

# What You Should Know About the 2020 Republican Party Platform

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JOE CARTER – EDITOR FOR “THE GOSPEL COALITION”

Prior to next week’s Republican National Convention the GOP voted to adopt their party’s platform (which remains largely unchanged from the 2016 version), a document that outlines the statement of principles and policies that the party has decided it will support.

Why should Christians care about a document that few non-politicians will ever read? Because of the influence the two major party platforms have on public policy. While the platform is not binding on the presidential nominee or any other politicians, political scientists have found that over the past 30 years lawmakers in Congress tend to vote in line with their party’s platform: 89 percent of the time for Republicans and 79 percent of the time for Democrats. For this reason we should be aware of what is proposed in these documents and how they may affect the welfare of our nation (Jer. 29:7).

***This article will provide, without commentary, an outline of the Republican platform as it relates to several social issues.*** Every statement is either a direct quote or a summary of the platform's position.

## **Bioethics Issues**

Supports the sanctity of human life and affirms that the “unborn child has a fundamental right to life which cannot be infringed.”

Supports a human life amendment to the Constitution and legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to children before birth.

Opposes taxpayer funding of abortion. Calls for a permanent ban on federal funding and subsidies for abortion and health-care plans that include abortion coverage. Opposes 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.”

Supports codifying the Hyde Amendment and its application across the government.

Supports a ban on human cloning for research or reproduction, and a ban on the creation of, or experimentation on, human embryos for research.

Supports Congress' ban on the FDA approval of research involving three-parent embryos.

Opposes the FDA's approval of Mifeprex, the abortifacient formerly known as RU-486. This drug "threatens women's health, as does the agency's endorsement of over-the-counter sales of powerful contraceptives without a physician's recommendation."

Supports cutting federal and state funding for entities that endanger women's health by performing abortions in a manner inconsistent with federal or state law.

Opposes the non-consensual withholding of care or treatment from people with disabilities, including newborns, the elderly, and infirm.

Opposes euthanasia and assisted suicide.

Supports a restoration of a ban from the Drug Enforcement Administration on the use of controlled substances for physician-assisted suicide.

Supports the right of parents to consent to medical treatment for their minor children and urges enactment of legislation that would require parental consent for their daughter to be transported across state lines for an abortion.

Opposes health-care providers being permitted to "unilaterally withhold services because a patient's life is deemed not worth living," and urges all states and Congress

to make it a crime to acquire, transfer, or sell fetal tissues from elective abortions for research.

Supports a Congressional ban on any sale of fetal body parts and calls on Congress to ban the practice of misleading women on so-called fetal harvesting consent forms.

Supports our “moral obligation to assist, rather than penalize, women who face an unplanned pregnancy.”

Supports legislation that requires financial responsibility for the child be “equally borne by both the mother and father upon conception until the child reaches adulthood.”

Supports funding for ultrasounds and adoption assistance.

Supports states protecting women and girls through laws requiring informed consent, parental consent, waiting periods, and clinic regulation, and condemns the Supreme Court’s “activist decision in *Whole Woman’s Health v. Hellerstedt* striking down commonsense Texas laws providing for basic health and safety standards in abortion clinics.”

Opposes infanticide and calls on Congress to pass a federal Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Acts prohibiting abortion after 20 weeks, the “point at which current medical research shows that unborn babies can feel excruciating pain during abortions.”

Supports state and federal efforts “against the cruelest forms of abortion, especially dismemberment abortion procedures,

in which unborn babies are literally torn apart limb from limb.”

Supports a federal ban on sex-selection abortions and abortions based on disabilities. Opposes embryonic stem-cell research and federal funding of such research. Supports adult stem-cell research and urges the restoration of the national placental stem-cell bank.

### **Conscience Rights**

Supports the ability of all organizations to “provide, purchase, or enroll in healthcare coverage consistent with their religious, moral, or ethical convictions without discrimination or penalty.”

Supports the right of parents to determine the proper medical treatment and therapy for their minor children.

### **Criminal Justice Reform**

Supports a bipartisan presidential commission to purge the code and the body of regulations of old “crimes.”

Supports adding *mens rea* elements in the definition of any new crimes to protect Americans who, in violating a law, act unknowingly or without criminal intent.

Supports Congress codification of the Common Law’s Rule of Lenity, which requires courts to interpret unclear statutes in favor of a defendant.

Supports mandatory prison time for all assaults involving serious injury to law enforcement officers.

Supports protecting the rights of victims and their families by allowing them to be told all relevant information about their case, allowed to be present for its trial, assured a voice in sentencing and parole hearings, given access to social and legal services, and benefit from the Crime Victims Fund.

Supports protecting prisoners against cruel or degrading treatment by other inmates.

Supports states offering opportunities for literacy and vocational education to prepare prisoners for release to the community.

## **Discrimination and Racial Issues**

Opposes “bigotry, racism, anti-Semitism, ethnic prejudice, and religious intolerance. Therefore, we oppose discrimination based on race, sex, religion, creed, disability, or national origin and support statutes to end such discrimination. As the Party of Abraham Lincoln, we must continue to foster solutions to America’s difficult challenges when it comes to race relations today.”

## **Drug Abuse**

Supports a measure by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services that would ensure no physician will be penalized for limiting opioid prescriptions.

Supports the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, which addresses the opioid epidemic from both the demand and supply sides of the problem.

## **Education**

Supports a constitutional amendment to protect parental rights “from interference by states, the federal government, or international bodies such as the United Nations.”

Supports school choice for all students. Proposes that the bulk of federal money through Title I for low-income children and “through IDEA for children with special needs should follow the child to whatever school the family thinks will work best for them.”

Opposes the imposition of national educational standards and assessments.

Supports state legislatures offering the Bible in a literature curriculum as an elective in America’s high schools.

Supports background checks for all personnel who interact with school children.

Supports 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.

Supports replacing “family planning” programs for teens with sexual risk avoidance education that sets abstinence until marriage as the responsible and respected standard of behavior.

Opposes school-based clinics that provide referral or counseling for abortion and contraception and believes that “federal funds should not be used in mandatory or universal mental health, psychiatric, or socio-emotional screening programs.”

Supports states that oppose including gender identity and sexual orientation under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Supports the prompt investigation by civil authorities and prosecution in a courtroom of sexual assault claims, rather than having them adjudicated in the “faculty lounge” of colleges. Those convicted of sexual assault should be punished to the full extent of the law.

## **Human Trafficking**

Supports using the full force of the law against those who engage in commercial sexual exploitation and forced or bonded labor of men, women, or children; involuntary domestic servitude; trafficking in persons for the purpose of organ removal; and the illegal recruitment and use of child soldiers.

Supports increased diplomatic efforts and accountability for foreign governments to prosecute traffickers, including “penalties for any public officials who may be complicit in this devastating crime.” Calls for the need to stop slave labor by “taking steps to prevent overseas labor contractors who exploit foreign workers from supporting military bases abroad or exporting goods to the United States.” Calls for working at home and abroad to “ensure that trafficking victims are identified among migrants, refugees, and our own citizens so they receive the rehabilitative care needed to heal and thrive.”

Supports the goal of our domestic anti-trafficking programs being the “rescue and safe return of victims to their homes, not creating a long-term dependency upon public support.”

## **Marriage and Family Issues**

Supports traditional marriage and family, based on one man and one woman. “Every child deserves a married mom and dad, and our laws and government regulations should actively promote married family life as the basis of a stable and prosperous society.”

Supports the removal of marriage penalties from the tax code and public assistance programs.

Supports restructuring the tax code to increase adoptions and support families who adopt.

Supports states and community groups attempts to help young adults who are aging out of the foster care system to become independent.

## **Pornography**

Supports states fighting against pornography and pledges a commitment to children's safety and well-being.

Supports "energetic prosecution" of child pornography, which is "closely linked to human trafficking."

## **Poverty**

Supports evaluation of poverty programs based on whether they actually reduce poverty and increases the personal independence of its participants.

Supports work requirements for poverty programs.

Supports greater state and local responsibility for, and control over, public assistance programs.

## **Religious Liberty**

Opposes government discrimination against businesses or entities that decline to sell items or services to individuals for activities that go against their religious views about such activities.

Opposes any efforts to tax religious organizations.

Supports the right of “America’s religious leaders to preach, and Americans to speak freely, according to their faith.” Says that 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.”

Supports efforts to “defend the religious beliefs and rights of conscience of all Americans and to safeguard religious institutions against government control.”

Supports the First Amendment Defense Act, legislation in the House and Senate that would bar government discrimination against individuals and businesses for acting on the belief that marriage is the union of one man and one woman: “This Act would protect the non-profit tax status of faith-based adoption agencies, the accreditation of religious educational institutions, the grants and contracts of faith-based charities and small businesses, and the licensing of religious professions—all of which are under assault by elements of the Democratic Party.”

Supports every state to pass similar legislation to the First Amendment Defense Act.

Supports the efforts of Republican state legislators and governors who have “defied intimidation from corporations and the media in defending religious liberty.”

Supports laws to confirm the “longstanding American tradition that religious individuals and institutions can

educate young people, receive government benefits, and participate in public debates without having to check their religious beliefs at the door.”

Supports the freedom of Americans to act in accordance with their religious beliefs, not only in their houses of worship, but also in their everyday lives.

Supports the right of the people to conduct their businesses in accordance with their religious beliefs and condemns public officials who have proposed boycotts against businesses that support traditional marriage, and pledges to protect those business owners who have been “subjected to hate campaigns, threats of violence, and other attempts to deny their civil rights.”

Supports the public display of the Ten Commandments as a reflection of our history and our country’s “Judeo-Christian heritage.”

Supports the rights of religious students to engage in voluntary prayer at public school events and to have equal access to school facilities.

Supports the First Amendment right of freedom of association for religious, private, service, and youth organizations to set their own membership standards.

Supports the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, and calls for the United States to “stand with leaders” who has protect the rights of Coptic Christians in

Egypt, and calls on other leaders across the region to ensure that all religious minorities, “whether Yazidi, Bahai, Orthodox, Catholic, or Protestant Christians” are free to practice their religion without fear of persecution.

Supports restoring “advocacy of religious liberty” to its “central place” in diplomacy.

Supports the designation of the systematic killing of religious and ethnic minorities as genocide, and “will work with the leaders of other nations to condemn and combat genocidal acts.”

Supports “standing up for repressed religious groups, prisoners of conscience, women trafficked into sexual slavery, and those suffering from disease or starvation.”

Supports the adoption of a “whole of government” approach to protect fundamental freedoms globally, “one where pressing human rights and rule of law issues are integrated at every appropriate level of our bilateral relationships and strategic decision making.”