**Young Democrats of Mississippi**

**Platform**

**Education**

**We believe that education at any level is one of the best investments we can make for the future of our nation. We must ensure that all Mississippians have the skills and knowledge they need to compete in today’s job market. The highest possible quality of education is essential for this reason and also for the equal treatment of all Americans.**

1. We oppose school choice plans, which would remove funding from public schools and further increase isolation of socioeconomic or ethnic groups.
2. We firmly call for pay raises for Mississippi’s teachers. We call not only to meet the national average but also to surpass it, so that we may keep the quality teachers we already have and may attract more teachers to our state. Their pay should be exemplary of their importance to our communities, our children, and society, now and in the future. In order to foster competitive pay for teachers in Mississippi and the region, we call for the support of full funding of the MAEP.
3. We call for stabilization and guarantee of state funding for Mississippi college students studying in-state. The secure funding of MTAG, MESG, and Pell Grant monies are essential to keeping talented Mississippi students in our state. We support the enforcement of fraud prevention in these programs.
4. We understand that learning can be better achieved in small classes; therefore, we support the state in seeking to lower class sizes in all schools through increasing funding for more educators.
5. We recognize that learning does not cease at a certain age; therefore, we support funding of programs that would allow all Mississippians to achieve an undergraduate education.
6. We recognize the fact that early childhood education, including pre-kindergarten, is proven to be socially and educationally beneficial. Therefore we believe this opportunity should be available to all children.
7. We support the establishment of new and further development of existing community colleges and vocational training facilities in an effort to enhance the skills and education of all Mississippians regardless of age or prior educational experience.
8. We support the establishment of funding for a comprehensive sex education program in Mississippi schools.
9. We recognize education as the top budgetary priority for Mississippi and support legislative initiatives that reflect this priority.
10. We support providing additional resources to failing public school districts.
11. We support increasing focus on science, technology, and math in our schools.
12. We support promotion of the arts in our schools.
13. We oppose charter schools.
14. We oppose institutionally mandated school prayer.
15. We support extra-curricular activities in our schools, and oppose efforts to decrease them.
16. We recognize the importance of existing anti-bullying laws, and support stronger anti-bullying laws.
17. We advocate for the education and promotion of voting rights to Mississippians.

**Health Care**

**We consider health care to be a right, not a privilege, and that all Mississippians have the right to a safe, secure, and healthy life. We also believe that the Health Care Industry should hold the individual in higher regard than its profits.**

1. We support the funding of medical research and disease prevention programs.
2. We support the state in providing affordable prescription drugs to all Mississippians.
3. We support the Patient’s Bill of Rights, especially in the sense that patients have the right to sue their HMOs.
4. We support the implementation and continuation of the Affordable Care Act.
5. We advocate for the expansion of Medicaid.

**Environment**

**We believe that we owe it to future generations to leave Mississippi in a condition that will be productive and useful to them. We understand that our planet has limited resources and it is our job to preserve and protect them for future generations.**

1. We believe our state should show good leadership by investing in and exploring the use of alternative energy sources.
2. We believe that the state should encourage economic growth, but not at the expense of the environment.
3. State parks and waterways and coastal regions are an asset to our state and should be protected and preserved for the use of generations to come.
4. We support the funding of initiatives that would reduce greenhouse emissions, to counter the effects of climate change, in our state in enforce the regulations we have on the quality of our water. We support the use of awareness campaigns to educate the people of Mississippi about the pollution problem.
5. We believe the state’s environmental and natural resources agencies deserve adequate funding so that they may provide the state of Mississippi with proper coverage for the protection and enforcement of environmental laws.
6. We further support the funding of initiatives to further the quality of knowledge of the environmental sciences on all levels.
7. We support the use of awareness campaigns to educate the people of Mississippi on all environmental concerns.
8. We support the establishment of local and regional comprehensive recycling programs in counties and municipalities throughout the state of Mississippi.
9. We declare our belief in the science of climate change.

**Economy**

**We believe the citizens of Mississippi should have every opportunity for economic success.**

1. We believe a cornerstone to the growth of our economy is the reduction of debt while still maintaining principles such as the advancement of education, the improvement of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid systems, and the preservation of the environment.
2. We support proper fiscal discipline as a priority over tax reduction.
3. We understand that the growth of our state economy cannot occur without the funding of technological development. Technology education must be on par with technological advances while seeking to help small businesses succeed in a demanding market.
4. We support public works projects.
5. We support the implementation of a progressive state income tax to replace the current tax structure.
6. We support an end to corporate welfare by eliminating tax abatements to antiquated established industries and investing these monies into Mississippi small businesses.
7. We support an initiative to develop a more advanced service-based economy to keep up with National and Global trends.
8. We believe it is important to establish and develop small and minority owned businesses in the state of Mississippi in addition to attracting new companies to locate in Mississippi in order to create sustainable employment for the people of our state.

**Labor**

**We believe that all working Mississippians have the right to unionize in order to protect their rights as workers, and to engage in fair collective bargaining. Unions are key to the development of fair wages and safe work environments.**

1. We support the state in working to raise the minimum wage above that of the national level. We believe every Mississippian should be able to provide shelter and food for his or her family without the threat of poverty.
2. We support any laws that allow workers to organize, join unions, and collective bargain with their employers.
3. In an age of technology, we are concerned with the loss of Mississippi jobs to automated machinery. We favor technology, but value the well being of our citizens over the growth of automation. We support the retraining of Mississippians so that they may be better suited for an ever-advancing job market.
4. We strongly support any laws or practices that discourage and prevent any discrimination in hiring and termination of employees.
5. We support equal pay for equal work. We believe differences in salary levels not based on merit or qualification are intolerable.
6. We support an increase in benefits for any Mississippi workers who have become temporarily or permanently disabled during the course of employment, or may not work based on injury.
7. We support the ability of unions to deduct union dues from municipal payrolls just as they are able to do for some state employees.
8. We oppose state prevention of job action, particularly in the cases of teachers and public employees, excluding elected officials.
9. We recognize that employers in Mississippi need to provide adequate access for disabled employees so that they are able to perform their job functions.

**Law and Justice**

**We believe that the fundamental building blocks of America are the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. These form the basis for the laws that govern our land as well as outlining the rights of the individual.**

1. We condemn the practice of profiling in law enforcement.
2. We support the funding and implementation of a Uniform Public Defender Program in Mississippi to secure adequate representation for all defendants.
3. We support alternate forms of punishment, rather than incarceration, for juvenile defenders.

**Youth and Family**

1. We believe that youth and family are two of our state’s most valuable resources. We must continue to hold these in high regard.
2. We believe that every Mississippian should have the opportunity to own a home; therefore, we support an initiative for transitioning low-income individuals into homeownership. We support the state in its effort to provide quality affordable housing for all Mississippians.
3. We recognize access to a quality public education as a civil rights issue.
4. We support efforts and nonprofit organizations in decreasing underage drinking, tobacco use, and drug use.
5. We believe all Mississippi children have the right to healthy, affordable meals through public education and programs.
6. We support any program or initiative that works to end or prevent domestic abuse and maltreatment.
7. We support living wage ordinances that work to strengthen and stabilize Mississippi families.
8. We support the rights of same-sex couples to adopt.

**Tort Reform**

1. We believe it is not the place of government to decide what proper compensation is, or what it should be limited to, in cases where individuals have been wronged or injured. We believe the legislature should return the right to decide liabilities and damages to the jury.
2. We believe jurors are best suited to decide proper compensation. Individuals are due fair compensation upon being injured. They should be compensated for physical injury, loss of time and wages, and any punitive damages for negligence.

**Military**

**We believe that service to one’s country is the most honorable duty one can perform. Without brave men and women fighting for our values and beliefs, America would cease to be the great nation it is today.**

1. We encourage all Mississippians to serve their country.
2. We support any and all Americans who serve both domestically and internationally in the service of our country.
3. We believe that our soldier should not be placed in a position of combat unless absolutely necessary. We support peaceful resolution of any conflict to the best of our abilities, but always give our full support to our men and women in any peace or wartime situation.
4. We support any programs or initiatives that would aid in the care of our Mississippi veterans once they return from times of service. We should thank them for the job they have bravely done and aid them by any means possible.
5. We support access to higher learning opportunities for anyone who has served in the military.

**Civil Rights**

**We recognize that prejudice is an evil that has long divided the people of this state and this great nation. It has oppressed many generations of Americans of all races. The Young Democrats of Mississippi realize that stronger Civil Rights Laws are needed and should be more stringently enforced, so no citizen will be discriminated against. The Young Democrats also realize that, as the leaders of our party, state, and nation, it is up to us to continue the fight for stronger Civil Rights Legislation to ensure a better way of life for all citizens.**

We, the Young Democrats of Mississippi, realize that we have a moral obligation to ourselves and to all those who came before us to fight for the strengthening of all Hate Crimes Legislation in this state, so that no citizen of Mississippi, regardless of age, creed, color, sexual orientation, or disability status will ever have to live in fear of being harassed or harmed.

1. We strongly support affirmative action programs, which ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to achieve the ideals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
2. We promote symbols of unity.
3. We support civil unions between same-gender couples, which will afford these couples the same legal, contractual, and social rights that all other citizens share with their chosen life partners.
4. We formally support the passage of ENDA.
5. We denounce the 2014 passage of SB 2681.
6. We support efforts to remove the symbol of the Confederate Flag from our state flag.

**Women**

**We, the Young Democrats of Mississippi, believe in every American’s right to make sound, health personal choices for themselves and their families without fear of unwarranted governmental intrusion.**

1. The Democratic Party trusts the women of Mississippi to make their own decisions about personal matters such as when or whether to bear children. No government, politician, or bureaucrat should intervene in an individual’s private and personal decisions.
2. We will work to guarantee every woman the right to have access to and make personal decisions regarding the full range of reproductive choices, including bearing children and preventing unintended pregnancy; and the right to adopt children as a viable alternative to unwanted pregnancies.
3. We understand the need to provide family planning services and a variety of birth control options to the people of Mississippi at a low or free cost.

**Domestic Services**

1. We support the provisions and full funding for adequate services provided by the Department of Human Services.
2. We oppose the 2014 Passage of HB 49.

**International Affairs**

1. We support all Human Rights.
2. We respect and appreciate the role of the United Nations.
3. We support the ratification of the treaty that recognizes the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.
4. We support immigration to America.
5. We support immigration reform.

**Public Safety**

1. We oppose the passage of the 2013 “Open Carry Law.”
2. We support stricter background checks.
3. We support a ban on the ownership of assault weapons.

**Elections**

1. We oppose voter ID laws.
2. We support easier access to voting such as: online voting registration, same-day voter registration, and early voting.
3. We support initiatives to explore the possibility of online voting.