

# THE DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM FOR 1912

The democratic platform unanimously adopted by the democratic national convention for 1912, is as follows:

We, the representatives of the democratic party of the United States, in national convention assembled, reaffirm our devotion to the principles of democratic government formulated by Thomas Jefferson and enforced by a long and illustrious line of democratic presidents.

## TARIFF REFORM

We declare it to be a fundamental principle of the democratic party that the federal government, under the constitution, has no right or power to impose or collect tariff duties, except for the purpose of revenue, and we demand that the collection of such taxes shall be limited to the necessities of government honestly and economically administered.

The high republican tariff is the principal cause of the unequal distribution of wealth; it is a system of taxation which makes the rich richer, and the poor poorer; under its operations the American farmer and laboring man are the chief sufferers; it raises the cost of the necessities of life to them, but does not protect their product or wages. The farmer sells largely in free markets and buys almost entirely in the protected markets. In the most highly protected industries such as cotton and wool, steel and iron, the wages of the laborers are the lowest paid in any of our industries. We denounce the republican pretense on that subject and assert that American wages are established by competitive conditions and not by the tariff.

We favor the immediate downward revision of the existing high, and in many cases, prohibitive tariff duties, insisting that material reductions be speedily made on the necessities of life. Articles entering into competition with trust-controlled products and articles of American manufacture, which are sold abroad more cheaply than at home, should be put upon the free list. We recognize that our system of tariff taxation is intimately connected with the business of the country, and we favor the ultimate attainment of the principles we advocate by legislation that will not injure or destroy legitimate industry.

We denounce the action of President Taft in vetoing the bills to reduce the tariff in the cotton, woolen, metals and chemical schedules, and the farmers' free list bill, all of which were designed to give immediate relief to the masses from the exactions of the trusts.

The republican party, while promising tariff revision, has shown by its tariff legislation, that such revision is not to be in the people's interest, and having been faithless to its pledges in 1908, it should no longer enjoy the confidence of the nation. We appeal to the American people to support us in our demand for a tariff for revenue only.

## HIGH COST OF LIVING

The high cost of living is a serious problem in every American home. The republican party, in its platform, attempts to escape from responsibility for present conditions by denying that they are due to a protective tariff. We take issue with them on this subject and charge that excessive prices result in a large measure from the high tariff laws enacted and maintained by the republican party and from trusts and commercial conspiracies, fostered and encouraged by such laws, and we assert that no substantial relief can be secured for the people until import duties on the necessities of life are materially reduced and the criminal conspiracies broken up.

## ANTI-TRUST LAW

A private monopoly is indefensible and intolerable. We therefore favor the vigorous enforcement of the criminal as well as the civil law against trusts and trust officials and demand the enactment of additional legislation as may be necessary to make it impossible for a private monopoly to exist in the United States.

We favor the declaration by law of the conditions upon which such corporations shall be permitted to engage in interstate trade, including, among others, the prevention of holding companies, of interlocking directors, of stock-watering, of discrimination in price and the control by any one corporation of so large a proportion of any industry as to make it a menace to competitive conditions.

We condemn the action of the republican administration in compromising with the Standard Oil company and the tobacco trust and its failure

to invoke the criminal provisions of the anti-trust law against the officers of those corporations after the court had declared that from the undisputed facts in the record, they had violated the criminal provisions of the law.

We regret that the Sherman anti-trust law has received judicial construction depriving it of much of its efficacy and we favor the enactment of legislation which will restore to the statute the strength of which it has been deprived by such interpretation.

## RIGHTS OF THE STATES

We believe that the most efficient results under our system of government are to be attained by the full exercise by the states of their reserved sovereign powers; we denounce as usurpation the efforts of our opponents to deprive the states of any rights reserved to them, and to enlarge and magnify by indirection the powers of the federal government.

We insist upon the full exercise of all the powers of the government, both state and national, to protect the people from injustice at the hands of those who seek to make the government a private asset in business. There is no twilight zone between the state and nation in which the exploiting interests can take refuge from both. It is as necessary that the federal government shall exercise the powers delegated to it as it is that the states shall exercise the powers reserved to them, but we insist that federal remedies for the regulation of interstate commerce and for the prevention of private monopoly shall be added to and not substituted for state remedies.

## INCOME TAX AND POPULAR ELECTION OF SENATORS

We congratulate the country upon the triumph of two important reforms demanded in the last national platform, namely, the amendment of the federal constitution authorizing an income tax and the amendment providing for the popular election of senators, and we call upon the people of all the states to rally to the support of the pending propositions and secure their ratification.

We note with gratification the unanimous sentiment in favor of publicity before election, of campaign contributions—a measure demanded in our national platform of 1908, and at that time opposed by the republican party—and we commend the democratic house of representatives for extending the doctrine of publicity to recommendations, verbal and written, upon which presidential appointments are made, to the ownership and control of newspapers and to the expenditures made by and in behalf of those who aspire to presidential nominations, and we point for additional justification for this legislation to the enormous expenditures of money in behalf of the president and his predecessor in the recent contest for the republican nomination for president.

## PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES

The movement towards more popular government should be promoted through legislation in each state which will permit the expression of the preference for the electors of candidates at primaries.

We direct that the national committee incorporate in the call for the next nominating convention a requirement that all expressions of preference for presidential candidates shall be given, and the selection of delegates and alternates shall be made through a primary election conducted by the party organization in each state where such expression and election are not provided for by state law. Committeemen who are hereafter to constitute the membership of the democratic national committee and whose election is not provided for by law, shall be chosen in each state at such primary elections, and the service and authority of committeemen however chosen shall begin immediately upon the receipt of their credentials.

## CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

We pledge the democratic party to the enactment of a law prohibiting any corporation from contributing to a campaign fund, and any individual from contributing any amount above a reasonable maximum.

## TERM OF PRESIDENT

We favor a single presidential term and to that end urge the adoption of an amendment to the constitution making the president of the

United States ineligible to reelection and we pledge the candidate of this convention to this principle.

## DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS

At this time, when the republican party, after a generation of unlimited power in its control of the federal government, is rent into factions, it is opportune to point to the record of accomplishment of the democratic house of representatives in the sixty-second congress. We endorse its action and challenge comparison of its record with that of any congress which has been controlled by our opponents. We call the attention of the patriotic citizens of our country to its record of efficiency, economy and constructive legislation.

It has, among other achievements, revised the rules of the house of representatives so as to give to the representatives of the American people freedom of speech and of action in advocating, proposing and perfecting remedial legislation.

It has passed bills for the relief of the people, and the development of our country; it has endeavored to revise the tariff taxes downward in the interest of the consuming masses and thus to reduce the high cost of living.

It has proposed an amendment to the federal constitution providing for the election of United States senators by the direct vote of the people.

It has secured the admission of Arizona and New Mexico as two sovereign states.

It has required the publicity of campaign expenses, both before and after election, and fixed a limit upon the election expenses of United States senators and representatives.

It has passed a bill to prevent the abuse of the writ of injunction.

It has passed a law establishing an eight-hour day for workmen on all national public work. It has passed a resolution which forced the president to take immediate steps to abrogate the Russian treaty.

And it has passed the great supply bills which lessen waste and extravagance and which reduce the annual expenses of the government by many millions of dollars.

We approve the measure reported by the democratic leaders in the house of representatives for the creation of a council of national defense, which will determine a definite naval program with a view of increased efficiency and economy. The party that proclaimed and has always defended the Monroe doctrine, and which stood for the new navy, will continue faithfully to observe the constitutional requirements to provide and maintain an adequate and well proportioned navy sufficient to defend American policies, protect our citizens, and uphold the honor and dignity of the nation.

## REPUBLICAN EXTRAVAGANCE

We denounce the profligate waste of the money wrung from the people by oppressive taxation through the lavish appropriations of recent republican congresses, which have kept taxes high and reduced the purchasing power of the people's toil. We demand a return to that simplicity and economy which befits a democratic government and a reduction in the number of useless officers, the salaries of which drain the substance of the people.

## RAILROADS, EXPRESS COMPANIES, TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE LINES

We favor the efficient supervision and rate regulation of railroads, express companies, telephone and telegraph lines engaged in interstate commerce. To this end we recommend the valuation of railroads, express companies, telephone and telegraph lines by the interstate commerce commission, such valuation to take into consideration the physical value of the property, the original cost, the cost of production and any element of value that will render the valuation fair and just.

We favor such legislation as will effectually prohibit the railroads, express, telephone and telegraph companies from engaging in business which brings them into competition with their shippers or patrons, also legislation preventing the over-issue of stocks, and bonds by interstate railroads, express companies, telegraph and telephone lines and legislation which will assure such reduction in transportation rates as conditions will permit, care being taken to avoid reduction that would compel a reduction of wages,

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