



# Socialist Party of Michigan 2011-2012 State Platform

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## **Introduction**

The Socialist Party of Michigan is unlike any other political party participating in Michigan's elections. We believe that a new society must be organized and built that can serve the interests of the true majority in our state: Michigan's working class — organized, unorganized and unemployed.

We believe that government should work for working people, and that a Socialist government's first and foremost priority is assisting workers in their struggle for a democratic and peaceful society, where the twin scourges of poverty and oppression are eradicated through the elimination of class divisions and class antagonisms. Our platform expresses the Party's commitment to the achievement of a democratic workers' state government, which will allow all people, regardless of their current position in society, to build a better future for themselves and their children. Thus, our Socialist platform is not only a concrete expression of this commitment to building a better world, but also a guide to achieving it.

Today, Michigan faces new struggles and opportunities. Upon having become the 20th Century's beacon of capitalist industrial development, the close of the 21st Century's first decade has now left Michigan as the beacon of capitalist industrial decline. As with its advancement of heavy industry in the blooming era of capitalist industrial growth, Michigan's now skyrocketing levels of job loss, foreclosure, public service starvation, and near destruction of whole cities have since placed our state into an equally precursive position, amidst the present system's emerging degeneration, as it once held amidst its expansion and ripening. Michigan finds itself at a fundamental crossroads: either we as a people will continue down the unsustainable path of upholding capitalism's callous disregard and neglect of human and environmental needs; or, we as a people will seek out and develop a new vision for the future of the state, and the world in which we live. We Socialists seek to offer a new vision for our state, which we can sum up in the simplest terms: *another Michigan is possible*.

As Socialists, we are proud of our traditions as the most consistent fighters for genuine democratic renewal and social change. We are proud of those Socialists who came before us, seeking to build a new world atop the ashes of the old: Eugene V. Debs; Mother Jones; Helen Keller; Bill Haywood; Sol and Genora Dollinger; W.E.B. DuBois; A. Philip Randolph; etc. It is in their name, and in the principles they embodied, that we Socialists work today for a world without war, without poverty, without discrimination or chauvinism, without fear and desperation. It is with proud history borne in mind that we turn our eyes to the future and the work ahead.

We are committed to raising the issues and hard questions that none of our competitor parties wish to raise. We are committed to giving real answers, and offering real solutions, to the people of Michigan. We are committed to fighting for real change by focusing on the issues that matter most to working people in our state: quality health care for all, regardless of income; real educational opportunities for students of all ages and backgrounds; an economy that works in the interests of human need, not corporate greed; flourishing communities with quality housing; neighborhoods that no longer live in fear of what is to come; the strengthening and expansion of democratic functioning into all aspects of society; an end to both systemic (institutional) and prejudicial discrimination and chauvinism based on race, nationality, sex, gender, sexuality, religion, language, age or ability; and the development of a sustainable environment that works in harmony with human civilization.

We are committed to raising these issues, both in our electoral campaigns and in the streets. As Socialists, we recognize the profound meaning in Frederick Douglass' famous statement, "If there is no struggle, there is no progress." When we campaign to serve in the offices of government, it is a part of our overall effort to take our case directly to the people.

We Socialists believe that the working people of our state have rejected the "politics as usual" of the Republican and Democratic parties. They have done this by "voting with their feet" in their majority, and not casting ballots in recent elections. We believe they, anticipating so many others, are ready for a real alternative — a democratic socialist alternative. We believe they are ready for a fundamental change of direction in society, and are willing to place their trust in a new movement of working people. This is why we Socialists state unequivocally that another Michigan is possible — a Michigan that works for working people. Our Socialist Party and Socialist platform represent that desire.

## **Demands**

The choice now facing Michigan voters is whether to continue traveling down the same path of war, repression and poverty laid out by the two major parties, or to take a new course toward peace, jobs and democracy. Whether we like it or not, whether we asked for it or not, the upcoming election will be a referendum on the current policies of the two parties and their collective vision (a nightmare) for us all. The Socialist Party offers an alternative vision of Michigan, based on our core values and principles, to our fellow citizens. To this end, in order to facilitate the development of a new society based on the ideals of egalitarian, non-exploitative and non-violent relations among and between all peoples, we offer a platform of concrete, practical demands that, if implemented, would create the conditions for building a better state and a better world. This platform represents the beginning elements of the historic task facing us all. It is a means to an end, not the end itself.

What we offer to accomplish, if elected, are policies that can be fought for in mass struggle and in some cases implemented today, even under the current capitalist system. But we also reach forward and show the way to the new society of general freedom and equality, and lay the basis for taking those decisive steps into a new tomorrow - a socialist tomorrow; a tomorrow where a completely new government

and way of doing things will be created by working people; a government of deeply democratic assemblies of recallable workers' representatives and direct mass democracy wherever possible; a workers' government that will take possession of the means of production, distribution, commerce and institute a democratically planned economy to meet the needs of all. Until then, we fight for the following:

## **Economy**

As the working people of Michigan begin their journey through the 21st century, we are facing a crisis in our state that is not of our making, but we are expected to pay for its solution. Today, we face the greatest budget deficit since the outbreak of the Second World War. Absent either a sweeping overhaul of the state's regressive tax structure and budgetary priorities, or the further escalation of public and social service cuts to a near breaking point, Michigan's budget gap is projected to approach nearly two billion dollars in the coming fiscal year.

At the same time, millions of working people across Michigan have to find ways to continue to survive. While even the state's officially calculated unemployment percentage rate continues hang within the double digits, such official percentage estimates do not count those who are working for even a single hour a week or those who have since given up actively and continuously searching for available employment. If we include those who are not counted in the official numbers, as well as those who are underemployed, we find that more than one out of every four working people in the state is now without adequate means to provide for themselves or their families.

We Socialists are committed to putting Michigan back to work in jobs with the best quality living standards and benefits that can be squeezed from capitalist society — paid for by the profits made by our labor.

### **Putting Michigan Back to Work**

- The immediate placement of all major corporations under social ownership and worker control.
- A massive state and federal public works program to rebuild our cities and

communities, administered and controlled by elected assemblies of working people.

- Immediate reopening of all closed and closing factories under workers' control, retooled (if necessary) to produce staple items for human need.
- Creation of a National Pension Authority, under democratic control of elected workers' assemblies, to hold the assets of private pension funds and 401(k) retirement funds, and a levy against corporate assets for any pension fund deficits.
- State and federal cultural works projects to develop and bring cultural activities into working communities.
- Creation of a Workers' Superfund to pay a worker's full wages and benefits, as well as necessary educational and/or retraining costs, for workers who lose their job due to environmental transition, downsizing, corporate restructuring or capital flight.
- Cut the work week with no loss of net pay or benefits to spread available work around in accordance with the aim of producing for use and public need, rather than not production for the maximization of private profit.
- A 100-percent capital flight tax on corporations and capitalists who attempt to leave the state.

### **Rebuilding our Communities**

- Creation of a neighborhood reconstruction program, to build quality, community based housing, controlled and administered by democratically elected assemblies of construction workers and future residents.
- Confiscation without compensation of rental houses and apartment complexes from commercial landlords found guilty of repeated and persistent code violations.
- Rent control for all existing rental units, and the right of tenants to organize into unions and conduct rent strikes and strikes over conditions.
- Support for the formation of housing cooperatives and nonprofit land trusts.
- Creation of a housing rehabilitation service, democratically controlled by construction workers and residents, to aid homeowners and renters in renovations and maintenance, and seasonal weatherizing.

### **Safe and Efficient Access to Travel**

- Government-subsidized programs to expand foot and bicycle paths. Creation of pedestrian ways that exclude vehicles from downtown areas of cities and towns, accessible only by mass transit.
- Creation of fully funded high-speed rail transportation systems between the major cities in Michigan, with fares set low enough to be a viable alternative to the use of

the automobile.

- Creation of an elevated train/subway system in Detroit as a part of the D-DOT system, and commuter lines from Detroit to suburban communities as a part of the SMART system.
- Subsidies for socialized mass transit so that fares are affordable to all.
- Indefinite moratorium on the expansion of the interstate highway system.
- Establishment of a democratically controlled Highway Redevelopment Commission to explore ways to transform the state's roadway infrastructure into a non-invasive, environmentally friendly system.
- Replacement of all diesel-powered buses by electric- and CNG-powered coaches.
- Establishment of state-owned auto insurance, with rates on a sliding scale based on income, administered by an elected state Insurance Commission.
- Replacement of salt for snow removal on roads with an ecologically sound chemical substitute that does not deteriorate the roads, so as to preserve our state's resources and reduce the need to rebuild roads.
- Establishment of a state agency for road repair rather than contracting the job out to "non-profit" corporations that serve as the fronts for the for profit corporations, often owned by the same individuals that the job is then subcontracted to.
- Increase the quality of new road repairs so as not to require constant repair, which increases fuel consumption, causes accidents, creates tension, and over all decreases the quality of life for commuters.

### **Lifting the Tax Burden Off of Working People**

- An amendment to Michigan's Constitution to replace the state's flat-rate income tax with a steeply graduated income tax structure, with people making less than 80 percent of the average wage of a skilled worker paying no income taxes.
- Restoration of the estate tax, capital gains tax and luxury tax on a progressive, graduated scale.
- Elimination of all subsidies, tax breaks and credits that benefit corporations and individual capitalists (also known as "corporate welfare").
- Abolition of the federal payroll tax, state sales tax, and all "sin" taxes on gasoline, alcohol and tobacco.
- Tax benefits for renters equal to those for homeowners.
- A 100-percent homestead exemption on property tax for homes valued under \$53,353.
- A 100-percent tax on the profits of war goods and weapons manufacturers.

- Raising of the maximum yearly income limits to qualify for the federal Earned Income Credit by at least 25%.
- We also point to the fact that socialized industries in a planned economy would generate a social surplus of wealth which could be used to replace many taxes altogether.

### **Protecting the Right to Work with Dignity**

- A minimum wage of \$16/hour for wage earners and a minimum yearly salary of \$33,292 for salaried workers, indexed to the cost of living for certain states, and a cumulative maximum wage no greater than 10-times the minimum.
- An uninterrupted weekly break, of no less than 64 hours, for all workers, with exception for flex-time.
- A minimum of three weeks paid vacation, and a minimum 24 days of personal time off, for all workers.
- Abolition of mandatory overtime. Employees working voluntary overtime must receive double pay.
- Increased unemployment compensation at a living wage and indexed to the cost of living.
- Establishment of a guaranteed annual income at a living wage for those outside the work force.
- Price controls and freezes on all staple food items and essential services, established by democratically elected assemblies of producers and consumers.
- Support for the right of any number of interested workers in a workplace to form a union and bargain with their employer, with no limits on the subjects upon which employees and unions may bargain with employers.
- Automatic union recognition based on card check and neutrality.
- Democratic control by the membership of all labor unions, independent of employer and government domination and influence.
- Support for the right of all workers, particularly workers in service industries, enlisted personnel in the Armed Forces (excluding non-commissioned officers) the unorganized, under organized and unemployed to organize labor unions, associations and cooperative societies.
- Support for militant, united labor action including secondary strikes, sympathy strikes and secondary boycotts, factory committees, and ultimately the expropriation of the work place.

- Support of the right of first-time and part-time workers to full benefits.
- Repeal of all repressive “slave labor” legislation such as the 1994 Public Act 112 amendments to the Michigan Public Employment Relations Act, the Hatch Act, the Taft-Hartley Act, the Landrum-Griffin Act and all so-called “right-to-work” laws..
- Abolition of the National Labor Relations Board, replaced by community-based elected commissions composed of at least 50 percent working people.
- Support for the right of workers to organize workplace committees and assemblies, to hold shop meetings on company premises, elect their supervisors, and administer health and safety programs.
- Support for the right of workers, consumers and communities to information on plant safety, hazardous wastes, toxic substances, and the quality of goods and services.
- Support for the right of workers to strike over health and safety issues.
- Support for the right of all workers to organize irrespective of job titles and responsibilities, citizenship status, method of payment or sector of the economy where employed.

### **Ending Debt Slavery in Rural Areas**

- Formation of cooperatives to represent small and family farmers in negotiating contracts with canneries and grocery/produce distributors.
- Technological and resource incentives to small and family farmers that agree to form a cooperative.
- The right of farm workers to organize into unions to gain better wages and benefits, quality housing and working conditions, and for negotiating contracts.
- Placement of corporate-run “factory farms” into public ownership, administered and restructured by democratically elected farm workers’ assemblies.
- A parity system that guarantees farmers a full return on the cost of production.
- Repudiation of all current farm debts. Creation of grants, no-interest loans, micro-credits and technical help to farmers, including help to shift farm production from non-essentials to staple foods and fibers.
- Family farmers whose land was taken in foreclosures should be given their land and equipment back, or be given comparable land and equipment somewhere else if they wish it. They should also have the option of monetary compensation for their loss instead.
- The right of farmers and farm workers to organize unions for good wages, housing, and working conditions (including the right to be protected from pesticides).

- Labeling of genetically modified foods, and the banning of genetically modified seeds designed to be sterile.
- Democratic control of agricultural research and the complete testing of agricultural products.
- Increased funding to the U.S. Department of Agriculture to carry out full inspections of domestic and imported agricultural products to make sure they meet standards for food safety.
- Full disclosure in the labeling on agricultural products, including listing the country of origin.
- Full funding for research geared toward the elimination of pesticide use.

### **A People's Budget, Approved by the People**

We Socialists, if elected, would establish a policy of direct, popular participation in the formulation and passage of municipal, county and state budgets. These “Participatory Budgets” would be drafted by the people themselves, and adopted by elected assemblies. Communities would be presented with the amount of money that is received annually, the budget lines that could be funded and possible recommendations from an elected Budget Commission. Meeting in community assemblies, elected delegates and members of the community would debate and decide on how much each budget category would receive and when, and then adopt it.

We Socialists believe that working people are the most qualified to know which services should receive priority funding and which should be cut. Unlike the capitalists and their professional political agents, working people have spent virtually their entire lives budgeting money in order to survive. Since working people are the majority of the population, and the recipient of the overwhelming majority of municipal, county and state services, we believe they are the most qualified to decide these issues.

## **Human Rights**

Michigan has had a strong tradition of progressive and democratic action. We were the first English-speaking government in the world to ban the use of capital punishment for a crime; in fact, International Death Penalty Abolition Day is in recognition of the implementation of the 1847 Michigan Constitution. In the early

years of the 20th Century, when poor and working people were suffering under spiraling inflation and unemployment, public officials allowed them to use unoccupied plots of land for growing food. In the 1930s, in the midst of the Great Depression, Michigan became the epicenter of the emerging industrial union movement, as working people across the state demanded the right to organize and bargain collectively.

In recent years, however, reactionary and far-right elements inside and outside of the state government have been working to roll back the clock of social progress. The 12-year administration of Governor John Engler (1991-2002) was a period in which these forces gained the greatest strength, but previous administrations, both Republican and Democratic, did their part to lay the foundations for what came about in the 1990s. We Socialists are committed to reversing these defeats by strengthening and deepening the progressive and democratic traditions of the state through legislation that protects human and democratic rights.

### **Social Equality and Democratic Rights**

- Full equality for all, regardless of race, color or creed, nationality or national origin, gender, sexuality or sexual identity, age, ability, political affiliation, religion, or citizenship status.
- State and federal anti-discrimination legislation covering the above categories, with fully empowered enforcement mechanisms in the hands of elected assemblies of working people.
- Affirmative action programs, including concretely measurable targets and timetables, democratically approved by elected diversity oversight committees in housing, education, employment and state services.

### **Social Equality and Democratic Rights — People of Color**

- Recognition of the right of oppressed nationalities to autonomy, community control and self-determination, up to and including separation.
- Formal apology and reparations from the State of Michigan and federal government for its role in the maintenance and continuation of the slave trade, and the genocide of Native American nations, with the reparations programs administered by the

oppressed communities themselves.

- Full representation and/or sovereignty for Native American communities and nations in the state and federal government as autonomous entities.
- Opposition to attempts to adopt an official language for Michigan or the United States.
- Passage of legislation making racial profiling a crime severely punishable by law.
- The right of immigrants to housing, education, health care, jobs, and civil, legal and political rights.

### **Social Equality and Democratic Rights — Women**

- Equal pay for equal work or work of comparative worth.
- Establishment of 24-hour childcare and medical facilities, crisis lines and shelters for victims and survivors of rape, domestic violence and child abuse, and community-based education and response teams to combat violence against women and children.
- Establishment of 24-hour community kitchens and domestic cleaning teams.
- Banning all involuntary sterilizations, with doctors who perform them subject to prosecution.
- Decriminalization of prostitution, to remove it from criminal control. Prostitutes to be provided with special health care and other services to reduce the dangers they confront.
- For organizational structures based on feminist practice: rotating leadership, gender balance, gender based caucuses and systems for insuring full and open participation in discussion and decision-making.

### **Social Equality and Democratic Rights — Lesbians, Gay Men, Bisexuals, Transgendered, Queer, and Intersex (LGBTQI)**

- Repeal of all anti-LGBTQ legislation, including anti-sodomy and “criminal deviant” laws.
- Recognition of equal protection under the law for same-sex couples through a constitutional amendment affirming their right to obtain a marriage license and certificate from the State of Michigan, and their right to adopt and raise children.
- We call on all schools to adopt policies and procedures to address and prevent student violence and to ban discrimination against GLBTQ people throughout the educational system.
- A state and federal ban on all forms of job discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in both the public and the private sector.

- We are committed to confronting the heterosexism that provides the fertile ground for homophobic violence, and support all efforts toward fostering understanding and cooperation among persons and groups of different sexual orientations.

### **Social Equality and Democratic Rights — Disabled**

- Restoration and enhancement of enforcement provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Establishment of a network of support for people with physical, mental and developmental disabilities, including home assistance, recreation centers, guaranteed income, voting access and quality control in residential facilities.
- We oppose any attempts to reduce social security entitlement, remove protections for the disabled under social security, or privatize the social security system.
- A raise in Social Security and SSI benefits to a minimum of \$2,588 a month.
- Adjust the resource limits and income exclusions for SSI for the cost of living from the point they were last raised in the mid 80's.

### **Social Equality and Democratic Rights — Elderly**

- No compulsory retirement. Right of retirement at age 55 — age 50 for workers in hazardous or extremely labor-intensive industries.
- Increase in home service and hospice care for older people so that they can remain independent in the community.
- Formation of publicly funded and democratically controlled senior centers to provide positive opportunities for community involvement.
- Vigorous enforcement of health and care standards for nursing homes.
- Election of advocates and ombudsmen by assemblies of seniors and caregivers to insure the protection of residents' rights in nursing homes, and a stimulating environment in group and nursing home situations.

### **Social Equality and Democratic Rights — Youth**

- Opposition to measures that increase responsibilities and penalties on youth ostensibly to curb crime.
- Abolition of the Selective Service Administration, the government agency responsible for organizing the military draft, abolition of Selective Service registration and abolition of military recruiting in educational institutions.
- Stipends and grants for children to aid in the economic satisfaction of every child's basic rights and needs.

- The right of all parents to share in the child-rearing process.
- Adoption and foster care reform, including child protections from abuse and abandonment, and the stripping of parental rights from abusive parents.
- The right of young people to a job, proper training and/or full benefits after finishing their education.
- The right of young people to enter into personal relations with their peers without fear of repression from the state.
- End age-based curfew laws.

### **Breaking the System of Legal Injustice**

- We call for the ultimate replacement of capitalist police departments altogether. They should be replaced, through struggles of working people, with fully democratic, community based workers' and peoples' militias, volunteer and paid, composed of community residents and professionals trained in conflict resolution.
- Free, quality legal and court services with skilled and experienced attorneys of choice.
- Full prosecution of the criminal activities of politicians, corporate managers and other privileged individuals rather than the over-enforcement of minor infractions by working people.
- Expansion of community release programs and other alternatives to prisons, and a moratorium on new prison construction.
- Immediate closure of all "Supermax" prisons. Abolition of "prisons for profit".
- Abolition of prison labor for profit, forced labor ("chain gangs") and the use of prison labor to perform state services.
- The right of prisoners to organize unions and cooperative societies to negotiate for better living conditions.
- Abolition of the inhumane practice of cavity searches and adoption of a zero tolerance policy towards sexual assault within prisons.
- Establishment of academic programs and schools to aid prisoners with literacy, attaining higher education and understanding the law and society.
- Support services for prisoners and their families to reduce ostracism, maintain family ties, and provide for non-degrading visitation policies.
- Abolition of multi-prisoner cells.
- Establishment of completely independent and democratically elected police control and oversight councils, with full power to fire police and to arrest, detain, and indict police officers who brutalize or abuse people or who commit any violation of laws or

civil rights and liberties.

- Recognition of the right of working-class and oppressed communities and communities of color to defend themselves by any means necessary against reactionary violence, police harassment and brutality.
- Community response services for crime victims.
- Decriminalization of victimless crimes, including drug possession and substance abuse, and legalization of marijuana and hemp.
- Sliding scale of fines based on income.
- Commutation and pardoning of all political prisoners.
- Legislation to make the recitation of the rights of the accused (the “Miranda warning”) by police mandatory.
- Immediate dismissal of all prosecution cases where the rights of the accused have been violated.
- Abolition of the federal death penalty and oppose the institution of the death penalty in Michigan.
- Federal safety standards and training for gun owners, under democratic control.
- Unconditional amnesty for undocumented people. For full citizenship rights upon demonstrating proof of residency for six (6) months.
- We call for an end to the use of “secret evidence” in deportation hearings, a ban on all immigration detentions and military tribunals, and full due process and habeas corpus rights in U.S. courts for all non-citizens on U.S. territory or in U.S. custody.

### **Protecting the Health of Humanity**

- For a socialized single-payer health care system, with standard and alternative medical coverage, and vision and dental care, for all.
- For a health care system that emphasizes preventive care, respects patients’ privacy, gives special attention to the needs of the physically and mentally disabled, and conducts treatment and research unimpaired by sexism, racism or homophobia/heterosexism.
- Free and safe access to reproductive services, including birth control and medical termination of pregnancy (abortion), on demand.
- Fully paid maternity leave three months before and six months after giving birth; the partner or guardian couple to be provided with six months’ leave.
- Full funding for research into developing vaccines and treatment for HIV and AIDS.
- Full funding for research into medical benefits that can be derived from the study of the human genome.

- Abolition of all copyright protection for medicines and biomedical/technology products.
- Immediate lifting of the restrictions upon government funding for human embryonic on stem-cell research.
- Full funding for treatment and management of addiction to controlled substances, and the development of synthetic alternatives that aid in eliminating physical addiction, not merely replace one addictive substance with another.
- Full funding for community mental health services available on a voluntary basis, with patients' rights respected.

### **A 21st-Century Public Educational System**

- Free, quality and universal public education, from pre-kindergarten through post-graduate studies, including open admissions with the abolition of tuition and fees at all public universities.
- Recognition of full unionization rights for graduate teaching assistants.
- Abolition of legislation that allows public funds to be diverted into private schools. Abolition of school voucher programs and charter schools.
- Funding for massive teacher recruitment and retention program, administered by the teachers' unions.
- Mandatory reduction of class sizes to no larger than 15 students per teacher.
- Broadband Internet access in all schools, libraries and other educational facilities, free and accessible to all students, parents and members of the community.
- Repudiation of the provisions of the "No Child Left Behind" Act and the Michigan Educational Assessment Program, including teacher testing and merit pay.
- Multicultural, class-conscious curricula that allows for alternative methods of learning and development.
- Non-moralistic sex and health education beginning in the fourth grade.
- Removal of all corporate advertising and presence in public schools.
- Mandatory updating of all school textbooks and other learning-related materials every three years.
- Inclusion of vocational and fine arts courses in the mandatory curriculum.
- An end to military research at public universities and the abolition of all ROTC and JROTC programs.
- Student, parent, and teacher control of curriculum formation, and in the hiring and dismissal procedures of school personnel, through the formation of local school/community committees.

- Student, teacher, and faculty representation on school boards, and for those boards to be fully accountable to students, parents, teachers, and school workers.

## **Democracy**

Throughout much of its history, Michigan has been in the forefront of advancing democratic reform. Michigan was one of the first states to ratify the most socially and historically progressive amendments to the U.S. Constitution. The people of Michigan were among the first to implement desegregation and public assistance programs, repeal reactionary social and political legislation, and to protect the rights of the most exploited and oppressed. At the same time, none of this social progress would have been possible without the consistent mobilization of working people throughout the state.

The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, “The arc of history is long, but it bends toward justice.” Throughout its history, Michigan has been on the forefront of that arc. Today, however, the forces of social reaction are attempting to gain the upper hand, to reverse this tradition and plunge the state into the mire of barbarism and despair. We Socialists are committed to not only reversing this recent trend backwards, but to push forward and advance democratic reform as part of a fundamental transformation of society.

## **Election Reform**

- Abolition of restrictive rules for obtaining and retaining ballot status as a political party.
- Uniformed ballot access laws or all states.
- Automatic granting of “Political Party” status for any organization that holds a State Convention and elects a State Central Committee.
- Abolition of the two-tier system that favors the Republicans and Democrats by abolishing signature-gathering requirements.
- Abolition of the partisan Board of Elections and Board of Canvassers, and its replacement with a non-partisan State Electoral Council.
- Repeal of all laws restricting participation by labor unions in the political process.
- Equal public financing of all registered candidates and abolition of the use of personal funds in elections.

- Mandatory, verifiable paper trail of all votes to allow for recounts and verification.
- Automatic voter registration upon reaching voting age, based upon the most recent of address provided on a drivers' license application, state ID application or state tax return, whenever possible.
- Implementation of Instant Runoff Voting in all state, county and municipal elections. Implementation of proportional representation in all legislative bodies.
- Lowering of the voting age to 14.
- Extension of the right of Michigan citizens incarcerated in jails and prisons within the state to vote.
- Higher donation limits for minor parties.
- Election day as a national and state holiday.

### **The People's Airwaves**

- Abolition of privately funded campaign commercials, replaced by state-mandated blocs of time for each candidate and recognized state political party.
- Reinstitution of the "fairness doctrine" in all media, with automatic recognition of equal time for all candidates.
- Supervision and oversight of media reporting by democratically elected boards of review attached to each local and regional media outlet.
- Expansion of public access media, including print and radio, to allow for more diverse voices to be heard.
- Sliding scale of fees for obtaining broadcast licenses, based on income and audience served.
- Free Internet access for all, including the distribution of computers to individuals and families in need of them.

### **Community Control**

- Abolition of the right of the state government to stage "takeovers" of community institutions: courts; school districts; power and water facilities; public transportation; etc.
- Establishment of community control of municipal services, based on elected assemblies of those employees working the facilities and liaison bodies from the community.

### **Democratic Economy and Society**

- All financial institutions, including credit unions, mutual insurance cooperatives, and

cooperative state banks, to be publicly owned and operated by democratically controlled assemblies of financial service workers.

- Debt “owed” to the big banks by levels of government be either cancelled outright or drastically reduced at far lower interest rates. It is time for debt enslavement to be ended as an excuse for cutting domestic spending on social needs.
- Abolition of all ATM, check cashing and bank fees.
- No business secrets hidden from the workers. The books and data banks of every company must be open to the inspection of specialists appointed by and responsible to the workers.
- Abolition of state secrecy. Public access to all state files, cabinet papers, diplomatic agreements, etc., with respect to personal privacy.
- Mandatory full disclosure of corporate plans to close and relocate plants and compensation for workers and communities affected by plant closings.
- Mandatory full disclosure of budgets and assets for all declared failing and bankrupt corporations.
- End to all forms of censorship, both legislative and institutional.
- Separation of church and state, and separation of church and school. Full freedom for religious and atheist beliefs.
- An end to all state-sponsored religious propaganda and acts of worship. Religion taught in public schools only as a subject of academic study.

### **Community Assemblies**

- Sanctioning of fully empowered neighborhood councils and assemblies to administer areas and communities within cities.
- Transfer of oversight of all services in a community to such assemblies.
- Establishment of liaison committees between community assemblies and workplace assemblies to recommend new techniques, improvements to equipment, additions of personnel, etc.
- Citywide, county, regional and statewide gatherings of community assemblies on a periodic basis, to exchange ideas, set policy and coordinate activity.

### **A Democratic Constitution**

We Socialists, if elected, would push for a statewide Constitutional Convention, organized and convened by community and workplace assemblies, to codify the transfer of power and authority over the affairs of the State of Michigan from the old, nominally “democratic” structures to the new grassroots community and workplace

assemblies, and whatever statewide system of legislation and administration they establish.

This Constitutional Convention, upon convening, would assume all authority and power currently vested in the state government, including authority over the armed institutions of the state, with the ability to dispose of them as they see fit. Central elements of a democratic state Constitution would include:

- Abolition of the State Senate and expansion of the State House of Representatives into a general State Legislature, chosen by proportional representation.
- No representative to make more than the average wage of a skilled worker.
- All Representatives and executive officers subject to immediate recall at any time.
- All members of the executive Cabinet, including directors of state agencies, not directly elected by the people to be chosen from among the elected Representatives.
- Direct election of all judges and justices of the court, subject to recall and earning no more than the average wage of a skilled worker.
- Secretary of State to be empowered to oversee relations with other states and the federal government.
- All post-Census legislative redistricting to be done by a non-partisan commission, employing the latest in computer-aided design and database technology.
- A constitutional amendment requiring a binding vote of the people on all issues of war or military intervention.

Central to the tasks of a new Constitutional Convention would also be the adoption of a “Working People’s Bill of Rights,” designed to make clear and concrete the rights of working people in the state to the necessities of life, the means of expression and the power to determine their own futures and those of succeeding generations.

## **Environment**

Michigan is a land of environmental splendor. Indeed, if you ask most people what they think of when you say “Michigan,” the most common answers include the Great Lakes, our parks and wildlife areas and our outdoor attractions. With 35,000 inland lakes, and 50,000 miles of rivers and streams, is it any wonder that the health and sustainability of the environment is important to the people of Michigan.

We Socialists are committed to building a Michigan that prides itself on having a

sustainable environment and society that co-exists in relative harmony with undeveloped areas of the state. We insist that our environment not be sacrificed on the altar of profit — either in the form of corporations devouring our forests and waters, or in the form of urban sprawl and unnecessary development. We Socialists seek to build a society where the barriers between rural and urban are broken down through the reorganization of society for the benefit of all life on the planet.

### **Preserving Natural Resources**

- Public ownership and democratic control of all our natural resources in order to conserve resources, preserve our wilderness areas, and restore environmental quality.
- Placement of all financial responsibility for cleaning up toxic wastes on the corporations which are responsible for them.
- Requirements for manufacturers to contribute to research and development of new technologies for cleaning up and preventing future toxic wastes.
- Banning of the placement of local municipal landfills, toxic waste disposal sites or incinerators in working-class communities and communities of color.
- Legal action against any U.S. private corporation that violates environmental laws in the operation of facilities overseas.
- No clear-cutting in commercial forestry. Banning of commercial cutting in old-growth forests.
- An environmentally sound timber policy that takes into account the historical ecology of the region.
- Endangered species protection that focuses on habitat-centered protection for plants and animals.

### **Water Pollution**

- Massive cleanup of all Michigan lakes and waterways.
- Ban on all oil and natural gas exploration and pumping in the Great Lakes.
- Ban on the use of water from the Great Lakes for bottling and sale.
- Strict adherence to the federal Clean Water Act.
- Strict controls on runoff and effluent by industry and agriculture.
- Programs to reduce and eliminate mercury contamination in water.
- Statewide program to clean up and restore our state's beaches and shorelines.

### **Air Pollution**

- “Polluter pay” laws to stop corporations from exceeding pollution levels.
- Mandatory DEQ monitoring of air pollution levels in urban areas.
- Dismantling of all trash incinerators in the state.
- Statewide moratorium on all logging and other programs that cause deforestation.
- Legislation to preserve old growth forests and create new forest areas.
- Acceptance and compliance with the Kyoto Protocols.

### **Alternative Energy**

- For alternative energy systems that are not harmful to the environment or living things.
- Public ownership and control of energy plants, organized in a production-for-use system, and administered by elected workplace and community assemblies, assuring the most careful use of natural resources.
- Establishment of wind, geothermal, biomass and hydroelectric power plants to end Michigan’s dependence on fossil fuels.
- Immediate closure and decommissioning of all nuclear power plants, and an indefinite moratorium on all nuclear plant construction.
- Mandatory vitrification of all spent nuclear fuel, control rods and other waste.
- Ban on all imports of nuclear materials, whether they are vitrified or not.
- Sliding scale of utility rates which favor low-income people and ensure that everyone has access to utility services.

### **Consumption Waste**

- Ban on all imports of consumption waste.
- Moratorium on the construction of new waste dumps and landfills.
- Retrofitting of all current dumps and landfills with technology that aids in breaking down waste.
- Increasing conservation efforts by individuals, businesses and communities.
- “Premium pricing” for virgin raw materials.
- Expansion of weekly curbside recycling programs.
- Expansion of the “Bottle Bill” to include all glass, plastic, metal and coated paper containers.
- Democratically-elected, community-based environmental oversight committees.

### **Urban Sprawl**

- Immediate moratorium on all new construction and an injunction on all current

construction contributing to urban sprawl.

- Credits and incentives to individuals and construction teams to build new dwellings and facilities in urban areas.

### **Biodiversity**

- Creation of and support for programs aimed at preserving wildlife preserves and natural wetlands.
- Expansion of federal and state wildlife areas, under democratic control of elected DNR representatives.
- Support for the development of programs aimed at studying the effects of naturally-occurring chemical compounds.

### **Respecting all Living Things**

- Free spaying and neutering of domesticated animals and pets to prevent overpopulation.
- Mandated humane treatment of all animals employed to entertain humans, enforced by a Bureau of Animal Rights Enforcement, attached to the DNR.
- Abolition of the fur trade.
- Support for greater inclusion in and enforcement of the federal Endangered Species Act.
- Banning of animal experimentation for product development, and support for products that are not tested on animals.
- Opposition to the practices of overcrowding, drugging, and otherwise cruelly treating animals on large and factory farms.

### **Hunting and Fishing**

- Condemnation in the strongest terms of hunting and fishing for no purposes other than to slaughter.
- Sliding scale of limits and seasons to preserve threatened species and control overpopulation.
- Cleaning and dressing stations for the safe and sanitary butchering of wild game.
- Taxidermy services to aid hunters and fishermen.

### **New Cities Initiative**

We Socialists, if elected, would work to pass a New Cities Initiative, which would go beyond the proposals for “cool cities” advanced by modern technocrats. The New

Cities Initiative would reorganize urban and rural life to provide for a common bond between all people in Michigan. Modern conveniences and culture would be brought to rural populations; rural calm and openness would be brought to urban peoples. Through modern methods of municipal planning and organization, it would be possible to bring the 21st century to even the most remote village and town in Michigan, while at the same time preserving old-growth forest, natural wetlands and wildlife areas.

## **International Policy**

While we make a point to focus our attention on the issues affecting the working people of Michigan the most, we Socialists also understand that we are not isolated from the world community. On the contrary, our core values and internationalist principles allow us to understand how what we do here at home has an effect on what happens across America and around the world. We Socialists are committed to building a government and society in Michigan that will be a model and beacon of democracy and social justice for the entire planet.

As part of our understanding of Michigan's place in the world, and expressing our commitment to the principles of peace and non-violent relations among peoples, we Socialists commit ourselves to exploring ways and means that can resolve specific problems related to various countries and regions in a manner that is in accordance with our core values and the spirit of mutual human solidarity.

### **Anti-Militarism/Disarmament**

- Elimination of all stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, and depleted uranium weapons.
- Support for the worldwide ban on landmines.
- Immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. occupation forces from Afghanistan, Iraq and Haiti.
- Immediate, unconditional return of all military and paramilitary personnel stationed outside of the U.S. and the closure of all over-seas military bases.
- Immediate closure of the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.
- Disbanding of NATO and all other international military alliances.
- Immediate reduction of the federal defense budget by 50 percent, with additional cuts to follow.

- Abolition of permanent ranks and orders in the Armed Forces, and their replacement by elected command and chief positions based on all standard unit divisions (detail, squad, platoon, company, battalion, regiment, etc.).
- Full democratic rights for soldiers.
- The right of soldiers to elect and recall officers and sergeants at all levels and to form soldiers councils and assemblies to represent their views and interests.
- The right of soldiers to refuse suicidal orders or to commit murder, terror against populations, or war crimes.
- A constitutional amendment requiring a binding vote of the people on all issues of war or military intervention.

### **The “War on Terror”**

- Repudiation of the USA-PATRIOT Act, Transportation Security Act and other similar “anti-terrorist” measures.
- Repeal of all state-enacted “anti-terrorist” measures.
- Abolition of the FBI, CIA, NSA and all other institutions of covert warfare and domestic spying.
- Abolition of the Department of Homeland Security and similar agencies within the State of Michigan.
- Abolition of the North American Command of the United States Armed Forces and of military intervention inside the borders of the U.S., except in times of civil war or invasion.
- Strict enforcement of the civil and Constitutional rights of all those residing within the state.
- Ban on federal detention facilities associated with the “war on terror”.
- Rejection of all federal funds earmarked for the “war on terror”.

### **International Trade**

- Immediate repeal of U.S. participation in NAFTA and CAFTA; rejection of the proposed FTAA; withdraw from the G-7 and G-8.
- Abolition of the World Trade Organization, World Bank and International Monetary Fund.
- Application of International Labor Organization standards to all trade agreements.
- Repudiation and cancellation of all international debt owed by or owed to the U.S.

### **The Americas**

- Self-determination for Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and all U.S. possessions; immediate admission of these states into the Union if they so desire.
- Statehood for the District of Columbia, with voting rights for its citizens.
- Immediate lifting of the embargo against Cuba and normalization of relations.
- Immediate end to U.S. interference and military intervention in Latin America; abolition of “Plan Colombia”.

### **The Middle East**

- Immediate withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights; enforcement of UN resolutions 242 and 338.
- The right of return, or appropriate compensation, for all Palestinian refugees.
- A democratic and secular Palestine, and a democratic and secular Israel, preferably united in a voluntary federated republic.
- Abolition of all military aid to Israel and other aggressor states.

### **International Relations**

- Abolition of permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council. Abolition of the “concurrence clause” (veto power) of the UN Charter. Transfer of UN executive authority to the central assembly. Suspension of member state’s rights if they are more than three years in arrears of paying their dues.
- Distribution of AIDS treatments based on a sliding scale, from at-cost to free, for countries ravaged by the disease.
- Fraternal, non-violent assistance to countries requesting assistance in dealing with communal, religious and fratricidal conflicts.
- Creation of an international political organization of working people as the only way of combating the exploitation of workers in a global economy based on capitalism.
- Establishment and implementation of international labor standards, including the unconditional right to organize, a sliding scale of wages and hours, generous periods of vacation and leisure, and provisions for leaves of absence for new parents with no loss of seniority.

## **Socialism and the Classless Society**

Socialism is not merely a mode of production. It is the transition from class to classless society. It is the new world bearing the birthmarks and scars of the old. Socialism therefore bears the moral, economic and intellectual imprint of capitalism,

which must be overcome to achieve its goal.

The division of labor established by capitalism cannot be abolished overnight. It manifests itself under socialism in the contradictions between mental and manual labor, town and country, men and women, as well as social, regional and national differences. Classes and social strata continue to exist under socialism because of different positions occupied in relationship to the means of production, the roles played in society and the way they receive their income.

Class and social contradictions necessitate the continuation of the class struggle. However this struggle is determined by the new alignments brought about by the overthrow of capitalism and the opening of the transitional period. While socialism creates the objective basis for solving social contradictions, these contradictions need to be solved through patient analysis and understanding of our political tasks, and the continuous development of active, mass participatory democracy. This is essential because the achievement of the classless society is not a spontaneous development, but requires a critically-thinking and self-acting people to bring it into existence.

Socialism in the United States will start at perhaps the highest level of technique and output possible. Once the hard task of ousting the capitalists and establishing majority rule through the instrument of a democratic workers' republic has been achieved, we will begin to advance directly towards a classless society. The speed of that advance is dictated by the success of democratic and social revolution on a world scale, and the continuous and ever-deepening development of the necessary political tasks facing the most conscious elements of society.

Through society reabsorbing the functions of the state, made possible through the establishment of real majority rule, the need for it withers away. Democracy (a form of the state) negates itself and gives way to general freedom. The classless society is a free association of producers. Everybody will contribute according to their ability and take according to need. Real human history begins at this point, and society leaves behind the "era of scarcity." In this new "era of general freedom," people will become well-rounded, fully social individuals, who can for the first time truly develop their natural humanity.

This is what we want to achieve. To win this prize we will overcome any obstacles,

bear any burdens and pledge ourselves to nothing less than total success.

## **Conclusion**

The Socialist Party of Michigan brings its struggle for radical, socialist democracy to the people of this state at the ballot box, in the workplace and on the streets. We do not see these areas as separate “spheres,” disconnected and without influence on each other. On the contrary, the Socialist Party sees electoral, workplace and street struggles as avenues of a broad struggle against capitalism and its agents.

In the struggle to achieve the above demands, working people must rely on their own experiences, consciousness and organization. The Socialist Party, as a political party of working people, provides a vehicle through which workers can strengthen and develop these areas. The Socialist Party is not a party of “outsiders,” attempting to influence through pressure. We are an integral part of our class, an organizational expression of socialist and class-consciousness.

As a political party of working people, the tasks of the Socialist Party are not merely limited to activism. The struggle for a socialist transformation of society is a conscious effort, requiring an understanding of events taking place and the ability to formulate a common response. Thus, the Socialist Party is as much a party of education as it is a party of activism. Ultimately, there should be no division between the “leaders” and the members; all members of the party must be able to take on the tasks necessary to advance the struggle for socialism.

On the most basic level, the development of capitalism in the United States creates the necessity among working people to struggle against the effects of the capitalist system that confronts them. Even without a conscious Socialist movement, resistance will occur, albeit spontaneously and blindly. This is the unconscious expression of the fact that workers have nothing to lose except their illusions and everything to gain through the overthrow of capitalism. To succeed, however, this movement must consciously oppose every violation of democracy and example of discrimination, defend all exploited and oppressed people, and elevate itself to the position of a ruling class by winning the battle for democracy.

The demands we Socialists put forward are based on what working people need if they are to live any sort of a decent life. They are not based on what the capitalist system says it can afford. Our intention with this platform is to provide a guide and plan of action, and, at the same time, assist working people in becoming aware of their power to reconstruct society so that it serves the interests of humanity. The formulation of our demands thereby connects today's conditions and consciousness to the aim of revolution and the establishment of a democratic workers' republic and socialism.

The tactics, methods and forms of struggle may necessarily change over time, depending on the development of the conditions. But, at all times, these tactics, methods, forms, and aims employed by the Socialist Party are developed in a coordinated and planned way, and with the same ultimate aim — the advancing of the struggles of working people for their immediate and historic interests.

## **APPENDIX**

### ***Core Values and Principles***

THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Michigan is a party of principle. With us, there are no hidden agendas and no secret deals. As well, our principles are non-negotiable; we will not give up our vision for a better Michigan for the sake of votes or legislative maneuvering. When you vote Socialist, as the saying goes, what you see is what you get.

Our core values and Socialist principles stem directly from the principles and core values that guide the whole of the Socialist Party USA: freedom, equality and democracy; democratic workers' control of production; community control of neighborhoods, cities and society; an end to oppression through movements for liberation; cultural freedom and diversity; international solidarity and peace; ecological harmony; and the abolition of class divisions and antagonisms. These core values and principles are outlined in our Party's basic statement, *Socialism as Radical Democracy*. Each of these values and principles embodies a part of our overall vision for a new Michigan and a new world:

- Freedom, equality and democracy are the bedrock of a democratic workers' republic and the future socialist society. Without these three serving as the basis for fundamental change, history has shown that human society begins to degenerate and slide backwards toward barbarism. Thus, the battle to preserve, strengthen and expand these three concepts in the real world is at the center of every struggle in which Socialists engage. Socialists are committed to the exercise of full freedom of speech, press, assembly, association and religion, as embodied in the Bill of Rights. Moreover, we Socialists see that these rights, in order to be more than mere words on a page, must be supported by legislative and constitutional measures that make it possible for all people to exercise them. As well, Socialists are committed to the establishment of a real multiparty political system, where our views can be freely represented and democratically expressed. For us, "freedom" means to be free from exploitation and oppression that is an integral part of a socio-economic system based on the production of commodities for profit (capitalism). For us, "equality" means more than mere formalities on a sheet of paper; "equality" means regarding one's fellow human being as a brother or sister, and loving them as such. For us, "democracy" is more than voting and deliberation; it is the right and power of the people to determine their own destiny.

- Democratic workers' control of production is the heart of this new, really democratic society. It is not enough for democracy to be expanded in politics, while it is systematically denied in other areas — primarily the economy. Workers' control of production makes democracy a daily practice, involving millions in the basic decision-making process of the new society. As well, democratic workers' control of production will end the irrational and chaotic practice of overproduction, which plagues our current society and results in regular, cyclical economic crises. Socialists are committed to working together with our brothers and sisters in the workplace to bring democracy to one of the most authoritarian and despotic sectors of our society: the economy. We Socialists commit ourselves to break the grip of the economic lords over society and bring genuine power to the people.

- Community control of neighborhoods, cities and society goes hand-in-hand with workers' control of production. While there does exist a formal "democracy" in terms of governing our communities and cities, and the society at large, that system is still dominated by those with little or no connection to our daily lives and experiences. The

exercise of community control — over everything from education and housing to municipal services and infrastructure repair — would bring democratic practice and accountability into every home, every neighborhood and every community. We Socialists commit ourselves to working with all those seeking to empower themselves through democratic community control at all levels of society.

- Part of the process of empowering working people and bringing real, meaningful democracy into our society is the ongoing struggle to bring an end to oppression through movements for liberation and social justice. The systematic, institutional discrimination and repression practiced today is an instrument in the hands of the capitalist class, designed to keep working people divided and competing against each other in a race to the bottom — toward lower pay, hazardous working conditions, eroded standards and conditions of living, less participation in the political life of society, and a muted cultural voice. This practice is not only done among working people here in Michigan, and in the United States as a whole, but is also fostered among working people around the world. Socialists believe that the struggle against oppression, far from being either a diversion or distraction, is central to the movement for democratic renewal and control of society. We Socialists are committed to put an end to oppression based on race, ethnicity and nationality by fighting for social equality and supporting the rights of oppressed people to self-determination through community control and the exercise of real democracy at the grassroots level. Moreover, Socialists support programs that seek to correct and reverse the decades and centuries of oppression that have been carried out by the capitalist class. We Socialists are committed to end the systematic discrimination and oppression of women by supporting practices and movements that empower them and protect their right to control over their own bodies and lives. We Socialists are committed to end the discrimination and oppression practiced against lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered people by fighting for full democratic and social equality in all aspects of society, including the right of same-sex couples to full and equal protection under the law. We Socialists are committed to supporting the democratic and social rights of young people to speak their minds, express themselves in ways they see fit and decide for themselves what the future holds.

- An essential part of working to attain real democracy and liberation is the struggle for cultural freedom and diversity. Culture is the common aesthetic and psychological bond that all of us share. Regardless of our age, gender, race, ethnicity or nationality,

sexuality, or religion, one thing we all share is a common culture. However, because we live in a society where everything — including human beings themselves — is considered a commodity to be bought and sold on the market, our culture is packaged and marketed like toothpaste or a new car. The true character of our culture is relegated to a secondary, “underground” existence. We Socialists are committed to promoting and protecting cultural freedom and diversity through programs and institutions that express and foster them. Furthermore, Socialists commit to being active participants in the development of new cultural norms, which actively promote the principles of democracy, liberation and diversity.

- Every day, our world seems to get smaller. Events that take place in one country inevitably affect how we live our lives. Whether it is through triumph or tragedy, working people in Michigan are learning that they are part of a community that reaches to every corner of the globe. This is why Socialists are committed to the principles of international solidarity and peace, which is essential to achieving the goal of a society of general freedom. Autoworkers in Detroit, Flint and Saginaw have more in common with their fellow autoworkers in Argentina, Indonesia and China than they do with the capitalists that employ all of them. This is because solidarity speaks no one language, practices no one religion and comes in no one color. We Socialists are committed to promoting solidarity and united action among the working people of the world in support of their common interests. In conjunction with this, we Socialists are committed to building a peaceful world for this and all future generations. We understand that, while the capitalists are the ones who get us into wars, working people — on both sides — are the ones who have to fight them. We Socialists work to build unity among working people in uniform, regardless of the government for which they are forced to fight. As long as capitalism continues to commit us and our brothers and sisters to fight in wars, it is the main enemy of all working people. Thus, we Socialists seek to unite with working people in all countries to bring lasting peace to the world through the socialist transformation of society.

- Ecological harmony and a sustainable environment are essential to the continued existence of humanity. Humanity is the only species that has developed the ability to alter its environment. Under capitalism, these alterations have been at once beneficial and harmful. While human beings marvel at the latest technological innovations and feats of engineering, we also lay waste to whole sections of the earth. In the name of capitalism and the drive for the highest possible profits, we have threatened the very

ecological balance that created us. We Socialists are committed to using all the technology and knowledge available to us to undo as much of the damage humanity has done to the planet we all share. In addition, we Socialists are committed to utilizing our existing technological and intellectual abilities to improve on and create new ways to rebuild our natural world.

- Ultimately, in order to make sure our core values and principles are achieved, and we are able to open the door to a new society of general freedom, the abolition of class divisions and class antagonisms will be necessary. The history of the development of human civilization is the history of the class division, class antagonism and class struggle. From the earliest civilized communities in Africa and Asia to the “globalized” world society of today, class division and class antagonisms have motivated virtually every step. However, those divisions and antagonisms are now holding humanity back from achieving all it can. The maintenance of classes has become an obstacle to human progress, and must be abolished. We Socialists are committed to laying the basis for the abolition of classes, class division and class antagonism, through the instrument of a democratic workers’ republic, which will serve to administer the transition from class to classless society.

The Socialist Party of Michigan seeks to bring about the implementation of these core values and principles through mass participation of working people in taking charge of their lives. For us, that means advocating a revolutionary transformation of society, from the bottom up. Furthermore, we advocate that this transformation take place democratically and non-violently, as a conscious expression of the will of the people, primarily working people, to change the world. Our strategy and tactics in the struggle for social change and genuine democracy reflect the kind of world we wish to bring into existence: a society founded on principles of egalitarian, non-exploitative and non-violent relations among all people and between all peoples.

As the Socialist Party’s Principles state: “To be free we must create new patterns for our lives and live in new ways in the midst of a society that does not understand and is often hostile to new, better modes of life. Our aim is the creation of a new social order, a society in which the commanding value is the infinite preciousness of every woman, man and child.”