



CHAPTER II

The Progressive Agenda

A FUTURE WORTH FIGHTING FOR

At Progressive Majority, we believe that every individual has the right to:

- ◆ Safety in the home, in the community and in the world;
- ◆ Free speech and assembly;
- ◆ Civil rights and liberties, including the right to trial by jury, effective counsel and due process of law;
- ◆ Privacy, including protection from unwarranted invasion or surveillance and unreasonable search and seizure;
- ◆ Vote and to have his or her vote count;
- ◆ Equal opportunity and protection, with an end to discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion, physical or developmental ability or sexual orientation;
- ◆ Economic justice, including decent and safe work that pays a living wage and the right to organize for better working conditions;
- ◆ Security in retirement, including a Social Security system that provides an inflation-proof base;
- ◆ Affordable and comprehensive health care;
- ◆ High quality education at any age, with income posing no hurdle to advancement;
- ◆ A clean and healthy environment in which pollution is no longer a threat; and
- ◆ Complete reproductive privacy.

Progressives, like most Americans, want a more egalitarian, more enlightened country – one that works toward the creation of a just society for all.

At Progressive Majority, our mission is to elect progressive leaders on the basis of their commitment to principles and their ability to champion a broad progressive agenda. Specifically, we will help elect candidates who will lead the fight to:

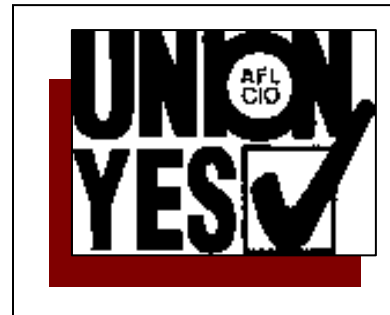
- ◆ Protect Workers' Rights
- ◆ Protect Civil Rights
- ◆ Ensure Access to Affordable Health Care
- ◆ Invest in Quality Education
- ◆ Protect Our Environment
- ◆ Secure Reproductive Freedom



PROTECTING WORKERS' RIGHTS

We seek leaders who will work to ensure a world in which prosperity is shared among the many and not merely the few. Shared prosperity requires a commitment to full employment as a priority for economic policy, tied to a commitment to decent work standards for all people. In the pursuit of economic justice, our priorities include:

- ◆ Protecting the right to organize and to strike;
- ◆ Developing and enforcing work safety standards and expanding workplace right-to-know laws;
- ◆ Penalizing corporations that are repeat offenders of workers' rights, consumer and/or environmental laws;
- ◆ Raising the minimum wage to a living wage that can sustain the family of a full-time worker;
- ◆ Enforcing pay equity for men and women doing equivalent work;
- ◆ Requiring workers' rights, human rights and environmental protections — and the mechanisms to enforce them — in all trade accords;
- ◆ Protecting Social Security and expanding pensions;
- ◆ Passing new initiatives to hold corporations accountable, shut down sweatshops and turn export-processing zones into fair workplaces, not back alleys of exploitation; and
- ◆ Developing an America that leads in the struggle against poverty, while creating the example of a just democracy for all.



PROTECTING CIVIL RIGHTS

We seek an America that offers equal opportunity to all. This requires protection against discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, physical or developmental ability, and sexual orientation. In the pursuit of protecting civil rights and liberties, our priorities include:

- ◆ Ending racial profiling and discriminatory sentencing;
- ◆ Prohibiting bias and discrimination in employment, public accommodations and housing practices;
- ◆ Promoting policies that protect immigrant workers;
- ◆ Appointing judges who will protect the rights and safety of all people; and
- ◆ Punishing hate crimes to the fullest extent of the law.

We also support election reform as a means of protecting civil rights, including:

- ◆ Modernizing voting equipment, developing consistent, voter-friendly ballots and conducting local voter education programs;
- ◆ Increasing language access and ending voter disenfranchisement and discrimination at the polls; and
- ◆ Ensuring that all Americans are able to exercise their right to vote freely and without intimidation.



Freedom and privacy must be honored as core values, especially in a society of rapidly changing technology and communications. This includes:

- ◆ Defending the privacy of the home from unwarranted searches and seizures, including Internet and web-based communications; and
- ◆ Defending the right to free speech and assembly, so that citizens may exercise their right to petition without fear of government intrusion.

ENSURING ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE

Americans should be guaranteed affordable, high quality, comprehensive health care. It is simply unacceptable that this nation spends more of its resources on health costs than any other, yet nearly 44 million Americans still go without health insurance. In the pursuit of affordable and accessible health care for all, our priorities include:

- ◆ Investing in public health and preventive health programs;
- ◆ Securing a right to long-term care;
- ◆ Passing a strong, comprehensive Patient's Bill of Rights that holds HMOs and insurance carriers accountable;
- ◆ Providing pre-natal care and infant health and nutrition to all families;
- ◆ Providing comprehensive health care for the uninsured and the underinsured;
- ◆ Increasing equality in biomedical research, health education, and access to quality health care;
- ◆ Ensuring a secure and expanded Medicare program that includes a prescription drug benefit; and
- ◆ Ensuring health care that is protected against the soaring cost of medicine and drugs.



INVESTING IN QUALITY EDUCATION

We must invest in our children by providing the best education system in the world. Over the next few years, the largest influx of children since the baby boom will enter our schools. Yet our schools are in the worst shape ever – 16 million children go to school in buildings without proper heat or ventilation. We face the largest wave of teacher retirements ever. Teachers' salaries rank among the lowest of any profession requiring a college degree. And state budget crises are increasingly requiring states and school boards to cut spending on schools and teachers. We must do better.

Our commitment to quality education includes:

- ◆ Reducing class sizes and updating classrooms;
- ◆ Guaranteeing pre-school and after-school programs for every child;
- ◆ Recruiting and retaining high-quality, well-trained teachers;
- ◆ Making post-secondary education affordable;
- ◆ Requiring high standards for student achievement in our public schools; and
- ◆ Keeping our schools safe while promoting policies that ensure students of all socio-economic backgrounds are treated with fairness and respect.



PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

Environmental pollution has gone from nuisance to threat. From global warming to toxic waste, pollution threatens the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat and the very climate in which we live. Our priorities for investment in a sustainable economy include:

- ◆ Increasing public health inspection and enforcement of clean water, clean air, and food quality regulations;
- ◆ Investing in renewable energy, while helping to create the markets that will make renewables cost-competitive;
- ◆ Promoting policies that demonstrate a commitment to environmental justice and the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields;
- ◆ Enforcing laws against toxic waste dumping that require polluters to pay to clean the waste they create;
- ◆ Promoting clean energy, rebuilding the infrastructure of our cities, and using skilled labor and ingenuity to replace waste and pollution;
- ◆ Increasing public investment in the transition to green growth;
- ◆ Making the transition to a sustainable economy; and
- ◆ Planning and creating incentives to preserve our wilderness, protect ecosystems, and curb suburban sprawl.



SECURING REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM

All people have the inherent right to self determination. Families, not politicians, deserve the right to make deeply personal decisions about abortion in private and in consultation with their own personal advisors. Women and men deserve all the necessary tools to plan their childbearing according to their unique individual circumstances — and in accordance with their own personal and moral beliefs. Our priorities include:

- ◆ Leaving the full range of reproductive choices to women and men, without stigma or government sanctions, regardless of economic status;
- ◆ Supporting policies that promote everyone’s right to bear children, make personal decisions about sexuality and sexual activity, and adopt or place a child for adoption;
- ◆ Increasing access to effective contraception, safe abortion services, fair adoption programs and accessible child care;
- ◆ Protecting laws that leave complex, personal decisions about abortion to women;
- ◆ Providing youth with comprehensive information about sexuality, pregnancy prevention; and STD/HIV/AIDS prevention;
- ◆ Ensuring increased participation of women of color in the development of policies, legislation and research affecting women’s reproductive health; and
- ◆ Increasing community-based reproductive health services and programs available to women in need.

