

Climate Change Requires Comprehensive Public Policy and Education to Protect Floridians

Summary: The Florida Democratic Party (FDP) resolves to support public policy and education that connects reversing climate change with serving the full range of Democratic goals and values.

WHEREAS, scientists agree that climate is changing and that human civilization is largely responsible for the current changes through the burning of fossil fuels and the release of other greenhouse gases;

And WHEREAS greenhouse gas emissions and climate change are causing the melting of ice sheets, the warming of oceans, the rise of sea level, the acidification of oceans, the increasing strength, frequency, and duration of many weather-related disasters across the globe, but especially in coastal states like Florida, the intrusion of salt water into coastal aquifers, and the migration northward of biomes and tropical diseases and other deleterious effects;

And WHEREAS climate change associated sea level rise and precipitation changes increase the frequency of flooding in coastal areas, lowers water quality, damages economic stability, hurts agriculture and tourism-related employment, lowers real estate values, drives economic impacts related to health, infrastructure, insurance, electricity, water resources, agriculture, and ecosystems, forces human migration and immigration, and can make chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease and asthma, deadlier;

And WHEREAS vulnerable populations including those with low incomes, some communities of color, immigrant groups, Indigenous peoples, children and pregnant women, older adults, vulnerable occupational groups, persons with disabilities, and persons with preexisting or chronic medical conditions suffer disproportionately from climate change impacts, are more at risk for displacement, suffer disproportionately from climate economic impacts related to health, infrastructure, electricity, water resources, agriculture, and ecosystems, are most at risk for displacement, and are the targets of violence, especially in times of climatic stress;

And WHEREAS climate change topics have been ignored or actively denied in the past and are neither adequately covered in Florida schools, nor adequately discussed by local and state governments;

And WHEREAS the socioeconomic impact of doing nothing is too great to bear, both in dollars and human struggle;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the FDP views climate change not as a single issue but rather as an umbrella issue under which the full range of Democratic priorities and values can and must be advanced in order to preserve humanity. Therefore FDP hereby supports a comprehensive and integrated public policy initiative that reflects the needs of communities affected by and at risk due to climate change.

And be it further RESOLVED that appropriate curriculum regarding climate science, prevention of global warming, mitigation of potential damage, adaptation to rising sea levels and the possible need for evacuation and migration will be incorporated into State Standards for every grade level from elementary through high school;

And be it further RESOLVED that classroom and science teachers throughout Florida will be trained in climate science so that they can adequately respond to citizen inquiries on these topics.

And be it further RESOLVED that FDP commits to support public policy that recognizes climate change is the reality of all Floridians and will encourage Democratic representatives to consider how climate change mitigation and adaptation can be incorporated into state legislation, including the transition of electric utilities to 100% renewable energy by 2035 and develop a state-level program to support the carbon fee & dividend concept.