

# **Santa Clara County Democratic Party Platform**

## **Business and Economy**

A robust economy is essential to stimulate job creation and ensure a thriving and inclusive business climate. At the same time, we must be careful to preserve economic opportunities for all workers and small business owners, prevent irresponsible and predatory lending, and implement a fair and progressive system of taxation. To achieve these goals, the Santa Clara County Democratic Party:

- promotes job creation and placement infrastructure through local hire policies for public agency construction and support for minority-owned and women-owned small businesses.
- supports enhanced services for small businesses, including the streamlining of the permit process.
- supports a minimum wage indexed for inflation, including living wages in areas where the cost of living renders it impossible to afford the basic necessities of life.
- supports eliminating wage theft throughout the county.
- supports eliminating prevailing wage exemptions on public projects.
- supports funding mechanisms for affordable housing, including linkage fees and housing impact fees established through nexus studies.
- supports progressive fee and taxation scales for businesses.
- encourages employee representation in corporate management.
- promotes investigating the viability of establishing a county-owned bank that could eliminate debt servicing costs in the county general budget, provide infrastructure financing at very low interest rates, and partner with local banks to strengthen their capital bases.
- encourages municipalities to consider and mitigate the impacts of development on small businesses.
- supports developing municipal policies to apply prevailing wage to large private projects.

## **Education**

In order to ensure and maintain a competitive edge nationally and globally, all students in Santa Clara County must have access to free, world-class public education. Further, a balanced curriculum that includes music and the arts is essential to developing a well-rounded and inquisitive civically-engaged workforce prepared for the challenges of an

increasingly globally-interconnected world. Therefore, the Santa Clara County Democratic Party:

- recognizes the importance of obliterating the achievement gap by adequately funding programs designed for struggling students.
- promotes expanded access to preschool and transitional kindergarten for all students, regardless of income.
- recognizes that suspension and expulsion policies result in missed learning time and disproportionately affect students who need the most help and are at the greatest risk of dropping out.
- strongly supports democratically elected school boards that serve to provide direct oversight of the educational institutions in our county.
- strongly supports policies that promote accessibility to higher education and places controls on higher education costs.
- supports increased funding, staffing, and oversight of special education and services for students with disabilities, migrant youth, English language learners, and foster youth, and programs for students with children.
- encourages municipalities to consider the impact of development on school districts as well as the impact on the quality of life in surrounding communities when planning, including the potential for joint use agreements with neighborhoods for facilities.
- supports increased funding for science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics programs (STEAM), vocational and trade schools, and assistance in degree completion programs.
- promotes equal enforcement of LGBTQ access.
- supports opening the path for undocumented people to qualify for financial aid.

## **Health Care**

Health care is crucial to the well-being of our community. Health is the building block of economic and social development because it is what enables us to live, work, and grow together. Without high-quality, affordable health care, our residents, regardless of immigration status, will not have the opportunity to get to the starting point for educational, economic, and social opportunities that create economic growth and a better quality of life for our County. Therefore, we will advocate for policies that will expand access to health care while ensuring that it is affordable for all in Santa Clara County. To expand healthcare access and improve affordability, the Santa Clara County Democratic Party will:

- support the expansion of health care through the Santa Clara Family Health Plan for all children.

- support expanding and increasing funding for the Valley Health Plan.
- strongly support community health providers and clinics as a means to deliver these vital services to all of Santa Clara County.
- support funding for school nurse services.
- support expanded access to quality, affordable, doctor-driven health, dental, behavioral, rehabilitative, and vision care, with follow-up services, especially for vulnerable communities.
- promote better collaboration and an improved service continuum between federal, state, and county service providers.
- promote outreach to communities that have not had easy access to information regarding health care services.

## **Labor, Economic Justice and Poverty Elimination**

Santa Clara County Democrats recognize the supremacy of preserving and enhancing human rights and workers' rights with the goal of eliminating poverty and establishing economic justice. All human beings are entitled to basic rights to affordable housing, healthcare, education, representation on the job and workplace safety. The Santa Clara County Democratic Party:

- believes that all workers should be afforded basic human rights and labor rights and that it is the responsibility of government to enforce those rights; including the right to earned sick leave and a living wage as the minimum wage for hourly, including tipped, employment.
- recognizes the dignity of work and believes that all Santa Clara residents have the right to work that pays enough to ensure that workers and their families can avoid poverty, meet their basic needs, and save for the future.
- supports project labor agreements, opposes binding arbitration in public employee contracts, and affirms the right of all workers to join and form unions to collectively bargain.
- supports the expansion of the social safety net to ensure children are afforded an environment that helps parents better support their children's development.
- supports the creation of a 'dashboard' of existing county and municipal services to help vulnerable populations that do not have easy access to information.
- strongly supports eliminating predatory (payday) lending, providing financial literacy programs, including financial planning and financial aid workshops and training, and ensuring services are available to unbanked populations.

- supports policies, including inclusionary housing ordinances, housing impact fees, and BMR in-lieu fees, that will increase the affordable housing stock or generate revenue that can be used to fund affordable housing development.
- supports measures to help struggling renters, including renters' assistance, tenant relocation assistance, and rent control where appropriate to ensure low-income families are not displaced and threatened with homelessness.
- supports prioritizing park upgrades in low-income and high poverty neighborhoods and predominantly apartment areas.
- promotes eliminating the digital divide by providing broadband and wifi access through libraries and supports mobile library services in underserved neighborhoods.
- supports offering credit repair services.
- will work to ensure that adequate tools to investigate wage discrimination are available.
- encourages divesting from any institution that profits from economic injustice.

## **Good Government and Political Reform**

Good governance, fairness, equal protection, and robust and representative elections are the core of our civic society. Santa Clara County is renowned as the global leader of technological innovation and the SCCDP also seeks to have our county become a similarly renowned leader in good elections and government. The commitment of all governmental bodies, agencies, and branches to the rule of law, the good of the community, and creating the best society possible for future generations, is imperative. The Santa Clara County Democratic Party:

- supports fair and reasonable efforts to have elected bodies represent the diversity of their constituents.
- advocates reform of the University of California Board of Regents and the California State University Board of Trustees so that they may be representative of their stakeholders: the students, staff, faculty, and the public.
- recognizes the importance of government in a free society; governmental agencies must be adequately funded, provide services as quickly and efficiently to the public as possible, be open and accountable to the public, and encourage civic participation.
- encourages all municipal governments, the county, and special districts and school boards to make their budgets transparent and easily accessible and understandable to their constituencies.
- strongly supports campaign advertisement disclosure and increased transparency in campaign financing.

- abhors any and all attempts and efforts to disenfranchise and deliberately misinform voters.
- supports public financing of election campaigns and enforcement of campaign finance reporting.
- promotes the elimination of cyberbullying in campaigns.
- will promote regular evaluation of special districts to ensure they are transparent, accountable, and relevant.
- encourages implementation of the California Voting Rights Act in Santa Clara County jurisdictions.
- supports the consideration of proportional representation and cumulative voting as an option, especially for political entities that are in violation of the California Voting Rights Act.
- supports voter registration, education, and participation efforts, especially among the homeless and other vulnerable populations.
- supports completing the implementation of instant run-off voting at the county level and implementing instant run-off voting in San Jose.
- supports fair representation of North County cities on the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board, the Caltrain governing board.
- supports efforts to protect and provide transparency regarding free speech in public places.

## **Sustainable Communities**

Sustainable communities are essential not only to abate the impact of global climate change, but also to enhance our quality of life and ensure a high standard of living for future generations. Santa Clara County Democrats recognize the supreme importance of conserving natural resources, preserving and expanding open space, employing smart land-use planning, and improving transit and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure in order to develop healthy, livable, and sustainable communities. To reduce our carbon footprint, improve air quality, and lower household costs to families, the Santa Clara County Democratic Party:

- supports transit oriented development: increased intensity/density along transit corridors and stations, affordable housing in transit corridors, mixed-used development, subsidies to encourage transit use, unbundled parking, and complete streets.
- acknowledges the importance of comprehensive regional planning and encourages municipal governments to consider regional mass transit capacity, the housing/jobs imbalance, and the impact and potential displacement of low-income families when approving development.

- supports regional open space acquisition and preservation, urban parks, community gardens, and watershed protection.
- encourages the county, municipalities, and transportation districts and agencies to work together to make transit convenient and affordable by improving connections/transfers and fully integrating payment systems.
- recognizes the supreme importance of having a clean and safe water supply and encourages water conservation through municipal programs and grey water infrastructure development and enhancement, including in residential properties.
- supports efforts by local governments to improve energy efficiency of residential and commercial buildings and to establish and operate municipal electric power systems or purchase power generated from renewable sources through Community Choice Aggregation.
- opposes utility monopoly efforts to change community choice laws that allow local governments to contract freely for electric power.
- supports strategies, including providing subsidies, to increase the use of energy efficient technology (solar panels, insulation, dual-pane windows, etc.) by a broader segment of the market, especially low-income families.
- supports rail modernization, including electrification, level boarding, platform compatibility, and grade separation, to make rail safer, faster, environmentally sustainable, and ADA-compliant. Stable Caltrain funding is essential to achieving these goals.
- supports improving the performance of key bus routes, making transit more competitive, revitalizing underused corridors and Bus Rapid Transit..
- supports connecting backbone rail service around the Bay by completing BART to San Jose/Diridon with seamless connections to electrified Caltrain.
- encourages local government to require new development to meet rigorous LEED or green building standards and enact policies that reduce SOV (single occupancy vehicle) trips.
- recognizes that unaffordable housing causes displacement of low-income residents and results in long, environmentally damaging commutes, and therefore new and increased funding mechanisms, such as housing impact fees, for affordable housing are needed.
- supports efforts to develop and incorporate energy efficiency programs and water delivery programs that retrofit affordable housing so that tenants and landlords are not burdened by the rising cost of utilities.
- believes government should be a leader in green technology and encourages publicly funded agencies to purchase low emission and energy efficient vehicles.

## **Women**

Women make up half the population and half the workforce in Santa Clara County. Yet, women represent only 31 percent of councilmembers in Santa Clara County's 15 cities. A woman's ability to advance and move to greater economic prosperity is compromised whenever women experience discrimination, inequity, or lack of opportunity. These effects are damaging, not only to women, but to the entire community. SCCDP recognizes the need for true equity for women in decision-making, leadership and elected office. The Santa Clara County Democratic Party:

- supports increasing funding for domestic violence programs and other services for vulnerable populations.
- supports mandatory lethality assessment training and protocol in all police departments.
- encourages incarceration and facility considerations for gender.
- promotes remediating economic inequality, income disparity, and paycheck fairness.
- supports access to safe, reliable, high quality, and affordable dependent care, especially for working single mothers.
- will fight for adequate funding for child care programs and adequate training for child care workers.
- supports paid maternity and family leave for full and part time works as well as fair treatment for pregnant workers.
- supports a woman's right to choose, protection of Family Planning Service providers and, regulation of crisis pregnancy centers.
- supports meeting needs of women and girls in Santa Clara County, which can be identified by SCC's Office of Women's Policy's annual Status of Women and Girls Reports.
- does not support discrimination including misogynistic behavior.
- will work to ensure gender parity in elected positions.

## **Fair And Just Society**

The Santa Clara County Democratic Party recognizes the importance of protecting and empowering vulnerable and underrepresented demographic groups. A fair and impartial judicial system, adequate social services, and public safety are all crucial to ensuring a fair and just society. The Santa Clara County Democratic Party:

- supports dramatically expanding and improving county services for veterans, especially mental health and job placement programs, and creating a One-Stop Center to reach out and provide information to veterans.
- supports equal, fair, and timely access to all services by all populations, including veterans, the disabled, LGBT, seniors, and the homeless.

- supports offering abundant translation services at public and governmental agencies.
- demands fair and equitable application of criminal justice laws as well as an equitable bail system, including a pre-trial assessment to avoid 'too poor to pay bail' cases.
- supports adequate restorative justice and rehabilitation to ensure public safety and promotes better education for post-conviction rights.
- supports the Santa Clara County civil detainer policy and promotes an immigration buffer to help families stay together.
- supports competitive compensation for public safety employees and adequate funding for public safety programs.
- strongly supports enhanced services for foster kids and promotes increased resources and outreach to foster youth.
- supports enhanced enforcement of monitoring and reporting laws and promotes victim services and education.