

## **DRAFT: PLATFORM FOR THE HILLSBOROUGH DEMOCRATIC PARTY, 2012.**

The Platform Committee is pleased to present its draft of the Hillsborough Democratic Party's Platform for 2012. The Platform respects the thirteen principles that represent our permanent political beliefs (view at <http://lutzdemocrats.us/PlatformPrinciples2011.pdf>), but is specific in terms of locality and currency. The Platform for 2012 is organized in three sections:

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

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

**Section III. Strengthening local economic development.**

Members of the Platform Committee who contributed most to this final draft are Chris Cano, Bill Guerra, Anna Scott, and Alvin Wolfe, who chaired the Committee.

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

The Hillsborough Democratic Party supports the very clear provisions of Article IX, Section 1, of the Florida Constitution, as amended, providing by law for all children within its borders a uniform, efficient, safe and secure system of free public schools that allow students to obtain a high quality education at funding levels adequate to meet those high standards.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party supports funding sufficient to meet the constitutional requirements on classroom size at different grade levels.

Recognizing that bullying among students has a substantial negative impact on the academic achievement of children at all ages, the Hillsborough Democratic Party puts a high priority on preventing such behavior in schools and communities.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party recognizes that teachers, being educated and especially trained professionals, are the most important component serving students in the public school system and recognizes also that teachers' associations are vital to planning and operating schools and preserving the integrity of teachers' roles and benefits.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party does not support the use of vouchers in Florida public schools because that practice tends to provide public financing of private schools.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party feels strongly that the salary of teachers should be based on merit criteria other than student achievement.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party supports using a more dynamic benchmark than the FCAT to measure student achievement.

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,

including the services and facilities necessary for an economy to function. 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 that private businesses benefit from the public infrastructure built and maintained by governments.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party recognizes that although similarities exist between governments and businesses, it is not the case that a government should be run like a business. The major obligation of a business is to its investors, while a government has a range of obligations to the community-- obligations more like those of a family or a nation. 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 cost centers – for example, charging “user fees” 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.

The Hillsborough Democratic Party favors the following:

- Restore honor and integrity in planning and contracting for rebuilding our infrastructure.
- Restrict drilling for oil off of Florida’s coasts.
- Conserve our natural resources and assure the quality of our water supply by supporting renewable resources.
- At local, regional and state levels guard against destruction of resources by unrestricted development

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

The Hillsborough Democratic Party supports restoration of reasonable coordination to planning for meeting many needs of our communities:

- Public transportation should provide the population with the ability to work , play and participate in the activities of their communities
- 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. 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 are 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 will fight all efforts to suppress these rights.

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, and 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.

### **Section 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 to attract companies to the area, 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, own property, or have 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 foreclosure.

**--End of Platform 2012**

**Draft, October 8, 2011. –Alvin Wolfe, Chair, Platform Committee**