A Socialist Program for Milwaukee in 2014

The Socialist Party of Milwaukee calls for maximizing democratic principles to develop meaningful and practical plans created by local government, county government and regional planning agencies. These plans will improve Milwaukee's economy and the well being of its citizens. To accomplish these goals, we propose the following:

**Economic Planning**

Economic planning shall consider the development and maintenance of our infrastructure so that Milwaukee has the best and most effective educational system, health care system, and transportation system, in order to create jobs paying livable wages and create the most effective use of land.

**Health:** Employers are demanding that workers pay a greater percentage of health care costs or are cutting back on this benefit altogether. A health plan should:

- Support efforts at the national and state levels to provide a universal single-payer health care system.
- Recreate a Community Hospital and a network of such hospitals and clinics to be run by public bodies.
- Explore ways of providing health and wellness care to all Milwaukee residents including universal access to mental health care.

**Employment:** A long-standing socialist belief is that everyone should have a job. Jobs should pay a livable wage. An employment plan should:

- Push for local, state and federal legislation that will require community and worker control and input of corporate decisions.
- Establish public works and public services in the areas of environmental protection and preservation, housing creation and maintenance, improvement of public transportation, infrastructure, and other areas needed to make Milwaukee a stronger and better community. Guarantee that everyone has a job.
- Utilize the area's universities to identify business sectors that can provide livable wage jobs.
- Support vocational and science education programs that will assure employers have skilled work force.

**Education:** A strong community requires an educational system that can address the needs of its citizens from early childhood through adulthood. Milwaukee needs its schools to prepare pre-school children for elementary education; to prepare youth to contribute to society in fulfilling careers and active citizenship; and to provide adults with remedial help in basic skills, as well as train them in new skills and occupations. A good educational plan should:

- Provide community oversight and local democratic control of our schools and educational programs.
- Expand the public school system to provide pre-school opportunities for all the city’s children.
- Support for smaller class sizes in K-12 schools. Stress science and math education. Emphasize mastery, not test scores.
- Ensure that every student has access to and training in technology and life skills, exposure to careers, and experience with citizenship.
- Open schools in the evening for basic adult education, parenting classes, financial and nutritional education, citizenship education, and recreation.
- Provide free public higher education.
- Support educational research and partner with local colleges and universities to improve educational practices.
- Reinforce teachers and school staff by including teacher unions and other worker organizations in the development of school environment, work policies and rules.
- Hold all schools accountable for reporting student achievement and the use of public funds.

**Transportation:** Transportation is essential to allow all people access to jobs, services and other comforts and is essential for protecting our environment and promoting sustainable growth. A Socialist transportation plan should:

- Support for the expansion and improvement of the existing public transportation system.
- Develop and expand a rail backbone for both urban and interurban transportation systems.
- Acknowledge that effective public transportation systems must be efficient, affordable, convenient, and environmentally friendly.

**Housing:** Decent, safe and sanitary housing is essential for a stable, healthy society. A market system dependent upon private developers results in blight and homelessness. A democratic socialist housing plan will:

- Develop sweat equity programs to encourage and aid home ownership.
- Increase the number of publicly owned and run subsidized housing units for low income people.
- Replace every public housing unit that is sold or demolished with a new unit.
- End zoning and other building policies that prohibit the construction of housing for people with low- or moderate-incomes.

For more information and to join the coalition to bring about change in Milwaukee, contact the Socialist Party of Milwaukee, 1001 East Keefe Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53212 or call 414-332-0654.
Environment: Clean water, clean air and safe food are essential to sustaining life. An environmental plan:

- Controls urban sprawl and encourage better utilization of urban lands through state, regional and municipal planning with citizen participation.
- Holds corporate polluters accountable for environmental pollution.
- Maintains and expand sour urban park systems, green spaces and environmental corridors so they will be within walking distance of all residential areas.
- Promotes sustainable development practices to stop the depletion and destruction of our vital resources that add to problems created by climate change.
- Ensures the supply of clean water and clean air.
- Promotes aquaponics, urban farming and other locally grown food practices.

Human Rights Planning
A community divided by racial, ethnic or class differences cannot progress. All citizens must be able to live in dignity. All workers have a right to a safe and just workplace.

Anti-Discrimination: A strong community cannot afford the loss of human resources resulting from discrimination and the denial of basic rights. We must:

- Guarantee equal opportunities in employment, housing, and education for all people.

Workplace: Workers deserve a safe and secure job that pays a livable wage. A human rights plan means:

- Developing education programs promoting safe working practices.
- Insuring adequate numbers of safety inspectors.
- Easing rules and procedures hindering access to worker compensation.
- Promoting policies encouraging the use of independent unions at all workplaces, private and public.
- Establishing mechanisms that guarantee a minimum wage that is a living wage.

Children’s welfare: Children are our future. Unfortunately, children are one of the groups suffering the most from changes in our economy. Child welfare planning should:

- Demand for affordable, quality day care services.
- Support a social safety net for those unable to work, especially parents.
- Providing help and preventative services for homeless and exploited children.
- Advocating for the expansion of family leave rights at the national level.
- Provide a full range of recreational programs that will encourage participation and child development.

Crime: A safe, crime free society is necessary for a healthy community. To that end the following principles and practices must be adopted:

- Expand the use of community and problem-oriented policing practices.
- Enlarge fire and police commissions to insure better democratic oversight of protective services.
- Establish restorative justice and holistic treatment as options for incarceration of non-violent drug offenders.
- Support the development and expansion of programs designed to eliminate human trafficking.

Good Government: The fairest and most effective government is a democratic government. Socialists advocate for the following reforms to maximize governmental responsiveness and provide citizen oversight by:

- Adopting parliamentary systems at all levels of government using proportional representation to choose elected officials.
- Expanding the size of legislative bodies.
- Discouraging the privatization of public services. Increase public oversight of those functions that are privatized.
- Maintaining governments free of corporate influence.
- Opposing the use of corporate money on public projects or services.
- Ending corporate welfare.
- Reusing structurally sound public buildings for new alternative uses.