

**COMPARISON OF THE REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRAT PARTY PLATFORMS**  
**Adopted at 2004 Conventions**

**Democrat Platform on Abortion:**

We will defend the dignity of all Americans against those who would undermine it. Because we believe in the privacy and equality of women, we stand proudly for a woman's right to choose, consistent with *Roe v. Wade*, and regardless of her ability to pay. We stand firmly against Republican efforts to undermine that right. At the same time, we strongly support family planning and adoption incentives. Abortion should be safe, legal, and rare.

**Republican Platform on Abortion:**

The Supreme Court's recent decision, prohibiting states from banning partial-birth abortions—a procedure denounced by a committee of the American Medical Association and rightly branded as four-fifths infanticide—shocks the conscience of the nation. As a country, we must keep our pledge to the first guarantee of the Declaration of Independence. That is why we say the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life that cannot be infringed. We support a human life amendment to the Constitution and we endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children. Our purpose is to have legislative and judicial protection of that right against those who perform abortions. We oppose using public revenues for abortion and will not fund organizations that advocate it. We support the appointment of judges who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life.

Our goal is to ensure that women with problem pregnancies have the kind of support, material and otherwise, they need for themselves and for their babies, not to be punitive towards those for whose difficult situation we have only compassion. We oppose abortion, but our pro-life agenda does not include punitive action against women who have an abortion. We salute those who provide alternatives to abortion and offer adoption services, and we commend congressional Republicans for expanding assistance to adopting families and for removing racial barriers to adoption.

**Democrat Platform on Religious Liberty:**

We honor the central place of faith in the lives of our people. Like our Founders, we believe that our nation, our communities, and our lives are made vastly stronger and richer by faith and the countless acts of justice and mercy it inspires. We will strengthen the role of faith-based organizations in meeting challenges like homelessness, youth violence, and other social problems.

At the same time, we will honor First Amendment protections and not allow public funds to be used to proselytize or discriminate. Throughout history, communities of faith have brought comfort to the afflicted and shaped great movements for justice. We know they will continue to do so, and we will always protect all Americans' freedom to worship.

**Republican Platform on Religious Liberty:**

Our country was founded in faith and upon the truth that self-government is rooted in religious conviction. While the Constitution guards against the establishment of state-sponsored religion, it also honors the free exercise of religion. We believe the federal courts must respect this freedom and the original intent of the Framers. We assert the right of religious leaders to speak out on public issues and will not allow the EEOC or any other arm of government to regulate or ban religious symbols from the workplace. We condemn the desecration of places of worship and objects of religious devotion, and call upon the media to reconsider their role in fostering bias through negative stereotyping of religious citizens. We support the First Amendment right of freedom of association and stand united with private organizations, such as the Boy Scouts of America, and support their positions.

Because we treasure freedom of conscience, we oppose attempts to compel individuals or institutions to violate their moral standards in providing health-related services. We believe religious institutions and schools should not be taxed. When government funds privately-operated social, welfare, or educational programs, it must not discriminate against faith-based organizations, whose record in providing services to those in need far exceeds that of the public sector. Their participation should be actively encouraged, and never conditioned upon the covering or removing of religious objects or symbols.

**The Democrat Platform on Judicial Issues:**

President Bush has a different vision – instead of searching for common ground to bring our people together, he has sought political advantage in driving our people apart. He has neglected the opportunity of most Americans, choosing instead to lavish resources on those who need them least. He has rejected the American vision of greater equality, appointing judges more interested in rolling back rights than protecting them....

We will enact the bipartisan legislation barring workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation. We are committed to equal treatment of all service members and believe all patriotic Americans should be allowed to serve our country without discrimination, persecution, or violence. We support the appointment of judges who will uphold our laws and constitutional rights, not their own narrow agendas.

### **Republican platform on Judicial Issues:**

In the federal courts, scores of judges with activist backgrounds in the hard-left now have lifetime tenure. Recent events have made it clear that these judges threaten America's dearest institutions and our very way of life. In some states, activist judges are redefining the institution of marriage. The Pledge of Allegiance has already been invalidated by the courts once, and the Supreme Court's ruling has left the Pledge in danger of being struck down again – not because the American people have rejected it and the values that it embodies, but because a handful of activist judges threaten to overturn commonsense and tradition. And while the vast majority of Americans support a ban on partial birth abortion, this brutal and violent practice will likely continue by judicial fiat. We believe that the self-proclaimed supremacy of these judicial activists is antithetical to the democratic ideals on which our nation was founded. President Bush has established a solid record of nominating only judges who have demonstrated respect for the Constitution and the democratic processes of our republic, and Republicans in the Senate have strongly supported those nominees. We call upon obstructionist Democrats in the Senate to abandon their unprecedented and highly irresponsible filibuster of President Bush's highly qualified judicial nominees, and to allow the Republican Party to restore respect for the law to America's courts.

The sound principle of judicial review has turned into an intolerable presumption of judicial supremacy. A Republican Congress, working with a Republican president, will restore the separation of powers and re-establish a government of law. There are different ways to achieve that goal, such as using Article III of the Constitution to limit federal court jurisdiction. For example, in instances where judges are abusing their power by banning the use of "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance or prohibiting depictions of the Ten Commandments, and potential actions invalidating the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). Additionally, we condemn judicial activists and their unwarranted and unconstitutional restrictions on the free exercise of religion in the public square.

### **Democrat platform on Homosexuality:**

We support full inclusion of gay and lesbian families in the life of our nation and seek equal responsibilities, benefits, and protections for these families. In our country, marriage has been defined at the state level for 200 years, and we believe it should continue to be defined there. We repudiate President Bush's divisive effort to politicize the Constitution by pursuing a Federal Marriage Amendment. Our goal is to bring Americans together, not drive them apart.

### **Republican platform on Homosexuality:**

We support the traditional definition of marriage as the legal union of one man and one woman, and we believe that federal judges and bureaucrats should not force states to recognize other living arrangements as marriages. We rely on the home, as did the founders of the American Republic, to instill the virtues that sustain democracy itself. That belief led Congress to enact the Defense of Marriage Act, which a Republican Department of Justice will energetically defend in the courts. For the same reason, we do not believe sexual preference should be given special legal protection or standing in law.

### **Democrat platform on Immigration**

We will improve security at our borders and entry-points to block the individuals and weapons that would harm us.

### **Republican platform on Immigration**

We support reforming the immigration system to ensure that it is legal, safe, orderly and humane. We also support measures to insure that the immigration is structured to address the needs of national security. America is a stronger and better nation because of the hard work and entrepreneurial spirit of immigrants, and the Republican Party honors them. The temporary worker program proposed by President Bush would allow workers who currently hold jobs to come out of the shadows and participate legally in America's economy. There must be tough penalties against employees and employers who violate immigration laws. We oppose amnesty because it would have the effect of encouraging illegal immigration and give an unfair advantage to those that have broken our laws.

**REPUBLICAN PLATFORM SUMMARY AND CALL TO ACTION**  
**Distributed at the 2004 National Convention**

For 150 years, our Party has found its purpose in its principles. We confront big challenges instead of passing them on to future generations. We move forward with needed reforms to make the government work better for citizens. We fight important battles and champion freedom because by expanding liberty, we make our nation more secure.

This is the choice the American people face – moving forward or looking back, reforming government or settling for the status quo, producing results or playing politics. As Republicans, we know who we are and what we believe. As the Party of the open door, while steadfast in our commitment to our ideals, we respect and accept that members of our Party can have deeply held and sometimes differing views. This diversity is a source of strength, not a sign of weakness, and so we welcome into our ranks all who may hold differing positions. We commit to resolve our differences with civility, trust and mutual respect, and to affirm the common goals and beliefs that unite us.

**As the Party of Lincoln we stand for Freedom.**

- We stand for the freedom of families and individuals to have good schools, good health care and affordable housing and services.
- We stand for the freedom that comes with a good paying job in a growing economy.
- We stand for the freedom and dignity of every human life, in every stage of life.
- We know that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty's gift to every man, woman and child in the world. And we stand for a hopeful tomorrow that will come from the total and complete victory in the War on Terror.

These are values worthy of a great nation. And they are values worth fighting for. That is exactly what President George W. Bush continues to do. He is protecting us from danger by being prepared, strong, and steadfast. Vigilance is never easy. But it is always essential, now more than ever.

George W. Bush has done the hard work and made the hard choices required of an American President in challenging times. Because of his leadership we are strong. Because of his leadership we will be even stronger. That is the pledge of this platform...and the promise of this convention.