**The Political Platform of Taylor Hartley**

*Based largely on the 2012 Utah County Democratic Party platform*

GOVERNMENT

I stand for a democratic and free government of the people and for the people in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. Government is the way we organize our communities to do what we cannot do individually.

Our government must be transparent and limited to the purpose of actively promoting the public good while securing fundamental human rights for each person within our society. This may include legal constraint in order to curtail the desires and passions of our human nature that fail to conform to the dictates of reason and justice.

This government is necessary government—it expands and contracts as our conditions require in order to preserve life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness for each member of society. Accordingly, federal and state governments remain separate, but work together in their respective roles to achieve the purpose of government.

Government should be held to the same standards we expect of individuals: honesty, fairness, and respect for others. I call for vigilance on the part of our elected and appointed officials to eliminate government corruption wherever, whenever, and by whomever it occurs. When existing laws fall short, I call upon voters to hold politicians accountable for unethical behavior.

DIVERSITY WITH COOPERATION

My party is one of inclusion and mutual respect. I encourage participation by people of differing opinions and backgrounds. I embrace diversity as a source of political, economic, and spiritual strength.

I proudly uphold our heritage of faith, hard work, and cooperation. By working together, we can make the nation, and even the world, greater places to live for all.

FAMILY AND WELFARE

I support government incentives that strengthen families. By supporting families, we build our communities and safeguard society. I call for fidelity, respect, and compassion in family relationships. Regrettably, many families struggle today. Often two or more incomes are required to meet daily economic needs. Too many families go without essential health services. Many of our elderly face difficulties caused by poor health, poverty, or restricted services.

I call for supporting families with high standards of ethical conduct, a clean environment, reasonable taxes, recreational opportunities, affordable housing and health care, safe and reliable transportation, and excellence in education.

I seek the health and prosperity of all, expecting the stronger members of our society to support the weaker members physically, mentally, and emotionally in an intelligent and concerted effort to help them achieve self-reliance. The strong do not give up when the weak fail in becoming self-supportive for whatever reason. Our active compassion does not depend on the success or failure of those we seek to help.

EDUCATION

Quality public education is essential for effective democracy and proper economic growth. It is the most important investment in our future. Government should play a role in fostering this kind of public education and encouraging the same for private education. It does this by creating consistent, minimum standards of educational achievement for all of our students. It does this by adequately funding public education for smaller class sizes, better teachers, and excellent equipment for a world-class education.

Sufficient resources should be allocated for higher education. Preparing individuals for employment opportunities that yield personal satisfaction and economic growth is critical to our prosperity. Funding education must be a priority and the tax policy should reflect this priority.

FAITH

I value religious faith and the protection of religious liberty for all as guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. Frequently, the best sources for legal morals come from spiritual and religious principles. With this in mind, leaders and others in government should seek to work together with people of all affiliations in order to make the nation and world a better place to live.

I recognize that in the political realm, democracy in a pluralistic society requires the religiously motivated to translate their concerns into propositions based on universal values and shared experience, subject to argument and amenable to reason.

To prevent violence and stimulate harmony, the more diverse our society is, the less morally stringent our laws must be. Although the government’s laws need to be relatively lax, religious and spiritual practices should stimulate adherents to a higher level of morality, which, in a democracy, will mean the eventual improvement of the government’s laws.

People of faith or without faith have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and spirituality. This includes the freedom to change religions or beliefs, and freedom to manifest religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance, whether done so in private or in public.

It is lawful for any person to favor and follow whatever religion he or she wishes, and to do the best they can to bring others to their opinion so long as they do it peaceably, gently, quietly, and soberly, without hasty and contentious criticizing.

IMMIGRATION

I recognize the contributions of immigrants to the betterment of society, both past and present. I also believe that those who come to the United States should do so legally.

The federal government should adopt policies that provide necessary control of our borders; that recognize the value of hard-working immigrants to our economy and our society; that prevent exploitation of undocumented workers by employers; that deal compassionately with families; and that enable undocumented workers who demonstrate a desire to be law-abiding citizens a reasonable opportunity to come out from the shadows and become legal, fully contributing members of society.

I strongly oppose enforcement-only policies, which severely distress and separate families, foster racial tension, and threaten cooperation with law enforcement officers. A humane approach to immigration is appropriate. The way we treat immigrants will say more about us as a free society and less about our immigrant neighbors.

ENVIRONMENT

I believe we collectively have a responsibility not only to one another, but also to act as stewards of our natural surroundings and resources, for both our present enjoyment and that of future generations.

ENERGY

I believe in wisely using the energy resources of our nation and world while carefully preserving our environment. I call for improvements to mass transit and support initiatives that advance the development of clean, renewable energy.

FIREARMS

I stand for the Constitutional right of citizens to possess firearms for sporting purposes and for lawfully defending their families, neighbors, and property. I also support the enforcement of existing gun laws, educating citizens on the responsible use and storage of firearms, and common-sense measures to reduce gun violence and enhance public safety.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

I call for public policies that foster good jobs for all people. I seek a business climate characterized by fair taxation, well-planned infrastructure, sustainable development, and a skilled and well-educated workforce.

I stand for fair wages, equal pay for equal work, a safe workplace, and the right to organize. I call for cooperation between business and government to facilitate affordable health care and retirement benefits.

HEALTH CARE

Everyone should have access to appropriate health care. No one should have to choose between seeing a doctor or paying rent. I call for systematic improvements that employ technology and that better align market forces with costs and outcomes in order to increase quality and efficiency. I advocate health programs that provide supplemental care as may additionally be needed for expectant mothers, children, seniors, the disabled, and the working poor.

Taxation for these programs should be appropriately graduated in order to be less of a burden on the poor and more of a privileged and respectable responsibility for those who are more fortunate.

ABORTION

I believe in the sanctity of human life and that there should be a balance between the rights of the woman and her unborn child. I oppose elective abortion for convenience. I also recognize that there are unfortunate circumstances under which abortion may be justified, including pregnancies resulting from sexual crime, when the life of the mother is in jeopardy by the pregnancy, or if licensed professionals reasonably expect that the child will be severely challenged physically or mentally. I seek to resolve differing views on this issue in a spirit of respectful cooperation.