



## PLATFORM FOR THE HILLSBOROUGH DEMOCRATIC PARTY Adopted 16 April 2012

Respecting the thirteen principles that we approved as representing our permanent political beliefs the Hillsborough Democratic Party has organized a more specific platform for the 2012 elections.

### Section I. Restoring our (Hillsborough) *public* educational system.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party supports the very clear provisions of Article IX, Section 1, Florida Constitution, as amended which reads:

The education of **children** is a fundamental value of the people of the State of **Florida**. It is, therefore, a paramount duty of the state to make adequate provision for the education of all **children** residing within its borders. Adequate provision shall be made by law for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free **public** schools that allows students to obtain a high quality education and for the establishment, maintenance, and operation of institutions of higher learning and other **public** education programs that the needs of the people may require. To assure that **children** attending **public** schools obtain a high quality education, the legislature shall make adequate provision to ensure that, by the beginning of the 2010 **school** year, there are a sufficient number of classrooms so that:

1. The maximum number of students who are assigned to each teacher who is teaching in **public school** classrooms for prekindergarten through grade 3 does not exceed 18 students;
2. The maximum number of students who are assigned to each teacher who is teaching in **public school** classrooms for grades 4 through 8 does not exceed 22 students; and
3. The maximum number of students who are assigned to each teacher who is teaching in **public school** classrooms for grades 9 through 12 does not exceed 25 students.
4. The class size requirements of this subsection do not apply to extracurricular classes. Payment of the costs associated with reducing class size to meet these requirements is the responsibility of the state and not of local **school** districts. Beginning with the 2003-2004 fiscal year, the legislature shall provide sufficient funds to reduce the average number of students in each classroom by at least two students per year until the maximum number of students per classroom does not exceed the requirements of this subsection.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party recognizes that teachers, being educated and especially trained professionals, are the most important part of the system.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party recognizes that teachers' associations (unions) are vital to planning and operating schools and maintaining the teachers' roles and benefits.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party does not support the use of vouchers in Florida public schools.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party does not support basing the salary of teachers on student achievement.



The Hillsborough Democratic Party does not support the use of the FCAT as a standardized test for all Florida students.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party does not support the use of public money to improve private property as is now being done in the case of Charter Schools.

## **Section II. Rebuilding our Hillsborough infrastructure.**

The Hillsborough Democratic Party recognizes that the infrastructure on which our county and our people depend includes more than just physical things. Infrastructure consists of the basic [physical](#) and [organizational](#) structures needed for the operation of a [society](#) or [enterprise](#),<sup>[1]</sup> including the services and facilities necessary for an [economy](#) to function.<sup>[2]</sup> This complex whole includes the Thirteen Principles that our Hillsborough Democratic Party believes in. The infrastructure also includes the health and welfare and the culture of the community. More than just the physical materials that make up the parks and playgrounds and civic centers, it includes the network of activities that support the moral and cultural climate that underlie such facilities

The Hillsborough Democratic Party believes it is the duty of government to promote the general welfare of the population, to lay and maintain this groundwork so that communities of families can be healthy and businesses can prosper. Laying and maintaining that groundwork to benefit the whole is not the same as “running a business” that seeks profit for itself.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party recognizes that it is proper for local businesses to benefit from the infrastructure built and maintained by government. That does not mean that governments should be run like businesses. Governments have a wider range of obligations than to business firms – obligations more like the obligations of a family or nation to all members. Like a business, local government should be efficient and accountable, but the “bottom line” of government is more holistic than that of a business firm.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party believes that public facilities and the services associated with them are crucial to every community. Treating public facilities as private -- charging “user fees” for example -- as a business firm would is not necessarily in the best interest of the community. That practice with respect to public facilities actually reduces the contribution of such facilities to the community, reduces their public value. When public facilities are treated only as cost centers, the very bases of civil society would seem to be disintegrating.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party recognizes that governments must find ways of providing for the basic needs of their people and for maintaining public safety and quality of life in their communities.



The Hillsborough Democratic Party will restore honesty and integrity in planning and contracting for rebuilding our infrastructure. In support of Florida's natural environment, Democrats will restrict the drilling for oil off of Florida's Gulf Coast and Atlantic coast so that our beaches will be safe from further pollution and erosion.

Democrats will conserve our natural resources and assure the quality of our water supply.

Democrats will work against resource destruction by unregulated development, and there will be surveillance at community, regional and state levels.

Democrats will restore the roads, bridges, and buildings that have deteriorated during the years of neglect. In the interest of public safety and the integrity of our communities this must be done as soon as possible.

Democrats will restore transportation planning that has been without reasonable coordination. Public transportation should provide the population with the ability to work, play and participate in the activities of their communities

The Hillsborough Democratic Party recognizes that health and human services planning are important to safe and livable communities. Provision of affordable quality health care will continue to be our objective as it has been for twenty years in Hillsborough County. This includes reproductive health care, and Democrats will not put ideology above women's health.

In the interest of healthy and safe communities, The Hillsborough Democratic Party recognizes and respects the rights of all families and citizens without bias regarding race or sexual orientation.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party recognizes that, in matters of health, prevention and early intervention are more efficient than deep-end services. Whether the problems be mental or physical or social. Prevention of mental illness, HIV/AIDS, cancer, diabetes and other chronic diseases and disorders pay off in building an effective work force and community when based on results-based research and practice.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party recognizes that our communities and the state save resources by restoring the civil rights of felons as early as possible upon completion of their court-ordered sentences.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party appreciates the responsibility of government to protect abandoned, abused and disabled persons of all ages.

The right to vote being very nearly sacred in democratic society, the Hillsborough Democratic Party protects that right from every sort of threat.



All of the things we have been concerned with above are public infrastructural needs -- “basic [physical](#) and [organizational](#) structures needed for the operation of a [society](#) or [enterprise](#),<sup>[1]</sup> or the services and facilities necessary for an [economy](#) to function.” The Hillsborough Democratic Party recognizes that the protection and preservation of these many aspects of physical and organizational infrastructure require not only preventive measures but also deliberate planning.

### **III. Strengthening local economic development.**

The Hillsborough Democratic Party recognizes that to strengthen the local economy the governments’ primary focus must be on creating jobs that pay a livable wage.

Government has a responsibility to create an environment that is friendly to large and small businesses and especially to their employees.

The Democratic Party believes that the government must operate in the sunshine.

Economic incentives may be necessary but state and local governments must regulate business practices that could have a negative impact on health conditions for workers or for the community at large.

The Democratic Party favors an equitable playing field for businesses and workers with regulations that sustain standards for public health and safety.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party supports the extension of benefits for unemployed Florida workers while at the same time supporting job training that will return unemployed workers back to full participation in the workforce.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party recognizes that the depressed economy is causing considerable pain but that pain is suffered much more by the unemployed and by low wage workers than by those who already have high salaries and inherited wealth.

The Hillsborough County Democratic Party calls for Tax reforms that strengthen our local economy, bearing in mind that some corporations and families have wealth that is lying fallow.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party believes that the County Government should do whatever it can to help homeowners who are under threat of disclosure.