



*MORE JOBS
AND NEW
OPPORTUNITIES*

The choice 2010

THE CHOICE

WE WANT TO MAKE SWEDEN A LAND OF OPPORTUNITIES

The 2010 election means a crucial choice – what kind of Sweden do we want? The choice lies between two directly opposed dreams, completely different paths for the future.

When the economy is growing, the key choice is whether to spend our resources on continuing to cut taxes for the most well off or to spend them on more jobs and a better welfare system.

As Social Democrats we want Sweden to be a land of opportunities for everyone, where each and every one of us – whatever our background – has the chance to turn our dreams into reality. Equality liberates individuals, fuelling economic and social growth. We see a welfare state where we choose to compete on skills rather than low pay. Where there are more jobs, high social mobility and everyone has the chance to do their bit. Where we solve social problems and invest in the future together. That way, we all gain. This is the path the Social Democrats want for Sweden.

We've been going down the other road for four years now. The rich have gained as taxes have been cut on borrowed money. Inequalities have grown and wages been squeezed. The result of this policy is not jobs. Our shared economy is shrinking and people working in health and education are being sacked. Despite sky-high unemployment, companies are finding it difficult to hire new staff as educational opportunities are limited. This reduces competitiveness and increases mortgage interest rates. We need a change of direction.

On 19 September the Swedish people will stand at a crossroads. Which path will we take? Will the journey towards a bleaker, unfriendlier Sweden continue for yet another four years and will it be worth the price we have to pay?

The Social Democrats choose jobs. We want Sweden to be a land of opportunities.

This is what we think needs to be done in the four areas where the choice is clearest:

1. MORE JOBS

We want Sweden to be a competitive country with full employment. We want to create a climate in which the export industry, the service sector, small businesses and welfare can flourish and employ more people. We must make the most of the great opportunities for development and for new green jobs opened up by the switch to sustainable development. People's desire to work is Sweden's most important asset. A government that wastes this resource and lets unemployment soar is letting the country down. We need every single hour worked. With more jobs, Sweden's economy will grow. We want to get the public purse back into the black. This will see us safeguard a better welfare system and greater opportunities for you to lead a richer life – whether you live in a city or in the countryside. Regional policy must be extended. A work-oriented

approach means the right to a job, a duty to work and opportunities for people to gain the skills they need to take on new jobs. This is why we want to invest in 100,000 new jobs, work experience and education places in the years ahead.

The Social Democrats choose more jobs instead of greater inequalities:

Full employment is the aim of our economic policy. One target is to raise the employment rate to 80 percent and cut long-term unemployment to one percent. The labour market and services must work efficiently in every part of the country. We want to eradicate the housing shortage, invest in education and research and invest in a modern welfare system and an infrastructure that create excellent opportunities for growth. Taxation, family and economic policy must promote work and entrepreneurship among women – not lead to falling female employment. More recent arrivals and people with disabilities must be able to gain a foothold in the labour market.

A kick start for jobs for young people. Sweden's youth unemployment rate is one of the highest in Europe. 207,000 young people want nothing more than a first step into the world of work. A great many of them are well educated. Others need to complete their upper secondary education. At the same time companies are crying out for people with the right skills and a vast number of people are coming up for retirement. We refuse to accept this waste. The government's three-month ban on work experience or training for unemployed young people must be abolished. Instead we want to launch a kick start for young people. Measures to help them into work should start from the first day of unemployment. We want to introduce a youth bonus that will get young people into work. We will abolish employer's contributions for businesses that employ a young unemployed person, with similar deductions for those offering work experience placements or traineeships.

Businesses with faith in the future. We want to make the most of Sweden's success stories and encourage new ones. We want to pursue a strategic policy to encourage the jobs and growth companies of the future. It is high time for dialogue and for us to work together to see Sweden leading the way. To strengthen our export industry we will implement innovation programmes in partnership with businesses and other stakeholders. We want to cut taxes for small businesses by 6 billion kronor and set up a risk capital fund to stimulate start-ups in high-tech industry, the knowledge-intensive service sector and new environmental technology as well as introducing tax deductions on research and risk capital. There will be a better safety net for entrepreneurs and it will be easier to switch between employment and self-employment. One percent of Sweden's GNP will be invested in research every year.

Getting the job market in good shape. The aim is fewer casual, insecure jobs and more permanent contracts. Full-time should be a right and part-time an option. We want to see work become less stressful, helping people reach their full potential rather than burning them out. It is unacceptable for people to be exploited on miserably low pay and in appalling working conditions. We want to strengthen preventive work environment measures and work environment research. We want to tear up the

government's Laval Act. Swedish collective agreements must be able to be applied in full even for foreign companies operating in Sweden. All employees must be treated equally whether they come from Ronneby, Riga or Rotterdam.

2. MORE EDUCATION

We want to create more opportunities to invest in the future, to train, carry out research or forge a career – not fewer. Everyone gains from people not being restricted by their background or their sex. The more people who have the chance to aim higher, the better it is for Sweden. Education is the key to the jobs of the future and to future competitiveness, but also to people's freedom to shape their own lives the way they want to. Sweden needs a knowledge boost. People have been forced to make education choices at increasingly earlier ages and it has become harder to change path later in life. In a fast-changing labour market, people need a second, if not a third or fourth chance at education. Research and Swedish experience show that high quality education from preschool to post-graduate level is the key to social mobility and new opportunities.

The Social Democrats choose education instead of a rigid class structure and closed doors:

Invest in more opportunities for higher education. A competitive business climate that creates jobs demands a trained workforce. We want to expand and raise the quality of our colleges and universities and improve students' lives with higher grants. Our aim is for half of each year group to have started higher education before the age of 25. We mustn't waste talent. Complicated admission regulations must be removed and the social imbalance in admissions halted. Upper secondary schools must equip all students with the basic qualifications for further study. It must be easy to add to or update skills. We want to create 44,000 more places in adult education, folk high schools, higher education colleges, vocational colleges and vocational labour market training. We want to set up a skills insurance system to cover all wage earners.

Improving school results. We want to give every pupil real opportunities to achieve their full potential at school. This means smaller class sizes and more competent teachers. We want to increase the teacher-pupil ratio to 9 teachers per 100 pupils. This will also enable us to improve the quality of teaching and carry out the special measures required to improve Swedish school results. Our aim is for Sweden to rank in the top 10 on the OECD's Pisa survey in the subjects mathematics, reading and science in 2015. We want schools to provide written reports from year 1 and grades from year 7. Schools must open up a multitude of opportunities, not force early choices that lead to dead ends. Pupils are different and need different amounts of resources. This is why we want to tighten up the rules so that schools allocate resources according to need. Schools that fail to meet the quality requirements must be able to be shut down.

Modern preschool education. The foundation of lifelong learning is laid at preschool. All preschools must have trained staff and follow the curriculum. We want modern,

high-quality preschool education for all children – not a conservative care allowance that excludes children. The municipalities need resources to give all children, including children whose parents are on parental leave, the right to 30 hours a week of preschool education. We want to guarantee sibling places throughout Sweden. The modern world of work demands a modern childcare system that is open when parents are working and makes the daily juggling act easier.

Culture and cultural education. We want to reduce the large local differences in fees and access to music and cultural education by introducing a ceiling for fees. We want Sweden to have a flourishing, free and unfettered cultural climate. This will create opportunities for successful artists, performers and entrepreneurs. Non-formal adult education strengthens democracy and opportunities for personal development alongside the formal education system. Sweden's cultural climate must not be controlled but it must be supported! Our aim is to increase the culture budget by a billion kronor in 2011 – 2014.

3. BETTER HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION

We want all children to get the best education in our schools. We want everyone living in Sweden to be able to benefit from health care of the highest quality where they need it and according to need. We want to invest in a richer life for our elderly people and remove the unfair tax on pensioners. It is not possible to create world-class welfare by using borrowed money to cut taxes and making staff redundant. We want to create more jobs in the health, care and education sectors. The Swedish welfare state wasn't built in a day but on clear visions of shared responsibility and on all people being of equal value. But in the past four years visions of a different kind have left their mark on legislation and the regulatory framework. Today those with private health insurance get to jump to the top of the waiting list, commercial interests are more important than the needs of patients or pupils and large hospitals have been allowed to be sold off. Where are these government policies taking us? We promise to guarantee the principle that health, education and care must maintain the highest quality, and be paid for by us all according to ability and given to all according to need – never on other class-based grounds.

The Social Democrats choose better welfare for all over continued big tax cuts:

More staff in health and education. In the past year tax cuts have led to the loss of 24,000 jobs in the education, health and care sectors. This only results in a deteriorating welfare system. Instead we want to invest in more staff in preschools, more teachers and more care staff to increase quality and accessibility. We prioritise this ahead of continued big tax cuts. We want to invest at least 12 billion kronor more than the government has invested in welfare in the next two years.

Higher quality of life for Sweden's elderly people. Respect for the generations who built the welfare state now seems to have gone up in smoke. This is something we want to change. Pensions are not state benefits. We will abolish the unfair tax on pensioners. Elderly people must be entitled to free home help services without means testing and

they must be able to decide for themselves how these hours are used, whether for cleaning, clearing snow or going out for a walk. Older couples should not need to separate when one of them needs sheltered housing.

Patients first – not private health companies. We want to quality assure the health service by introducing a national certification system. A care provider must comply with high requirements in terms of quality of care and patient safety to receive funding from taxes. To increase accessibility and improve the efficiency of emergency health care we want to introduce mobile home health care for families and the elderly. We want to increase the amount of time that care staff spend with patients. Our taxes must be spent on high quality care for patients, not on profits. Citizens must have the right to choose their care but private health companies must not be able to exclude patients. We want to abolish the law that allows companies to set up wherever it is most profitable instead of where the need is greatest.

No queue jumping in the health service. We do not want to see a trend towards a health system in which those with private health insurance sneak to the top of the waiting list. There should be no place in the Swedish state-funded health system for those who pay more to jump the queue. We want to protect tax payers' money. It must not end up in private pockets through sell-offs and spin-offs. We want Sweden to regain its position as a world leader in medical research. University and regional hospitals not only guarantee good, consistent care for patients throughout Sweden, they also stand for competent education and work experience for health care staff and for advanced medicine and research. They must not be sold out.

4. REDUCE INEQUALITIES

We want to live in a welfare state in which we share risks and opportunities because that way, we all benefit. Inequality doesn't solve anything. Equal societies are better societies for everyone to live in. But at the moment ever-increasing inequalities are changing Sweden. Half a million people have been forced out of the unemployment insurance system in the middle of an economic downturn. People with cancer and other serious illnesses have to apply for benefits. A new, large group of excluded people is growing, those without insurance. Child poverty has almost doubled. In 80 percent of Sweden's municipalities spending on benefits is increasing. Taxes are being cut on borrowed money. The richest one percent of the Swedish population has received as much in tax cuts as a quarter of the whole Swedish population put together. Men receive more than women. Differences are increasing in the cities and between urban and rural areas. Crime creates a sense of insecurity. Fear is growing, and with it xenophobia.

The Social Democrats choose cohesion instead of a bleaker, unfriendlier Sweden:

Proper insurance. We want to raise the ceiling for insurance so that the vast majority gain real income protection when the unexpected happens. We will continue working for parental insurance to be taken equally. Today's fast-changing labour market demands good unemployment insurance that everyone can afford. This should cost 80 kronor for

everyone. Sickness insurance must not be cut back. Everyone who is ill must be entitled to an individual assessment and the right to work according to their ability.

Reduce inequalities. Taxes must encourage people to work and give everyone the opportunity to play their part in society. We are not proposing any major tax changes but the most well off must contribute more. Property tax must be fair. Property tax will be lowered or remain unchanged for 99 percent of all detached and terraced homes and the tax on deferment abolished, increasing the freedom to move house. The tax rate will increase for the most expensive detached homes. People on low incomes who own expensive houses will be protected.

Combat exclusion. In more than 80 percent of Sweden's municipalities spending on benefits is increasing. Having to apply for financial support to survive is the clearest form of exclusion. One of our goals is to reduce the number of people on benefits by a quarter by 2015, and to halve it thereafter. We want to increase the large family supplement, the additional grant for students with children and maintenance support for lone parents. Our goal is to reduce the number of children living in families on benefits by at least 50,000 by 2015. The battle against poverty among women must be stepped up.

Crime must be fought, as must the causes of crime. Equal societies have lower crime rates. We want to improve support for victims of crime and introduce stricter punishments for sex crimes and purchasing sex. All municipalities must have a crime prevention council.

WE CAN BUILD A BETTER WORLD

We also take the Social Democrat values of freedom, equality and solidarity with us in working with the EU, the UN and with the world's progressive governments. Here we are a strong voice for peace, international law, human and union rights, equality, disarmament, jobs and responsibility for the climate. The climate crisis and the financial crisis show that the world must relinquish its faith in the market – shared political decisions leading to sustainable development must be taken now. We want Sweden to be a leading force in this work. A fair world is possible if we all work together and shoulder our own share of the responsibility.

THE SWEDISH PEOPLE STAND AT A CROSSROADS

The great conflict of this election is between more jobs or continued increasing inequalities. The Social Democrats choose jobs. We choose cohesion instead of inequality. We want to change direction before it's too late. Now we want to start creating jobs and making new success possible – for you and for Sweden. Our aim is for Sweden to be a land of opportunities for everyone.

We can't wait! Can you?



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