

Mesa County Democratic Party

2020 Platform

The Democratic Party has a long and proud history of promoting hope, opportunity, and progress toward a better life for the citizens of these United States. The Democratic Party is rooted in the ideas set forth in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The Democratic platform of Mesa County builds on these historic foundations.

Climate Change and the Environment

The Mesa County Democrats recognize the scientific fact of human caused global climate crisis. The future of our air, water, agriculture, economy, migration, and health requires us to educate and prepare citizens for this rapidly changing future.

Mesa County Democrats support development of renewable energy-based long-distance public transit systems for travel to major state cities.

Mesa County Democrats support Mesa County's recycling programs for residences and businesses. We support access to recycling for all reaches of the county and a move toward mandatory recycling plus a ban on plastic bags and single use plastics.

Mesa County Democrats support developing programs for local use of recycled products such as composting organic materials for bedding, making usable products out of recycled glass and recovering excess building materials for affordable housing.

Mesa County Democrats support efforts to lessen the impact of burning fossil fuels by supporting a transition of energy development from carbon-based energies to renewable and sustainable energies.

Mesa County Democrats support building a central hub for EV and other clean energy transportation. Local infrastructure needs to be expanded to accommodate the shift to electric vehicles.

Mesa County Democrats support zoning changes to require solar or renewable on new residential and commercial buildings.

Mesa County Democrats support a carbon dividend on all forms of carbon-based energy.

Mesa County Democrats fully support the Clean Water Act of 1972. Water is essential to this valley. The Colorado and Gunnison Rivers and their tributaries are an irreplaceable resource in arid Mesa County. Mesa County Democrats support the reduction of the use of public lands for carbon emitting extractive industries. We support the continuation of public comment periods on public land issues.

Mesa County Democrats encourage adoption of conservation measures, informed decisions regarding landscaping in arid environments, and use of organic and natural fertilizers and/or natural pesticides.

The Mesa County Democratic Party strongly supports healthy river systems by supporting and encouraging private and public collaborations that focus on restoring species biodiversity along the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers and tributaries through the removal of invasive species and reclamation and restoration of the cottonwood/willow riparian ecosystem.

Mesa County Democrats support programs to provide alternate transportation corridors, nonmotorized access to state parks and wildlife areas, venues for maintaining a healthy lifestyle, bird viewing and other recreational activities.

The Mesa County Democratic Party strongly supports The Riverfront Project and other efforts to connect community resources, open spaces and parks by completing recreational trails along the greenways of the rivers.

Economy

The economy of Mesa County has historically relied on extractive industries controlled by international, political and financial authorities within a world economy. The inherent nature of the “boom/bust” cycles of extraction industries is not controllable by Mesa County.

Mesa County Democratic Party supports a diversified economy predicated on quality of life, a livable wage determined by real economic tenets and the development of sustainable, environmentally sound industries.

Mesa County Democrats support assisting workers displaced by the transition of energy sources to secure training and placement in new careers.

Mesa County Democrats oppose the unfair tax practice that heavily reduces the severance taxes paid by the petroleum companies to the State of Colorado. We support of the repeal of the ad valorem tax credit.

Mesa County Democrats support creation of a multi modal transportation plan to connect all areas of the county. Much of our infrastructure needs repair and improvement.

The Mesa County Democrats support an equitable vehicle tax program to fund roads, bridges, sidewalks and bike paths. With the rapid growth of electric, fuel cell and hydrogen sources to propel vehicles, the revenue generated by the gasoline tax is insufficient.

Tourism is a significant driver of Mesa County ‘s economy. Federal public lands occupy 76% of the County. We support the CORE Act for protecting public lands for recreational use.

Mesa County Democrats support strong partnerships and cooperation between public and private entities and the County, State and Federal land management agencies. We support the goal of developing and promoting recreational opportunities and facilities subject to regulations that will protect the significant natural and cultural resources in Mesa County.

Mesa County Democrats strongly oppose any attempt to transfer our public lands managed by federal agencies to the State of Colorado or any other public or private entity.

Mesa County Democrats vigorously support protecting, improving and maintaining all units of the National Park Service, BLM and US Forest Service.

Mesa County Democrats believe access to information in the digital age is vital to economic competitiveness and individual success. We support the development of locally owned expansion of fiber optic high speed broadband to urban and rural areas.

Mesa County Democrats support efforts to improve the quality of internet service in Mesa County and believe that every Mesa County citizen, regardless of age, has a critical need to be able to access online government, business and learning resources.

Mesa County Democrats urge Colorado legislators to support streamlining small business licensing and tax collections by establishing common licensing laws and tax rates for the whole state.

Mesa County has traditionally been a strong agricultural region for the State of Colorado. We support the expansion of sustainable agricultural practices, such as organic approaches, to agricultural practices to ensure the ongoing health of our air, water and land for future generations.

Mesa County Democrats support sustainable and organic agricultural programs in all Western Slope colleges and universities.

Mesa County Democrats support the promotion of “farm to fork” for locally grown products.

Mesa County Democrats support a public vote to allow retail dispensaries of recreational and medical marijuana for all of Mesa County.

Mesa County Democrats support our historic preservation programs and protection of our historic neighborhoods’ structures and sites.

Mesa County Democratic Party believes that employees from any workforce merit respectful arbitration.

The Mesa County Democratic Party supports open bargaining, with or without union involvement, without fear, intimidation or retribution.

Mesa County Democrats support a minimum wage of \$15 per hour and stable working schedules.

All businesses, above a threshold, will cover the following: sick time, family and pregnancy leave, health care benefits, vacation time and retirement options. These should apply to all employees, regardless of the status of their employment.

Mesa County Democrats strongly support equal pay for equal work.

Mesa County Democratic Party believes that no Mesa County citizen with a full-time job should live in poverty.

Mesa County Democrats believe that a lifetime of work deserves a fair and livable retirement.

Government

Mesa County Democrats support same-day registration and oppose all efforts to suppress voter participation and block access to the voting process. Voting is a citizen's most important constitutional right.

Mesa County Democrats support a national holiday for Federal elections.

Mesa County Democrats support exploration of using ranked choice voting for federal, state and local elections.

Mesa County Democrats support replacing a caucus nominating system with a more accessible primary system.

Mesa County Democrats support campaign finance reform.

Mesa County Democrats support the rescission of the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision.

Mesa County Democrats support fair and publicly funded elections.

Mesa County Democrats demand that fundamental principles of freedom of religion and separation of church and state must not be compromised.

Mesa County Democrats believe equal treatment must be available to all persons regardless of race, religion, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation and gender identity.

The fiscal crisis in Colorado has been precipitated by the intersection of the Gallagher (1982) and the TABOR (1992) Amendments to the Colorado Constitution. The consequences can only be addressed by constitutional reform. We support the "De-Bruceing" of Mesa County.

Mesa County Democrats believe that our immigration system needs reform as it fails to meet the needs of our economy and our employers, while inflicting a costly human toll on people caught between global market forces and outdated laws. Immigration is vital to America's economic and cultural diversity.

Mesa County Democrats endorse a fair and equitable pathway to citizenship and support Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program recipients and their families.

Mesa County Democrats support continued international cooperation through our Sister City Program and other international cooperative programs.

Mesa County Democrats support the Master Land Use Plan that protects our historical agricultural heritage, accommodates the needs of population growth and new industries, while protecting the vital environmental qualities and natural resources that make Mesa County a desirable place to live and work.

Mesa County Democrats support an expansion of the Commissioner's office to five commissioners from the present three. We also support three commissioners to be elected by voters living in their own district and two commissioners elected at large. We support the number of signatures for independent candidates to get on the ballot to be lowered from 750 to 500.

Mesa County Democrats support the restoration of the legal name "Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area" to the area currently illegally named "McInnis Canyon."

Health Care and Quality of Life

Mesa County Democrats support accessible and comprehensive universal health insurance and coverage for all. We believe health care is a fundamental human right. We define health as a holistic concept including incorporating physical, mental and environmental health.

Mesa County Democrats support efforts to recruit and expand medical practitioners including primary care providers in order to bridge the gap between needs and available services.

Mesa County Democrats support efforts to provide state legislators with the authority and flexibility to negotiate cost saving benefits for consumers, such as the cost of pharmaceuticals while maintaining the quality of care. In addition, we encourage Congress to authorize Medicare to negotiate pharmaceutical and medical device costs.

Mesa County Democrats support a culture that does not tolerate any form of gender/sexual harassment. Reporting any and all forms of gender/sexual harassment, intimidation or unwanted physical contact in workplaces and schools should be encouraged without fear of retribution.

Mesa County Democrats believe that Mesa County and its municipalities should continue to provide and expand access to integrated and safe affordable housing for all.

Mesa County Democrats support focused efforts on eliminating food deserts in Mesa County by encouraging easier access to locally grown and raised food year-round.

Mesa County Democrats strongly support the construction of a community recreation center in Grand Junction, as well as further improvements and additions to the county's walking and bicycle trail system. We support partnerships and funding such as a Metropolitan Recreation District to maintain and build shared community recreation resources.

Mesa County Democrats believe reproductive information, services, and family planning must be readily and easily accessible to all genders and ages.

Mesa County Democrats believe that the constitutional guarantee to a right of privacy extends to decisions regarding a woman's reproductive health care that are made between a woman and her medical provider.

Mesa County Democrats believe in adequate family and medical leave including paid maternal and paternal leave.

Mesa County Democrats support affordable childcare programs.

The Mesa County Democratic Party believes in the individual right to die with dignity and access to the means to fulfill that dignity as prescribed by law.

Mesa County Democrats support the expansion of accessible mental health services including 24-hour crisis services and providers that accept Medicaid and Medicare. We believe that mental health is a key component to overall health and well-being.

Mesa County Democrats support the expansion of community-based treatment for mental health disorders and support better integration of behavioral and general health care systems for continuity of care.

Mesa County Democrats support readily available substance use treatment.

Mesa County Democrats support the development of a robust mental health workforce and support programs to help encourage new professionals and maintain existing professionals through supportive legislative measures.

Mesa County Democrats support the expanding current resources for children to address high rates of sui-cide, homelessness, substance use and other self-destructive behaviors; physical and sexual abuse of children; and human trafficking in Mesa County.

Mesa County Democrats support the development of programs and resources to promote suicide prevention including the 988 crisis number.

Mesa County Democrats support the expansion of Veterans Affairs facilities and services, including programs for job training and employment of veterans, rehabilitative and mental health programs and community support for homeless veterans.

Mesa County Democrats support responsible gun ownership and training. Recognizing that gun violence is a major health issue, we believe there should be a ban on the sale of all military assault weapons including rapid fire attachments and accessories.

Mesa County Democrats support the implementation of a comprehensive universal background check on all gun purchases, prohibiting sales to individuals with a history of domestic abuse, emotional instability, mental illness and prior legally designated crimes.

Mesa County Democrats support the development and implementation of “smart gun” technology.

Mesa County Democrats support changes to our criminal codes that reduce the length of incarceration for nonviolent offenders.

Mesa County Democrats encourage the implementation of alternative justice approaches focused on rehabilitation including problem-solving courts and restorative justice while maintaining the safety of the general population.

Mesa County Democrats support the purging of nonviolent felony records of those that have served their entire punishments and the removal of questions on employment applications that do not differentiate nonviolent vs violent felonies.

Education

Mesa County Democrats believe a strong public education system, pre-school through college, with adequate and equitable funding and independent from political influences, is essential to creating an informed democratic society.

Mesa County Democrats strongly support and call for the repeal of the Gallagher and TABOR amendments and restoration of Amendment 23 to reestablish adequate funding for Colorado’s ailing public education system. Fair and equitable funding for education will benefit all citizens and the State of Colorado, including Mesa County. It is currently not being provided and needs to be addressed by the legislature.

Mesa County Democrats support a robust program of building new schools and remodeling existing schools to create safe learning environments. We support all schools be built and run with Green School sustainability standards.

Mesa County Democrats believe that improvement to Colorado public education should include universal preschool and better programs for students of all abilities, including those for ethnically diverse students and those students who fall within parameters for Title 1 funding. Such programs should include dual language immersion and other successful models.

Mesa County Democrats strongly oppose educational vouchers and tax credits for private schools, as they divert tax dollars away from public education thus diminishing financial support for Colorado's public schools.

Mesa County Democrats support fact-based and impartial news. We support the teaching of critical thinking in our schools so future voters of the digital age know where and how to check media facts.

Mesa County Democrats support, at the very least, funding for two years of free post-secondary and /or vocational education as well as a reduction in student loan fees. In today's world, post-secondary education is critical for the success of our students and integral to the transformation of our economy. College loan debt is crippling the ability of university graduates to fully participate in the modern economy.

Mesa County Democrats support retaining programs for workers displaced by changes in the economy. Mesa County Democrats support the rights of teachers to collectively negotiate for better working conditions as well as equitable pay and benefits. Teachers should be compensated for experience and additional education. Funding should be provided for teachers to attain continuing education credits.

Mesa County Democrats support educators' freedom to exercise autonomy and creativity in the classroom to meet students' needs. We support only the most judicious use of standardized testing because it unnecessarily stresses financial and human resources and reduces student/teacher contact time essential to learning in all subject areas.

2020 Platform Committee:

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| Scott Beilfuss | Glen Whitaker |
| Tom Acker | Bobbie + Boz Bozworth |
| Marcus Freeman | Larry Ingram |
| David Stahlke | Beverly Hart |
| Hali Nurnberg | Larry Carter |

The Colorado Democratic Party 2018 Platform is available at: <https://www.coloradodems.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/2018-Colorado-Democratic-Party-Platform.pdf>