

DRAFT



# Democrats are working for a better Arkansas.

## A Healthier Arkansas

with improved health care and expanded access,  
better health outcomes, and a healthier environment.

health equity ▪ food security ▪ health education ▪ substance abuse treatment ▪  
maternal & infant health ▪ outdoor recreation ▪ environmental protection

## A Safer Arkansas

with better roads and bridges, clean air and water,  
less crime in our communities, and safe places to live and work.

rural infrastructure ▪ quality air & water ▪ criminal & juvenile justice reform ▪  
gun violence prevention ▪ victims' rights ▪ increased community safety ▪  
workers' rights ▪ safe & affordable housing

## A Fairer Arkansas

with rights protected for everyone and  
systems that work for all of us.

racial equity ▪ gender equity ▪ LGBTQ+ rights ▪ immigrant rights ▪ disability rights ▪  
safeguarding our democracy ▪ tax & income equality

## A Brighter Arkansas

with a world class education for every child,  
a growing economy, and economic opportunity for all.

strong public schools ▪ early childhood education ▪ workforce preparedness ▪  
bold investment ▪ economic development ▪ strengthened social safety net

This Draft Platform is available for public comment until 8/13/22. To provide comment, please reach out to the Democratic Party of Arkansas Platform Committee at [platformcommittee@arkdems.org](mailto:platformcommittee@arkdems.org)

# DRAFT



Platform 2022-2024

## **Preamble**

Arkansas is home. We love the people, the places, and the promise of “The Land of Opportunity.” We believe Arkansas is worth it, and we as Democrats are working for a better Arkansas in every community across our state.

“A better Arkansas” is more than a dream. It’s a plan, a call to action, and a collective commitment to doing the hard work to create a healthier, safer, fairer, and brighter Arkansas for all of us.

Democrats are working for a healthier Arkansas with improved health care and expanded access, better health outcomes, and a healthier environment. We are working for a safer Arkansas with better roads and bridges, clean air and water, less crime in our communities, and safe places to live and work. We are working for a fairer Arkansas with rights protected for everyone and systems that work for all of us. And we’re working for a brighter Arkansas with a world-class education for every child, a growing economy, and economic opportunity for all.

We hope that you’ll join us in this work. There’s a place for you, no matter your story.

We respect the diverse opinions, backgrounds, faiths, and experiences in our party and recognize that all good policy is a product of debate and compromise. We recommend the following platform for 2022-2024 guided by our vision for a better Arkansas.

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# DRAFT



Platform 2022-2024

## **I. Democrats are working for a healthier Arkansas, with improved health care and expanded access, better health outcomes, and a healthier environment.**

### **A. Improved and Expanded Access**

Democrats believe everyone deserves high quality health care. We are adamant that no one should go bankrupt due to medical expenses. We are working to protect the Affordable Care Act and expand it to help more Arkansans. We acknowledge that health care remains unaffordable and inaccessible to too many Arkansans. We are working to drive down the cost of insurance coverage and prescription drugs while ensuring health care access in every community in our state. Democrats are committed to preventive screenings and care, family planning care, and mental health and substance abuse treatment.

### **B. Better Health Outcomes**

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we must do better to equip our healthcare providers with the tools to be successful in the next crisis. Democrats are fighting for resources to expand funding for medical research in Arkansas, and we support our frontline health care workers through good public policy that follows expertly informed and science-guided directives.

Democrats are working to address food insecurity in our state by working for nutrition programs that reach all Arkansans and ensure we activate the resources in our state to reach zero-hunger.

Acknowledging that Arkansas faces a crisis in unplanned pregnancy, we are working to equip Arkansans with the health care and education they need to plan when pregnancy is right for them. This includes science-based, comprehensive, sexual-health education, access to legal and safe abortion, and access to contraceptives. Democrats are working to expand resources to all pregnant Arkansans, and we are seeking solutions for our state's maternal health crisis and its disparate impact on communities of color.

### **C. A Healthier Environment**

Our state is blessed with abundant beauty. Democrats will prioritize the protection of our natural heritage and support small towns and rural communities by making Arkansas a must-visit destination for tourists. We will protect and sustain hunting, fishing, and recreational areas, expand hiking and cycling trails, and create and expand programs to promote tourism in the Natural State. Democrats are working to ensure that our parks, forests, and iconic features of Arkansas - from the Buffalo National River to Hot Springs National Park and the Delta Heritage Trail, are protected and promoted.

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## **II. Democrats are working for a safer Arkansas with better roads and bridges, clean air and water, less crime in our communities, and safe places to live and work.**

### **A. Better Roads and Bridges**

A safer Arkansas needs quality infrastructure. Too many communities in our state lack roads and bridges that allow Arkansans to travel efficiently and safely. Democrats are working to improve and expand our infrastructure with safe, reliable, and accessible transportation systems that keep Arkansas families and businesses moving.

### **B. Clean Air and Water**

Democrats believe in protecting our natural resources. We are committed to keeping our air and water clean and safe. Like transportation infrastructure, water and sewer systems remain inadequate for many Arkansans, and Democrats are working for more efficient water and sewer solutions, especially in our rural communities.

### **C. Less Crime in Our Communities**

Democrats are working for an Arkansas with less crime so that all Arkansans are free to live, work, and play safely. Democrats believe in a criminal justice system that is fair, timely, and properly punishes people convicted of crimes. We believe that the best long-term strategy for deterring crime is improving health outcomes and expanding economic and educational opportunities.

Democrats believe in responsible gun ownership and are working for an Arkansas with less gun violence by enacting common sense gun-safety measures. We are working for increased trust between law enforcement and the communities they protect and serve, advocating for improved training, community connection, and accountability. We support criminal justice reforms built on restorative justice and rehabilitation and reject Arkansas' overreliance on incarceration. We support innovative and humane ways to deal with those in the justice system due to mental health issues. We stand with crime victims and are working for protections for domestic violence victims, human trafficking victims, and victims of rape and incest. Democrats are committed to juvenile justice reform.

### **D. Safe Places to Live and Work**

Democrats are working for a safer Arkansas at work and at home. We support the rights of workers to organize for safe and fair conditions. We are working for protections for pregnant and disabled workers. We believe all workers should be able to earn a living free from discrimination or unlawful termination.

All Arkansans deserve a habitable place to live. Democrats are working for renter protections and a guarantee of habitability for rental housing. We support efforts to reduce homelessness and ensure affordable housing in all regions of our state, and we believe that no one should go to jail for failing to pay rent.

### **III. Democrats are working for a fairer Arkansas with rights protected for everyone and systems that work for all of us.**

#### **A. Rights Protected for Everyone**

Democrats are committed to ensuring liberty and justice for all. We believe in these foundational American ideals for every Arkansan, regardless of sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, race, ethnicity, country of origin, immigration status, religion, socioeconomic status, or ability. We acknowledge the individual biases and systemic barriers that hold people back from pursuing and achieving their American dream. We are working for an Arkansas that expands opportunity and prioritizes fairness, and we are committed to acknowledging and correcting where we fall short.

Democrats are working to rectify the detrimental impacts of racism and discrimination. We believe in gender equity and support the rights of women to be paid equally for equal work and to have privacy and choice in their health care decisions. Democrats stand with the Arkansas LGBTQ+ community and oppose harmful and discriminatory measures that target individuals based on their sexual orientation or gender. We continue to support compassion-driven solutions for immigrant families and support efforts to humanely reform our immigration system. Democrats stand in solidarity with disabled Arkansans for the right to live, work, and access all public services.

#### **B. Systems that Work for All of Us**

Democrats believe our American democracy is both sacred and fragile. We will protect our democracy, especially the right to vote, and demand the highest ethical standards in government. We believe in transparency, accountability, and participation from informed and empowered citizens. We are working for more accessible and secure elections, greater campaign finance transparency, nonpartisan redistricting, and a continued commitment to the right to petition.

Democrats believe in empowering Arkansans through fairer wages and a more equitable tax code. We believe in building the economy from the ground up, not the top down, and oppose tax breaks for corporations or the wealthy. Instead, Democrats support relieving the tax burden for hardworking Arkansans who are struggling to make ends meet. Democrats believe that fairness goes beyond individual liberty. We must also ensure our systems are equitable.

## **IV. Democrats are working for a brighter Arkansas with a world-class education for every child, a growing economy, and economic opportunity for all.**

### **A. A World-Class Education for Every Child**

Democrats are working for a brighter future that comes from educational opportunity and empowerment. We believe every child in our state deserves a world-class education, and we are committed to supporting and strengthening our public schools to provide equity and excellence. We see teachers as professionals, parents and teachers as partners, and schools as places that should be welcoming, safe, and enriching for all.

A brighter Arkansas begins with our littlest Arkansans, and Democrats are working for expanded early childhood education and affordable child care opportunities for families. We also support lifelong learning through adult literacy, public libraries, after-school and summer learning programs, public educational television, and other educational and wraparound services that serve learners of all ages.

### **B. A Growing Economy**

The promise of a growing economy allows all Arkansans to plan for a brighter future. Democrats are working to develop and expand economic opportunities in all regions of our state. We believe in supporting small business growth and entrepreneurship. Democrats recognize the importance of a strong farm economy, not only for our state but for the nation and world. Regardless of industry, Democrats are committed to policies that promote and reward responsible business growth and benefit workers and their families with good-paying jobs.

### **C. Economic Opportunity for All**

A growing economy should promise all Arkansans a chance for a brighter future. Democrats support all types of higher education and workforce development opportunities and are working to make them more accessible, affordable, and inclusive. We are working for sufficient funding for our higher education institutions to keep tuition low, and we believe that students should not have to incur massive debt to attain these opportunities. Students should have the ability to refinance their student loans, and students who dedicate their working lives to public service should have their debts forgiven.

Democrats are future-minded and are strong supporters of innovation. We are working to pursue bold investments in arts, science, and advanced technology, leading to an improved quality of life for all Arkansans. We support transportation innovations, green technology, and enhanced broadband quality and access.

A brighter future is built on the foundation of stability and security. Democrats believe in protecting Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, expanding food and housing security programs, eliminating work requirements and other punitive mandates, and ensuring and enhancing benefits for our veterans.

Democrats believe that a brighter Arkansas future is worth investing in now. Every Arkansan deserves the hope and promise of a better Arkansas, now and for years to come.