



The Crossroads Commitment

2024 Indiana Democratic Party Platform – First Draft

April 29, 2024

Creating a Better Future for Hoosier Families

Hoosier Democrats have answered the call over the past four years, and provided incredible accomplishments that have impacted every county in our state. Congressmen Frank Mrvan and Andre Carson have led the effort to invest in Indiana's infrastructure, and bring the economy of the future to the Hoosier State. Both Democrats in Congress voted for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which is transforming the American transportation network to be ready for the future. About \$7 billion dollars for repairs and upgrades will flow into Indiana thanks to this legislation. In addition, it provides over \$750 million for water upgrades, including replacing lead service lines across Indiana. Hoosier public transportation is seeing a \$680 million investment, and hundreds of millions from the bill have been allocated toward rural broadband and building climate resilience for our communities.

The CHIPS and Science Act was led by President Joe Biden and Democrats, and it is delivering for Indiana. Multiple companies have announced multi-billion dollar projects across our state thanks to the provisions in the bill that allow chips to be made right here in America. Democrats will continue supporting the economy of the future right here at home. Through the American Rescue Plan, Democrats ensured every American had access to a vaccine, and cities and towns throughout our state saw critical relief during the worst stages of the pandemic to keep the lights on, and support local small businesses. Localities also saw much-needed investment in law enforcement and public safety to curtail crime, and hire more first responders. The Child Tax Credit included in the bill lifted 80,000 Hoosier children out of poverty, and Hoosier Democrats will keep fighting for the Child Tax Credit to return permanently for families.

At the state legislative level, Hoosier Democrats have fought for freedom and opportunity. The efforts of the Indiana Black Legislative Caucus

(IBLC) led to significant criminal justice reform in 2021. This means these reform policies will provide de-escalation training for officers, define chokehold tactics, hold officers accountable for misusing body cameras, and increase transparency of law enforcement disciplinary actions. IBLC members also passed automatic enrollment in the state's 21st Century Scholars program, which could send as many as 40,000 more low-income Hoosiers to higher education every year.

Our state legislators have also been the last line of defense for some of the most dangerous policies coming from the Statehouse. Hoosier Democrats unanimously opposed the Republican near-total abortion ban – the first ban passed in the country after the fall of *Roe v. Wade*. We know we must restore the right to choose for Hoosier women across the state.

Hoosier Democrats will always fight for the rights and freedoms of everyone in our state. We delivered these accomplishments for our state, but we know we can't stop until every Hoosier has a fair shot to get ahead, and the same rights as everyone else.

Our promise to you is that we will continue to travel the state, to both small towns and large cities, to hear what Hoosiers have to say, and how we can continue delivering as Hoosier Democrats at every level of government. We invite you to read our 2024 State Party platform [here](#), and recommit to improving the quality of life for every Hoosier family.

Creating Economic Success for All Workers, Hoosier Families

The facts don't lie. Indiana's economy is leaving Hoosiers behind. The cost of living keeps rising, but Hoosiers' incomes haven't kept up. Hoosier Democrats are committed to ensuring families do not just make ends meet but thrive. To accomplish this, it's past time to dismantle the

“work more for less” economy created by the Indiana Republican Party. Too many Hoosiers work more than one job just to put food on the table, and now is the moment to deliver livable wages for our workers and their families.

Here’s the economic reality for Indiana. Thanks to the Indiana Republican Party, “good jobs” have left the state and have been filled by low-wage jobs. Because of the Republicans’ “right to work” policies, the state’s workforce has now earned a failing rating by economic experts.

The Republicans’ short-changing economy must end. While Democrats continue to fight to increase the minimum wage, fight for equal pay for equal work, and more policies for the success of all Hoosiers, we must also be bold in identifying new and creative solutions so every Hoosier has the opportunity to pursue a good-paying career, and work to ensure the workforce has the skills to succeed.

One of these bold strategies is to legalize and regulate cannabis across Indiana. The vast majority of Hoosiers want to end the complete prohibition on cannabis, and Democrats have proposed legislation to legalize cannabis in Indiana. We are losing Hoosier tax revenue to our neighboring states, and threatening veterans who cross state lines with jail time. It needs to end now.

A Fair Deal for Hoosier Workers

The Indiana Democratic Party stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the efforts of our partners in organized labor to remain the foundation of the American marketplace. Now more than ever, workplace safety is critical, as Republicans look to weaken labor protections across the country. We’ll fight to repeal efforts to purposefully undermine Hoosier workers’ right to organize and demand fair wages and safe working conditions.

Hoosier Democrats will continue pushing to repeal the dangerous 'right-to-work' bill and expand project labor agreements in cities and towns across the state. We're proud to have the first President to ever walk on a picket line. The Infrastructure and Jobs Act is creating tens of thousands of union jobs across the country. We will continue to support American labor to build the economy of the future here in Indiana.

Restoring and Protecting Reproductive Healthcare in Indiana

In 2022, Indiana became the first state in the country to pass a near-total abortion ban after the Dobbs decision by the U.S. Supreme Court. This law strips bodily autonomy and reproductive freedom from millions of Hoosier women, and has forced women to seek care in other states. We oppose this cruel ban, and will keep working to oppose it and other attempts to push doctors and care providers out of our state.

Hoosier Democrats believe that reproductive healthcare should be within reach for every family that needs it. That's why we opposed this ban, and why our state legislative members have worked to protect access to contraception and IVF in Indiana.

We know that Indiana's near-total abortion ban will only lead to disastrous results for the health of Hoosiers. Much of the state is already a maternal healthcare desert, and the Republican abortion ban only makes it considerably harder to recruit and retain the best possible healthcare professionals in Indiana.

A World-Class Public Education System

Indiana's Constitution guarantees a quality public education for every Hoosier child. Public schools are the heartbeats of urban, suburban, and rural communities alike, and Republicans have failed to live up to this promise, and instead have put the health of Indiana's communities in

jeopardy. Instead of making investments in parents and students, they've mandated retention policies that experts warn will negatively impact students.

Recent state budgets show Republicans want to dismantle public education. Whether it's consistently under-funding rural and urban public schools, denying educators a pay raise, or super-funding an unregulated school choice system, Republicans have created a state education system that earned a "D+" grade by experts. This is an unacceptable grade, and Republicans are failing our children as well as Indiana's future.

In recent years, the Republican supermajority has expanded private school vouchers to some of the most wealthy families in Indiana, pulling dollars out of public schools. This is unsustainable, and another reason why we need full transparency and accountability in our state government, which starts by breaking the Republican supermajority in the State House.

It's time to focus on what's best for student learning again. It's past time the state addresses and solves the ongoing teacher shortage crisis. Moreover, the incessant misinformation and culture wars fueled by the Indiana Republican Party – including the crusade on nonexistent Critical Race Theory (CRT) curriculum, and dangerous book bans – must end. For too long, political debates have outweighed what is best for students. It starts with respecting teachers, educational best practices, and returning the emphasis to the classroom.

Invest in Hoosiers, Reduce the Cost of Living, and Develop a 21st Century Workforce

Our state's most valuable resource has always been Hoosiers. Time and again; Hoosiers have proved that with the right tools, our work ethic,

ingenuity, and creativity are second to none. To compete in the global economy, the state government must create an economy that's reflective of the 21st Century by investing in Hoosiers and building strong, welcoming communities. Such investments include comprehensive paid family leave, affordable childcare options, and student loan reform. We believe Indiana should be a leader by adapting paid family leave in our state. Democrats are also working hard to bring good, union jobs to our communities.

Hoosier Democrats are also leading the charge to address the cost of housing crisis in Indiana. Democratic legislators have asked Governor Holcomb to study this issue, and have proposed legislation to expand tenant rights throughout the state.

Safe and Strong Communities

Building safe and strong communities means examining past practices and ensuring every stakeholder has a seat at the table. For too long, Indiana has failed to look inward and confront policies that marginalize Hoosiers who identify as a person of color. It's time to move Indiana forward by creating a better future for everyone, not just the status quo.

Democrats firmly oppose the practice of racial profiling in all potential applications, especially as a law enforcement tool. We celebrate the recent reforms passed by the Indiana Black Legislative Caucus in 2021 while also confronting and correcting systemic racism in housing, workplace, health care, environment, and safety policies.

Through the American Rescue Plan and other legislation, Hoosier Democrats have returned home millions of dollars for funding of local police departments throughout Indiana. We also understand the scourge gun violence has had on our communities. Congressmen Mrvan and Carson both voted for the first major gun safety bill in 30 years: the

Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. We recommit to tackling gun violence in our communities.

We believe in strengthening and protecting Indiana's red flag law, and having universal background checks on gun sales. Localities should not be preempted by the state from banning open carry or raising the age of firearm sales to 21, as proposed in Indianapolis.

We further call on all of our Democratic candidates who run for public office in the State of Indiana to include in their platform policies aimed at improving our communities in an equitable and just manner for Hoosiers of color and those in our community who have faced persistent and systematic discrimination. We are the political party that has for decades called for and worked to ensure the civil rights and liberties of communities of color. Democratic candidates are expected to listen to the needs of all diverse communities and build new paths that guarantee all Hoosiers prosperous, equal, and free lives. This commitment should be reflected in Democratic candidates' campaign organizations.

Healthier Communities and Lowering the Cost of Health Care

The United States is the richest country on earth, yet we rank near last among industrialized countries in health care coverage. Thanks to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), pre-existing conditions no longer mean a lifetime of medical debt, a loss of coverage, or worse. Further, the ACA installed a consistent streamline of funding to create the Healthy Indiana Plan 2.0 (HIP). Democrats must celebrate the Affordable Care Act and the long-term health care opportunities it provides to Hoosier families.

Democrats must also curb the rising cost of premiums and prescription drugs, preserve Medicare, and fight any efforts to decrease access to affordable health care. The Affordable Care Act isn't perfect and it's up to

Democrats to make universal health coverage a reality for every American.

Further, Democrats must stem the rising tide of opioid addiction in our communities. Indiana's opioid overdose death rate has quadrupled since 1999. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates there are 109 opioid prescriptions for every 100 Hoosiers. And Indiana lags neighboring states in access to treatment. We must take proactive steps to end this scourge.

Democrats understand how the loss of rural healthcare facilities and providers has negatively impacted much of our state. The state needs to help ensure that these places do not lose access to critical care services. Every Hoosier community deserves access to world-class healthcare. Recent policies such as the near-total abortion ban aren't helping our rural health deserts; they're making it even worse.

Equality and Justice for All: Protecting the Rights of All Hoosiers

The Indiana Democratic Party is proud of our longstanding commitment to and support for civil rights and equality. We support making the promise of "equal protection under the law" a reality for all Hoosiers – regardless of who they are.

Republican leaders at the General Assembly have invested too much time and taxpayer resources focused on divisive culture wars that send an unwelcoming message to those around us. These crusades – based on misinformation, conspiracy theories, and fear – further prove the Indiana Republican Party is bad for business, and their partisan efforts must end.

Democrats reaffirm our commitment to fully embrace Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the

basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, as well as full enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 for Hoosiers with disabilities and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act.

The Indiana Democratic Party opposes all forms of discrimination based upon sexual orientation or gender identity and all efforts to enshrine discrimination in our state's Constitution.

As Democrats, we oppose discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodation and we strongly support the adoption of a statewide policy barring discrimination against LGBTQ+ Hoosiers. Democrats continue its call for the Indiana General Assembly to pass an all-inclusive hate crimes prevention legislation.

As Democrats, we believe that older workers are a vital part of the workforce and that prohibitions against age discrimination should be enforceable in the same manner and to the same extent as any other discrimination. We also continue to support legislation that would protect the freedom of all Hoosiers and create tougher penalties for those who infringe, criminally or otherwise, on those freedoms.

Democrats are concerned with accessibility issues for those with disabilities, including personal income limits and attaining and sustaining personal care when needed. We also believe that a state Family and Medical Leave Act should be ratified and that meaningful remedies be available when a person is subjected to discrimination and seeks redress under our state's civil rights statute. Further, Hoosiers should not be bound by their disabilities. Therefore, Democrats will advocate for a better environment for entrepreneurship and small business opportunities for Hoosiers with disabilities.

We believe those who wish to make a life for themselves and their families in Indiana should be afforded the opportunity to do so. Furthermore, it is unconscionable for any human being to be exploited or abused. Every Hoosier deserves to be treated with basic human decency and should be allowed to pursue the American Dream.

We believe that state and local governments, as well as the private sector, should create a truly diverse and inclusive economic infrastructure by making it a priority to buy goods and services from minority contractors.

Democrats are working to ensure that every Hoosier gets a fair shot to achieve the American Dream. For the sake of current and future generations, we feel it is our duty to put an end to any injustices that threaten that goal. In the Indiana Democratic Party, everyone has, and always will have, a voice.

Election Reform and Redistricting

To restore trust in government, the Indiana Democratic Party supports the right of every eligible Hoosier citizen to register to vote and cast a ballot without undue burden, fear, or intimidation. We support expanded access to early voting, extended poll hours on election day, same-day voter registration, and automatic registration of all eligible US citizens with an Indiana driver's license. It is unacceptable that Hoosiers have the earliest poll closings in the country. Democrats have opposed recent legislation to make it harder for transient voters to make their voices heard, including college students and military families.

Indiana's congressional and legislative lines have been drawn to favor one party, and rob the voters of being the ones truly in power. We believe Hoosiers should choose their representatives, not the other way around.

We believe Indiana needs an independent redistricting commission to draw fair lines that represent communities of interest and encourage civic participation.

Securing the Future of Our Most Vulnerable

Every Hoosier deserves a fair shot at success, economic security, and earning a good living. The Indiana Democratic Party has a long and proud tradition of championing policies that provide Hoosiers with a launching pad to achieve their full potential.

We know that children live better lives when their families are strong. This is exactly why Democrats supported and passed the American Rescue Plan and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act – because these laws will deliver on that promise.

Democrats are committed to celebrating this better future we've created for families in all 92 counties. Whether it's employment, transportation, childcare, education, discrimination, or eldercare – Democrats are removing all potential obstacles that can prevent individuals from reaching their full potential in the workforce.

But our work does not stop there. The Indiana Democratic Party supports policies that will assist Hoosier families with these issues and provide opportunities to earn success. This means looking after our most vulnerable and creating policies to protect our children, including:

- Fully-funding the Department of Child Services(DCS) to achieve a meaningful decrease in child abuse and neglect and a significant reduction in deaths of abused and neglected children.

- Ensuring family case managers are properly trained and compensated and develop a tuition forgiveness program for college graduates who work for DCS.
- Demanding an answer for Hoosiers on the \$1 billion Medicaid shortfall, and protecting the care of our state's most vulnerable, which has been put into jeopardy by an accounting error by the Republican supermajority.

Democrats have a moral obligation to take care of our nation's seniors, and after a lifetime of paying into these programs, we have a responsibility to ensure that both Medicare and Social Security are preserved for current and future retirees. We must ensure the state programs designed to help protect and support our Hoosier seniors are adequately funded.

The Indiana Democratic Party believes that vulnerable Hoosiers, including senior citizens and low-income families, must not be the victims of those who would take advantage of them through risky mortgages, loans, or identity and investment schemes. Hoosier families must be free from the fear of losing money to predatory lenders or dubious commercial enterprises. We should also recognize the importance of consumer protections by supporting efforts to bolster cybersecurity and fraud reduction.

As the Party that advocates for all Hoosiers, Democrats also understand that it's time to address one of the most crippling issues facing our families in all communities: addiction. Democrats stand for:

- Fully supporting adequate funding for substance abuse treatment and prevention services, including programs for prenatal substance abuse prevention and proven therapeutic opportunities – like cannabis.

- Fighting food insecurity and making it clear we are committed to a guarantee that, in the richest country in the world, no Hoosier should go hungry.

Conserving our Land, Promoting Energy Independence

Indiana is the most chemically polluted state in the United States. This is simply unacceptable. We should be striving to protect and cherish our state's heritage and natural health now and in the future.

The Indiana Democratic Party believes in a strong, balanced approach to energy production and environmental stewardship and is keenly aware that our state's economy depends on healthy land. We believe a responsible and comprehensive energy policy should provide clean, affordable energy to Hoosier families and businesses while promoting domestic production and national security. We also must face the existential threat climate change poses to every element of our lives.

Luckily, Democrats have already begun this work. Thanks to The Jobs Act, more than \$100 million is being used to expand the state's electric vehicle (EV) charging network, making EV the future for Hoosier drivers. Further, about \$20 million will be used to help Indiana fight climate change the extreme weather Hoosiers have faced in recent years.

Hoosiers have a tremendous opportunity to contribute to the evolving energy economy. The production of renewable and alternative energy sources could create jobs and compete with conventional sources of power to drive down the cost of power, spur innovation, and preserve our land.

Democrats have fought in recent legislative sessions to protect and conserve Indiana's wetlands, which the Republican supermajority in the

Statehouse have attacked. We know there must be a balance between economic development and protecting our environment, our air, and our water. Democrats also believe our communities deserve a statewide climate plan that prepares us for climate change and extreme weather.

We also recognize Hoosier communities and our economy are built on the foundation of our natural resources—from Lake Michigan and the Hoosier National Forest to our rivers and streams and fertile farmland.

A Comprehensive Approach to the Crossroads of America

Indiana's infrastructure has been crumbling. From outdated bridges to dial-up internet, Indiana lacks a true foundation for faster and more efficient modes of transportation. Local communities struggle to maintain what they have – let alone thinking about how to improve or expand.

Luckily, Indiana Democrats joined President Biden and delivered transformational infrastructure investments through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Because of this work, the state can reclaim its “Crossroads of America” reputation with extensive repairs to the state's roads and bridges. Indiana's public transportation systems will see a once-in-a-generation opportunity to update its infrastructure to fit a modern nation. Indiana's water system will be overhauled so that all Hoosiers can enjoy safe and clean drinking water in their homes. Lastly, Democrats delivered more than \$350 million to expand broadband internet access across Indiana – thanks to The Jobs Act and the American Rescue Plan.

However, the work is never over and the Indiana Democratic Party strongly backs making significant and strategic investments in Indiana's infrastructure through the targeted use of federal and state dollars. Better transit options mean better access to good-paying jobs.

Infrastructure investment is as critical to the Indiana economy as it is to Hoosier communities.

As the party of local control in Indiana, we also strongly believe that local elected officials know their communities best, and the state government should stop meddling in the business of local governments. We opposed attempts by the state legislature to end a public transportation project in Indianapolis. We also opposed a law passed by the Republican supermajority which stripped away protections 21 cities in Indiana had against puppy mills. Local voters know their communities, and we should trust the people Hoosiers elect.

Honoring Our Veterans

The Indiana Democratic Party honors those who serve in the United States Armed Forces, as well as the Indiana National Guard and Air National Guard. The dedication of an individual in this service is the ultimate selfless act on behalf of one's state and country.

It is our steadfast belief that we must continue to be committed to giving our brave men and women the tools to succeed in whatever endeavor our nation faces, whether it's at home or abroad. We must help bridge the gap between military families and the benefits they've rightfully earned, such as quality, state-of-the-art health care access through the national Veterans' Affairs system.

Democratic State Rep. Mitch Gore passed a bill during the 2024 legislative session to set up a 'Green Alert' system for missing, at-risk Hoosier veterans. Democrats believe we can't stop until Indiana is the best state in the country for veterans to live and work. U.S. Reps. Mrvan and Carson delivered the PACT Act which guarantees medical benefits for veterans exposed to dangerous toxins and substances.

Our Party is committed to providing our aging and newly returned veterans the benefits they have earned. Our duty to those who serve our nation does not end when they leave that service. We must guarantee that our veterans have access to the health benefits, education, and job opportunities we promised them.