

Timeline of Democratic Party National Platform Language

Quotes from Democratic Platforms are in italics.

1952

"[I]t is our prayerful hope. . . that Almighty God may grant us the wisdom to succeed."

"Under the guidance, protection, and help of Almighty God we shall succeed in bringing to the people of this Nation a better and more rewarding life."

1960

"In this spirit, we hereby rededicate ourselves to the continuing service of the Rights of Man everywhere in America and everywhere else on God's earth."

1968

The Democratic platform supports "family planning" for the first time, by encouraging the establishment of "family planning information centers" throughout the country.

1972

The platform states that "family planning services . . . should be available to all, regardless of sex, age, [or] marital status."

1976

Abortion is explicitly mentioned in the platform for the first time, saying that amending the Constitution "to overturn the Supreme Court decision" would be "undesirable." The platform pledges support for family planning "around the world, as well as at home."

1980

The following terms are used for the first time:

"sexual orientation"

"right to choose"

"reproductive rights/freedom/choice"

"The Democratic Party supports the 1973 Supreme Court decision on abortion rights as the law of the land and opposes any Constitutional amendment to restrict or overturn that decision."

"The Democratic Party recognizes reproductive freedom as a fundamental human right."

1984

The terms "gay" and "lesbian" are used for the first time.

"We will assure that sexual orientation per se does not serve as a bar to participation in the military."

1988

The platform states that "the fundamental right of reproductive choice should be guaranteed regardless of ability to pay."

1992

The party pledges for the first time to support "comprehensive family life education" [A euphemism for a type of sex education which teaches kids that contraception and abortion are legitimate options.] The term "Roe v. Wade" is used for the first time, and the platform explicitly supports reforming American health care to "provide for the full range of reproductive choice," which includes "the right to a safe, legal abortion."

"Democrats stand behind the right of every woman to choose, consistent with Roe v. Wade, . . . and support a national law to protect that right."

"We will . . . provide civil rights protection for gay men and lesbians."

1996

The Democratic Party stands behind the right of every woman to choose, consistent with Roe v. Wade, and regardless of ability to pay. . . . We believe it is a fundamental constitutional liberty that individual Americans -- not government -- can best take responsibility for making the most difficult and intensely personal decisions regarding reproduction.

The Democratic Party is a party of inclusion. We respect the individual conscience of each American on this difficult issue, and we welcome all our members to participate at every level of our party.

2000

"This year's Supreme Court rulings show to us all that eliminating a woman's right to choose is only one justice away. That's why the stakes in this election are as high as ever."

"We support the full inclusion of gay and lesbian families in the life of the nation."

2004

President Bush has rejected the calls . . . for assistance with embryonic stem cell research. We will reverse his wrongheaded policy.

Because we believe in the privacy and equality of women, we stand proudly for a woman's right to choose, consistent with Roe v. Wade, and regardless of her ability to pay. We stand firmly against Republican efforts to undermine that right. At the same time, we strongly support family planning and adoption incentives. Abortion should be safe, legal, and rare.

2008

The Democratic Party strongly and unequivocally supports Roe v. Wade and a woman's right to choose a safe and legal abortion, regardless of ability to pay, and we oppose any and all efforts to weaken or undermine that right.

We support the full inclusion of all families, including same-sex couples, in the life of our nation, and support equal responsibility, benefits, and protections. We will enact a comprehensive bipartisan employment non-discrimination act. We oppose the Defense of Marriage Act and all attempts to use this issue to divide us.

2012

President Obama and Democrats will continue to stand up to Republican efforts to defund Planned Parenthood health centers.

The Democratic Party strongly and unequivocally supports Roe v. Wade and a woman's right to make decisions regarding her pregnancy, including a safe and legal abortion, regardless of ability to pay. We oppose any and all efforts to weaken or undermine that right.

We oppose discriminatory federal and state constitutional amendments and other attempts to deny equal protection of the laws to committed same-sex couples who seek the same respect and responsibilities as other married couples. We support the full repeal of the so-called Defense of Marriage Act and the passage of the Respect for Marriage Act.

2016

Note that there is no mention of religious freedom in the context of abortion in the 2016 platform. The 2016 platform for the first time explicitly calls for the repeal of the Hyde Amendment which restricts the use of Medicaid funds for abortions. In other words, the Democratic platform supports having you pay for others' abortions.

Democrats applaud last year's decision by the Supreme Court that recognized that LGBT people—like other Americans—have the right to marry the person they love. But there is still much work to be done.

We support a progressive vision of religious freedom that respects pluralism and rejects the misuse of religion to discriminate.

We believe unequivocally, like the majority of Americans, that every woman should have access to quality reproductive health care services, including safe and legal abortion—regardless of where she lives, how much money she makes, or how she is insured. We believe that reproductive health is core to women's, men's, and young people's health and wellbeing. We will continue to stand up to Republican efforts to defund Planned Parenthood health centers, which provide critical health services to millions of people. We will continue to oppose—and seek to overturn—federal and state laws and policies that impede a woman's access to abortion, including by repealing the Hyde Amendment.