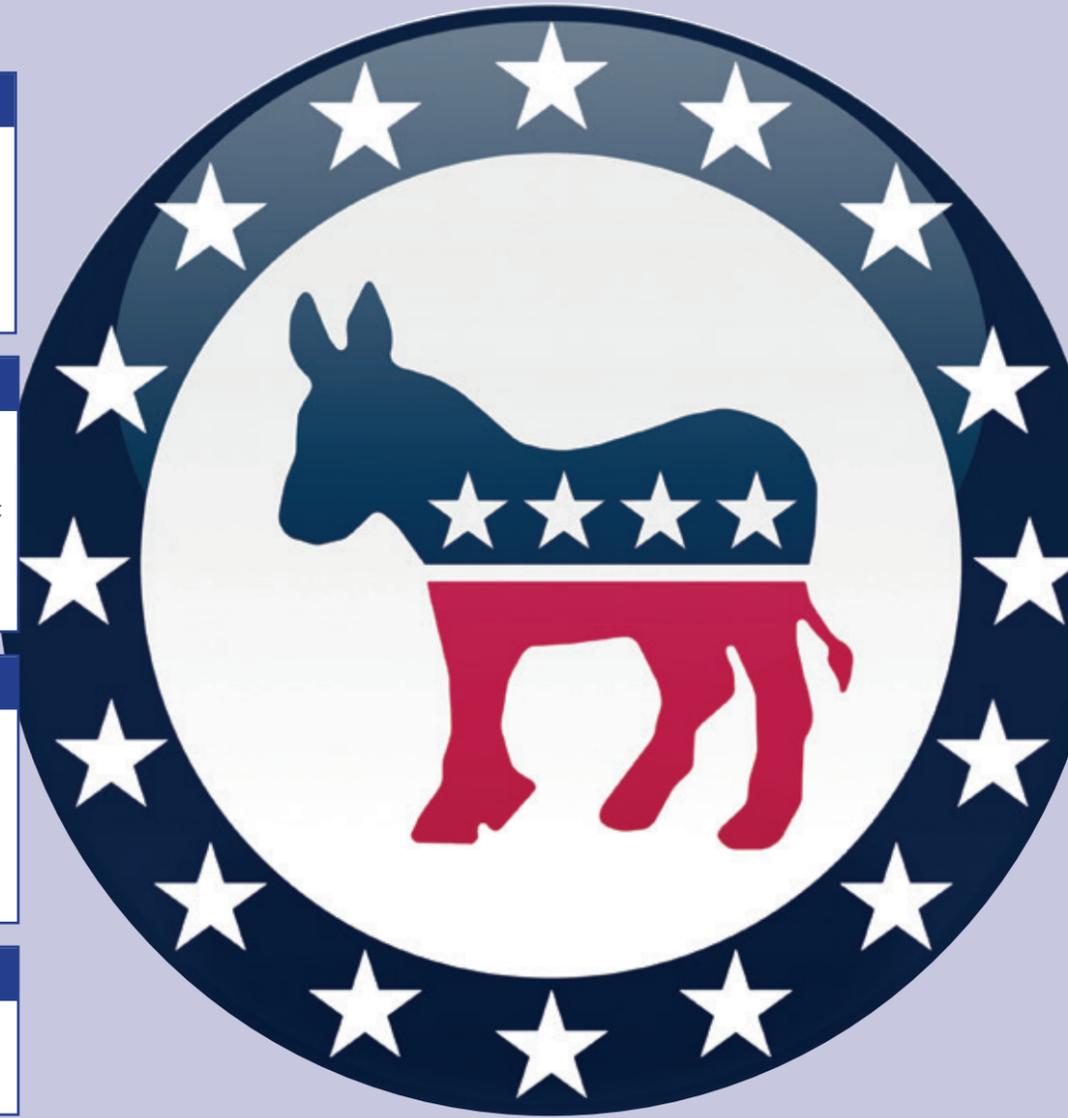


The main ideas and policies of the Democratic Party

It is more difficult to establish the policies of a US political party than it is for one in the UK because there is no party manifesto that all party candidates stand on. The 2016 Democratic Party candidates will each have a different policy focus, as will members of Congress at both federal and state level



Abortion

- Strong and unequivocal support for *Roe v Wade* and a woman's right to make decisions regarding her pregnancy.
- Obama repealed the *Mexico City* rule that banned money going to foreign groups that promote abortion.
- Obama was described as 'the most radical pro-abortion American president ever' on Fox News.

Civil rights

- The party defends civil rights and expanding opportunity for all Americans.
- In 2010 'Don't ask, don't tell' legislation for gays in the military was passed.
- In 2011 Obama instructed the Justice Department not to enforce the Defense of Marriage Act because he regarded it as 'unconstitutional'.
- In 2012 Obama came out in favour of gay marriage.
- In 2015 Obama appointed Eric Fanning, the first openly gay man to lead the army.

The environment

- The party is committed to effective environmental policies.
- In 2014 it agreed a historic deal with China to cap carbon emissions and increase use of renewables.
- The 2015 Clean Power Plan promised a 32% reduction in power-plant carbon-dioxide emissions.
- In 2015 Obama vetoed legislation giving the go-ahead to the Keystone XL pipeline.

Healthcare

- It is committed to accessible, affordable, high-quality care.
- The 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act gave healthcare to about 16 million additional Americans.

Immigration reform

- The party supports immigration reform.
- A 2012 executive order halted the deportation of illegal immigrants under 30.
- A 2014 executive order gave deportation relief for up to 5 million undocumented immigrants but also cracked down on illegal immigration.

Education

- The party is committed to turning around struggling schools and to expanding public school options including magnet schools, charter schools, teacher-led schools and career academies.
- In 2015 Obama announced \$60 billion to provide 2 years of free tuition in community colleges.

The economy

- The party is committed to helping all Americans to deal with the economic issues of the twenty-first century.
- The 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided an \$831 billion stimulus to an economy in deep recession.
- In 2014 Obama signed an executive order substantially raising the minimum wage for many federal employees.
- In 2015 Obama achieved 'fast track' authority for negotiating the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

Gun control

- The party recognises the right to bear arms but believes that it should be subject to reasonable regulation.
- Its attempts to strengthen firearms regulation following repeated mass shootings have failed.
- In January 2016 Obama said he was taking action on gun control because Congress had failed to act.
- Obama announced executive actions including the expansion of background checks before guns could be purchased. He urged federal agencies to enforce existing laws.

Foreign policy

- The party will continue to support and train the military for the tasks facing it in the twenty-first century.
- It ended the war in Iraq and killed Osama Bin Laden.
- It restored diplomatic relations with Cuba.
- John Kerry sponsored a deal with Iran on nuclear weapons.
- Guantanamo Bay remains open.
- There are concerns about drone strikes and revelations of widespread CIA surveillance.

Drugs policy

- The administration of justice should be fair and impartial.
- The 2010 Fair Sentencing Act reduced the disparity of sentencing for possession of crack cocaine and powder cocaine.
- Obama has used his power of pardon to grant clemency to many low level non-violent drug offenders.

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