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POLICY SURVEY

Dear Sir/Madam

In order to assist our members to better understand the policies and principles of your party please be so kind as to answer the following questions:

- 1) Does your party accept the Bible as the inspired and infallible Word of God?

The DA values deeply the guidance and inspiration that Christianity offers to individuals and communities. We accept the right of all South Africans to follow the religion of their choice, and to freely worship their chosen God within the bounds set by the Constitution.

- 2) Does your party acknowledge the sovereignty of God and intend to include an affirmation "In humble submission to Almighty God" in the constitution of South Africa?

The DA's objective is to ensure that the constitutional value of freedom of worship continues to be firmly entrenched in the constitution and that this right is fiercely upheld and defended.

- 3) Does your party recognise the pre-born child as fully human? ___

The question of the sentience and awareness of the pre-born child is not one that the DA believes is for politicians to decide.

- 4) Does your party support legislation to protect the unborn child from abortion?

The DA believes that support for the right to abortion is a matter of individual conscience. We therefore give our public representatives the right to vote according to their conscience on abortion. Many of our members support such legislation.

- 5) What is the policy of your party with respect to the honouring of the Lord's Day and Sunday trading?

The DA honours and supports the right of Christians to respect the Lords Day. It must be recognized that not all religions share the same sanctified days, and Sunday trading should continue to be a right for those for whom Sunday is not a holy day, or who hold different views on its observance.

- 6) How does your party intend to protect law-abiding citizens from violence and crime?

The DA will ensure that anyone who commits a criminal act knows that they will be swiftly found, prosecuted and imprisoned by a proficient, professional and zealous criminal justice system, and we will promote a society that respects the law.

Specifically, we will:

- Increase the number of SAPS members to 250 000 – in contrast to the government’s target of 190 000.
 - Ensure that all police officers possess the right basic skills and pass regular fitness tests.
 - Employ police officers on the basis of merit, not quotas or political alignment.
 - Empower the Independent Complaints Directorate to stamp down hard on corrupt officers.
 - Improve the functioning of the courts by giving tax incentives and other benefits to legal practitioners to encourage them to spend a few hours a month in the public court system, and work to have a period spent in the court system a requirement to be registered as a lawyer.
 - Ensure that “life means life” and there is no parole for life sentences.
 - Require that exacerbating factors, such as the use of a gun, result in longer sentences.
 - Require prisoners to be drug free to qualify for parole.
 - Create a statutory body called the Directorate for Victims of Crime, which will administer a toll-free helpline for victims, run a national victim support training centre, and administer a Victims of Crime fund. The fund would include money from various sources, including prisoners’ earnings, and anyone suffering physical damage as a result of a crime would be able to claim against it.
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7) What is the policy of your party with respect to capital punishment for murderers?

Support for the ultimate sanction of the death penalty is a matter of personal conscience. DA members would vote on any such question in line on the basis of their own beliefs, and many do support the death penalty. However, evidence from around the world shows that criminals are not diverted by the presence of the death penalty, but rather by the knowledge that if they commit a crime, they will be caught and convicted and given a sentence that matches the severity of their crime. Our criminal justice system does not create this certainty – only one out of ten murderers is ever convicted. The DA will therefore prioritise the building of an efficient police force, and effective justice system and a secure correctional services system so that no criminal is ever able to escape the law.

8) What is the policy of your party with respect to the availability and distribution of pornography within S.A?

A DA government will vigorously enforce the law on pornography. But the response to this crime must not simply be reactive, and active steps must be taken to clamp down on internet pornography rings, and to stop the trafficking of children that is driven by pornography. By reinstating the Family Violence, Child Abuse and Sexual Offences units within the SAPS we will help to rebuild the specialist focus that is needed to clamp down on crimes such as these.

9) What is the policy of your party with respect to education?

The DA will direct the education system towards valuing excellence and rooting out poor performance. Schools which meet carefully defined performance criteria will be given more power to manage their own affairs, because experience shows that capable schools work best when they are able to manage matters such as staffing, discipline and timetables themselves.

However, around 60% of South African schools do not yet meet these performance criteria and they will be the focus of various initiatives including:

- Training for principals, their deputies and heads of department.
- A review of all teacher appointments to ensure that they are appropriate.

- Regular management audits.
- Regular performance assessments aimed at building teacher capacity.

Bold steps are needed to confront schools that are completely dysfunctional. The DA will, among other things, create a dedicated dysfunctional schools task team to help these schools, implement a mentoring programme for them using school managers with proven track records, and set clear performance targets.

To increase the number of quality teachers we have available, the DA will:

- Work with universities to establish satellite teacher training campuses in remote areas to replace teacher training colleges.
- Institute full study bursaries for quality candidates who undertake to teach in specific under-privileged areas for two years.
- Pay teachers for performance, not years in the system.

It is imperative that teachers are able to properly convey their subject to their learners. The DA will ask all teachers to write standardized knowledge assessments in the subjects they teach, and pay increases and promotions will be dependent on the results.

The DA will conduct a detailed review of Outcomes-Based Education, with a view to correcting defects with as little disruption as possible and ensuring that it is relevant to our needs. Schools should be able to opt out of the national curriculum if there is a demand for this in the school community, and if the proposed curriculum meets certain requirements.

To identify problems with schooling early, the DA will conduct systemic learner assessments at grades, 3, 6, 9 and 12.

A healthy learning environment depends on respect for legitimate authority. The DA will give control of their classrooms back to teachers with a range of measures, including:

- Stronger support for the right to expel disruptive learners.
- A demerit points system for learners culminating in expulsion.
- Diversion programmes for youth at risk, taking them out of their damaging home environments and allowing them to learn valuable skills.
- Dedicated remedial schools for disruptive learners.

10) Does your party support the right of parents to supervise the teachers and textbooks that will mould and fill their children's minds?

The DA believes that close parental involvement in the education of their children is one of the most important factors in quality education. In public schools, the content of textbooks must be determined by the curriculum. But the DA will give schools the opportunity to adopt any curriculum of their choice that meets certain requirements. Private schools similarly will be able to follow the curriculum that the community chooses.

11) Does your party support the right of parents to send their children to the schools of their choice?

Yes.

12) Does your party advocate a Bible based and Christian-orientated education system?

The DA believes that schools that are funded by the state should make room for children to learn about all faiths. The DA will allow schools that wish to do so the right to adopt curriculums other than the national one, and this might include curriculums with an emphasis on Christianity. Private schools should have the right to establish themselves in terms of a bible-based and Christian-orientated education system if they so wish.

13) What is the policy of your party with respect to sex education in schools?

All children need, at an appropriate age, to be given information at school that they do not necessarily get at home about sex. This information must always be located within a strong framework of personal responsibility and parental choice.

14) What is the policy of your party with regard to the teaching of creation and the theory of evolution in schools?

The DA supports a curriculum based on scientific evidence.

15) What is the policy of your party with regard to the demands of homosexual and lesbian groups to recognise homosexual "marriages" and adoption of children?

The DA supports the right of homosexual couples to form civil unions, and of religions to decide for themselves whether to agree to recognize such marriages through religious ceremonies or not. With regard to the adoption of children, the primary consideration must be the interests of the child and the capacity of the parents.

16) Does your party stand for private ownership of property and a free market economy?

The DA's philosophy is grounded in the view that a free market economy is the system most likely to create prosperity for all South Africans, and that private property is a core component of a free market economy. The right to own property must be fiercely protected, and steps must be taken to give the rights and benefits of property ownership to as many South Africans as possible.

16) Does your party advocate any socialist policies, such as a centrally planned economy, nationalisation and redistribution of land and wealth?

The DA believes that a centrally planned economy is efficient, destructive to personal freedom and catastrophic to national prosperity. This does not mean, however, that the state does not have an important role to play in the economy. A certain amount of regulation is necessary to ensure a competitive and fair environment, and the state must work with the private sector to, for example, help to develop skills and promote the development of certain key industries. However, this involvement must always be in partnership with others, and never in a dictatorial role. A critical part of the DA's economic policy is the privatization of state assets such as SAA, the removal of strictures on economic growth such as certain aspects of labour legislation, and the review of state-imposed structures that serve merely to promote bureaucratic interests, such as the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs).

18) What limits does your party plan to make on civil government and its powers?

