transactions reflect fair market valuations and that they are conducted publicly and openly, with adequate provisions for recourse in the event of dispute.
3. Our legislature is costly, inefficient and too big to be effectively held accountable. We believe Minnesota's House and Senate (bicameral) legislature should be replaced with a single (unicameral) legislative body.
  4. We believe the cost of government operations can be reduced by consolidating operations, eliminating waste, and using new technology to increase efficiency. We support the new "Drive for Excellence" law as authored by an Independence Party senator, which consolidates government services, increases the efficient government use of technology, and takes other actions to streamline government operations.

### ***Ensuring Fair Elections***

Campaign and election processes should be reformed so that government represents the people before special interests, so that public participation in the election process is maximized, and so that qualified candidates are encouraged to run for public office.

1. We support a Fair and Clean Elections Bill to expose and reduce special interest campaign financing.
2. We support Instant Runoff Voting or another runoff process that allows us to vote our conscience and ensure that winners are supported by a majority.
3. We support same-day voter registration to ensure that all eligible citizens have the ability to vote and to maintain Minnesota's tradition of high voter turnout.
4. We support partial public funding of elections to reduce candidate dependence on fundraising, thereby making politicians more independent and responsible to voters.
5. We encourage the use of new voting technologies that will increase voter turnout and protect the integrity of the election process.
6. We support lowering the minimum age to run for state elective office to 18 years of age.
7. We support the establishment of an independent nonpartisan commission to implement legislative redistricting.

## Promoting Prosperity and the Quality of Life

We believe that a wise government should promote prosperity and a good quality of life for today and, more importantly, for the future. We do not agree with those who say our goal should be to simply minimize taxes, nor do we agree with those who believe throwing money at problems is the only solution. We are dedicated to fiscal responsibility and insist that our tax dollars be spent with restraint and care, but our goal is also for a bright future, and so we are committed to: supporting economic growth, excellence in education, access for all to quality and affordable health care, investing in an efficient transportation infrastructure, protecting the environment, and providing efficient energy resources.

### *Supporting Economic Growth*

An important role of government should be to support commerce and invite corporate investment in the state by assuring reasonable taxes, a well-educated and productive workforce, good transportation infrastructure, and an excellent health care system.

1. We believe that small business is important to economic growth in Minnesota. We support reforming government policies and regulations to allow small businesses better opportunities to compete in the competitive marketplace.
2. We believe that many rural Minnesota economies are challenged by a lack of access to the highest quality telecommunications, technology and transportation. We support policies that will allow rural businesses to compete effectively in the global economy and we also support government initiatives to assure that affordable and state-of-the-art internet connections are readily available to all citizens of Minnesota.
3. We believe that the federal government has been irresponsible in conducting an erratic, self-destructive, and illogical farm policy over the last eighty years. We support the development of a long-term, sustainable, market-driven farm economy and we oppose pandering to the agricultural community with unsustainable policies.
4. We support the establishment of incentives to enable landowners to preserve farmland and open spaces while directing non-agricultural development to less productive land.
5. We believe in funding the research, development, and promotion of new value-added products and processes using Minnesota farm products.
6. We favor strengthening laws that protect homeowners from fraudulent or irresponsible builders and contractors, while also assuring that subcontractors are paid for their labor and materials.

## ***Achieving Excellence in Education***

In a competitive global economy, excellence in education is the most important determinant of our future quality of life. We believe education begins in the home, and we call on parents, family and all members of the community to actively participate in the education of our young people. We support innovative and results-oriented schools because we believe outcomes matter. With the cost of education consuming half of the state's budget, we must ensure efficient use of our education resources.

1. We believe that unfunded state and federal mandates significantly hamper the quality of our educational system. We support giving local school districts the option of not participating in such mandates.
2. We believe it is wrong for government policies to reward only the meeting of minimum standards. We support government funding, standards and incentives that also reward advanced achievement, improving the education of our "average" students, and realizing the full potential of all students.
3. We believe that the quality of Minnesota's colleges and universities are vital to the long-term success of our state. We support policies that promote access to high quality and affordable higher education.
4. We believe investments in early childhood education should be made to provide students and parents with the skills they need to be successful at school and at home. We believe early childhood programs will generate excellent returns on investment by reducing future, more expensive educational needs and developing better-educated and more productive citizens.
5. We believe it is important for all residents, native or foreign born, to achieve English literacy, in order to ensure their ability to fully participate in our civic, economic, political, and legal institutions, as well as to be an integral part of our nation's social fabric.
6. We believe that health and physical education should regain their place as part of the curriculum in Minnesota schools.

## ***Access for All to Quality and Affordable Health Care***

We believe universal coverage and affordable costs can be achieved in the private market by creating competition, eliminating the inappropriate use of insurance, and fixing inappropriate tax incentives. People's behavior choices make more of a difference to health than the health care delivery system; the way we pay for health services must reward responsibly healthy lifestyle choices.

1. We support policies to enable every individual and family to afford and pay directly for routine and predictable health care costs, and carry health insurance coverage for catastrophic needs.

2. We support an individual's right to protect personal health information from those who have not received expressed permission from an individual to access that information.
3. We support transparency of information regarding health care provider cost and quality so that consumers can make informed choices.
4. We believe that the best way to make unintended pregnancies rare and to prevent HIV and sexually-transmitted diseases is to guarantee that mature individuals have access to voluntary family planning, counseling, and scientifically accurate information.

### ***Making Transportation Work***

Efficient transportation helps the economy and improves quality of life. We must continue to lay the groundwork for a quality, integrated, multimodal transportation system that systematically addresses transportation needs through approaches like the "ABC" principles of "Alternatives, Bottlenecks and Corridors."

1. We support further development of a fully integrated, multimodal transportation system that could include automobiles, light and high speed rail, personal rapid transit (PRT), and High Occupancy Vehicle, high-speed bus lanes.
2. We support permanent and predictable funding for transportation projects. Funds from excise taxes and user fees should be dedicated to transportation only.
3. We oppose borrowing from tomorrow to pay for today's transportation maintenance.

### ***Protecting the Environment***

Balancing the needs of industry, recreation, and preservation is paramount given our rich, but finite, environmental resources. The test that must be applied to every decision that could affect the environment should be: will this protect and preserve what we currently have for future generations to enjoy, or will it reduce the quality or quantity of environmental resources for future generations? The Independence Party is committed to preserving the quality of our environment for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

1. We share the belief of many family farmers in Minnesota that the environment and economy are fully integrated and that a lack of stewardship through environmental abuse will lead to dire economic consequences.
2. We support policies that hold people and businesses accountable for the long-term economic and environmental costs of their activities, and that prohibit activities with costs too high to be recovered.
3. We support strong enforcement of environmental protection laws.

4. We believe that public policies should reflect current scientific knowledge; policy must conform to facts and facts must not be ignored to fit an ideology.

### ***Reliable, Affordable, and Clean Energy***

We believe it is important to decrease America's dependence on foreign oil and fossil fuels, to protect the environment by promoting the use of the clean energy, and to have access to reliable and affordable energy to support our economy.

1. We support the increased use of biofuels, such as ethanol, and the expanded development of wind-generated electricity.
2. We support energy conservation policies which balance the long-term costs of energy use with short-term economic consequences.
3. We are in favor of the aggressive development of new “clean” energy technologies such as fuel cells, hydrogen power and non-fossil fuel transportation options.

## **Protecting Liberty, Justice and Security**

We believe freedom requires personal responsibility, and that defending freedom often has a high cost.

1. We strongly defend the Constitution of the United States and its Bill of Rights, including provisions for an independent judiciary and the separation of church and state.
2. We support high standards of morality, family values and personal responsibility, but we oppose having the government impose state-sponsored morality or values on people of good conscience with differing views.
3. We believe that all law-abiding citizens are entitled to the full rights and protections of citizenship and that discrimination on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual preference, or religion are contrary to American values.
4. We are committed to defending our country against its enemies, protecting its citizens and property, and maintaining a legal system that dispenses equitable justice to all.
5. We believe in funding the courts, corrections system, and public safety so that they can perform their duties well.