

KFTC's 2017-2018 Platform

Adopted by the KFTC Membership at the Annual Business Meeting, August 27, 2017

Preamble

Kentuckians For The Commonwealth is a statewide, grassroots, citizens' organization working for a new balance of power and a just society. As we work together we build our strength, individually and as a group, and find solutions to real life problems. We use direct action to challenge – and change – unfair political, economic and social systems. Our membership is open to all people who are committed to equality, democracy and nonviolent change. KFTC's goals of organizing are: (1) fostering democratic values, (2) changing unjust institutions, (3) empowering people and communities, (4) helping people participate, (5) overcoming racism and other discrimination, (6) communicating a message of what is possible, (7) building organizations, (8) winning issues that affect the common welfare, and (9) having fun.

We are working to create a society that focuses on supporting the human rights of all people. We are a social justice organization. We believe that all people must be treated with respect and dignity regardless of ability, age, gender, national origin, race, religion, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or any other defining characteristic.

We are working to build New Power – new economic, energy, and political power – in Kentucky and the nation. New Power consists of a new economy, a diverse homegrown economy good for all people, an economy that is just and sustains workers, communities, and the environment. New Power includes new energy that is clean, renewable, affordable, and generates jobs for our workers. New Power means a new democracy that includes, respects, and represents everyone.

1. *We understand that the global climate is changing as a result of human activity. The changes already underway have profound effects on our weather, our water, our food, our economy, world politics, and the natural environment. And we understand, if not checked, climate change will have a catastrophic impact on the entire globe. Specifically:*
 - a. As Kentuckians, we are committed to working here at home and with communities across the nation and around the world to prevent catastrophic climate change by working for a just transition.
 - b. We believe that a just transition is one that celebrates our cultures and invests in communities and workers who currently depend on the old economy.

2. *Since clean air, water and land are every Kentuckian's right, KFTC will work to protect and preserve a clean environment and to protect health and bio-diversity by working for stronger regulations and better enforcement. Specifically:*
 - a. We oppose the use of the mountaintop removal method of surface coal mining and valley fills that bury perennial, intermittent and ephemeral streams.
 - b. We will work for a sustainable forestry products industry [non-timber and wood products] for Kentucky that relies on ecologically sound forest management and the use of Best Management Practices on public and private lands.

- c. We will work to preserve and protect publicly owned lands and their natural resources.
- d. We oppose on every front the rollback of the authority and funding for agencies and services that protect the environment and the rights of surface owners.
- e. We will fight to protect Kentucky's precious water resources including ensuring safe, accessible and affordable water for all Kentuckians.
- f. We demand reasonable regulation of oil and gas drilling including protection and replacement of water and reclamation of damaged land.
- g. We oppose fracking and fracturing drilling technology until such time it is proven safe.
- h. We oppose the construction of new pipelines, or the repurposing of existing pipelines, to carry oil, fracked gas or its by-products, tar sands oil or any toxic substances because of the proven vulnerability of pipelines to leaks and explosions that can adversely affect residents.
- i. We demand full enforcement of laws and regulations related to the mining, transportation and burning of coal in order to protect water resources, prevent blasting damage, and require the reclamation of land and permitting of secondary roads used for hauling coal.
- j. We oppose the use of dangerous coal sludge impoundments and call for the development of emergency action plans for communities living near impoundments.
- k. We support a robust set of policies that make family farms an economically viable livelihood, ensure clean air and water, and healthy foods for communities. We oppose the environmental and economic destruction of industrial farming.
- l. We oppose importation of all solid, hazardous and special wastes including those related to fracturing. We promote local control over land-use decisions involving landfills, incinerators, and related facilities.
- m. Recognizing the high costs and deadly effects of uranium mining, processing, and waste disposal, we oppose the expansion of nuclear power.
- n. We will work to protect air quality to ensure the health and safety of Kentuckians.
- o. We support local and statewide policies to ensure smoke-free workplaces.
- p. We will support reducing the use of harmful pesticides and herbicides, the right of the public to know the nature of pesticides and herbicides applied, and the right of a local government to have more stringent control of pesticide and herbicides use.
- q. We promote source reduction, recycling, strong procurement policies for recycled products and a bottle bill.
- r. We will oppose environmental racism and classism, or the practice of locating polluting industries and waste facilities near low-income and minority communities, and in neighborhoods where people are least able to fight back.
- s. We support strengthening present timber theft laws in Kentucky to protect forests and private property rights.
- t. We support protection of biodiversity, including endangered species.
- u. We favor strong conservation representation on the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission.

3. *We will fight to protect surface owners from the abuses by extractive industries. Specifically:*

- a. We demand that the broad form deed amendment be fully enforced by all levels of government.
- b. We support a change in property laws so that a minority owner of an undivided interest cannot allow the sale, leasing or mining of land or minerals against the wishes of the majority of owners.

- c. We demand that oil and gas operators have permission of surface owners before they drill.
 - d. We support the property rights of all landowners and will work to ensure these rights are exercised responsibly and equitably so as not to unfairly compromise the interests of the public, the environment, or surrounding property owners.
4. *We will work to empower voters and expand authentic, democratic participation that makes government open, honest, and responsive to the needs of the people. Specifically:*
- a. We will fight to protect the local control of solid waste management and siting, and support strong host agreements before permits are issued by the state.
 - b. We will work to strengthen and enforce ethics codes for elected and appointed officials.
 - c. We support an amendment to the U.S. Constitution making it clear that corporations are not people and money is not speech. Furthermore, we will work to eliminate the connections between money in political campaigns and governments that are non-responsive to the people.
 - d. We support campaign spending limits and public financing of elections to reduce the amount spent on elections and the power of big money contributors.
 - e. We will work to make state and local economic development authorities accountable to the people.
 - f. We demand easy access and an end to the overly bureaucratic procedures necessary to obtain open records in Kentucky.
 - g. We support equitable access to state funds for roads and public transit.
 - h. We support local communities' cooperation on common issues.
 - i. We oppose closed-door meetings and decision-making not open to the public when used to block public participation or transparency.
 - j. We support restoring voting rights to former felons. We support programs that promote the positive re-entry of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated prisoners into our communities.
 - k. We oppose all forms of voter suppression and support policies that facilitate full democratic participation, including accommodations for people with disabilities.
 - l. We support all efforts for same day new voter registration.
 - m. We oppose the practice of partisan gerrymandering in drawing political districts, which strips communities of their democratic power and compromises the integrity of our political process.
5. *We will fight to create a just economy that sustains communities, families and individuals, promotes health, protects resources for the future, and supports social investment that eliminates structural poverty. We support communities that value socio-economic diversity. Specifically:*
- a. We will work with all interested parties, including recipients, to develop a welfare and benefits system that serves the community as a whole, provides a safety net, helps people move forward, and treats people fairly and with dignity and due process.
 - b. We will work for an economic development process that is open, sustainable, supportive of local economies, and sees that companies receiving public money for job creation provide training, safe working conditions, health benefits and a living wage and transition away from a fossil fuel extraction industry. KFTC does not support prison expansion as a means of economic development.

- c. We support public policies and utility programs that minimize utility customer shutoffs due to inability to pay and we will work to eliminate customer shutoffs during extreme weather conditions and medical emergencies. We support energy conservation programs, the implementation of percentage of income payment plans and fair access to utility services including local gas hookups.
- d. We support policies aimed at significantly increasing the development of energy conservation, energy efficiency, and clean renewable energy sources in Kentucky, ultimately leading toward climate neutrality.
- e. We seek energy policies that promote the development of community-scale, locally owned renewable energy sources, create local jobs, and help low-wealth households, enterprises, and communities to access energy efficiency measures and clean energy solutions.
- f. We support funding effective and efficient community services through an equitable, fair, and progressive tax structure.
- g. We support the continued fair taxation of unmined minerals.
- h. We support the collection of coal severance taxes on every ton of coal mined and demand an increasing return of severance tax funds to promote sustainable economic development in coalfield counties; we further support at least one-percent of coal severance taxes collected be put in a permanent trust fund that will be used by and for the communities where the coal was extracted for the purpose of creating a more diverse and sustainable economy; we call for an increase in the severance tax rate and the creation of a community-based process to determine how funds are spent.
- i. We call for a system of high quality public education, including pre-school through higher education that is accessible and affordable for all Kentuckians.
- j. We support policies that are in favor of reducing the economic burden of higher education.
- k. We object to the dominance of corporate interests in the decision-making, values and priorities of our public and private educational institutions at all levels. We oppose for-profit charter schools and vouchers.
- l. We support economic reform through the use and support of sustainable agriculture.
- m. We support affordable access to nutritious and healthful foods for all people.
- n. We advocate for quality, affordable, comprehensive health care including but not limited to preventive health care, preventative dental and vision care, mental health services, prevention of infectious diseases including HIV prevention and care, reproductive health services, comprehensive addiction treatment and long-term care for all Kentuckians, and we affirm our support for a single payer health care system.
- o. We support a comprehensive approach – and investments – that recognize good health is determined by a wide range of social and economic factors such as education, social welfare, housing, income, and environmental conditions, as well as traditional health factors.
- p. We support the right to a living wage for all Kentuckians that provides adequate income for housing, health care, education and basic necessities. We oppose wage discrimination based on gender, race, ability, age, national origin, citizenship, religion, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, immigration status, or any other defining characteristic
- q. We oppose exploitation of labor and unjust international trade programs and demand an end to the use and sale of sweatshop-made products.
- r. We call for a new system for the transportation of coal that makes possible better pay for truckers, shared company accountability for safety violations and road damage, safe roads and safe mining communities, and reduced weight limits for coal trucks.

- s. We support the right of workers to organize and the right to collective bargaining.
 - t. We support quality, affordable, accessible housing for all persons. We demand just housing policies that protect the rights of renters to be treated fairly and encourage resident involvement in decision-making processes. We support the right of all people to live in inclusive, healthy and sustainable neighborhoods of their own choosing.
 - u. We demand enactment and enforcement of occupational health and safety laws that protect all workers in Kentucky, especially workers in occupations that continue to suffer high rates of preventable work-related death, disability, and illness such as coal miners, coal truckers, and other coal industry workers.
 - v. We support fair and equitable lending practices.
 - w. We support adequate, affordable, and energy efficient public transportation on a statewide basis, and we demand infrastructure planning that supports alternative modes of public transportation such as biking and walking.
 - x. We support fair and equitable access to information and communication systems for all people.
 - y. We support policies that enable people to live safely and well in their homes and provide good alternatives to nursing home care.
 - z. We support policies that foster the growth of alternative economies, including worker-owned cooperatives.
 - aa. We support policies that promote substantial paid family and medical leave from the workplace that are flexible regardless of race, class, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age or any other defining characteristic. We also support access to safe, affordable childcare that values families in the workplace.
 - ab. We oppose the privatization of public services.
 - ac. We support sustainably grown industrial hemp as an economic driver providing a just transition for environmentally impacted communities as well as respite from resource extraction and monoculture farming. To that end, we support informing citizens of the various uses and products derived from hemp and legislation that removes barriers to scaling the domestic supply and market. We support policies that restrict the monopolization of hemp by corporate entities.
 - ad. We support the legalization of production, sale and consumption of cannabis and cannabis-based products for medical and recreational use, and amnesty of anyone currently experiencing legal ramifications of cannabis related charges. We support policies that restrict the monopolization of cannabis by corporate entities.
6. *We will fight to create a fair and just society that respects human and civil rights, uplifts all people to their potential, and values the participation of everyone. Specifically:*
- a. We support affirmative action programs that guarantee equal rights for all people.
 - b. We oppose all forms of racism and work to eliminate it from our society and from within our organization.
 - c. We condemn and oppose discrimination, oppression, and harassment of all people by public or private individuals or institutions based on any of the following: ability, age, gender, gender identity, gender expression, familial status, national origin, citizenship, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, immigration status, current or former incarceration status or any other defining characteristic. We believe that denial of the right to due process constitutes discrimination and oppression.

- d. We will lead by example in affirming people's gender identities and gender expressions and embodying inclusive spaces for diverse gender identities.
- e. We will work toward a more fair justice system not mired in discrimination based on ability, age, gender, national origin, citizenship, race, religion, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, immigration status, or any other defining characteristic.
- f. We support the right of residents who are undocumented to be treated with the respect and dignity that all human beings are entitled to. We also support open pathways to citizenship for people who are undocumented.
- g. We oppose the inappropriate use of police powers, the expansion and privatization of the prison system, and the use of excessive force by police, including the targeting and killing of African Americans and other people of color. We do support full funding of public defenders in order to ensure the diligent and competent representation by these public servants. We call for an immediate end to the mass incarceration of African Americans and other people of color, and the practices by which mass incarceration is currently implemented.
- h. We support a transition from our current punitive justice system to a more restorative system that honors the inherent dignity of all individuals, including people with physical illness, mental illness or addiction.
- i. We support the abolition of the death penalty.
- j. With farmers, horse owners, pet owners and a diverse array of wildlife, Kentucky is a state that values animals and their contributions to our lives, our economy, and our well-being. It is also a state with some of the weakest laws and enforcement related to animal cruelty. We support sensible local and state initiatives that would prevent the abuse of animals.
- k. We understand there's a lot of diversity around gun ownership across the state. We support responsible gun ownership and initiatives to address the problem of gun violence.
- l. We support KFTC members being active in peace movements in Kentucky and worldwide.