

INDIANA DEMOCRATIC PARTY 2026 PLATFORM -- Second Draft, April 30, 2026

The Indiana Democratic Party is committed to making Indiana a place where people want to move and start careers, families want to establish roots, and businesses want to build worker-friendly economies. We envision an Indiana where everyone who works a full-time job can pay their bills. We believe in an economy that allows parents access to affordable childcare and fully funded pre-k and public schools so they never have to worry about getting to work. We insist that hard-earned tax dollars should go to repairing our crumbling infrastructure and not tax breaks for data centers. We want communities to thrive with the resources they need to focus on quality-of-life and place initiatives, like building parks and greenspaces to improve health outcomes and bring families and neighbors together. We won't stop until every Hoosier has affordable health insurance that's critically important to controlling health costs for patients.

Hoosiers absolutely know that, after 20 years of Republican rule, utility rates are skyrocketing, rent is increasing, mortgage foreclosures are double the national average, and childcare is growing more and more scarce. Hospitals are closing their doors while insurance rates balloon past affordable. We deserve better! That's why Indiana Democrats are pushing back against the outrageous actions of both the state and national governments and offering common-sense solutions to make Indiana a better place to live.

Instead of playing political games with Hoosiers' lives like mid-decade redistricting, protecting masked agents and dismantling affordable healthcare, Democrats are coming to the table with common-sense, Hoosier-backed solutions.

- Indiana leaders like U.S. Congressmen André Carson and Frank Mrvan stand up for policies to keep faith with Hoosier workers and ensure jobs stay in the U.S. They demand government accountability by supporting policies that unmask ICE agents and require body cameras. They're defending the constitution by opposing deadly and costly wars started unilaterally by a rogue president.
- Your legislators in the Senate and House of Representatives Democratic caucuses author targeted bills to get rents under control, take pressure off utility bills, protect access to health care and support child care so parents can work. They put real, workable solutions on the table that focus on affordability and stability
- Local Democratic Mayors and council members work tirelessly to improve roads in your hometowns and build local economic development initiatives. They champion their communities against the supermajority's continued attacks on local control and ongoing defunding of city and county budgets.

Affordability for Every Hoosier

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Hoosiers have been crushed under the burden of high inflation and crushing costs of living driven by Trump's tariffs. Every policy Indiana Democrats champion is rooted in the real stories and struggles shared by our constituents. We stand up for those who are doing everything right but still falling behind.

Reduce Healthcare Costs - Access to healthcare is not a luxury, but a human right. No Hoosier should be denied care because they don't earn enough or live close enough. Yet, Republicans actually shut down the federal government to deny 364,000 Hoosiers access to the ACA, doubling their insurance premiums. And still insurance company profits rise at record rates. Indiana Democrats support guaranteed affordable healthcare coverage and access to necessary care for every Hoosier, including a robust public option and aggressive action to reduce prescription, hospital and insurance costs.

- Fully restore health insurance subsidies to lower costs for Hoosier patients.
- Implement a universal public health insurance option.
- Extend prescription price negotiations beyond just Medicaid.
- Require insurance companies and pharmacies to pass any savings from prescription rebates or hospital cost reductions back to the consumer.
- Provide relief to Hoosiers burdened with medical debt by prohibiting liens on their primary residence as a means of collection, requiring hospitals to offer payment plans and capping the amount of monthly payments for low-income patients.

Lower Utility Bills - A Republican majority has stood by while Hoosier utility bills increase far beyond affordability and Indiana climbs to third in the nation for shutoffs. You have made your voices loud and clear about these hardships. This is why elected Democrats continue to champion legislation to lower your bills and keep utility companies beholden to you, not Wall Street.

- Eliminate the 7% sales tax on utilities.
- Enact a moratorium on utility rate hikes.
- End the 50-year tax breaks for data centers, require them to pay for their own utility and water use, mandate they report to the community on the amount of water and electricity they plan to use, and ensure they offset impacts to neighbors.
- Ensure local communities have a meaningful voice in major development decisions, including data centers, that impact their neighborhoods and quality of life.
- Repeal Republican bills that prohibit coal plants from restructuring to renewable energy sources - a change that even large utility corporations say will save consumers money.
- Champion policies to promote cost-effective renewable energy options, reducing bills for consumers while also slowing the effects of climate change.

Improve Access to Housing - Under Republican control, property taxes and rent continue to increase while housing stock stays limited, as a result Indiana leads the nation in evictions. The Republican supermajority big “fix” saves the average household just over \$200 a year - not even enough to cover a car payment or help with the cost of groceries. Calling this “property tax reform” is absurd. Indiana Democrats offer policies for stronger tenant protections, price-gouging penalties, more affordable housing production, rehabilitation of vacant properties, restrictions on corporate landlord abuse, and stronger code enforcement against negligent landlords. These meaningful solutions are focused on keeping Hoosiers in their homes - affordably.

- Create a path to first time home ownership with buyer tax breaks.
- Increase the renters’ tax deduction and crack down on negligent landlords by allowing tenants to hold rent until they make essential repairs.
- Allow faith institutions to build affordable housing units on their property and reduce restrictions on building tiny homes on personal property for in-law suites.
- Prohibit out-of-state investors from buying up housing stock to rent out for corporate gain and not community investment.
- Offer legal resources to tenants when facing abusive landlords that don't keep properties up to statutory health and safety standards.
- Incentivise building affordable housing on vacant properties.

Education and an Economy that Work for Workers

Treat Childcare as Essential - Access to childcare and Pre-K is the foundation of a strong economy. Without it, parents cannot work, businesses suffer and brain drain accelerates. Yet, Indiana only has childcare spots for 41% of the children who need them, which is why almost 60% of Hoosier parents have had to cut work hours or leave their jobs. This isn't sustainable for families or the economy. While Republicans continue to say the state doesn't have solutions, Democrats are standing up for parents.

- Fully fund the Child Care Development Fund to eliminate the waitlist and ensure low-income families can afford to get to work.
- Implement universal pre-k for 3 and 4 year olds.
- Improve childcare worker pay.
- Require the private sector to invest in solutions that benefit their employees.

Fully Fund Public Schools and Better Pay for Teachers - The Democrats have been sounding the alarm on a full-blown Republican attack on public schools and teachers. Indiana’s public schools educate 90% of our students and yet Republicans have stripped over \$500 million from them to fund voucher expansions. Money that could be

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used to implement statewide Pre-K. By banning books and regulating speech, they violate 1st Amendment protections while making teachers targets of baseless complaints and public attacks. This is not how we encourage our children to learn or help prepare them for a 21st century workforce. Democrats remain committed to fully supporting public schools and teachers.

- Raise starting teacher salaries to \$60,000 to help slow the loss of teachers to other states and careers while also raising the average teacher salary as Indiana's current average teacher salary ranks 38th in the country and 2nd to last when compared with our neighboring states (IL, OH, MI, KY, WI).
- Repeal the Republican immigration bill that makes schools less safe by authorizing them as targets of ICE-led crackdowns.
- Fully fund public schools.
- Require all schools at a certain free and reduced lunch threshold to apply for corporation-wide free and reduced lunch.
- Reign in costly vouchers that have directed public school dollars to private schools with little oversight or academic expectations.

Implement Paid Family Leave - Paid family leave programs allow workers to still be paid while taking time off to care for a new child or aging parent. They help businesses retain skilled workers, improve maternal and infant health outcomes, reduce the risks of families falling into poverty, and are supported by over 75% of Americans. Fewer than ¼ of Hoosiers have access to paid family leave and many workers cannot afford to take unpaid leave. And yet, the Republicans keep refusing to hear the Indiana Democrats' bills to establish such a program.

- Incentivize employers to create paid family leave programs.
- Create a statewide family leave program funded through very small payroll tax contributions.

Create More High Paying Jobs IN Indiana- At \$7.25 an hour Indiana's minimum wage is the lowest pay permitted by the federal government. At this rate, a Hoosier would have to work three full time jobs to afford a two bedroom apartment. Our stagnant wages contribute to Indiana having the highest foreclosure rate in the nation. Despite Republicans touting Indiana as "open for business," we lose critical opportunities because without childcare, Pre-K, strong public schools, parks, and thriving neighborhoods, businesses cannot recruit workers to our state. Businesses have been saying this, Republicans do not listen. Democrats understand a strong economy is built by workers, not CEOs.

- Raise Indiana's minimum wage to a livable amount such that Hoosiers working full time can at least afford the basics of living.

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- Invest in community improvement initiatives, keep public schools strong, focus on public health and well being, fix our roads, and provide resources to build and maintain parks and greenspaces.
- Continue the fight to ensure U.S. companies stay U.S. companies, and make it a financial disadvantage for corporations to ship jobs overseas.
- Champion unions by supporting workers, encouraging organizing and expanding union rights. This is how we ensure workers earn the high pay and benefits reflective of their hard work.
- Demand that economic development initiatives benefit the workers and communities more than Wall Street. Economic development must pay for its own utilities, provide neighborhood investments, and ensure local residents fill the available jobs.
- Support policies to eliminate taxes on tips and overtime.

Revitalize Rural Communities - Our rural communities have unfortunately borne the brunt of difficult economic times. Nine rural hospitals have closed in the last ten years, and 16 OBGYN centers in the last six. Farmers have silos full of crops they can't sell because of Trump's chaotic Tariffs. Rural schools continue to be robbed to fund voucher programs in more urban areas. There was a time when rural communities thrived in Indiana, and Hoosier Democrats have a plan for bringing vital resources and opportunities back to these important areas.

- Repeal Governor Braun's policy prohibiting hospitals that accept Medicaid to use a nationwide prescription cost reduction program, causing more uncertainty and higher costs in rural hospitals.
- Persistently pursue increases to Medicaid reimbursements for health care. Medicaid currently only reimburses at 57% of the actual cost of services, which is one of the main reasons rural hospitals continue to close.
- Champion ending non-compete contracts that prohibit doctors from leaving their place of work to practice elsewhere - such as rural communities.
- Repeal vouchers and fully fund public schools. Money for vouchers take money away from rural public schools, even though many rural communities do not have private schools.
- Continue to fight to implement the Sun Bucks program blocked by Governor Braun. This program provides meals to hungry children in the summer - benefitting both our children and farmers.
- Demand President Trump reimburse farmers for crops lost due to his tariffs and the inability to import fertilizer because of his rogue war.

Freedom

Support Veterans - Hoosier heroes deserve to be honored for their sacrifices, not with empty rhetoric, but with real support from their state and country. Indiana must be a state that prioritizes every veteran's wellbeing.

- Fight the Republican Supermajority in the Statehouse when they decreased veterans' access to the Military Family Relief Fund.
- Require every county to hire a County Service Officer and establish a fund to pay their salaries to ensure Hoosier veterans can access services no matter where in Indiana they live.
- Require discharge counseling for returning veterans to evaluate any needed ongoing services for a successful return to home - and make sure those services are available.
- Fund focused, intensive housing programs for veterans without homes.

Legalize Cannabis - 84% of Hoosiers believe Cannabis should be legal in some form, underscoring that no one in Indiana should go to jail for something legal in 40 states and D.C. Our neighboring states have become the marketplace for Hoosiers and are scooping up millions of our tax dollars. This is critical revenue that could be invested in Indiana. After more than a decade of Republicans ignoring Democrat proposals it is time to bring Indiana into the modern-day.

- Fully legalize Cannabis and create the regulatory framework.
- Record expungement for those with Cannabis-related convictions.

Restore Reproductive Justice - Despite 59% of Hoosiers supporting abortion in all or some cases, the Republican Supermajority in the General Assembly still forced through their extreme abortion ban. While they hold steadfast on reducing women's access to healthcare, 16 hospital obstetrics departments have closed since 2020 and Planned Parenthood announced the closing of two clinics. This has created women's healthcare deserts in 25% of Indiana's 92 counties. As a result, Indiana has the third highest maternal mortality rate in the nation. This is disgraceful. Democrats have vehemently opposed these bans and the loss of funding to Planned Parenthood that drive the closures of critical healthcare centers.

- Restore abortion rights to Roe v. Wade status.
- Restore funding to Planned Parenthood for wellness exams, STI testing and treatment, and birth control.
- Prohibit the public release of reproductive health records.

Live Safely in Communities - Public safety is top of mind for Hoosiers. Gun violence is now the leading cause of death for children, police officer positions remain unfilled, parents are worried about dropping their kids off at school, and public gatherings are

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mass shooting targets. But this still isn't enough to convince Republicans to take real action to get guns off our streets, incentivize safe storage, support community policing initiatives, or fund youth opportunity programs. Instead, they pour \$170 billion into ICE - more than the budgets for all local and state law enforcement agencies combined - so masked agents can instill fear into neighborhoods and detain people who have never committed a crime. Republicans expanded the role of the Indiana National Guard into policing - despite loud opposition from Hoosiers. These actions don't keep neighborhoods safe or reduce school shootings - they are power grabs meant to instill fear. Democrats in Indiana are steadfast in our approach to protect the 2nd Amendment while also protecting lives.

- Incentivize safe storage in homes to reduce youth access to guns.
- Establish the Indiana Gun Crimes Taskforce, a multi-agency partnership of federal, state, and local law enforcement focused on reducing violent crime in Indiana by seizing thousands of illegal firearms and targeting violent offenders.
- Require schools to provide access to mental health services to help youth struggling with mental health concerns, including suicidal thoughts.
- Increase the age to purchase a gun to 21 and restore the ban on the sale of military style assault weapons.
- Repeal SEA 1 passed by Republicans in 2025 - this bill took millions of dollars away from local communities, meaning less money for police, fire, emergency medical response, libraries, and parks.
- Protect neighborhoods from rogue federal law enforcement by requiring ICE agents to successfully complete deescalation training, wear body cameras, identify themselves, and answer to a third party review board when they use excessive force.

Free from Discrimination - You are not free if the government regulates who you love, supports programs for the one religion it prefers over others, or denies you opportunities because of the color of your skin. Our government is elected to represent all of us. Republican efforts to fund some faith-based initiatives, insert religious texts into schools and disparage certain religions are unconstitutional. Same sex marriage has been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court yet Republicans refuse to remove the ban from our statute. Voluntary DEI programs proven to improve workplaces and innovation should not be discouraged or banned. Democrats have always stood for freedom.

- Either stop using taxes to fund faith-based initiatives or make the funding available to all religions.
- Remove the ban on same sex marriage still in Indiana's code.
- Restore DEI programs so every Hoosier has the opportunity to succeed.

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Dignity for Immigrants: Indiana Democrats recognize and celebrate the contributions of immigrants to Indiana. America is an example to the world for how people from all races, religions and countries can work together for the shared goals of opportunity and freedom. As a nation of immigrants and indigenous peoples, we must recognize the equal humanity of all people. We recognize that true public safety relies on trust, constitutional due process, and the core tenets of Hoosier Hospitality. We reject the weaponization of immigration for corporate profit and support a fair, orderly, and humane immigration system that respects human dignity, keeps families together, and focuses resources on genuine public safety. We must fight to restore legal paths to citizenship, demand constitutionally-guaranteed due process for anyone who comes into contact with law enforcement, ensure schools are safe for children, and just bring back the fundamentals of Hoosier Hospitality.

- **Protect due process, birthright citizenship, and equal protection under the law** and ensure no one is deprived life, liberty, or property without the due process of law.
- **Support comprehensive immigration reform**, restore faith and stability in the immigration system, uphold the dignity of our immigrant neighbors, and fight for the rights of all residents.
- **Advocate for the reinstatement and maintenance of safe zones** and advocate that schools, childcare centers, hospitals, places of worship, and other essential community institutions remain places where families can seek education, healthcare, and support without fear that ICE agents will enter without a judicial warrant.
- **Reject the criminalization of immigrants and oppose profit-driven mass detention efforts:** Repeal the law that turns local law enforcement into federal immigration officials and facilitates the predatory expansion of private detention spaces, which also encourages federal agencies into leasing commercial warehouses to mass-detain humans.

Voting Rights and Elections Integrity - The right to vote is the foundation of our Democracy. This right should be guaranteed and protected for every single citizen without any barriers or interference from the government. Indiana Democrats believe government policies should ensure voting is accessible and secure.

- Expand voting hours to ensure working Hoosiers can make it to the polls.
- Allow Hoosiers to register to vote at polling sites.
- Permit college students to use their state-issued IDs to vote.
- Implement vote by mail.
- Provide resources to local governments to ensure adequate election security and a paper trail for all votes.
- Protect early voting.

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- Restore the Voting Rights Act to fully safeguard against election maps that dilute representation and try to silence communities of color.

There is a Path Forward to a Better Indiana

The Indiana Democratic Party Stands for providing Hoosiers with real solutions. We file and fight for bills to lower rent, keep utility bills in check, shore up child care, build a worker-friendly economy, and protect access to affordable health care - all Hoosier-first initiatives. We know these priorities align with the majority of Hoosiers who just want a fair shot and a little breathing room. Indiana deserves leaders focused on helping people build a good life with respect and dignity.