



PLATFORM

2012-2013

ADOPTED AT THE REGULAR STATED MEETING
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA
JULY 11, 2012

VETERANS DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF SACRAMENTO COUNTY PLATFORM

The Veterans Democratic Club of Sacramento County (DemVets), in an ongoing effort to fulfill our mission outlined by our bylaws, puts forth this platform in order to guide the club over the course of the next two years and provide for the continuation of the good work and effort being put forward by the Democratic Party of Sacramento County (DPSC) for the people of the County of Sacramento, its cities and towns. This effort, specific to our part, is specific to the affairs of the Sacramento County Veterans of our United States Armed Forces.

GENERAL

In general, the DemVets will be supportive of the different efforts of the Democratic Party at all levels, specific to the areas where we become involved in the political issues of the day. The DemVets will strive to help build the Democratic Party into a larger and more powerful force in the political arena.

The DemVets will:

- Fulfill the mission of the club as outlined in the bylaws.
- Fulfill the vision of the club as outlined in the bylaws and currently expressed in the most current edition of the handbook.
- Live up to the core values identified in the bylaws.
- Support the different identified issues of the club and work towards their identified solutions the club has chosen to pursue.
- Support the current Platform of the Democratic Party.
- Support the current Platform of the California Democratic Party.
- Support the current positions of the Democratic Party of Sacramento County, wherever and whenever possible.
- Assist with the shaping of the current positions of the DPSC through active participation with the DPSC's Central Committee.
- Provide as much financial assistance to the DPSC as possible once the financial needs of the club are met.

BENEFITS

Veterans are entitled to benefits that are reflective of a nation, state and community grateful for their sacrifices and service. As Veterans who have sacrificed great and small for us, it is our responsibility to ensure that we take care of them, especially when they transition from being members of the Armed Forces to become members of our Veterans community.

The DemVets will:

- Support the G.I. Bill of Rights for the 21st Century.
- Advocate to ensure that earned benefits are readily available to all service

- members, Veterans and their families on a timely basis within their own communities.
- Insist that the federal Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), California DVA and Sacramento County Veterans Resource Center fulfill their legal obligations.
 - Support the provision of payment from the state for Veterans and military benefits earned if the federal government is unwilling to pay, and hold the veteran safe from recovery of such payments if the claim is later denied by the federal government, except in the case of fraud.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Veterans of the local community should be an active part of their local community, and should strive to be good citizens of the neighborhoods they live in. In addition to this, the community should strive to support the Veterans within it. This partnership between Veterans and the community should be considered absolutely necessary to the success of the same.

The DemVets will:

- Work to support community education and involvement with local Veterans organizations, their activities and events.
- Work to support the communities of Sacramento County area through the involvement of the Veterans and the Veterans groups in the local activities and events of the community itself.
- Advocate on behalf of the Veterans across Sacramento County and their respective organizations in the political arena as a trusted representative.

EDUCATION

It is imperative to the recovery of the economy and the long-term success of the community that our Veterans be equipped with the knowledge needed to take their experiences and apply them forward in their personal, civilian careers. Without the educational advancement of our Veterans, there will not be the needed base of support to the recovery of the Nation, State and Community.

The DemVets will:

- Encourage Veterans to seek their full educational benefits.
- Seek improved educational benefits for Veterans.

EMPLOYMENT & BUSINESS

It is unacceptable that Veterans are now faced with the choice of either extending their already long tenured service to the country or face a home front that does not have a job waiting for them. It is absolutely imperative that we ensure that Veterans receive a higher priority when it comes to obtaining jobs. Additionally, the promotion of businesses that are Veteran-friendly or Veteran-owned must

take place in order to continue and spread the trend.

The DemVets will:

- Advocate for employment for the Unemployed Veteran population.
- Advocate for better jobs for Underemployed Veterans.
- Advocate for transferability of vocational training received in the military so Veterans can build on the vocational training foundation obtained during their service.
- Promote fair treatment of Veterans who were members of the Guard and Reserves by their employers.
- Promote businesses that hire Veterans by preference over other applicants.
- Promote businesses that provide discounts on their services to Veterans and Military.
- Promote businesses that are owned and operated by Veterans.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Energy independence and companion efforts to combat energy-related impacts of climate change are vital to National Security. Consistent with California policy, energy efficiency, demand response and renewable energy are significant to the furtherance of the California economy and the quality of California's environment. Veterans should be part of the energy solution and may be uniquely qualified to achieve diminished reliance on fossil fuels due to their knowledge and skills with energy efficiency and renewables in the field.

The DemVets will:

- Support public policies and programs intended to achieve energy independence, climate change goals, wise use of scarce water resources, and environmental equality.
- Cooperate with private-sector initiatives for energy and environment (such as the Truman National Security Project) that seeks clean energy solutions.
- Encourage Veterans to engage in working towards solutions for energy and environmental issues.
- Support any program or Legislator identified to be pushing for solutions to issues of energy/environment that do not rely on stock-fuel resources, net-energy-loss sources (such as oil shale, tar sands or corn-derived ethanol), or resource-depleting or environment-despoiling solutions (such as fracking).

EQUALITY

It is never be acceptable, nor is it acceptable now, for persons to risk their lives and well-being for the causes of freedom and equality, only to not experience these rights.

Veterans from all components of military service should receive equal treatment, by the United States, and should be provided all the entitlements given to Veterans of earlier service, including education and training benefits, health benefits, home loans, family benefits, and other financial assistance.

The DemVets will:

- Advocate for full equality for all Americans and against discrimination of any kind, including but not limited to race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or religion.
- Work for the overturning of dishonorable discharges that were specific results of the former “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy and for the return of full benefits to Veterans adversely affected by that policy.
- Work for a solution that provides an accelerated pathway to citizenship for Veterans who served in the Armed Forces prior to seeking US Citizenship.

HEALTH

With the rise in health issues experienced by Veterans specific to their time in service, it is unacceptable that the benefits provided to Veterans through the VA health program are slow to be provided and the bare minimum once they are received by the Veterans.

The DemVets will:

- Work to assist Veterans in receiving their healthcare benefits.
- Advocate for improved Veterans healthcare delivery.
- Work to ensure the needs of our Disabled Veterans are met and surpassed.

HOUSING

It is unacceptable that anyone should serve this nation in any capacity only to find themselves homeless after returning to civilian life. Shelter and housing for Veterans that provides them the chance to get back into the market for jobs and housing must be provided.

The DemVets will:

- Work to find homes or shelters for homeless Veterans.
- Work to assist Veterans who are seeking homes through support of programs that ease Veterans’ efforts to become renters and homeowners.

JUSTICE

Veterans deserve a certain level of justice, at minimum commensurate with their non-veteran counterparts in the citizenship. Consideration of military service should be taken into account when Veterans return with different PTSD issues

that possible influence their judgment in the commission of misdemeanors and citable offenses.

The DemVets will:

- Provide public education and outreach concerning PTSD and similar conditions that afflict Veterans, with a focus on communications with law enforcement entities and the courts.
- Advocate for public and law enforcement education to increase the recognition of cases where abuse of a substance is directly derived from mental illness (such as PTSD) due to a Veterans service experiences.
- Advocate for the appropriate selection of jurors for criminal and civil cases where a Veteran is involved as a defendant that balances and fully represents a true jury of his or her peers.

LABOR ISSUES

Veterans should be able to return to an otherwise normal life and should not be subject to any manner of workplace discrimination for their military service, including the suppression of vocal Veterans whose military-indoctrinated sense of justice drives them to participate actively in the creation or support of union activities within their respective workplaces.

The DemVets will:

- Support the Veterans and members of the Guard and Reserves who face labor issues.
- Encourage military, guard or Veterans groups in the Sacramento area to support organized labor.

MEMORIAL & PUBLIC AWARENESS

It is important for the entire region, California, and the Nation to remember the different service of Veterans, to honor Veterans, and support their needs with gratitude.

The DemVets will:

- Ensure that Memorial Day is properly observed in the form of a formal ceremony that solemnly marks the day of the year dedicated to the remembrance of those who have died in service to their nation and respects the sacrifices of Veterans.
- Ensure that Armed Forces Day is properly observed in the form of a celebratory event that salutes the members of the US Armed Forces and reminds the public of service members' needs.
- Ensure that Veterans Day is properly observed in the form of a celebratory event that thanks those who have previously served their country for their service and reminds the public of Veterans issues.

MILITARY FAMILIES

Too often, Veterans' families, including survivors' families, are left to fend for themselves in spite of the Veterans service and sacrifice. This is unacceptable, and will not be tolerated by the DemVets.

The DemVets will:

- Encourage community support of Survivors of Military Families.
- Work to ensure Homecoming Heroes are honored.
- Encourage provision of monetary support and services to families who bear the burden as caregivers for disabled Veterans.

POLITICAL REFORM

As a matter of public policy, support for the Veterans and Veterans' services are important at all levels of government. This shall no longer be deemed acceptable.

The DemVets will:

- Encourage local government to improve their involvement in the local Veterans Affairs.
- Work to change the way local office-holders involve themselves in Veterans issues and push for them to take responsibility of those issues that are within their districts and step outside of their normal boundaries to push for solutions.
- Work to change the accountability of local candidates for office in regards to Veterans issues, shaping debate and bringing our issues forefront to the forum of discussions that take place.
- Encourage the continued effort of the club to ensure that Veterans are represented in the political arena specific to the Democratic Party.
- Encourage effort that raises public awareness of the full spectrum of Veterans' issues as opposed to being limited to the cheerleading of other parties with regard to the military.
- Partner with Veterans Organizations in an effort to assist them with political or politically related Veterans' issues as an advocate where Non-Profit Organizations might be limited.
- Work to endorse candidates for office that will support the ongoing efforts to improve the Veterans Affairs of their specific constituencies they seek to represent.
- Work to promote more veteran candidates running for offices in the local area, that their experiences in the military may be put to use improving local governance while also directly addressing the needs of constituent Veterans.

SENIORS

As our Veterans become Senior Citizens, the DemVets will promote the different programs that support Senior Citizens and address their unique needs.

The DemVets will:

- Promote programs such as the Fisher House Program that ensure that Veterans who are of age may receive the different care afforded seniors in the VA communities.
- Promote care for retired and senior citizen Veterans through the promotion of strong senior citizen communities and benefits.