

# PARTY PLATFORM COMPARISON



**A NONPARTISAN COMPARISON OF CURRENT PARTY PLATFORMS**



**REPUBLICAN**



**DEMOCRAT**



**LIBERTARIAN**

**LIFE & ABORTION**

"The Constitution's guarantee that no one can 'be deprived of life, liberty or property' deliberately echoes the Declaration of Independence's proclamation that 'all' are 'endowed by their Creator' with the inalienable right to life. Accordingly, we assert the sanctity of human life and affirm that the unborn child has a fundamental right to life which cannot be infringed. We support a human life amendment to the Constitution and legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to children before birth...We oppose the use of public funds to perform or promote abortion or to fund organizations, like Planned Parenthood, so long as they provide or refer for elective abortions or sell fetal body parts rather than provide healthcare. ... We will not fund or subsidize healthcare that includes abortion coverage." (p. 13)

"Democrats are committed to protecting and advancing reproductive health, rights, and justice. We believe unequivocally that every woman should have access to quality reproductive health care services, including safe and legal abortion—regardless of where she lives, how much money she makes, or how she is insured. We believe that reproductive health is core to women's, men's, and young people's health and wellbeing.... We will continue to oppose—and seek to overturn—federal and state laws and policies that impede a woman's access to abortion, including by repealing the Hyde Amendment." (p. 37)

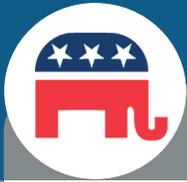
"Recognizing that abortion is a sensitive issue and that people can hold good-faith views on all sides, we believe that government should be kept out of the matter, leaving the question to each person for their conscientious consideration." (p. 3)

**RELIGIOUS LIBERTY**

"We value the right of America's religious leaders to preach, and Americans to speak freely, according to their faith. Republicans believe the federal government, specifically the IRS, is constitutionally prohibited from policing or censoring speech based on religious convictions or beliefs, and therefore we urge the repeal of the Johnson Amendment." (p. 11)

"Democrats know that our nation, our communities, and our lives are made vastly stronger and richer by faith in many forms and the countless acts of justice, mercy, and tolerance it inspires. We believe in lifting up and valuing the good work of people of faith and religious organizations and finding ways to support that work where possible." (p. 19)

"We support full freedom of expression and oppose government censorship, regulation, or control of communications media and technology. We favor the freedom to engage in or abstain from any religious activities that do not violate the rights of others. We oppose government actions which either aid or attack any religion." (p. 2)



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### ISRAEL

"Support for Israel is an expression of Americanism... We recognize Jerusalem as the eternal and indivisible capital of the Jewish state...We reaffirm America's commitment to Israel's security...We support Israel's right and obligation to defend itself against terror attacks upon its people...We reject the false notion that Israel is an occupier and specifically recognize that the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement (BDS) is anti-Semitic in nature and seeks to destroy Israel. Therefore, we call for effective legislation to thwart actions that are intended to limit commercial relations with Israel, or persons or entities doing business in Israel or in Israeli-controlled territories, in a discriminatory manner." (p. 47)

"A strong and secure Israel is vital to the United States...That is why we will always support Israel's right to defend itself, including by retaining its qualitative military edge, and oppose any effort to delegitimize Israel, including at the United Nations or through the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement. We will continue to work toward a two-state solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict negotiated directly by the parties that guarantees Israel's future as a secure and democratic Jewish state with recognized borders and provides the Palestinians with independence, sovereignty, and dignity." (p. 49-50)

"American foreign policy should seek an America at peace with the world. Our foreign policy should emphasize defense against attack from abroad and enhance the likelihood of peace by avoiding foreign entanglements. We would end the current U.S. government policy of foreign intervention, including military and economic aid. We recognize the right of all people to resist tyranny and defend themselves and their rights." (p. 7)

### MARRIAGE

"Traditional marriage and family, based on marriage between one man and one woman, is the foundation for a free society and has for millennia been entrusted with rearing children and instilling cultural values. We condemn the Supreme Court's ruling in United States v. Windsor, which wrongly removed the ability of Congress to define marriage policy in federal law. We also condemn the Supreme Court's lawless ruling in Obergefell v. Hodges. In Obergefell, five unelected lawyers robbed 320 million Americans of their legitimate constitutional authority to define marriage as the union of one man and one woman." (p. 11)

"Democrats applaud last year's decision by the Supreme Court that recognized LGBT people—like every other American—have the right to marry the person they love. But there is still much work to be done...Democrats will fight for the continued development of sex discrimination law to cover LGBT people. We will also fight for comprehensive federal non-discrimination protections for all LGBT Americans, to guarantee equal rights in areas such as housing, employment, public accommodations, credit, jury service, education, and federal funding." (p. 19)

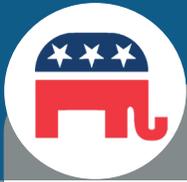
"Government does not have the authority to define, promote, license, or restrict personal relationships, regardless of the number of participants. Consenting adults should be free to choose their own sexual practices and personal relationships. Until such time as the government stops its illegitimate practice of marriage licensing, such licenses must be granted to all consenting adults who apply." (p. 3)

### HEALTHCARE

"Any honest agenda for improving healthcare must start with repeal of the dishonestly named Affordable Care Act of 2010: Obamacare. We will return to the states their historic role of regulating local insurance markets, limit federal requirements on both private insurance and Medicaid, and call on state officials to reconsider the costly medical mandates, imposed under their own laws. We believe that individuals with preexisting conditions who maintain continuous coverage should be protected from discrimination." (p. 36)

"Democrats have been fighting to secure universal health care for the American people for generations, and we are proud to be the party that passed Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act (ACA)...Democrats believe that healthcare is a right, not a privilege, and our health care system should put people before profits...Democrats believe that all healthcare services should be culturally and linguistically appropriate, and that neither fear nor immigration status should be barriers that impede health care access." (p 30-31)

"We favor a free market health care system. We recognize the freedom of individuals to determine the level of health insurance they want (if any), the level of health care they want, the care providers they want, the medicines and treatments they will use and all other aspects of their medical care, including end-of-life decisions. People should be free to purchase health insurance across state lines." (p. 6)



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### EDUCATION

"We support options for learning, including home-schooling, career and technical education, private or parochial schools, magnet schools, charter schools, online learning, and early-college high schools. We especially support the innovative financing mechanisms that make options available to all children: education savings accounts (ESAs), vouchers, and tuition tax credits." (p. 34)

"Democrats are also committed to providing parents with high-quality public school options and expanding these options for low-income youth. We support great neighborhood public schools and high-quality public charter schools, and we will help them disseminate best practices to other school leaders and educators. Democrats oppose for-profit charter schools focused on making a profit off of public resources." (p. 30)

"Education is best provided by the free market, achieving greater quality, accountability, and efficiency with more diversity of choice. Recognizing that the education of children is a parental responsibility, we would restore authority to parents to determine the education of their children, without interference from government. Parents should have control of and responsibility for all funds expended for their children's education." (p. 6)

### SOCIAL SECURITY

"We accept the responsibility to preserve and modernize a system of retirement security forged in an old industrial era beyond the memory of most Americans. Current retirees and those close to retirement can be assured of their benefits. All options should be considered to preserve Social Security. We oppose tax increases and believe in the power of markets to create wealth and to help secure the future of our Social Security system. Saving Social Security is more than a challenge. It is our moral obligation to those who trusted in the government's word." (p. 24-25)

"We will fight every effort to cut, privatize, or weaken Social Security, including attempts to raise the retirement age, diminish benefits by cutting cost-of-living adjustments, or reducing earned benefits. Democrats will expand Social Security so that every American can retire with dignity and respect...We will make sure Social Security's guaranteed benefits continue for generations to come by asking those at the top to pay more, and will achieve this goal by taxing some of the income of people above \$250,000." (p. 5- 6)

"Retirement planning is the responsibility of the individual, not the government. Libertarians would phase out the current government-sponsored Social Security system and transition to a private voluntary system." (p. 6)

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

"Modifications to [mandatory minimum sentencing] should be targeted toward particular categories, especially nonviolent offenders and persons with drug, alcohol, or mental health issues, and should require disclosure by the courts of any judicial departure from the state's sentencing requirements... We call for mandatory prison time for all assaults involving serious injury to law enforcement officers... We encourage states to offer opportunities for literacy and vocational education to prepare prisoners for release to the community...We urge energetic prosecution of child pornography, which is closely linked to human trafficking." (pp. 39-40)

"We will reform mandatory minimum sentences and close private prisons and detention centers...We will encourage better police-community relations, require the use of body cameras, and stop the use of weapons of war that have no place in our communities. We will end racial profiling that targets individuals solely on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, or national origin...We will remove barriers to help formerly incarcerated individuals successfully re-enter society...Democrats will prioritize prevention and treatment over incarceration when tackling addiction and substance use disorder. We will build on effective models of drug courts, veterans' courts, and other diversionary programs." (p. 14)

"We favor the repeal of all laws creating 'crimes' without victims, such as gambling, the use of drugs for medicinal or recreational purposes, and consensual transactions involving sexual services... The constitutional rights of the criminally accused, including due process, a speedy trial, legal counsel, trial by jury, and the legal presumption of innocence until proven guilty, must be preserved." (p. 3)



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### CLIMATE CHANGE

"We firmly believe environmental problems are best solved by giving incentives for human ingenuity and the development of new technologies, not through top-down, command-and-control regulations that stifle economic growth and cost thousands of jobs." (p. 22) "Information concerning a changing climate, especially projections into the long-range future, must be based on dispassionate analysis of hard data. We will enforce that standard throughout the executive branch, among civil servants and presidential appointees alike." (p. 24).

"Climate change is an urgent threat and a defining challenge of our time...Democrats share a deep commitment to tackling the climate challenge; creating millions of good-paying middle class jobs; reducing greenhouse gas emissions more than 80 percent below 2005 levels by 2050; and meeting the pledge President Obama put forward in the landmark Paris Agreement...We believe America must be running entirely on clean energy by mid-century." (p. 24)

"Competitive free markets and property rights stimulate the technological innovations and behavioral changes required to protect our environment and ecosystems. Private landowners and conservation groups have a vested interest in maintaining natural resources. Governments are unaccountable for damage done to our environment and have a terrible track record when it comes to environmental protection. Protecting the environment requires a clear definition and enforcement of individual rights and responsibilities regarding resources like land, water, air, and wildlife." (p. 4)

### THE SECOND AMENDMENT

"We uphold the right of individuals to keep and bear arms, a natural inalienable right that predates the Constitution and is secured by the Second Amendment...We oppose ill-conceived laws that would restrict magazine capacity or ban the sale of the most popular and common modern rifle. We also oppose any effort to deprive individuals of their right to keep and bear arms without due process of law." (pp. 12-13)

"Democrats believe that we must finally take sensible action to address gun violence...We will expand and strengthen background checks and close dangerous loopholes in our current laws; repeal the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA) to revoke the dangerous legal immunity protections gun makers and sellers now enjoy; and keep weapons of war—such as assault weapons and large capacity ammunition magazines (LCAM's)—off our streets." (p. 35)

"We affirm the individual right recognized by the Second Amendment to keep and bear arms, and oppose the prosecution of individuals for exercising their rights of self-defense. Private property owners should be free to establish their own conditions regarding the presence of personal defense weapons on their own property. We oppose all laws at any level of government restricting, registering, or monitoring the ownership, manufacture, or transfer of firearms or ammunition." (pp. 3-4)

The page numbers referenced are from the approved Party Platforms. We encourage readers to study the full text found at [www.biblicalvoter.com](http://www.biblicalvoter.com). This guide has been legally approved for Churches and 501 (c) 3 organizations to share and distribute freely.