

**PLATFORM OF THE ILLINOIS GREEN PARTY
2008**

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PREAMBLE

The Illinois Green Party is a voluntary association of individuals committed to advancing the principles and purposes of the global Green movement. It is the political expression of that movement in the State of Illinois and is an affiliate of the Green Party of the United States. As a political party, it is active on the electoral field, running and/or endorsing candidates for office and supporting legislative and other political measures that are consistent with its principles and objectives. Consistent with the Green view of politics, however, it also embraces other forms of political activism, including support for various non-electoral movements that aim to advance the interests of labor, human rights, peace, social justice and the environment.

This is the political platform of the Illinois Green Party. It advances positive recommendations for progressive change in Illinois and the United States on a number of vital issues. Each platform position reflects the Illinois Green Party's commitment to and agreement with the Ten Key Values of the Green Movement and the GP-US. The platform also demonstrates our belief in the inherent worth of all human persons and their rights as laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was adopted by The General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948 and of which the United States is a charter member. The Universal Declaration is attached to this platform as an appendix, to serve as a reminder of how far our nation has to go to meet the standards set forth in this powerful statement of our best aspirations as a species.

THE TEN KEY VALUES OF THE GREEN PARTY

Ecological Wisdom. The Greens recognize that the Earth sustains all life processes. Green ecology moves beyond environmentalism by understanding the common roots of the abuse of people. Whatever we do to the web of life, we do to ourselves.

Social Justice. Greens want to replace the worldwide system of poverty and injustice with a world free of all oppression based on class, gender, race, citizenship, age, or sexual orientation.

Grassroots Democracy. The powerless suffer the most from resource depletion and toxic pollution. Greens believe in direct participation by all people in the environmental, political, and economic decisions that affect their lives.

Nonviolence. Greens reject violence as a way of settling disputes – it is shortsighted, morally wrong, and ultimately self-defeating. We are working to create a world where war is obsolete.

Decentralization. Power and responsibility must be restored to local communities within an overall framework of ecologically sound and socially just values and lifestyles.

Community-Based Economics. Greens seek a new economics that is based upon the natural limits of the Earth, and which meets the basic needs of everyone on the planet, under democratic, localized community control.

Feminism. The Green movement is profoundly inspired by feminist values. The ethics of cooperation and understanding must replace the values of domination and control over others.

Respect for Diversity. Greens honor the biological diversity of the Earth and the cultural, sexual, and spiritual diversity of Earth's people. We aim to reclaim this country's finest ideals: popular democracy, the dignity of the individual, and liberty and justice for all.

Personal and Global Responsibility. Greens demonstrate a commitment to global sustainability and international justice through political solidarity and in personal lifestyles based on self-sufficiency and living lightly.

Future Focus. Like the Iroquois, Greens seek a society where the interests of the seventh generation are considered equal to the interests of the present. We must reclaim the future for our children and ourselves.

A. ECONOMY: REPLACE CORPORATE DOMINATION WITH SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE ECONOMICS

The Preamble to the Constitution of the State of Illinois states that our government was formed “to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the people . . . eliminate poverty and inequality; assure legal, social and economic justice; [and] provide opportunity for the fullest development of the individual”

The Illinois Green Party agrees that these are basic obligations of government and we are committed to finally achieving these goals. The objective of our economic policies must be to provide full economic opportunities to all – meaning:

- fulfilling employment opportunities for every able-bodied adult, at an income level that is at least adequate to support a family;
- ensuring the healthy development of, and quality educational opportunities for, every child, so that every child has a full and equal opportunity to thrive and achieve his or her full potential; and
- providing a high level of quality care for all of our brothers and sisters who are elderly and/or too disabled to work.

We aim to build a new type of economy in which the major decisions regarding the production and distribution of wealth are made democratically by the people. The workers – who produce society's wealth – and their communities should be in control of their economic activity, not controlled by it. To achieve these goals, fundamental changes must be made to the structure of our economy. Specifically, we must move to end the domination of our economy by large transnational corporations and the tiny minority of wealthy individuals who control those corporations.

As a form of business ownership, the corporation, at least as it exists today, is in conflict with the ideals of representative democracy, and social and environmental responsibility and accountability. By definition, a "corporation" is a legal fiction – a business entity or organization that (by an 1886 U.S. Supreme Court decision) has been given “rights” comparable to human beings, yet does not have the same legal responsibilities as human beings. The corporation was created in order to facilitate the rapid expansion of capital and, at the same time, insulate the profiteering owners from legal liability.

While originally subject to strict regulation under state charter, corporations over the years have eroded these social controls and now exert much more control over governments than governments exert control over them. Even in his day, Abraham Lincoln warned:

I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country . . . corporations have been enthroned and an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until all wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the Republic is destroyed.

Letter to William Elkin, Nov. 21, 1864

Today, Lincoln's prophecy has come true in every respect but the complete destruction of our Republic – and that outcome is well underway. Today a mere handful of corporations completely dominate the principal news and information media. Corporate money, power and influence almost completely dominate our government – with the Green Party itself now the main channel of resistance. Our government today is less a Republic than it is an increasingly authoritarian plutocracy, or system of rule by the wealthiest.

Our criticism of corporations does not mean or imply that all corporations are evil or that all persons who participate in corporations are evil. We acknowledge that many good and socially responsible business owners choose to incorporate because that option is encouraged by our laws and system of taxation. Some corporations do make a good-faith effort to act in a socially responsible fashion. The basic good-will of human beings is not always overcome by narrow, venal self-interest.

But overall, an economic system dominated by giant corporations that have overcome social controls is one that is antagonistic to the public interest and the goal of a healthy and sustainable economy. That's because, by its very nature, a corporation is a business entity that absolves its owners of any personal liability, and is obligated by law to serve the interests of its shareholders. This means that most corporations will do whatever will maximize profits in the short term, even if that means despoiling the environment, destroying jobs and communities, profiteering from war, or otherwise creating social harm. These amoral institutions have no loyalty to any community or nation, or concern for the fate of the planet.

Corporate domination of our economy is at the root of many societal problems. The compulsion to beat competitors and maximize profits leads many corporations to chase after the lowest possible labor costs; so they freely close up shop in our communities and shift production to poorer countries whose governments repress labor and impose below-poverty wages and inhumane working conditions. The same compulsion drives most corporations to deliberately engage in industrial practices that shortsightedly use up the planet's resources at a reckless pace, and keep their costs of production low by ignoring or downplaying environmental concerns, as well as workers' safety and health.

Corporate domination of our economy not only keeps millions of U.S. citizens in "official" poverty but also has driven tens of millions of working people into a more insidious form of poverty. These are the workers who have marginal, low-income jobs with no health insurance. These workers can't afford to raise a family at all, or they must struggle to raise a family by working two jobs, working long, exhausting hours, keeping two or more family members employed at once, going into debt, or all of the above.

Poverty and economic insecurity, in turn, breed domestic conflict, drug and alcohol abuse, child abuse and neglect, and crime. While these root causes of "crime in the streets" remain unaddressed, corporate crime, or "crime in the suites," goes largely unacknowledged, and the corporate criminals get away with practices that literally kill working people by the thousands by dumping toxins and carcinogens into our environment, creating unsafe products and coercing workers into working under unsafe working conditions.

On the political field, the same corporate interests have stifled genuine political democracy by using their tremendous wealth to buy and sell the politicians of the Democratic and Republican parties, thereby controlling government policies at the federal, state, and, to some extent, even the local level. Indeed, throughout Illinois, we have the sad spectacle of communities so desperate for jobs that they compete with one another in begging contests to have prisons built in their particular towns, or compete with one another by offering tax giveaways and other incentives to lure corporations to build facilities in their particular town, to the detriment of municipal governments, workers and taxpayers as a whole. State and national governments compete with one another in the same fashion, in a "race to the bottom."

At the state and national levels, corporate domination of government has led to the massive waste of society's wealth on "corporate welfare" – the practice of granting billions of dollars' worth of special subsidies, use permits, tax breaks and other special favors to corporations, at public expense. Meanwhile, corporations have steadily eroded the regulatory controls that have at least checked their worst practices. Today there are very few legal obstacles that interfere with corporations exploiting workers to the hilt, literally killing them by subjecting them to unsafe working conditions, plundering and poisoning the environment, defrauding or cheating consumers, and other gross misconduct.

Corporate domination of our media strongly affects how many people think about the economy. To the corporate media, the "health" of the economy is measured by how fast the economy is expanding, how well the stock market is doing, and the size of corporate profits. To the Illinois Green Party, the true measure of a healthy economy is how well it is meeting the needs of the majority of the people, and especially of the working people who actually create society's wealth.

Recognizing the true, root causes of our economic problems is the first step toward solving them and meeting the larger goals outlined above. Since domination of our economy by exploiting, out-of-control corporations is at the root of the problem, we must: a) take steps to reassert social controls over corporate behavior, through chartering and other laws, so as to minimize or eliminate socially and environmentally harmful conduct, and b) promote and favor alternatives to the corporate model, including small business, worker-owned enterprises and workers' cooperatives.

The former objective can be advanced by enacting a shareholders' bill of rights that will help empower all shareholders to participate meaningfully in corporate decision-making. It can also be advanced by adding requirements that corporations be permitted to operate only if they minimize or eliminate their environmental harm, engage in no socially destructive behavior, pay a living wage to their employees, do not abandon communities that have benefitted them, and other publicly beneficial criteria.

The latter objective can be advanced by providing tax credits and low interest loans to such enterprises, and by more far-reaching means – such as helping workers acquire industrial plants or other production facilities when their owners want to abandon them, shut them down, or relocate them. If the power of eminent domain can be abused by government to condemn land or even people's homes for the perverse goal of building a big-box store, condominium or mall, it can also be used for its intended purpose of advancing the public good, to seize abandoned factories and other facilities in order to save workers' jobs and create renewed economic opportunity.

We also support a healthy public sector, in those areas of the economy where public ownership and control of the economy is appropriate, such as transportation, communication, water, power and other infrastructure, health-care (or at least health-care coverage), education and most social services. We emphatically reject the rightist ideology that proclaims that all things governmental are bad, and that all or most governmental functions should be "privatized." We recognize this for what it is: An attempt by the corporate powers that be to expand the scope of profiteering by creating more corporate welfare and feeding at the public trough. The experience of such "privatization" has generally been that taxpayers get the worst of both worlds – they pay to support a bureaucracy to police the contractors, and they subsidize the contractors' profits, while typically getting lower-quality service provided by more underpaid, un-unionized and undertrained workers.

A healthy public sector, in the areas of infrastructure, education and social services, is essential to support a genuinely healthy private sector. When businesses are supported by a healthy and well-educated work force, when energy costs are kept affordable and reduced, when workers can get to work on time, well rested, through efficient transportation systems, they are better able to operate productively. "Privatization" may help individual profiteers but it is not good for the economy.

Of course, a healthy public sector can also be beneficial in creating jobs directly that improve our quality of life at the same time. A commitment to renovating and properly maintaining our infrastructure – waterways, bridges, roads, rail lines, public buildings and facilities – would create thousands of good engineering, construction and maintenance jobs. Beyond renovation, we can improve our infrastructure by, for example, building better parks and recreational facilities, energy-efficient libraries, schools and low-income housing, all of which are badly needed.

At the State level, agencies like the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Department of Employment Security, Department of Children and Family Services and other state agencies could be used to gainfully employ people in the service of others who need help – drug and alcohol rehabilitation, prison rehabilitation programs, adult education, job placement, parenting education and prenatal care, child care, public health, elderly care and more. These agencies are understaffed and its workers underpaid. Yet investments in "human services" pay off in the long run, as they reduce the social costs of crime, poverty and disease.

While taking steps to rein in corporate power and make corporations more accountable and responsive to the public interest, while encouraging alternatives to the corporate model, and while restoring health to the public sector, there are also other policy choices that can move us toward our economic goals. These include:

● ***A Real Peace Dividend.*** We need a federal government devoted to meeting human needs, not militarism and war. But that has been remained impossible as long as two corporate-sponsored parties dominate our government. Even after the Cold War ended, Democratic and Republican administrations alike squandered the potential for a peace dividend, supporting an ever-expanding military-industrial complex – along with periodic wars that impose a huge economic as well as human cost. Our military should be for protecting the nation, not dominating the globe. We will fight to dismantle the military industrial complex and free hundreds of billions of dollars to promote the real foundation of a healthy economy – a healthy, Green energy and transportation infrastructure and other public works, affordable housing, universal single-

payer health-care and education.

● ***A “New Deal”-scale Program for Sustainable Energy and Transportation.*** To eliminate our dependency on fossil fuels and combat global warming, we need a major government effort to promote sustainable energy, energy efficiency and sustainable transportation. This is not only necessary for the sake of all life on the planet. It is also essential for economic health. The promotion of solar, wind, biomass and geothermal energy will create hundreds of thousands of new manufacturing, construction and service jobs and generate new sources of farm income. New energy-efficiency standards and conservation measures will drive energy bills *down*, leading to more savings for businesses and consumers. New high-speed rail and modernized public transit will not only reduce traffic congestion; they create more jobs than equivalent spending on more roads.

● ***Single-Payer Universal Health Care.*** Although this is addressed elsewhere in our platform, a single-payer health-care system would not only fulfill a basic government obligation to meet the basic needs of its people; it would also be a boon to our economy, as both businesses and consumers would be relieved of the crippling burden of paying for overpriced, wasteful private health insurance.

● ***Increased Support for Education.*** As with health care, education is also addressed elsewhere in our platform – but it is also an essential building block for economic health. Quality grade-schools *and* quality higher education should not be reserved for the wealthiest Americans; they should be accessible and affordable to all. Indeed, one objective should be to make higher education free to all who academically qualify. The short-term cost to the public will be paid back by long-term gain. It has been proved time and again that education is the best “investment” government can make, paying back every dollar spent several times over. That’s because a better-educated people are more productive, earn higher incomes and create more new businesses, and impose less cost on our criminal justice system and remedial social services. In addition, equal economic opportunity cannot be achieved without equal educational opportunity.

● ***Fair Trade, Not Corporate Globalization.*** So-called “free trade” deals such as NAFTA, CAFTA and Fast Track, that actually promote corporate globalization, have cost us quality industrial jobs and undermined laws protecting our environment. We need to repeal treacherous free trade policies and replace them with trade policies that protect the interests of our own industrial base and the interests of workers, and our environment, at home and abroad.

● ***A Genuine Living Wage.*** The goal of creating full employment, with fulfilling jobs that pay enough to support a family, can also be advanced by more direct means. The minimum wage needs to be raised beyond the baby steps recently enacted by our federal and state governments, to allow all workers to climb out of poverty. In addition, we support “living wage” initiatives, from the local to the state to the federal level. The best of these measures require all government workers and all workers in businesses that receive a contract, subsidy or other material benefit from government, to be paid a living wage, meaning at least 25 percent above the federal poverty level for a family of four. Another variation would require “big box” retailers, and/or employers above a certain size, to pay their workers a living wage.

By “bargaining up” the price of labor, such measures help raise living standards for workers generally. While some argue that such measures harm the economy by imposing higher labor costs on marginal businesses, the experience to date supports the conclusion that businesses do better in a living wage environment, as greater purchasing power in the hands of workers boosts the economy, including most businesses that initially struggle with the higher labor costs. Well-designed living wage laws can also create partial exemptions or assistance for start-up, small and struggling businesses.

In general, the Illinois Green Party and its candidates will succeed in meeting the economic and social goals set forth in our Constitution because we are committed to such goals as a matter of principle, consistent with our Ten Key Values. We will not “sell out” these principles, because we refuse campaign contributions from corporations and will not be bought. We rely on the grass-roots support of the working people that we intend to serve. Where the Democratic and Republican parties spend millions of dollars to deceive and manipulate the people, we take our direction from the people.

A vote for the Illinois Green Party is a vote for a healthy economy, with fulfilling and rewarding jobs for all who need them. It is a vote to empower people and protect the environment, a vote to put human needs before profits and to

make government an instrument that serves the interests of the many, not the wealthy few.

B. WORKERS' RIGHTS AND WORKERS' POWER

Closely connected with our economic goals, in order to transform the economy so that it serves the people, the Illinois Green Party is dedicated to the goal of empowering working people. Thus, we support government policies that will improve the quality of life for working people in all areas, not only materially, but also with respect to more leisure and family time, access to health care, better working conditions, and a better environment, both inside and outside the workplace.

The objective of empowering workers means supporting workers' right to organize. At the national level, we call for the repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act and similar measures, that will make it easier for workers to organize without interference from their employers and to bargain with the employers effectively.

The Illinois Green Party also supports other measures to improve working conditions and the quality of life for workers, such as lowering the workweek with no loss in pay; requiring larger employers to provide paid maternity leave, health and pension benefits and paid vacations; better enforcement of occupational safety and health standards, and a law that would protect workers from being fired without just cause.

C. HUMAN RIGHTS, SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

In some respects, our society has moved toward realizing the ideals of equality enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution that we are all created equal, and that we all have equal rights under the law. In other respects, however, these goals continue to elude us. Differences of class, race, sex, sexual orientation, disability, and other ways of being, continue to stack the deck against many members of society, and society as a whole is the poorer for it.

These truths about our society today are self-evident:

1. A person born into poverty does not have a chance to thrive equal to a person born into wealth.
2. A person born into an abusive or neglectful home environment does not have a chance to thrive equal to a person raised in a comfortable, nurturing home environment.
3. A child sent to a poor, run-down school with overcrowded classes, poorly paid teachers and outdated textbooks does not have an opportunity equal to a child sent to a well-funded, well-equipped school with small class sizes, well-paid teachers and modern tools of learning.
4. Despite considerable progress, a person with a skin color other than white still must confront institutional barriers, negative assumptions and expressions of hostility today that a person with white skin rarely has to confront.
5. Despite considerable progress, women must still confront institutional barriers, "good old boy" networks, insidious biases, sexual harassment, and both physical and political attacks on their person that men generally do not have to confront.
6. Gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender people are often subjected to violent hatred and brazen discrimination without much legal protection.
7. Persons of different nationalities, religions, or non-religious beliefs, persons with disabilities and persons who simply have a physical appearance that differs from the "conventional" still face prejudice and persecution.
8. Notwithstanding the fact that there are many police officers who perform their duties responsibly, all of us may potentially have our rights violated by police agencies that are institutionally encouraged to mistake repressive

and sometimes brutal practices for zealous law enforcement and by the courts that increasingly give tacit approval to such practices.

To deny these realities is to allow them to persist and reproduce. The evils of social inequality, prejudice, bigotry and hatred must be recognized, rooted out and combated, both politically and in our daily lives, if we are to attain the promise in our Declaration of Independence and our Constitution and live the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King.

The Illinois Green Party is dedicated to that battle for social justice. We are defenders of civil liberties and human rights, and proponents of social equality. We stand with all Americans who hold the view that diversity should be celebrated, not made a basis for oppression, mistrust or hatred. And we are dedicated to transforming these values into political action.

To some extent, these values are advanced by other sections of this platform. Working people of all races, both male and female, can and should unite around their common interests to attain full and equal economic opportunity for all, quality health care and education for all, and a healthy environment for all living things. To the extent that these goals are realized, working people will be less prone to be divided against, and scapegoat, one another along the lines of race, sex or other differences.

However, the evils of discrimination and prejudice must still be confronted directly on the political field as well. Toward that end, the Illinois Green Party supports the following measures:

1. Strengthen the Illinois Department of Human Rights with more and better-trained investigators and legal staff. Authorize the Department to conduct independent investigations of discriminatory lending, housing and employment practices statewide, including the use of “testers” of different races.
2. Provide adequate funding to our public legal services agencies that serve low-income people and authorize them to handle civil rights cases.
3. Halt racial profiling by making it illegal and setting up a state program to monitor police practices regarding traffic stops and arrests. Strengthen Fourth Amendment law with legislation to make trumped-up traffic stops illegal.
4. End the racist “war on drugs” and the unofficial campaign to incarcerate young black males.
5. Defend affirmative action in higher education – while working to make higher education freely available to all who need it.
6. Make “welfare to work” programs realistic: Provide real support that can enable single parents to survive, with child support, transportation and other social support, so that they can obtain meaningful job training and conduct a meaningful search for a job that can support a family. Hire more social workers to give the down-and-out meaningful, one-on-one assistance and attention.
7. Aggressively enforce the Americans with Disabilities Act and implement the Olmstead decree (a Supreme Court ruling requiring all States to provide a range of housing options to people with disabilities) in Illinois. Provide living assistance, support services and transportation assistance to our disabled brothers and sisters so that they can fully participate in our society.
8. Improve public health research for afflictions that primarily harm minorities and women.
9. Provide full, explicit, anti-discrimination protection and equal rights for gays, lesbians, bi-sexual and transgender persons, including the right to marry, by amending the Illinois Human Rights Act. We recognize that another valid approach to the question of marriage rights would be to remove government from any association with

“marriage” altogether, limit government’s role to the recognition of “civil unions” only, without regard to sexual orientation, and recognize “marriage” as a purely religious matter, to be defined by each religious denomination as it sees fit.

10. Honor and enforce treaties with Native Americans.

11. Eradicate environmental racism.

12. Support passage of the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

13. Make every child a wanted child: Defend and support women’s *full* right to reproductive choice – including genuine social support for those who choose to bear children, affordable access to safe abortion for those who do not, and better sex education and access to contraception for all. We are motivated by considerations of gender equity and civil rights, consistent with Green Party values.

The right to privacy and women’s (and men’s) right to control their bodily integrity are protected by our Constitution. Government should not be permitted to impose its will, or the tenets of any particular philosophical doctrine, on society, and we advance the view that this should be a matter of individual conscience.

On the other hand, many in the Green Party oppose the practice of abortion, motivated by a “consistent ethic of life” (a commitment to the protection of life on the planet, which is threatened in today’s world by war, poverty, environmental degradation, racism, capital punishment, abortion and euthanasia). The Ten Key Values of the Green Party are certainly consistent with this philosophy. We want to protect life, especially human life, and enhance the quality of that life.

We acknowledge that people on both sides of the abortion “divide” are motivated by deeply held principles. We should not let the abortion issue divide people of good will, but should promote a unified struggle to create conditions that will make abortion increasingly unnecessary and rare.

We also acknowledge that people on each side of the abortion “divide” don’t always agree with each other, and that there are complex sub-issues. While no reasonable person can deny that the human embryo and fetus are living, reasonable people can disagree as to the point at which the embryo or fetus becomes sufficiently developed to be a “person” protected by law.

However, both sides recognize the need to act to protect the health and safety of the mother. There is also broad agreement that abortion is the least preferred method for preventing the birth of an unwanted or unplanned child. On this basis, we can bridge the divide: We can stop making abortion such a divisive issue by working together to reduce the incidence of abortion – but without criminalizing it.

The unifying goal should be to help men and women avoid unwanted pregnancies in the first place and help make every child a wanted and well-supported child. We can enhance women’s right to full reproductive choices by improving women’s (and men’s) economic opportunities, by working toward the goal of promoting full employment at living wage (or better) jobs. As described elsewhere in our Platform, if the economic and social policies advocated by the Illinois Green Party were adopted, they would ensure that every child raised in America would be guaranteed a good material start in life, with a home, adequate and nutritious food, quality health care, and quality education.

Such a quality education must include comprehensive, age-appropriate sex education and free family planning services for young adults. We support free access to, and promotion of, contraception, including “morning after” or emergency contraception. We need to provide genuine societal support for single mothers who do choose to bear children, so they can provide a nurturing home environment for their children through infancy before having to return to the workforce.

Through these policies, we can reduce the incidence of abortion while still respecting women’s right to choose.

The Illinois Green Party opposes the many attacks on our civil rights and liberties, and the unauthorized and unconstitutional consolidation of executive power that have been imposed on our people, as well as people of other nations, in recent years. These include:

1. The USA Patriot Act and the use of “national security letters.”
2. The Real ID Act.
3. Domestic spying on American citizens, except as supported by probable cause and a warrant, consistent with our Fourth Amendment.
4. The Military Commissions Act and the general undermining of the fundamental right of habeas corpus.
5. The Protect America Act of 2007.
6. The use of presidential “signing statements” to undermine duly passed legislation.
7. The attempted legalization and/or rationalization, and use, of torture.
8. The practice of extraordinary rendition.
9. The FBI’s InfraGard program, which partners the agency with large corporations for domestic spying purposes, in exchange for security “threat” information.
10. The Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007, which, despite its name, is aimed at monitoring and possibly criminalizing a broad range of unconventional political speech and activism.

D. HEALTH CARE

The United States is the only industrialized country in the world that does not guarantee health care for its population.

The U.S. spends far more on health care per person than any other country in the world – in fact more than twice as much as the average for other rich countries. We have the best technology and certainly among the finest physicians. Yet we are not getting our money’s worth in terms of good health.

The United States ranks near the bottom of the industrialized world in life expectancy, infant mortality, and other standard measures of health. The World Health Organization ranks the United States 37th in overall quality of health-care performance. No wonder, since so many don’t have health-care coverage at all and millions more have inadequate coverage.

In Illinois, from 2000 to 2004, health insurance premiums rose by 34.9 percent, while average earning rose by only 13 percent. Businesses and consumers alike are suffering from either being priced out of the market altogether, or from the growing strain of paying through the nose for increasingly inadequate health-care insurance.

The framing of this issue by the corporate media and politicians as a “health *insurance*” crisis, rather than a health *care* crisis, is a deliberate misdirection. Fifty or more years ago, most people, when they got sick, paid their doctor – directly. Even hospital stays and surgery, while expensive undertakings, did not have quite the shocking impact that they have today. But over the years, as medical technology and methodology improved and became more sophisticated, the costs of all health services climbed. And gradually, more and more people turned to insurance to help pay for it.

The idea behind insurance, is that consumers pay a “middleman,” on a regular but gradual basis, to cover their

health-care needs, rather than pay a huge amount all at once on the unpredictable occasions when they really need it, and, being sick or injured, less able to pay for it. There is nothing wrong with that basic concept. It makes sense economically. The real question, though, is who is going to serve as the “middleman” – a private, for-profit business, or a public, non-profit agency of some kind?

Since 1965, when the Medicare program was launched, our elderly citizens have had coverage from the latter. The rest of us have had to rely on the former, and therein lies the problem. The private insurance-based system is driving up the cost of health-care and increasingly sticking us with the bill.

Why? First of all, we, the consumers, and employers, are necessarily picking up the tab for insurance company profits, as well executive salaries that run into the millions, or even tens of millions. Because we have nowhere else to turn, they have a fairly captive market, with inelastic demand.

Second, insurers make money by not paying bills. They have incentives to erect administrative hurdles – by complicating and stalling payment they can hold premiums longer, boosting their interest income. Such hurdles also discourage some patients and providers from pursuing claims. In short, their profits rise when they can find ways to avoid paying bills, passing them on to either the government, other insurers, or to you, the patients.

Third, functions essential to private insurance but absent in public programs – such as underwriting, marketing, and corporate services – account for about two-thirds of private insurers' overhead. But the waste that results from the system of private insurers is even larger than just the difference in administrative costs. The efforts of private insurers to avoid paying claims force hospitals, doctors' offices, and other health care providers to spend hundreds of billions of dollars dealing with paperwork from the insurance industry.

Fourth, and related to the last point, a fragmented payment structure is inherently expensive. For insurers, it means the duplication of claims processing facilities and reduced insured-group size, which increases overhead. Fragmentation also raises costs for providers, who deal with multitudes of different insurance plans -- one study pointed out that there are at least 755 insurance plans in the City of Seattle alone. This means providers must determine each patient's insurance coverage and eligibility for a particular service, and keep track of varying co-payments, referral networks, approval requirements and formulas.

As a consequence of these factor, the administrative costs of the private health insurance system are almost ten times as great (per dollar amount of health-care payouts) as the administrative costs of the Medicare system.

That is why the Illinois Green Party stands squarely, unequivocally and explicitly in favor of a single-payer universal health-care system, that will provide comprehensive, high quality physical, mental and dental health care, and eye care.

What is meant by “single-payer”? Simply stated, it means a government-financed health-care system – like our own Medicare system (leaving aside the recent “reform” regarding drug coverage), or the system in Canada, France, Germany, the Nordic countries and many other nations around the world. Under such a system, government pays the principal medical bills; consumers pay a modest co-pay at most, and private insurance, at most, plays a secondary role, to cover co-pays or exotic or cosmetic treatments that aren't covered by the publicly financed system.

As of 2008, we support, at the federal level, a single-payer system like that called for in House Resolution 676. At the state level, we support a single-payer system like that contained in House Bill 311.

The wealthiest nation in the world clearly ought to be able to deliver quality health care to all its citizens, no less than other industrialized nations. Health care is a critical social good that demands that collective interests prevail over private gain. It should be viewed as a right, not a privilege.

In addition, the Illinois Green Party supports:

1. Strong representation and a decision-making role for health-care recipients and health-care workers, and their unions, in public planning and oversight bodies.

2. More emphasis on promoting public health through better education on nutrition, organic food, exercise, avoiding tobacco and excessive alcohol, practicing safe sex, and other healthy practices. Studies have shown that such education proves the old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure: Investing in public health education today will save public health-care costs tomorrow.

3. Drugs or medicines developed with public funds should be made available at affordable prices, by prohibiting monopoly licensing and control of new drugs and, if necessary, by imposing price controls.

4. High quality and adequately staffed mental health facilities, designed to provide a high standard of care in the least-restrictive appropriate environment.

E. TRANSPORTATION

Taking immediate steps to start weaning our society away from its heavy dependence on petroleum is essential to saving the global environment, saving our economy, and removing an incentive for war.

The Illinois Green Party supports a major commitment to and public investment in, the restoration, development and improvement of clean and efficient public transportation, including inter-city high speed rail, a linked mass transit system for metropolitan areas, intra-city light rail, rail/bus hybrids, and the expansion of bicycle trails and lanes. We encourage car-pooling through the establishment of variable tolls and parking fees based upon the number of passengers per vehicle, as well as other disincentives to discourage private auto use where it is not needed, such as the elimination of free parking and/or road access in areas that are well served by public transit.

We support urban planning and dedication of rights-of-way in our cities and towns to make them more pedestrian-friendly and bicycle-friendly. We believe that mixed-use development should be conjoined with public transit development, so that public transit can provide ready access to and from population, business, commercial, and entertainment centers. We need to follow the basic precepts of smart growth: promoting urban residential/commercial infill, dual use buildings, residences near workplaces and schools, use of vertical density, road/light rail/bike path/pedestrian walkway planning that promotes efficient transit rather than suburban cul-de-sacs and sprawl, conservation of resources, energy efficiency and preservation of housing affordability in gentrifying areas.

The Illinois Green party also supports a ban on the transportation of hazardous wastes on dangerous roads and the development of emergency response plans for toxic spills on highways and railroads.

We support imposing higher fuel-efficiency standards for motor vehicles, including commercial trucks, with gas-guzzler taxes for those that do not meet these standards and gas-sipper tax breaks for heavy trucks that exceed the standards. We believe that general tax subsidies for automobile transportation should be eliminated, and we support providing monetary incentives for commuters to use alternative and mass transportation.

We support tough emission standards on all motor vehicles and the establishment of a state enforcement program that includes periodic testing and mandatory corrective action for motor vehicles that fail to meet these standards.

The Illinois Green Party supports a major expansion of both private and governmental research and, if justified by such research, development of, hydrogen fuel-cell, solar-powered, bio-diesel and other alternative-fueled vehicles and rail systems.

While supporting research and development of bio-fuels generally, the evidence to date strongly suggests that governmental support for ethanol – and certainly corn-based ethanol, as opposed to possible development of cellulose-based ethanol – is not justified by sound environmental or energy science. Rather, it appears to have mainly served as a profitable boondoggle or form of corporate welfare for certain high-powered agricultural interests that are based on cash-

crop, petroleum-consuming monoculture.

However, recognizing that research into biofuels is ongoing, the Illinois Green Party urges that initiatives and policy be based on research results from peer-reviewed journals, and that the results of research sponsored by industry and other special interest groups be reviewed with added skepticism and caution. Policy in these areas cannot be set in stone, but will reflect conclusions reached by reviewing the entire body of current scientific literature.

In addition, even if our society manages to design more environmentally friendly and energy-efficient automobiles, we would do well to question our reliance on a heavily subsidized mode of transportation that has resulted in the paving over of 38.4 million acres in the U.S. with roads and parking lots that are themselves built with petroleum-based materials, the loss of 3,000 acres of productive farmland to sprawling development every day, that is the leading cause of death from birth to age 45, and causes Americans to waste 3.7 billion hours a year stuck going nowhere in traffic. For these additional reasons, the priority for our transportation policy must be support for public mass transit, especially rail, and smarter urban planning.

F. ENERGY POLICY

The twin crises of global climate change and the end of the era of cheap oil demand that our federal and state governments commit public resources, on a scale comparable to the New Deal or the Marshall Plan, to developing decentralized and renewable sources of energy, such as wind, solar and geothermal energy, improving our conservation and efficient use of energy in homes and businesses, and promoting sustainable transportation practices, such as high-speed rail, other efficient public transportation and sensible urban planning.

In order to minimize the damage already caused by greenhouse gas emissions and minimize the risks posed by global climate change, the United States (and our own state) should adopt the goal of achieving zero non-natural CO2 emissions (and near-zero emissions of other greenhouse gases) by the year 2050.

Such a goal is achievable. To a large degree, the technology, and physical, financial and human resources, already exist to attain it. What is lacking is the political will. That's because the corporate stranglehold by Big Oil, Big Auto, Big Utilities and their allies on government continues to impede the social progress that our situation demands. Getting Greens – who do not accept corporate money and are not beholden to such interests – elected to government to break this political stranglehold is no longer simply a good idea. It is becoming critically important as the global climatic crisis and energy crisis intensifies.

In order to meet this goal, in addition to the sustainable transportation priorities discussed in the previous section, the Illinois Green Party supports:

1.Green Building Standards: We need to promote the establishment and enforcement of green building codes to promote energy-efficient buildings and a program aimed at providing rapid, substantial assistance for the retrofitting of homes and businesses, with priority going to low-income housing.

2. Raising energy-efficiency requirements for electrical appliances. Although the federal government recently did take action to require higher energy efficiency in some appliances, there are a number that were not covered, such as DVD players, furnaces, boilers, commercial refrigerators and freezers – and stronger standards could be adopted for other appliances. Illinois should adopt higher and more comprehensive energy-efficiency standards. Even greater energy savings could be achieved if we, for example, expanded our State Energy Efficiency Trust Fund to promote more efficient lighting, appliances, and other energy efficiency in older buildings.

3. Aggressively taking steps to minimize light pollution without compromising nighttime safety, security, or utility by a) Using night lighting only when necessary, turning off lights when they are not needed, and using the correct amount of light for the need, not overkill. b) Require that night-lighting be directed downward, where it is needed, using full cut-off fixtures that control the light well, minimizing glare, light trespass, light pollution, and energy usage. c) Require the use of low-pressure sodium (LPS) light sources whenever possible (including street lighting, parking lot

lighting, security lighting, and other applications where color rendering is not critical. and d) Apply rigid controls on outdoor lighting when development is unavoidable.

4. Adopting stronger renewable energy standards requiring utilities to obtain increasing percentages of their power from renewable sources. A renewable energy standard means requiring utilities to obtain a gradually higher percentage of the electricity delivered from renewable source, principally, solar, wind and biomass. Each year, the percentage required would be set a little higher. Although our State, among others, has recently adopted a renewable energy standard, we need to be more aggressive in pushing it, and our federal government to adopt higher standards faster, with aggressive and strict enforcement. There is no reason why we cannot reach a goal of a completely decentralized, secure, renewable-powered energy grid by the year 2050.

5. Create economic incentives to promote renewable energy production. These can include subsidies and tax breaks but we would do well to look at Germany's successes in promoting renewable energy – by regulating the prices that utilities must pay to renewable energy producers, essentially locking in a premium rate. The German government has also supported installation of solar and wind systems by offering 10-year interest-free loans, which can be paid off through sale of the electricity generated. Such a program has worked there; we should adopt it here. The State of Illinois also needs to stop catering to utility intransigence and aggressively enforce “net metering” requirements so that users of home-based renewable energy systems hooked up to the grid to sell their excess energy to power companies at retail price.

6. Promoting cooperative and/or public ownership of our energy grid. The recent farce of energy “deregulation” by “reverse auction” has had a disastrous impact on Illinois residents and businesses alike. In the short term, genuine rate rollbacks and strict regulation of the utility monopolies must be reimposed. In the long term, we must find a better answer. One part of the problem is that energy cooperatives have been legally barred from operating in parts of the State served by Com Ed or Ameren. Allowing them to compete freely with the utility monopolies, and otherwise favoring or promoting energy cooperatives, may be one part of the solution. Another policy option is to promote public utilities, which have worked well at the municipal level in many parts of the State – and may work even better at a statewide level. Either of these options would better serve the public interest and the economy than the status quo. And either option could serve as a vehicle to more quickly promote use of renewable energy sources.

7. Enact a physical limit of CO2 and other greenhouse gas emissions for all large users of fossil fuels (a "hard cap") that steadily declines to zero by 2050, with the time schedule for tightening assessed periodically according to climate, technological, and economic developments. The cap should cover all major sources of emissions, including utilities, transportation and energy-intensive industries, as well as agriculture, commercial and residential sectors. Emission allowances should be sold by the U.S. government for use in the United States only. There should be no free allowances, no offsets and no international sale or purchase of CO₂ allowances. The revenues generated should be used to subsidize renewable energy, conservation, research and development, and worker and community transition.

8. Eliminate all subsidies and tax breaks for fossil fuels. We should not be subsidizing our reliance on the very fossil fuels responsible for most global warming.

9. Ban new coal-fired power plants that do not have carbon storage. Rapidly phase out existing coal-fired plants, beginning with the oldest, most polluting plants. With respect to the question of “clean coal” production, the Illinois Green Party conditionally supports the research and development of genuine clean coal technologies, meaning that they must combine the use of Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle methods, or non-combustion methods, with sequestration of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases. Any such generating plants should meet the criteria of being close to geologically stable formations suitable for CO₂ sequestration and should be located relatively close to the coal fields that will be supplying the coal, to minimize transportation costs and associated CO₂ emissions.

In approaching coal policy generally, we must acknowledge the fact that the coal industry has traditionally sustained many working-class families in Central and Southern Illinois and that these regions are hungry for the relatively high-wage jobs that have been lost during the coal industry's slow and painful decline in that region. At the same time, however, we also acknowledge that our heavy reliance on coal-burning power plants, both in Illinois and nationally, has not only greatly contributed to global warming; it has also literally killed tens of thousands of victims of air pollution,

contaminated lakes and streams with mercury and other toxins, inflicted the misery of asthma on untold thousands of people – and has killed or given black lung to countless miners themselves, due to unsafe conditions in the mines. That is why we insist that any future coal production must meet the strict environmental criteria described above. We must also insist that our national and state governments take aggressive action to help displaced coal miners transition into the new growing areas of a Green economy, taking advantage of the tremendous potential of the growing new renewable energy and energy-efficiency industries (wind, solar, biomass, geothermal, Green construction and retrofitting) to create new, well-paying and far safer, jobs.

With respect to some of the environmental destruction caused by coal mining itself, the Illinois Green Party opposes the obscene practice of “mountain-top removal,” and insists that coal companies genuinely restore, to the extent possible, land areas ravaged by mining.

10. Do not license any new nuclear power plants; eliminate all subsidies and tax breaks for nuclear power (including guarantees for nuclear waste disposal, loan guarantees and subsidized insurance). Although some policy-makers have pointed to nuclear power as an “answer” to global warming, this would be a “cure” worse than the disease. While the Illinois Green Party does not oppose basic research on any technology that might hold promise of future breakthroughs, we continue to categorically oppose the building of new nuclear power plants, and call for the rapid phase-out of existing plants, given the present state of nuclear reactor technology.

Current forms of production of nuclear energy, from the mining of uranium, which constitutes one of the grossest forms of exploitation of the Native American population, to the still unsolved problem of radioactive waste disposal, are an environmental nightmare from beginning to end. That’s not even counting the unacceptable risk of a mass Chernobyl-type disaster, the periodic smaller-scale releases such as those that have polluted waterways in Illinois, the hazards posed by transporting nuclear materials and waste, the industry’s ties to the nuclear weapons complex, including depleted uranium weapons, and its reliance on massive governmental subsidies, with taxpayers being the “insurers” of final resort. Absent some miraculous breakthrough that can eliminate these unacceptable risks and costs, nuclear energy production cannot be justified.

Research into clean coal or peril-free nuclear power aside, our energy priorities must be to promote renewable energy production, energy efficiency, conservation and sustainable transportation.

11. Use government purchasing power, agency practices and contracting authority to promote greenhouse gas reductions. Government purchasing alone can help boost fledgling energy efficiency companies and products, for example, by requiring the purchase of plug-in hybrids for all new vehicles, or installing energy-efficient LED lighting. State and federal contracting policies could require giving favor to companies that have reduced or eliminated their CO2 emissions.

12. Remove the restraints on renewable energy caused by Big Oil’s control over those new technologies. The giant oil, auto and other corporations have been known to buy up patents and small companies that promise new breakthroughs in solar, battery, fuel cell and other technologies, in order to keep us on the same destructive path of overreliance on petroleum. We must revisit our anti-trust and other anti-monopoly laws and create whatever legal means are required to put an immediate end to this pernicious practice.

These do not exhaust all the measures that could move us in the direction of a rational, clean energy policy. Many good environmental organizations, such as the Union of Concerned Scientists, Repower the Midwest, the Environmental Law and Policy Center, Environment Illinois and Environment America, the Sierra Club, the Apollo Alliance, The International Dark Sky Association and the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research, have inspired some of the proposals described in this platform – and have developed many more concrete policy proposals that would help us attain the goal of an greenhouse-gas-free, non-oil-dependent energy system. However, among political parties, it is the Green Party alone, devoted to its values of ecological wisdom, personal and global responsibility, future focus and sustainability, that recognizes the urgent necessity of getting these policies adopted, quickly and comprehensively.

G. MILITARISM AND WAR

On April 16, 1953, years before he warned us of the dangers of the military-industrial complex, former President Dwight D. Eisenhower declaimed:

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.

This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.

Our society pays dearly for war, not only with the sacrifice of our sons and daughters, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, who were enticed into military service, drawn mostly from the ranks of the poor and working class. We pay for it not only with the terrible human and social cost imposed on veterans who survive war with mental and physical disabilities. We pay for it not only with the terrible human and economic costs visited on the countries that the corporate-dominated government chooses to attack, invade or occupy. We pay for it not only when the stature and respect formerly enjoyed by the United States throughout the world is increasingly replaced with fear, loathing, disgust and hatred. We also pay for it in the most literal sense, economically, with both direct and indirect impacts on our personal income and our quality of life.

Today, annual total military spending (not just the “Defense” budget but other war spending and military costs) is approaching \$1 trillion per year. Forty-three cents of every federal income tax dollar collected today goes to pay for past and present military and war spending. As of 2007, the share of funding for the Iraq war and occupation alone borne by Illinois taxpayers (\$24.7 billion) could have covered the cost of providing over 9 million people with health care or outfitting over 32.8 million homes with renewable electricity, or providing over 2.8 million university scholarships, or building 2,931 new elementary schools or 179,067 affordable housing units or pay the salaries of 403,550 elementary school teachers.

Yet as costly as it is to us, the corporate interests that dominate government today find it immensely profitable to them. Fed by our own tax dollars, supported by Democrats and Republicans alike, the military-industrial complex (or more accurately, the military-industrial-media complex), has become a mainstay of our economy, creating a self-perpetuating “permanent war” economy, based on this pernicious form of corporate welfare.

In addition, the interests of multinational corporations generally has driven our government to seek to dominate other nations, in order to control their resources, sources of labor, investment opportunities and markets.

The Illinois Green Party, based on its key values of non-violence, social justice, and personal and global responsibility, opposes aggressive war and intervention as a matter of central principle. That’s why we opposed the Iraq War before it began – not simply because we recognized that the Bush administration was lying about Iraq possessing weapons of mass destruction, but because Iraq had neither attacked nor even threatened to attack the United States. Therefore, in keeping with international law, the Nuremberg principles, and its own principles, we recognized that there was no justification whatsoever for attacking, invading or occupying Iraq. We also oppose the continuing occupation of Afghanistan, new threats to attack Iran – and indeed, any military intervention and war, excepting for legitimate self-defense to repel an attack..

Principled opposition to war is necessary – but not sufficient. It is not enough to be “anti-war”; we must be pro-peace. It is not enough to protest against war: We must understand and eliminate the structural, economic *causes* of war. Here again, the immediate struggle against militarism and war must be linked to the larger struggle against corporate domination of our economy, government and media. If we do not fight the corporatist agenda, if we do not dismantle the military-industrial complex, if we do not put an end to corporate domination of our government, we will be doomed to continuing periodic protests against continuing periodic wars.

Accordingly, while waging the larger fight against corporate domination, the Illinois Green Party, and its

candidates for federal office, are committed to the struggle, not only against war, but against militarism. Specifically:

1. We call for an immediate, massive reduction in military spending, to the level needed for actual defense of United States territory and contributing to international peace keeping actions under the auspices of the United Nations. A portion of the finances saved by this reduction must be allocated to peace conversion projects, retooling and refurbishing military facilities to serve socially useful purposes, and compensating, retraining and re-employing displaced workers into socially useful jobs.

2. We oppose all research, testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and call for rapid, mutual nuclear disarmament. We support immediate ratification and signing of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and complete honoring of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and any other treaties banning or limiting research, development, testing, or deployment of any nuclear weapons. We insist that the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty be honored.

3. We oppose the manufacture and use of depleted uranium, biological, chemical and anti-personnel weapons such as cluster bombs and mines.

4. We oppose recycling of radioactive waste into consumer or industrial products. We demand full disclosure as to any such use that is occurring or planned. We oppose exporting nuclear waste, including enriched uranium or plutonium, for any use.

5. We demand citizen and state inspection and oversight of the storage and disposition of all radioactive waste.

6. We oppose the “Nukes in Space” and “Star Wars” programs. These include tritium bombs, directed energy weapons, space and airborne lasers, “pure fusion” weapons and particle beams.

7. Regarding the terrible events of September 11, 2001, many serious, scholarly researchers and responsible investigators have raised valid questions regarding the acts and omissions of some elements of the Bush administration prior to and during the attacks, and the causes of the destruction and death that occurred that day. These questions demand real answers, yet they were not answered by the 9/11 Commission, which failed to conduct a comprehensive and impartial investigation. Considering that the 9/11 tragedy was used by the Bush administration and others to promote militarism and war abroad and assaults on civil liberties at home, the Illinois Green Party supports the call of the 9/11 Truth Movement for a new, fully funded, independent and exhaustive investigation of the attacks that occurred on 9/11, with meaningful input from that Movement, victims’ families and other citizens. This is in keeping with our values of Nonviolence, Social Justice, Personal and Global Responsibility and Grassroots Democracy.

H. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

One of the hallmarks of the Green Party is its devotion to ecological wisdom and protecting the long-term environmental health and sustainability of the Earth. Before adopting a policy or position on *any* issue, we must always consider and weigh the environmental impact.

We are living at a crossroads in human history. In the last 50 years, human society has begun to have a major impact on the global environment, as evidenced by the problems of global warming, the destruction of the ozone layer, the wholesale destruction of rain forests, the dispersal of dioxins and related chemicals into the environment, and the general deterioration of the quality of our air, water and land. Our health and the health of other living things have already been compromised by the pervasive presence of toxic chemicals, radioactive waste and pesticides. Meanwhile, new challenges are arising, such as the threat posed by giant agribusiness corporations that are attempting to manipulate and control the genetic makeup of our food supplies. The next 10 to 20 years may prove to be a crucial turning point: Will we as a species develop the wisdom and means to halt and reverse these trends, or will we continue to muddle through as we have -- adopting weak regulatory measures that are constantly being watered down under pressure from big business?

Our future depends on our ability to make major changes, not just in policy, but also in our whole philosophy of government. That is one of the major reasons why the Illinois Green Party is needed, and why it must play a continually increasing role in government.

Most of the threats to our environment are global in character and will require global solutions. However, Illinoisans can play an important role in effecting change, not only by sending Green representatives to Washington, but by attacking at least some of these problems at the state and regional levels.

Some of our proposals for protecting and improving the environment are found in other sections of our platform, such as the sections on Energy Policy and Agriculture. In addition, one important policy change that could be adopted at the state level is the introduction of a “pollution tax.” One variation of this is a proposed “carbon tax”; however the principle deserves to be applied to more than just carbon emissions. The idea behind the pollution tax is to impose the costs of despoiling the environment on those businesses that are responsible for creating the environmental hazards. Producers of greenhouse gases, ozone-depleting chemicals, dioxins and other toxic and radioactive substances, would be taxed in proportion to the quantity and severity of the emissions. The tax would give manufacturers an incentive to change their practices and give nonpolluting competitors an edge in the marketplace. Furthermore, the funds raised in this manner could be used to help develop and implement alternative methods of production.

However, taxing the emission of pollutants into our atmosphere and waterways, by itself, is not sufficient. As more and more heavy metals, toxic pesticides, volatile organic compounds, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, dioxins, endocrine disrupters and other toxic and radioactive wastes are allowed to enter our air, water, land, food – and ultimately our bodies – it is not enough to say that, in some areas, we are perhaps reducing the rate at which we are poisoning ourselves. To continue to allow this gradual poisoning of our own environment and our fellow human beings, in any one of these categories, let alone in combination, with its unpredictable synergistic impact, is irrational and intolerable. Every ounce, let alone every ton, of such toxic releases, is tantamount to releasing so many tickets in a death lottery that every human being and every other creature on our planet is forced to play.

Given that protection of public health is a fundamental duty of government, the Green Party supports more aggressive action to reduce and eliminate the production, storage, use and release of toxic chemicals – moving rapidly toward a requirement that all industrial production use “closed loop” practices with respect to such substances.

One of the largest contributing sources of dioxin contamination is industrial and medical waste incineration. Direct regulatory measures should be implemented to phase out such incinerators, or at least to eliminate dioxin-creating plastics from the waste stream. Encouraging hospitals to use reusable and re-stabilized supplies, rather than throw-away items, and more careful policing of the waste stream could go a long way toward eliminating Illinois's contribution to the dioxin problem.

Greens support the maxim, “reduce, reuse and recycle” and recognize that this involves both informed, socially responsible lifestyle choices and systemic or policy changes. “Reducing” does not have to entail reduction in the quality of life; it can actually improve the quality of life. What it implies is the elimination of senseless and wasteful practices, such as the mass consumption of throwaway products, planned to have limited life, made from finite resources, without any consideration for where the product came from, how far it traveled, who made it, under what conditions, what it is made from, whether there are any alternatives, and where it is going after being thrown in the trash. The same principle can and should be applied to energy and transportation practices, as outlined elsewhere in this Platform.

Although Illinois has begun to take encouraging steps to promote recycling, much more can be done to expand the scope of recycling and encourage the manufacture, sale, and purchase of reusable products, at both the personal and industrial levels, by using appropriate monetary incentives and disincentives, as well as easier, more available recycling collection and consumer education.

We oppose any commercial timber harvesting or other natural resource extraction on public lands.

Our public lands should be made accessible to the public, with the exception of protected wilderness areas. User fees should not be imposed. However, we oppose the expansion of horse trails on the Shawnee National Forest and the

push to allow all-terrain vehicles there, and in our state parks, as any such expansion threatens the integrity of the ecosystem.

We call for an improved funding stream for clean water programs, to meet our obligations under the federal Clean Water Act, for the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund (NAAF), and the Open Space Land Acquisition and Development Fund (OSLAD) in Illinois. We support a statewide wetlands protection program.

Metropolitan Chicago and the Metro East region do not meet federal health standards for air quality. The Illinois EPA must prepare and submit plans to attain healthy air quality in these polluted areas. In keeping with our platform on Energy policy, we must rapidly phase out old coal-fired plants that continue to emit mercury, other heavy metals and toxins, raise emission standards for vehicles, including diesel, and enact an emissions testing/permitting program for vehicles licensed in Illinois.

The Illinois Green Party stands up for environmental justice. In siting and permitting decisions, government must consider the impact of all pollution sources in a community and must put a halt to the victimization of poor and oppressed communities. Communities that have been victimized already by extraordinary levels of pollutants or toxic or radioactive contamination must be afforded fast and effective protection, fast remediation and intensive health-care monitoring and care. Indeed, we support a government commitment to medically treat and compensate all workers and residents exposed to and sickened by exposure to toxic or radioactive contamination, and for thorough studies to discover any “clusters” of illness that have occurred. We support the implementation and enforcement of community “right to know” laws.

Where environmental issues arise on any policy question, the Illinois Green Party will consistently support environmental protection over destruction, saving natural ecosystems and endangered species, not risking their demise, and promoting the long-term sustainability of the human race and other living things over corporate capitalism’s naturally short-sighted quest for maximum short-term profits.

I. AGRICULTURE AND FOOD POLICY

Agriculture and the entire food system must be transformed so that they truly meet basic human needs and become regenerative, sustainable and active forces in healing the Earth.

The Illinois Green Party seeks to encourage patterns of food purchasing and dietary choices that foster self-reliance, both in our country and abroad. We support the movement to “eat locally” whenever possible, and the urban food-growing movement, as these help promote energy sustainability and community-based economics. We support policies that will help advance these movements.

We promote eating lower on the food chain, giving preference to regionally produced, organic foods grown on biologically balanced soils. We favor confronting the health, ethical, environmental, and economic issues related to the drawbacks of meat- and dairy-based diets. We call for truth in nutrition science, nutrition education and nutrition labeling, instead of the current regime in which government nutrition information and recommendations are repeatedly twisted by food processing corporations with an interest in keeping Americans on an unhealthy diet.

We call for the establishment of an ecologically based, sustainable agricultural system that moves as rapidly as possible towards regional/bioregional self-reliance. The emphasis of agricultural research should shift to support these goals.

Soil conservation and regeneration and water conservation must be promoted as one of our top priorities. Alternatives to fossil-fuel-based fertilizers -- alternatives that will regenerate the soil -- need funding along with a phase-out of the use of artificial fertilizers. This will help lessen farmers’ over-dependence on big petrochemical/agribusiness corporations.

We need improvement and acceleration of small watershed programs and a task force to review and update our drainage laws to protect and conserve our soils. We support the “agricultural stewardship incentives” proposals of the Illinois Stewardship Alliance.

The Illinois Green Party calls for halting all uses of poisonous pesticides and encourages the widespread use of integrated pest management.

We oppose the patenting of any life form and the introduction of any genetically modified organisms (GMOs) into our ecosystem. At a minimum, we support the position of the American Farmers Union, which calls for a moratorium on the patenting, licensing and introduction of GMO foods "until the broader legal, ethical, and economic questions are resolved." We are categorically opposed to food irradiation, which creates new, unknown health risks while it lowers nutritional quality. As long as GMOs and irradiated food exist, we insist that they be clearly labeled so the public can make informed decisions.

America needs to change farm programs and tax and fiscal policies that presently place small and family farms in a disadvantaged position compared with that of large, corporate farms. We endorse policies that advance community and family organic gardens as a top Green priority. At the same time, we oppose "factory farming" practices, which are inhumane to animals, damaging to the environment, harmful to surrounding communities and harmful to consumers, including the widespread use of antibiotics on livestock.

We call for strengthening "organic certification standards."

We support legalization of industrial hemp, a remarkably versatile product that can at once provide a valuable source of income for farmers and a valuable source of fuel, paper and other applications.

In order for regions/bioregions to increase self-reliance in food production, the Illinois Green Party will encourage the initiation of steps to form food producer associations and cooperatives within regions, and to form economic development organizations that advance the manufacture of value-added agricultural products within regions. We also encourage community-supported agriculture programs, from community gardens to farmer/consumer purchasing agreements. Farm service, credit and action programs for family farmers should be administered by democratically administered community and county committees of farmers, in cooperation with local conservation district boards.

We support policies that will require land grant universities to be more fully engaged in research in sustainable, organic, ecologically balanced agriculture.

It is crucial to protect genetically diverse seed stocks. Therefore, we join citizen-led organized resistance to bio-devastation, genetically engineered foods and corporate control of the world food supply. We oppose corporate control of seed stocks and support farmers' control of their own seed supplies.

More specific to Illinois, we oppose the Peotone Airport and other misuses of our eminent domain laws to take away agrarian land, not for legitimate public purposes, but to promote reckless, sprawling development. While we support protection of genuine wetlands and natural areas, no farmer should be forced to stop farming land which has a cropping history without being given a right to appeal and without full and fair compensation for the land.

Illinois farmers need property tax relief. In keeping with our platform on Education, Taxation and Budget, we support the property tax relief provided by House Bill/Senate Bill 750 and will fight for its passage, or the passage of a similar tax reform that will shift funding for education from local property taxes to a more progressively structured state income tax.

J. ELECTORAL REFORM AND VOTERS' RIGHTS

The Illinois Green Party calls for a true government of, by and for the people. This is only possible through easy access to voting by all people; proportional representation rather than the present winner-take-all approach; accurate, untampered counting of every vote; and easy access of all people to the information they need to make informed decisions on who and what to vote for. The government should protect people and the planet from the excesses of moneyed interests.

Our elections should be clean, fair to all candidates, informative, accurate, and reflective of the public will, not the

power of big money.

The Illinois Green Party supports clean-money elections and more media access for candidates. A ban on “soft-money” contributions is needed immediately. We favor campaign finance limits on donations in Illinois, and we favor limits on the transfer of funds from party leadership to candidates.

We also favor a ban on corporate campaign contributions.

We will fight to end “pay-for-play” in Illinois by banning campaign contributions from state contractors, their owners and officers -- and barring the awarding of contracts to any company whose owners or officers had made such a contribution to an incumbent. Contracts should be awarded on the basis of merit, with consideration given to historically disadvantaged groups and under-served communities.

We must combat illegal job patronage in Illinois. All applicants for non-policy-making State jobs must be selected on the basis of objective criteria by an independent bureau.

We support a public financing option for public campaigns, such as that provided in House Bill 1640, the Illinois Clean Election Act.

We support the principle that the public airwaves belong to the people. We call for the reinstatement and enforcement of the Equal Time Provision of the Federal Communication Act, requiring broadcasters to carry debates including all ballot-qualified candidates and provide free time for all such candidates as a license requirement to use our public airwaves. We also support reinstatement of the Fairness Doctrine.

The Illinois Green Party supports strict enforcement and extension of the Voting Rights Act. As the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections demonstrated, the intimidation and disenfranchisement of communities of color still goes on. We oppose voter “caging” and other dirty tricks used to disenfranchise legally qualified voters. The federal Justice Department must strengthen its vote enforcement division to swiftly investigate and prosecute those who act in this way.

The Illinois Green Party supports the abolition of the Electoral College and its replacement with a majority-rule election. The President should be elected by direct, popular vote and must receive a majority of the votes to take office. If no candidate receives 50% plus one of the votes cast, a runoff must be held.

We support greater empowerment of the people through direct democracy: Illinois voters should be able to place not only advisory referendum questions, but referenda and initiatives having the force of law, on the Illinois ballot without onerous petition-signature requirements. By the same process, they should have the right to place on the ballot, for decision by majority vote, the question of recalling elected public officials before their term of office has expired. Laws that restrict the number of local or county referenda that may be placed on the ballot should be repealed. We support preserving the right for citizen participation in annual town meetings.

The Illinois Green Party supports Instant Runoff Voting. To encourage more participation in the electoral process, voters must know that their vote can really count. By allowing voters to rank candidates in order of preference (first choice, second choice, third choice, etc.), if no candidate gets a majority of first choices, a runoff count can be conducted without the need for a second election. Just as in a traditional second-election runoff, the majority choice can be determined, while also allowing voters the opportunity to vote for those candidates they like the most without worrying that in doing so their vote will help candidates they like least. Instant runoff voting also promotes positive campaigning and coalitions, since winners may need the second choices from opponents’ supporters.

The Illinois Green Party supports proportional representation. "Winner-take-all" is a very undemocratic way to choose representatives to government. When 49 percent of voters in a legislative district support a candidate, they should not get 0 percent representation. Most democracies in the world use some form of proportional representation to choose legislatures. Illinois should do the same – as it once did, until 1980. We support a return to three-member districts for the Illinois General Assembly, elected by cumulative voting. Cumulative voting allowed for the election of political minorities and made for a more diverse legislature.

The Illinois Green Party supports making voting easier and more reliable. Citizens should be able to register to vote up to and on voting day itself, with appropriate protections against voter fraud. To maximize voter participation, voting could be conducted by mail, or voting day could be a national holiday, or on the weekend. Voting precincts should be adequately staffed with sufficiently trained personnel and professional supervision.

In order to ensure that every vote is counted and counted accurately, we support a system of voting based on paper ballots, with random, independent audits of election tabulations – as called for in the Illinois Ballot Integrity Act, House Bill 1642.

We support reform of our prohibitive ballot access requirements in Illinois, to allow far easier access to candidates of smaller or newer political parties. We demand low-threshold, uniform and equal petition-signature requirements for all candidates seeking political office, regardless of political party.

The Illinois Green Party supports the creation of independent and non-partisan election administration bodies. Electoral commissions at all levels of government should be free of control by any political party.

The Illinois Green Party supports statehood for the District of Columbia. We support for the right of United States territories, including Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Marianas Islands and the Virgin Islands, to be allowed to choose either statehood (with full voting rights), or independence, or to maintain their current status.

The Illinois Green Party also supports other electoral reforms that advance democracy and a more representative government.

Youth in America are allowed to work at age 16 and are eligible for the draft at 18. Since laws affect the workplace and since youth should have the opportunity to elect or remove public officials who support policies that could send them to war, the Illinois Green Party supports the right of citizens of the United States who are sixteen and over the right to vote, provided that citizens of age 16 or 17 first complete an approved high-school level curriculum on civics and government.

The Illinois Green Party believes that if these reforms are made, Illinois and America will be a stronger and healthier democratic republic.

K. EDUCATION, FAMILY AND YOUTH: A HEALTHY HOME ENVIRONMENT

Our Party's approach to education recognizes that there are two major dimensions to the issue: Both the home environment and the public education system itself. Accordingly, in this section we propose measures that will help improve the ability of families to thrive and create a positive home environment. In the next section, we take up the issue of public education per se – which in Illinois, at least, is inseparable from the issue of taxation and our budget crisis.

Nowhere do we see more interconnections among the serious public concerns than in addressing the issue of education and families. We cannot achieve success in education without addressing all the needs of our people and environment, and without re-examining our national and local priorities, including the way our government funds are spent. While government officials proclaim we do not have adequate funds for education, at the same time they squander most of our tax money on the military and on subsidies for "corporate welfare." Shifting these resources to education, health and basic social services is an enormous priority. We *have* the money, and need to use it for our people and environment, not to fuel military and corporate aggression for the benefit of an elite few, which is the hallmark of our present political and social regime.

Education begins at home. There is no question that the care given to children when they are infants, and even prenatally, has a tremendous and critical impact on their future ability to learn and become full, productive members of society and responsible citizens. The issue of education thus cannot be separated from the issue of quality, living-wage jobs, access to health-care, decent housing and the other basic requisites of a healthy home environment. In addition, education needs to start at the top as well as the bottom: As a society, we need to make parental education – teaching prospective parents how to be good and responsible parents – a priority, just as much as we need to make quality pre-

kindergarten programs accessible to parents throughout our State. .

We need to recognize that parenting is real work (as are the other invisible labors of the home) and support it in a real way. In some European countries, there is mandatory paid parental leave for parents of children up to the age of three. We would do well to emulate that example.

We need support for child rearing done in the home, and professional quality day-care for families where all the adults work outside of the home.

In keeping with our support for the family, and the rights of youth, we support:

1. Paid emergency leave for workers to care for sick children or parents/elders.
2. Full benefits to domestic partners, regardless of sexual orientation.
3. Flexible hours and/or job-sharing in the workplace, to further support families.
4. Full social security and pension benefits for spouses and domestic partners of workers.
5. Support for meaningful gathering places, programs, and work/study opportunities for youth. Respect for the wisdom of our young people, giving them opportunities to be heard.
6. More effective intervention to break the cycle of domestic violence. Greater societal support for social workers so that they aren't given impossible case loads and can provide meaningful intervention and assistance to families struggling with poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, violence and other conflicts.
7. Decent wages for part-time and summer jobs for youth.

L. PUBLIC EDUCATION, TAXES AND BUDGET

With respect to public education itself, our public schools and our colleges and universities are in a dismal state.

Illinois continues to have some of the worst achievement gaps in the country and has not succeeded in narrowing them. These gaps are not a result of high achievement by non-poor students. They primarily reflect the extremely low achievement of poor students in Illinois.

The achievement gap in Illinois is not surprising, considering the spending gap among school districts in Illinois. Depending upon how it is measured, Illinois has either the highest or second-highest school inequality in the United States. The average low-poverty school district spent almost \$2,500 more pupil than the average high-poverty district, reflecting the second largest funding gap in the nation. In 2003-04, the highest spending school district in Illinois spent \$19,361 more per pupil than the lowest spending school district, increasing the gap by \$4,000 compared to the year before.

Both the poor performance of Illinois schools and their rampant inequality are due to our State government's failure to provide adequate education funding for basic school expenses and our State's overreliance on property taxes for school funding. Year after year, our State government fails to meet the foundation level of spending recommended by its own Education Funding Advisory Board. State government presently contributes only 30 percent of school districts' total revenues. This lack of State support for education places an overwhelming burden on local communities to finance education, with local property taxpayers providing 62 percent of funding for school districts.

Typically, communities with the greatest needs have the fewest resources upon which to draw. Schools on the state's academic watch list have considerably higher rates of poverty and lower property wealth than the state average. Due to their relatively smaller property tax bases, these communities have higher tax rates than the state average. Despite these high tax rates, they struggle to generate adequate revenues, and spend less per pupil than the state average. Thus, the

school districts with the greatest academic needs and highest poverty lack the resources to invest in programs that can help close the achievement gap.

The state of higher education in Illinois is no better: Under the present administration, students have been hit with double-digit increases in tuition and fees, year after year. According to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities in 2006:

Illinois public universities face a \$200 million shortfall of funds to meet students' financial need. . . . Low-income students face the widest financial-need gap in the state's history. The amount of unmet need at Illinois universities rose approximately 50 percent over the past five years Nationwide, the average unmet need gap is \$1,400. A recent *Chicago Sun-Times* survey found that the average gap in unmet need at the state's public four-year universities ranges from \$1,700 to nearly \$7,000 per student.

Nationally, tuition at public colleges and universities (where 83 percent of all students are) has increased by 47 percent for the ten-year period ending with the 2003-04 school year. In 2005, it went up an average of 14.1 percent for public four-year colleges and 13.8 percent for two-year institutions. Every state in the union raised tuition. Even before this last round of increases, the Congressional Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance reported that by the end of this decade as many as 4.4 million qualified high school graduates will be unable to enroll in a four-year college. Staff and services have likewise been severely cut.

This is unacceptable. To have a healthy economy, we need a well-educated workforce. But we won't have one if we make college unaffordable for lower and middle-income students. As it is, two-thirds of college students in the U.S. today graduate with loans to pay, averaging \$17,000. If we keep this up, we will return to the bad old days in which a college education was a privilege limited to the wealthy.

We cannot reconcile these conditions with America's promise, and the promise of our own Illinois Constitution, to create equality of economic opportunity.

It has been shown, time and again, that, dollar for dollar, government spending on education always pays off in the long run, and is generally the best "investment" government can make. Why? Because a better-educated people are more productive, they earn higher-paying jobs, they create more jobs and new businesses, creating future government revenue; they tend to stay out of trouble, imposing less cost on our criminal justice and prison systems and social service agencies, and they create a better home environment and better opportunities for their own children.

This has been demonstrated, not only by the experiences of other nations, but by our own history, with the original GI Bill of 1944, which provided our World War II veterans with free higher education, putting 2.2 million of them through college and another 3.5 million through trade or technical schools. This helped pave the way for the sustained economic boom of the 1950s and 60s. Over the 12-year life of the Bill, it cost about \$80 billion in today's money (contrast that with the \$417 billion spent on one year's military budget today) – but for every dollar spent the government was repaid seven times over.

Today, it costs a state \$24,000 to put a student through a four-year public college. The return to the nation's economy is about \$2 million over each graduate's work life; the direct return to the state's treasury is \$375,000 in taxes paid per graduate. In contrast, it costs \$22,000 a year to house an adult prisoner in a state prison and \$65,000 per year to house a juvenile offender. Think we can't afford to pay for quality education? We can't afford not to.

Thus, as with grade-school education, we need to make a major change of priorities with respect to higher education and get our government to commit itself to the goal of providing it free, and in the interim, as cheap and affordable as possible. Quality education for all, at all levels, needs to become a goal of government, because it serves the interests of the people.

This leads to the inevitable question: "How are you going to pay for all this?" And especially now, with the State struggling year after year to deal with crushing budget deficits and cutbacks in services?

The challenge of providing quality education to all is obviously related to our system of taxation in Illinois and our whole system of school funding and government funding, which is a system badly in need of fixing.

Basically, the problem with our tax structure in Illinois is that it underfunds our State government *because* it is unfair, placing far too much of the tax burden on those least able to pay, the poor, and low-to-middle income workers and farmers, and small businesses, while giving most of the breaks to those most able to pay, the big corporations and the extremely wealthy. How we got to this point is a story in itself but the point here is that it is a fact – and it is a problem in itself that needs to be rectified.

According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, Illinois is the 6th worst state in the nation in terms of being regressive, that is, in terms of taxing lower and middle-income taxpayers at a higher rate than the wealthy. When all taxes are taken into account – income, sales, excise and property taxes, and the effects of federal offsets, the poorest 20 percent of Illinois taxpayers pay 13.1% of their income in taxes, the middle 60 percent pay, on average, about 10.1% of their income in taxes, while the top 1 percent – people with an average income of \$1.3 million per year (or about \$23,000 per week) – are only paying 4.6% of their income in taxes. Years of special tax favors to big corporations also means that these wealthy non-persons are also not paying their fair share of taxes, either.

Part of the reason for this regressive system is our State's underreliance on the income tax and its overreliance on local and district property taxes, which is the largest single source of funding for our grade schools. While the State's personal income tax burden is more than twenty percent below the national average, its property-tax burden is about twenty percent above the national average, imposing an unjust burden on working and middle-class homeowners and on our farmers, orchard growers and winemakers.

Most Illinoisans have had enough. They are even willing to support an increase in our income tax in order to adequately fund our schools. A recent survey of Illinois voters found that 66 percent would favor a comprehensive plan to cut the portion of property taxes that fund education, broaden the sales tax and increase the income tax in order to provide more money to the poorest school districts.

The Illinois Green Party supports one plan that is designed to do just that: House Bill/Senate Bill 750. While we do not contend that this plan alone would solve our education and budget problems, it would be a major step in the right direction. The plan would generate nearly \$9 billion in new revenues by increasing the personal income tax to 5%, the corporate income tax to 8% and expanding the scope of the sales tax to include personal and consumer services, which are presently exempted. The increase in the income tax would be offset through a refundable credit for low and middle-income families, which costs approximately \$900 million.

About \$2.1 billion would then be devoted to increase the foundation level of our schools, meeting the recommendation of the Education Funding Advisory Board. Additional funds would be devoted to increase the special education personnel reimbursement, and Early Childhood Education. It would also phase in an increase of \$300 million per year for higher education.

Under another dedicated fund, \$2.7 billion would go to property tax relief. Local taxpayers would receive a property tax abatement of at least 20%, with poorer districts getting a slightly higher abatement. Structuring this as an abatement ensures that no school district loses any funding, because they continue to assess as if no relief is coming from Springfield. In other words, they would be required to continue assessing at the current rate.

Another part of this plan is devoted to helping alleviate the State's \$40.7 billion pension debt, one of the most underfunded systems in the nation. Under the plan, the State will be able to amortize the debt over 50 years at a flat rate of \$3.4 billion per year.

Under this plan, the basic needs of both grade-school and higher education are provided by our State government. Second, under the refundable earned income credit part of the plan, the bottom 60% of all income earners do *not* pay higher income taxes, and the bottom 20% of income earners actually realize a net tax decrease. Our homeowners and farmers *finally* get some real property tax relief. Our tax system is made more fair, relieving the burden placed on those least able to pay.

Third, Illinois will *still* have the 7th lowest income tax rate nationally. It will remain a low-tax state, ranking in the bottom third of all states in total state and local tax burden. Fourth, Illinois gains more school funding fairness, narrowing the gap in school funding, without forcing wealthier districts to spend less but giving a real boost to poorer districts, while ensuring that they cannot play a shell game with property taxes, as we have seen happen with lottery revenues.

Fifth, the State's structural deficit is eliminated under this plan. Years of austere budgeting, seeing thousands of state workers' jobs eliminated, wages frozen, pensions attacked and vital social services, including money for higher education, cut to the bone, will finally come to an end.

Of course, money alone cannot solve all of the problems of our public schools. But it is a necessary part of the solution. Smaller class sizes, modern textbooks, adequate facilities and reasonable teacher salaries are essential to success – and they do require money.

The Illinois Green Party also supports the following education policies and reforms:

1. The school system must recognize and honor multiple learning styles and varying speed of educational development of different children, while providing more targeted assistance to at-risk children.
2. Nutritious, safe foods must be made available and subsidized in all school cafeterias, breakfast and lunch programs, etc. There must be required health and nutrition education for all children and teachers.
3. Citizenship/civics classes must be required in all schools. Students must learn how to assert their power and rights as citizens to control their government and communities, rather than having citizenship defined as learning to “salute the flag” and follow orders. Military recruitment should not be allowed in our schools.
4. There must be encouragement of critical thinking, including in history and current events, encouraging looking at many views, not just whatever the government sees fit to promote.
5. Home economics classes should also be required – for the purpose of teaching real home economics, beginning with the basics of home budgeting, financial responsibility and planning, and avoiding unmanageable levels of debt.
6. We need to make our schools safe – not by promoting a mini-police-state environment but by combining strict enforcement of safety rules with early intervention to promote non-violent conflict resolution. The school curriculum must include teaching and modeling of non-violent conflict-resolution and peer-counseling skills. There must be meaningful teaching and discussion of skills surrounding interpersonal relationships, taking into account different cultural mixes.
7. Safe education also requires safe transportation to and from school. Seat belts and shoulder harnesses must be made available on, and their use required in, school buses, no less than in private automobiles.
8. We need to ensure adequate funding of special education for all children with disabilities, physical and mental. HB 750 will help us do this.
9. At the national level, we oppose any reauthorization and/or support the repeal, of the Federal “No Child Left Behind” program. At the State level, once we get our fiscal house in order, a top priority must be to opt out of the program. The Federal dollars provided cannot justify sinking our schools under the awful weight of this horrible education regime, with its destructive over-emphasis on testing and “teaching to the test.” The few positive aspects of the program, in re the rights of disabled students, can be saved and reproduced at the State level.
10. We support decentralization of the school system, making it responsive to the specific needs of each community. We support policies that encourage meaningful input and participation from all members of the community, including students and parents.
11. We oppose corporate involvement or influence in our school and educational system, via advertising,

advertising-biased curriculum, and promotional materials sneaked into classrooms through “donations” of biased teaching materials.

12. We affirm the right of families to home-school their children, and support the entitlement of home-schooling families to the same benefits as are given to private school attendees.

13. We oppose vouchers, or other use of public money to support non-public education and divert public money away from education that is accessible to all.

14. We support the availability of public “magnet” schools that focus on special interests such as science or music.

15. The school system must recognize and honor multiple learning styles and varying speed of educational development of different children. The definition of “normal” must be expanded to include these different learning types, and the curriculum must be adapted to provide appropriate educational methods to reach all of these children without labeling them as “abnormal.” This includes active children who currently are not given the resources and opportunities needed for them to learn in a healthy way.

16. We oppose medicating, or pressure to medicate, children whose learning styles do not “fit in” with a uniform classroom or the comfort of the teacher. We support education of teachers and others (including parents) in alternate, natural ways of working constructively with children not thriving in the standard “classroom” environment.

17. Education should embrace understanding of diversity of view and culture. There must be teaching about the wide variety of religions and social customs, including those within our own communities.

18. Ethical topics must be included in teaching science, especially in “controversial” areas such as biotechnology and nuclear power.

In addition to supporting HB/SB 750, we support other changes to our system of taxation and budgeting, both nationally and at the State level. In general, we – like Adam Smith – support a more progressive tax system, with the greatest burden falling on those most able to pay.

We call for a strict review of all corporate tax breaks and subsidies. In 2005, the most recent year for which data are available, U.S. corporate tax revenue as a share of GDP was only 2.6 percent, lower than in all but two developed countries. It's high time that we made the wealthiest section of society carry a more equitable share of the burden of funding government.

We also call for removing the current cap on Social Security taxes, which will ensure the stability of the Social Security system while mitigating the presently regressive quality of this tax. At the same time, we reject the campaign to privatize Social Security, which is based on false and misleading projections about a "crisis" in order to scare Americans into supporting this policy.

We support reducing the self-employment tax, which presently imposes a disproportionate tax burden on individual producers and small business owners, discouraging small enterprise in favor of large corporations.

We oppose the current trend by states to legalize and sponsor gambling to raise revenue for state programs. We oppose any expansion of gambling in the State of Illinois and support phasing it out in favor of genuine progressive taxation. The fact is, gambling is a hidden tax on the poor. It preys on the poor by taking advantage of the desperate and the ignorant, who often fail to recognize that “the house always wins.” Those who can least afford it – people with household incomes under \$10,000 – bet nearly three times as much on lotteries as those with incomes over \$50,000, according to a recent report from the National Gambling Impact Study Commission. The rates are undoubtedly similar for casino gambling. State-sponsored gambling is part of the general strategy of shifting the tax burden to the poor while helping the wealthy avoid paying their fair share of taxes. It is a regressive tax posing as a "recreational pastime," and it leads to more inequity and misery.

When proponents of gambling extol its supposed benefits, they generally fail to take into account the economic *and* social costs of higher suicide and divorce rates, more bankruptcies and homelessness, more broken homes, more abuse and neglect. They also fail to consider that if working people hung on to more of their disposable income and expended it on real goods and services instead of giving it away to casino owners, there would be a positive, healthier economic impact.

By promoting fairness in sharing the tax burden, and by making education and other social needs the priority in budget and spending decisions, the Illinois Green Party can dramatically improve the quality of life for the majority of people.

M. IMMIGRATION POLICY

The issue of immigration policy in the United States is a thorny and often emotional issue that seemingly defies finding any one "right" answer. But if we are to find the best, most sensible policy, comporting with Green values, we must begin by recognizing some basic precepts.

First, the fact that there are 12 million or more people in this country who have few, if any, legal rights is a huge problem for all working people. Other things being equal, when the supply of labor rises, relative to demand, the price of labor – wages – will fall. That is simply a fact of economics. And when a large part of this increased supply consists of undocumented workers who can be forced to work under miserable conditions and even below-minimum wages, it has an even bigger downward impact. An underground economy that defies minimum wage laws will necessarily take away jobs that pay decent, or at least minimum, wages. Unscrupulous politicians and political commentators use this situation to whip up anti-immigrant sentiment among native born working people.

Second, let's also not blame the undocumented workers who are being victimized by this system. The majority of immigrants who come from Mexico or other impoverished nations are being driven by dire circumstances. They do not choose to leave their homelands or their families and take tremendous risks to get here because they want to take away American jobs. They are trying to do the same thing that workers everywhere do – survive, support their families, and hopefully make a better life for themselves. It makes no sense to criminalize them for it. A Green immigration policy has to be grounded in the demand for social justice for all working people, documented and undocumented.

Third, let us not be self-righteous or arrogant in our treatment of, or attitude toward, immigrants. Except for the Native Americans, who were here first, and African Americans, descended from persons brought here against their will, the rest of us "Americans" are descended from immigrants, most of whom were fleeing either persecution or economic hardship, or both – just like immigrants today. Fourth, let us identify the real causes of this situation of such a large section of working people in this country having a second class status. These include:

A. The role of U.S.-based giant agribusiness corporations, the international banks, NAFTA, CAFTA, and U.S. foreign policy generally, in creating massive poverty in Latin America in the first place. Farmers in Mexico are being driven out of business and driven off their land by our heavily subsidized corporate agribusiness, which floods the Mexican market with cheap imported corn and other grain. Already poor to begin with, many of these displaced farmers flocked to the factories and sweatshops near the border, called *maquiladoras*, where they were exploited by U.S. manufacturing corporations. However, now many of the *maquiladoras* have closed, their operations moved to China or other nations where their owners can exploit even cheaper labor. These displaced farmers and former farm and factory workers comprise most of the desperately poor who are being driven to seek work in the United States. (For good background information, see, for example, the reports on Mexico and Guatemala at www.madre.org.)

B. The demands of U.S. agribusiness and reckless urban growth in unsustainable regions has also led to a misappropriation of water resources (e.g., the Colorado River) that has robbed Mexico of this essential resource and further harmed Mexican agriculture, generating more poverty.

C. The role of U.S. corporations, and smaller sweatshops in the United States, in the agriculture, meatpacking, construction, textile and other industries, as well as restaurants, custodial contractors, landscaping contractors, etc., in knowingly employing undocumented workers, so that they can get away with paying sub-standard

wages. These are the real criminals – the giant corporate outfits and the sweatshop "cockroach capitalists" alike. They are deliberately and cynically taking advantage of the huge influx of immigrant labor – which is part of the reason why the two corporate political parties are so conflicted over the immigration issue. Thus, we see some Republican leaders pandering to the extremists who favor the most militaristic and repressive "solutions" to immigration, while other Republican and Democratic leaders alike try to cater to their wealthy contributors who benefit from the exploitation of undocumented workers – talking out of both sides of their mouth by pushing schemes like the "guest worker" program.

D. There are other factors that contribute to the flow of immigration – such as the oppressive and corrupt government in Mexico, which has betrayed its people in order to cater to multinational capital, and which has cynically used immigration as an escape valve for its own unemployment problem.

Fifth, every nation has a fundamental right to control its own borders and the terms and conditions of entry into its territory. Yet considering why so many undocumented immigrants have been forced to come here, and considering the dangers of further militarizing an already over-militarized society, it makes no sense to attempt to "solve" the immigration problem by militarizing our borders. This not only sends a negative signal internationally; it is a dangerous and bad precedent.

Sixth, we believe in the rule of law and we are searching for a way to develop an immigration policy that is socially just and consistent with the rule of law. We also need to recognize that a policy that would even attempt to expel 12 million or more persons who have been living and working here, many for years and sometimes decades, would be both extremely unjust and logistically impossible. Any solution to the immigration issue has to be grounded in respect for the human rights of the undocumented immigrants. Accordingly, to bring our policy in line with the rule of law, we must find ways to make legal pathways to immigration easier and faster, both for workers who seek entry and workers who have already been contributing to our society.

Seventh, at a time when our government is in the hands of extremists who are seeking to undermine our most basic civil liberties, we must be extremely vigilant against *that government*, far more than we need to be concerned about immigrants. We must not allow the extreme Right to use scare tactics to further attack *our* freedoms.

Eighth, the Illinois Green Party accepts as a goal a world in which persons can freely choose to live in and work in any country he or she desires. We recognize that this would be impractical without reciprocity between nations. *We seek that reciprocity as a practical goal.* Countries do have a right to know the identity of persons seeking to enter. They also have the right to limit who can come in to protect public safety and legitimate security concerns.

While these precepts may not yield perfect answers, they provide better answers than the status quo. We must recognize that there cannot be any true solutions to the conflicts created by immigration until we are able to organize *globally* to overcome the power of multinational corporations, which are engaged in an unending campaign to drive down workers' living standards *everywhere*. International cooperation and solidarity among labor organizations, to advance the rights of labor and raise such living standards globally, are essential to combat this trend. Until the power of the multinationals is curbed, we will continue to be confronted with seemingly "no win" choices.

While working toward that goal, however, the following immigration policies would be consistent with the Ten Key Values and the above-stated precepts:

1. The undocumented immigrants who are already residing and working in the United States, and their families, should be granted a legal status which includes the chance to become U.S. citizens. Persons should be excluded from this process only if they present a clear and present danger to other members of our society. The level of fees required for this process should not be a burden on low income workers. In any path to citizenship created to provide an orderly and appropriate resolution of the status of persons currently in the United States without proper documentation, we demand a recognition of past, uncredited payments into the Social Security System as part of any fees assessed for regularization of status.

2. In regard to who should have a right to come and live and work in the U.S., we support the following policies:

a) While the Green Party supports fair trade, and opposes misnamed "free trade" policies, any citizen of those countries that have "free trade" agreements with the United States, whose identity can be traced and verified, should be entitled to a border pass to come and go from the U.S. as this person desires (subject to the public safety and legitimate security concerns mentioned above. As this policy is implemented, the U.S. will attempt to negotiate with the other countries). Work permits for these persons must be easily obtainable. This applies particularly to our neighbors, Canada and Mexico.

b) All persons fleeing political, racial, religious, or other types of persecution must be welcomed, offered asylum and offered an opportunity for permanent resident status, excluding only those who are clear risks to public safety. The history of arbitrary denial of political asylum claims must be ended.

c) Family reunification must be a priority in accepting applications for permanent residency. The years of waiting that families are currently put through must be ended.

d) Permanent residency should not be denied based on political views, racial or national origin, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, or any other arbitrary basis.

e) There are many countries in the world where the economic policies and military actions of the U.S. government or U.S.-based corporations have caused extreme hardships. The peoples of these countries deserve special consideration if they wish to come to the U.S. to escape intolerable conditions created by our government or U.S. corporations.

3. Recognizing that a just reform of immigration policy may take some time, the Illinois Green Party supports:

a) Measures to allow undocumented immigrants to obtain drivers licenses if they can prove their identity and pass the required tests. This will improve road safety and allow the undocumented who are driving in any case to obtain insurance.

b) Measures to give legal status to undocumented immigrants who graduate from high school in the U.S. and who are otherwise qualified, to allow them to attend colleges and universities on an equal basis with other high school graduates.

c) Reduce wait lists and make the system work more efficiently: current numeric caps on immigrant visas must be increased. The current system of quotas and preferences has to be thoroughly and realistically reformed. Current backlogs must be brought up to date as soon as possible. Wait times for processing and resolving immigration benefit applications should be reduced to no more than six months. Pre-1996 screening criteria for legal permanent residency and citizenship applications should be restored.

4. We do not support "guest worker" programs as these have been understood and implemented in the past, since they have served as vehicles for severe oppression and exploitation of workers. However, we recognize that there are some immigrant workers who work in the U.S. but do not seek a path to U.S. citizenship and sincerely do not wish to give up their citizenship in their home countries. Some process should be made available to such workers to permit them to travel readily to their home countries without major bureaucratic obstacles. Once enacted, any such process must be monitored to ensure that the labor and civil rights of these workers are protected and that employers not be permitted to use such workers to undercut the rights of other workers.

5. The understandable concern about immigrant workers competing for jobs with current citizens cannot and should not be addressed by criminalizing undocumented immigration or punishing fellow victims of U.S. corporatist policies. Instead, we must reverse the policies. Among other things, we should repeal NAFTA, CAFTA, Fast Track and other corporate globalization policies. We must stop using our tax dollars to subsidize corporate agribusiness and to promote poverty in Latin America, and start using them to help reward environmentally responsible family farmers, encourage improved infrastructure and economic conditions in Latin America, and raise labor standards, at home and

abroad. Here at home, we must also promote the policies, as outlined in the Economy and Workers' Rights sections of this Platform, that can help us achieve a full employment economy at a living wage, including strictly enforcing and expanding the rights of all workers to form unions.

6. We advocate an end to employer sanctions, which have been shown to hurt not only undocumented workers but also U.S.-born workers (especially those of color). Instead, the focus on employers must be to vigorously enforce our wage and labor laws. Don't further victimize the victims of corporate globalization; create real opportunities and raise labor standards for all!

7. We oppose "English-only" legislation. Immigrants already have ample incentive to learn English. But when interaction with the government is limited to the English speaking, persons are put at additional risk of exploitation. The focus needs to be on providing adequate and accessible English language instruction and assistance. We support the proposal of The Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights for a major "We Want to Learn English Initiative," to make Illinois the best state in the nation in assisting immigrants to learn English in their communities, at their places of work, school, and worship. We advocate legislation to ensure that federal funds marked for communities to provide ESL (English as a second language) training, and health and social support services to immigrants, actually go to them. When funds are spent in other areas, immigrants are being deprived of benefits that they earn as productive workers in their communities. Meanwhile, courts, social service agencies, and all government agencies dealing with the public must provide trained and certified translators. Additionally, the language rights of peoples who were in this land before it became part of the U.S., including Native Americans and Mexicans in the Southwest, must be recognized and respected.

8. We oppose the militarization of our borders, (mis-)using the National Guard as border police, and building a wall between the U.S. and Mexico. This will further intensify the human rights disaster our immigration policy has become, as well as seriously harm border ecosystems. We demand an immediate end to policies designed to force undocumented border-crossers into areas where conditions dramatically increase the risk of permanent injury or death, destruction of fragile environments, and the cutting off of corridors needed by wildlife for migration within their habitat. For these reasons we specifically oppose the walling off of both traditional urban crossing areas and of wilderness areas.

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

10. We must resist proposals that use illegal immigration as an excuse to put us all under further government monitoring and control by means of a national ID card or other identification or tracking systems. Citizen workers who have been propagandized to support "tougher" measures to identify and apprehend undocumented workers need to be carefully consider what they are asking for. The same snare they want the government to use against undocumented workers can easily be used to repress them. Our government is already engaged in illegal spying and surveillance of its own citizens. It is already invading our privacy. A national ID card system is one of the hallmarks of a totalitarian government or police state. We need to repeal the Real ID Act and resist the establishment of any system that would suppress freedom to travel and require citizens and non-citizens alike to "show their papers" and reveal their private information to government monitors at every turn.

11. We demand recognition of the sovereignty of indigenous nations whose territories cross national boundaries. These indigenous nations have the right to determine the status of their members.

N. FINANCE AND BANKING

As the U.S. economy entered 2008, it was beset by a new crisis, albeit several years in the making: a collapsing real estate market, punctuated by a wave of foreclosures, causing hundreds of thousands of homeowners to lose their homes, and sending the economy into a tail-spin.

The immediate cause of this crisis has been identified as an uncontrolled "bubble" of speculation. Largely unregulated financial institutions engaged in new types of predatory lending, the dominant form of which has been the sub-prime mortgage, including outrageous variants like the payment option adjustable-rate mortgage, under which the homeowner's principal debt can actually grow over time. These financial institutions then sold the mortgages to

speculators who bid up the price to irrational proportions. As interest rates on these usurious mortgages soared, homeowners began defaulting – and the housing market has come crashing down.

However, the sub-prime mortgage crisis is only one symptom of a much larger disease. As giant multinational corporations and banks have looted our economy and ruined much of its industrial base, it is now heavily dominated by the “FIRE” (Finance, Insurance and Real Estate) sector. This sector has taken advantage of low-income and middle-income workers, especially people of color and women, students and the disadvantaged, by engaging in an unprecedented expansion of credit and debt, fueled by deceptive and unconscionable predatory lending practices. Controlled and compromised by the same institutions, the federal government has deliberately dropped the ball in regulating wild speculation based on such practices. As a result, our national economy is facing ruin, under a crushing burden of indebtedness.

If elected to office, Greens in government would work to “bring the FIRE under control.” One top priority would be to stop the wave of foreclosures, with a goal of saving home ownership – not by bailing out predatory lenders with taxpayers’ money, but by imposing an immediate emergency freeze on foreclosures, followed by national legislation requiring renegotiation of unconscionable mortgage agreements, to meet new regulatory standards. Lenders would still be assured a return but on terms that maximize the successful retention of homes by the purchasers.

Similar bold new strategies should be employed to bring record credit card debt and student loan payments within affordable limits.

The Illinois Green Party also supports more sustainable pathways toward home ownership, and community ownership of productive resources, through community land trusts, producers’ cooperatives and similar institutions that empower the people.

The predatory practices of banks and other lending institutions are not limited to their direct scamming of unwary consumers. The monetary foundation of our Republic is another, longstanding target. The Constitutional power to issue the nation’s money supply was reserved to Congress. But in 1913, Congress abdicated that responsibility and turned it over to the Federal Reserve, a private banking cartel given the right to issue Federal Reserve Notes and *lend* them to the U.S. government. These notes, issued by the Fed for the cost of printing them, today form the basis of the national money supply. Except for coins, which compose only about one one-thousandth of the total U.S. money supply, *all* of our money is now created by *banks*. Federal Reserve Notes (dollar bills) are issued by the Federal Reserve, a *private* banking corporation, and *lent* to the government. Furthermore, Federal Reserve Notes *and* coins together compose less than 3 percent of the money supply. The other 97 percent is created by commercial banks as loans.

The “reserves” of the Federal Reserve consist of government bonds (I.O.U.s or debts). The government issues bonds, the Federal Reserve issues Federal Reserve Notes, which are essentially just traded for the bonds, leaving the government in debt to a private banking corporation for money the government could have issued itself, debt-free. One consequence of this system is that new money must continually be borrowed into existence just to pay the interest owed to the bankers. The economic problems generated by our spiraling national debt problem could be greatly alleviated if Congress were to take back its Constitutional power to issue the nation’s money, and banks restricted to responsible lending practices based on actual funds, rather than a never-ending supply of government bonds, ultimately backed by its taxpayers.

The Illinois Green Party believes that an essential condition for the improvement of Illinois neighborhoods and communities, as well as its rural and unconsolidated areas, is for people who dwell in these places to have fair and equal access to credit and banking services, especially lower-income and minority communities, in the form of home and business loans made widely available on reasonable and responsible terms. Therefore, we support the continued existence and rigorous enforcement of the Community Reinvestment Act, which mandates that financial institutions doing business in local communities set aside a portion of their loan funds for use by individuals, organizations, and businesses in those communities.

The Illinois Green Party promotes community reinvestment by seeking to build the capacity to accomplish it among existing and emerging community organizations, and by creating the necessary understanding and support among

business leaders, elected officials, and government regulators.

Ensuring the enforcement of the Community Reinvestment Act is an especially urgent task in the face of rapid changes in the financial industry brought on by mergers between existing small and medium-sized banks and the much larger metropolitan banks, resulting in huge mega-banks headquartered hundreds and even thousands of miles distant from the communities they serve.

O. CRIME AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

In Illinois, as in the rest of the nation, our criminal justice system is in dire need of an overhaul. The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world. As of 2005, there were nearly 2.2 million people in prisons and jails nationwide. Hundreds of thousands more are on probation or parole. The United States incarcerates seven times as many people per capita as Canada or Germany and more than triple the rate for Mexico. Yet massive imprisonment has had little, if any, impact on the rate of violent crime.

Our nation spends approximately \$60 billion a year on so-called corrections. Yet despite the millions spent on new prisons annually, our prisons are still bursting at the seams with overcrowding. The dehumanizing treatment experienced by most prisoners makes it all the more likely that they will commit violent acts upon their release. The current theory that our society can solve the crime problem by punishing or "incapacitating" criminals through massive, long-term incarceration isn't working.

The crime problem needs to be attacked on several levels. The most important step is to address the causes of crime by creating a healthier economic system that can provide well-paying jobs for all who need them. Poverty and economic insecurity are not the sole causes of crime, but they are probably the most important single factor. Economic insecurity also breeds domestic violence and child abuse which, in turn, perpetuates violent behavior when abused children become adults.

Another important step is to redefine the kinds of conduct that are regarded as "criminal." Eighty-four percent of the increase in the prison population since 1980 is attributable to persons convicted of nonviolent offenses. One survey of state prison inmates showed that 53% were convicted of crimes that most people would regard as "petty" -- such as shoplifting \$10 worth of merchandise or possessing small amounts of marijuana.

Indeed, much of the prison-overcrowding problem stems from our society's misguided attempt to legislate morality by criminalizing the use of drugs. It is senseless to punish people for using a relatively benign substance like marijuana while the use of more harmful substances like alcohol and tobacco is being encouraged through mass advertising. The prohibition of more addictive drugs such as cocaine or heroin only ensures that the price remains so high that many addicts must turn to theft or prostitution in order to feed their habit. We advocate a more sensible policy: Cannabis should be legalized, although its legal use should be restricted to adults. The penalties for simple possession and use of other drugs should be greatly reduced.

Serious substance abuse problems of all kinds, including alcohol and tobacco, should be dealt with as a public health matter, not as a criminal matter, with more resources devoted to drug education, treatment and social intervention. A sensible policy on drug abuse and crime should also eliminate the hypocrisy, double standards and injustices that permeate the criminal justice system today, such as:

1. The hypocrisy of the federal government proclaiming "zero tolerance" on drug abuse when the CIA for years has employed the "services" of organized crime and has winked at, if not aided, major suppliers of heroin and cocaine.
2. The injustice of "civil forfeiture" laws, which have allowed law enforcement agencies to rake in millions of dollars by seizing the property of persons who have merely been accused of drug offenses and retaining it even when the accused is later found innocent.
3. The double standard of specially targeting African-Americans for arrests and tougher prosecution, resulting in a

disproportionate rate of convictions, longer sentences and a higher rate of capital punishment for African-Americans than for white Americans.

4. The double standard of imposing severe punishment for victimless crimes, while much corporate, "white-collar" crime -- including violations of environmental and worker safety laws that can kill hundreds or thousands of people -- often goes unpunished or is punished by "slap on the wrist" fines.
5. The injustice of providing inadequate resources to public defenders' offices, resulting in wrongful convictions and incarceration of poor people.
6. The injustice of allowing private enterprise to exploit prison labor, a policy that eliminates real jobs from our communities, while undermining unions and the wage standards of all workers.

Finally, when people must be incarcerated for committing violent or other serious crimes, our criminal justice system must make serious attempts to rehabilitate offenders, not just punish them, by providing better counseling, psychiatric evaluation and therapy when needed, and better educational and vocational training opportunities to inmates. The use of alternatives to prison, such as "half-way houses" and programs that help convicts find jobs and manage their lives successfully, should be expanded. Persons convicted of crimes should be encouraged to turn their lives around, not brutalized and degraded.

Similarly, in keeping with its values of nonviolence and social justice, and in light of recent experience showing that the State's criminal justice system has put innocent people in danger of being executed, which in turn prompted a moratorium on the death penalty, the Illinois Green Party is opposed to capital punishment.

This does not mean that Greens are "soft" on crime. The Illinois Green Party recognizes that our society, at least at present, does create some people who have become so violent that they must be separated from the general population through some form of incarceration. However, to be truly "tough" on crime means attacking the causes of crime as much as possible, focusing on crimes that truly harm society, and focusing on turning offenders into productive, law-abiding citizens. It means recognizing the human potential for redemption and rehabilitation.

This Green policy on crime and criminal justice will be far more effective at eradicating crime than the policies of those who talk "tough" but who lack the political courage to attack this complex problem with integrity.

P. MEDIA, THE ARTS, AND INFORMATION

We recognize that free access to information is one of the cornerstones of the ability of communities to control lives and make meaningful decisions. The public has a right to know what is happening in the news, current events, the sciences, and the environment. The increasing centralization and corporate control of the media, including the recent round of mergers, plus withdrawal of government funding for community radio, has made access to relevant sources of information increasingly difficult. We are bombarded with false, biased "news" plus sophisticated corporate advertising campaigns, to disempower us from learning about, and responding to, what is really happening in our communities and the world at large. The cynical saying, "Freedom of the press belongs to those who own the press," has never been more representative of our lack of access to accurate news and community input and lack of vehicles for expressing our own opinions.

We deplore the promotion of the culture of "buying and acquiring," of violence, of sexual exploitation, of economic and racial elitism, and of chauvinism that is promoted by the corporate-controlled, centralized media. This is damaging to our communities and to the environment.

Accordingly, and in keeping with the Ten Key Values:

1. We support the continuation and growth of independent, non-corporate media such as the Independent Media Centers that have sprung up in many localities of this state and country. We support the access of reporters and journalists from independent media sources to press conferences and all events to which the "corporate media" are invited.

2. We support the decriminalization of “pirate” radio and the existence and growth of community radio and community/public access television stations. Public access to the airwaves is an essential part of our free press and our community control of our lives. We support access to public funding and technical information for these entities. We support community broadband Internet access.
3. We vigorously oppose targeting of children and the elderly by corporate and government advertising.
4. We support public funding for the arts, including both its creation and the access of the public to viewing it, without corporate and government censorship of its political content.
5. We oppose hidden corporate advertising being incorporated into so-called non-advertising sections of news. We oppose the use of corporate press releases and “PR” wires as “news” stories, especially those that do not mention the source of the “information.”
6. We oppose the glorification of violence, aggression, and sexual exploitation in our media.
7. We oppose the media’s demeaning and misleading representations of people of varying races, nationalities, religions, and cultures, of women, and of gay and lesbian people.
8. We support funding for education in the arts.
9. We support our right to privacy, and we oppose corporate access to our personal data without our informed consent.
10. We oppose the aggressive campaigns and misleading advertising of credit card and other financial companies that entice the public into debt.
11. We support access for reporters and journalists to all sources of information.
12. We support protection of reporters and journalists, regardless of whom they work for, from negative consequences, job-related or otherwise, of telling the truth.
13. We support net neutrality.
14. We support the open source movement. Proprietary software should not be used in any voting system and government agencies should be encouraged to use open source software elsewhere, when feasible.
15. We call for the repeal of the FCC’s relaxation of the ban on cross-ownership of broadcast media and newspapers in major markets. We oppose any further relaxation of rules limiting media consolidation and monopolization.
16. We oppose media collaboration with the Federal government to spy on the American people without following the Fourth Amendment.

APPENDIX

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948

PREAMBLE

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10. Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial

tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11. (1) Everyone charged with a penal offense has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offense on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offense, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offense was committed.

Article 12. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14. (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15. (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16. (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17. (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21. (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22. Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23. (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24. Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25. (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26. (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27. (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28. Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29. (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a

democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30. Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.