BUS 2012-02 Improve Workers’ Compensation in the State of Hawai‘i independent medical examination, Rescinding & Replacing OC Resolution 2010-5

Whereas, The Democratic Party of Hawai‘i has a long tradition for supporting injured workers’ in the State of Hawai‘i; and

Whereas, The Democratic Party of Hawai‘i has continued to fight for injured workers’ rights and protection; and

Whereas, The Democratic Party of Hawai‘i has always advocated that insurance companies and the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations continue to improve rules, policies and laws concerning Workers’ Compensation for the betterment of all of Hawai‘i’s injured workers; and

Whereas, Independent Medical Examinations (IME) in Workers’ Compensation has become so contentious that insurance companies continue to attack any change to make this policies fair for the injured workers’ and insurance companies; and

Whereas, Workers’ compensation IMEs are supposed to be fair, impartial, and truly independent;

Whereas, Doctor’s have been imported from the mainland to conduct IMEs, and some local Doctors have closed their practices to do IMEs; and

Whereas, At least one doctor has made over a million dollars doing IMEs in one year; and

Whereas, Many doctors who conduct IMEs are not specialist in the field they are performing the examination, and these Doctors cannot be sued for giving a wrong diagnosis; and

Whereas, Injured workers continue to wait for treatment as insurance companies put money ahead of treatment and rehabilitation; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the O‘ahu County Democratic Party rescind OC Resolution 2010-5 and urge the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i to rescind Resolution BUS 2010-11, and replace it with the following: and be it further

Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawaii support legislation to require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations of State of Hawaii to protect injured workers from the abuses of Independent Medical Examinations and Examiners who are paid by and accountable only to employers and their insurance carriers in the State of Hawai‘i; and finally be it

Ordered, That copies of this resolution will be delivered to all Democratic members of the Legislature, the Governor of the State of Hawai‘i, and the Hawai‘i State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, and the appropriate state pre convention resolutions committee.
Whereas, Housing in Hawaii is among the most expensive in the United States and infrastructure costs for roads, electricity, water, and sewage are often too high for developers and landowners to build in rural areas; and

Whereas, Water catchment and solar power can be built into modular homes, thus allowing home construction in rural areas that have little infrastructure; and

Whereas, The use of steel framing in modular homes prevents problems with subterranean termites and also makes these homes resistant to hurricanes and earthquake damage; and

Whereas, Homes that are built with factory construction can be moved, thus making them ideal for people who live on leasehold land; and

Whereas, By setting aside rural and land banked area, modular homes can be moved to safe areas if the property is in danger of a lava flow, hurricane, or flood, which would enable financial institutions and insurance companies to approve mortgages and insurance on homes that are in lava, hurricane, or flood inundation areas; and

Whereas, In 2002, a steel-framed housing factory on Oahu manufactured homes at $60 per square foot, or $120 to $180 per square foot for site built housing, demonstrating that a factory manufactured home can have a cost savings of over 50% through the use of local materials and local labor; now therefore be it further

Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i amend Resolution 2008-17 to add the following: be it

Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i supports building modular and factory manufactured homes in Hawaii, not including trailer homes; and finally be it

Ordered, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor and the Mayors of the respective counties of the State of Hawaii.
WHEREAS, the Big Island of Hawai’i has abundant renewable energies, such as geothermal, wind, solar, ocean, and hydro; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Government has many grant programs designed specifically for enterprise zones, including renewable energy, specifically for the Big Island; and

WHEREAS, Hawai’i Island residents pay some of the highest electric rates in the world, and we have one of the most abundant renewable energy resource sites in the world; and

WHEREAS, passing this resolution into the party platform will create high paying jobs on the Hawai’i Island now and for future generations; and

WHEREAS, Hawai’i Island has some of the most capable, well educated, and motivated

WHEREAS, Hawai’i Island would also implement mentoring and educational programs for, by and through the Smart Grid Technology Program; and

WHEREAS, Hawai’i Island would be the perfect global location for a living and working prototype of smart grid renewable technologies; and

WHEREAS, it is perfectly reasonable to create a competitive utility entity to compete with HELCO/HEI, and create cooperatives which are owned by the people of Hawai’i Island; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that upon implementation of the Smart Grid Energy Program, energy costs will decrease, Hawai’i Island will become a global incubator for Smart Energy Technology and this program should become part of the party platform.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that certified copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Hawai’i members of Congress, and Democratic members of the Hawai’i State Legislature via the Hawai’i Democratic State Convention 2010
Encouraging Development of Public Ownership of Electric Utility Generation and Distribution System

WHEREAS, the service provided by privately owned electricity generating and distributing system provides reliable, but expensive and heavily dependent on strategically unfavorable fossil fuel energy; and

WHEREAS, at the current price level there is no incentive for private utilities providers to move into renewable sources and smart grid; and

WHEREAS, long term interest of public will be better served through public ownership of smart grid and power generating plants; and

WHEREAS, the current private utility system inhibits the utilization of Hawaiian natural energy sources, and

WHEREAS, the operation and maintenance of publicly owned generating sources and the smart grid can be subcontracted to private enterprise; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that Democratic Party shall encourage the development of a publicly owned electric utility generation and distribution system.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be made available to all the members of State Legislature for consideration and securing financial means necessary (including but not limited to bonds and federal grants).
WHEREAS, the State of Hawai‘i is vulnerable to loss of supply lines through economic upheaval and civil conflict; and

WHEREAS, locally grown agricultural products are generally healthier; and

WHEREAS, a vibrant agricultural system will promote the wellbeing of the citizens of the State; And

WHEREAS, there is currently a lack of sufficient infrastructure to meet the needs of farmers and the consumers they serve; and

WHEREAS, small farms and farmers lack adequate facilities to store and distribute their products; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the State must commit to supporting, protecting, expanding and improving the agricultural sector in particular, and environmental sustainability in general.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Democratic Party should support the promotion of sustainable agriculture, thereby lessening the percentage of foodstuffs imported into Hawai‘i.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Democratic Party shall support the promotion of locally grown agricultural items by strongly supporting the small farms and farmers.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Democratic Party shall support the development of local food storage and distribution centers (county, private or non-profit).
Buses 2012-14 Resolution Calling for Truthful Marketing of Kona Coffee

Whereas, the unique climatic and soil conditions of the Kona region on the Island of Hawaii are ideal for cultivation of coffee; and

Whereas, the care, skill and cultivation practices of Kona coffee farmers, most of whom operate small family-owned farms, have resulted in recognition of Kona coffee as one of the world’s premier specialty coffees; and

Whereas, existing Hawaii statutes allow unfair and deceptive business practices which are used to deceive consumers into believing that packages containing 90% foreign-grown coffee are “Kona Coffee”—thereby damaging the reputation for quality which Kona coffee farmers have built over generations of growing this heritage crop; and

Whereas, by way of example, HRS 486-120.6 permits the use of the “Kona” name on packaging of a coffee blend having as little as 10% Kona-grown coffee and 90% from unidentified foreign countries; and

Whereas, by way of further example, the writers of Consumer Reports in their review of Kona coffees confused “Kona Blends” with “Kona Coffee” and concluded that Kona coffee can be “second rate” on the basis of this common mistaken belief that “Kona Blends” are “Kona Coffee”; and

Whereas, the State of Hawaii should provide the same type of protections to its specialty crop farmers as the State of California provides to Napa Valley wine grape growers, as Idaho provides to Idaho potato farmers, and as Georgia provides to Vidalia onion farmers; and

Whereas, the Hawaii Legislature made a factual finding in Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 102 (2007) that “existing labeling requirements for Kona coffee causes consumer fraud and confusion and degrades the ‘Kona coffee’ name”; and

Whereas, Hawaii is the ONLY REGION ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD to permit the use of one of its heritage crops with only 10% genuine content; now therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Hawaii County Democrats request the members of the Hawaii County Democratic delegation in the State Legislature introduce and vigorously work for the adoption of legislation requiring a minimum of 51% Kona-grown coffee in any coffee package labeled as a “Kona Blend” and requiring prominent identification on the label of the country or region of origin of the non-Kona portion in such blend; and be it

Resolved, That all members of the Democratic delegation in the State Legislature vigorously support the adoption of this legislation; and be it

Resolved, That the secretary of the Hawaii Democratic Party mail to each Democratic Party member of the State Legislature a copy of this Resolution on or before June 1, 2012
Whereas, “Origin” products such as Champagne from France, Napa Valley Wines from California, Parmigiano-Reggiano (Parmesan) Cheese from Italy, Tequila from Mexico, Potatoes from Idaho, and Vidalia Onions from Georgia are considered unique and valuable products because of the geographic locations where they are grown, as well as the care, skill and processes used to produce them; and

Whereas, origin products are high quality products whose unique characteristics bring higher prices in the market that are necessary to support small family farms and small farm economies; and

Whereas, national, state and international law protect origin products and their names from counterfeiting and being marketed as common commodities of a similar type; and

Whereas, these laws are essential to maintaining small, family origin farms and their economies; and

Whereas, the unique climatic and soil conditions of the Kona and the Ka‘u regions on the Island of Hawai‘i are ideal for cultivation of coffee as are the conditions on Maui for the production of onions; and

Whereas, the care, skill and cultivation practices of Kona and Ka‘u coffee farmers, most of whom operate small family-owned farms, have resulted in recognition of Kona and Ka‘u coffee as among the world’s premier specialty coffees; and

Whereas, other high value crops such as tea and cacao are beginning to be produced throughout the state that also have high value qualities derived from the regions in which they are produced and the skill, care and processes used to create them; and

Whereas, the Hawaiian legislature has enacted laws that allow for the diluted blending and misleading labeling of origin coffee and this year considered a measure to permit the diluted blending of Hawaiian teas; and

Whereas, Hawaii is THE ONLY PLACE IN THE WORLD that has adopted laws permitting the debasement of an origin product and the weakening of an origin farming economy; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i request the members of the Democratic delegation in the State Legislature introduce and vigorously work for the adoption of legislation protecting origin coffee, tea, cacao and all other origin products that might be grown in Hawaii; and be it

Resolved, That such legislation be patterned on and meet the standards of the best practices adopted elsewhere in the United States and the world for the protection of origin products and the small farming economies they support; and be it

Resolved, That all members of the Democratic delegation in the State Legislature vigorously support the adoption of this legislation; and be it

Resolved, That the secretary of the Hawaii Democratic Party mail to each Democratic Party member of the State Legislature a copy of this Resolution on or before June 1, 2012.
Whereas, the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i’s 2010 Platform lists preserving and strengthening the future of agriculture in the state of Hawaii; and

Whereas, Hawai‘i’s public and its governmental leaders express “support of energy independence, selfsufficiency, affordability and reliability through the development of renewable alternative energy resources,” and to lessen reliance on fossil fuels, therefore reducing Hawai‘i’s carbon footprint; and

Whereas, state statistics show less than 15 percent of the food consumed in Hawaii is produced in state; and

Whereas, the 2010 Democratic Party platform also expressed the government’s “vital role in nurturing and regulating our economic system” as “essential for economic expansion, diversification, innovation and entrepreneurship;” and

Whereas, science has now proven the nutritional, food, and environmental benefits of two plants – coconut and cassava, also known as yucca, manioc and tapioca – which grow readily throughout the state of Hawai‘i; and

Whereas, Hawaii is a tropical place where field research is possible on working production farms, according to University of Hawaii researchers, biosystems engineer Loren D. Gautz, PhD, and Harry “Skip” Bittenbinder, PhD; and

Whereas, cassava (Manihot esculenta) is the staple food of nearly one billion people in 105 countries, according to the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization; and

Whereas, Asian Pacific nations are currently competing to corner the market on its use not only in bioplastic production (as Sony is doing) but as a biofuel; cassava is used to make ethanol in countries not dominated by the corn industry; and

Whereas, Hawaii consumers are paying a minimum of $1 an ounce for healthful coconut oil, which must be imported from Sri Lanka, Thailand and the Philippines; and

Whereas, coconut (Cocos nucifera) has many health benefits and uses beyond its nutritional content; and

Whereas, according to an official with the UH College of Tropical Agriculture, it has been “at least” two decades since government-sponsored scientific study in the state has investigated coconut as a crop of any value;

Whereas, a UH study stated, paraphrasing here, it is a challenge to obtain reliable information on implementation of production, harvest and processing agricultural crops for market within the state and for export; and

Whereas, those seeking an alternative to externally driven tourism and for sustainable crops that would help fill the void left by the demise of Hawaii’s sugar industry cannot afford the costs of research, development and commercialization; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Democratic Party of Hawaii urges the state departments of agriculture and business and economic development as well as UH’s College of Tropical Agriculture, citing the above-mentioned factors, to give priority assignments for applied studies of the potential of coconut and cassava as crops for consumption and production for local use and export; and finally, that the State Administrative and Legislative branches do all within their power to advance these goals.
BUS 2012-18 RESOLUTION CALLING FOR RESPECT FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS AND THEIR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS

Whereas, the State Administrative and Legislative bodies express support for the ideals of increasing student learning and the improvement of public education outcomes, a goal most teachers dedicate themselves to daily and throughout their professional lives; and

Whereas, the current competitive nature mandated and implemented through Department of Education policies on both the federal and state levels treats classroom teachers – a career field primarily filled with women – in an adversarial manner; and

Whereas, reliable studies throughout the years prove parental involvement in their children’s education is the primary indicator of student success K-12; and

Whereas, schools represent children’s entry level into the world beyond their homes which in practice means public school teachers are charged not only with the responsibility of academic enlightenment but making sure of the safety, physical and emotional health, and socialization of children from all levels of society; and

Whereas, public school teachers, especially those in the elementary and middle school levels, are on the front line of our country’s war on poverty, homelessness, lack of comprehensive health care, violence and all other forms of abuse, with no control over any of these factors; and

Whereas, national statistics show the income gap in the United States to be widening at an ever-increasing level, with the lower income profile beset with high unemployment and record-breaking numbers of foreclosures and bankruptcies; and

Whereas, public school teachers have been held accountable for their individual work performances for decades through PEP-T and other administrative assessments; and a growing number of Hawaii’s public school teachers are National Board Certified Teachers; and

Whereas, “teachers are not opposed to an evaluation system that is fair, valid and reliable,” they also feel such accountability needs to extend to the students, their parents or caregivers, and the administrators of the Department of Education, on the school, state and federal levels; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the members of the Democratic Party of Hawaii express their concern for teachers, and demand a positive approach in the State Administration and Legislature to teachers’ collective bargaining rights, assuring good-faith bargaining with teachers on all levels.
Whereas, most workers at some time during the year, need temporary time off from work to take care of personal health needs or the health needs of members of their families;

Whereas, more than 40 percent of private-sector workers nationally and 43 percent of private-sector workers in Hawai'i (more than 174,000 workers) do not have paid sick time they can use to recover from a common, short-term illness such as the flu;

Whereas, many workers who do earn personal sick time cannot use that time to care for an ill child or close family member;

Whereas, nearly two hundred fifty thousand people in Hawai'i serve as unpaid family caregivers for family members;

Whereas, one in six adults nationally report that they or a family member has been fired, suspended, punished, or threatened by an employer because they needed to take sick time for themselves or a family member;

Whereas, low-wage workers are particularly unlikely to earn paid sick time, are among the least able to afford to take unpaid sick time, and are among the most at risk of long-term unemployment after losing a job;

Whereas, workers' inability to access paid sick time contributes to a drain on business productivity and increased risk of illnesses spreading throughout workplaces to customers and co-workers;

Whereas, workers' inability to access paid sick time leads to unnecessary emergency room visits and higher health care costs;

Whereas, parental care makes children's recovery faster and prevents future health problems;

Whereas, victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking often cannot access needed "safe" time to seek legal and relocation services;

Whereas, losing a job can be particularly devastating for survivors of domestic violence who often need economic security to ensure their and their children's safety;

Be It Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawai'i affirms that all workers should have the right to earn paid sick and safe time;

Be It Further Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawai'i endorses the federal Healthy Families Act (H.R. 1876/S. 984) and urges its passage; and

Be It Finally Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawai'i urges the legislature to pass statewide legislation to ensure that Hawai'i's workers will have access to earned paid sick and safe time.