As Adopted by the Republican National Committee

RESOLUTION REGARDING THE REPUBLICAN PARTY PLATFORM

WHEREAS, The Republican National Committee (RNC) has significantly scaled back the size and scope of the 2020 Republican National Convention in Charlotte due to strict restrictions on gatherings and meetings, and out of concern for the safety of convention attendees and our hosts;

WHEREAS, The RNC has unanimously voted to forego the Convention Committee on Platform, in appreciation of the fact that it did not want a small contingent of delegates formulating a new platform without the breadth of perspectives within the ever-growing Republican movement;

WHEREAS, All platforms are snapshots of the historical contexts in which they are born, and parties abide by their policy priorities, rather than their political rhetoric;

WHEREAS, The RNC, had the Platform Committee been able to convene in 2020, would have undoubtedly unanimously agreed to reassert the Party's strong support for President Donald Trump and his Administration;

WHEREAS, The media has outrageously misrepresented the implications of the RNC not adopting a new platform in 2020 and continues to engage in misleading advocacy for the failed policies of the Obama-Biden Administration, rather than providing the public with unbiased reporting of facts; and

WHEREAS, The RNC enthusiastically supports President Trump and continues to reject the policy positions of the Obama-Biden Administration, as well as those espoused by the Democratic National Committee today; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Republican Party has and will continue to enthusiastically support the President's America-first agenda;

RESOLVED, That the 2020 Republican National Convention will adjourn without adopting a new platform until the 2024 Republican National Convention;

RESOLVED, That the 2020 Republican National Convention calls on the media to engage in accurate and unbiased reporting, especially as it relates to the strong support of the RNC for President Trump and his Administration; and

RESOLVED, That any motion to amend the 2016 Platform or to adopt a new platform, including any motion to suspend the procedures that will allow doing so, will be ruled out of order.

Paid for by the Republican National Committee
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REPUBLICAN PLATFORM 2016

We dedicate this platform with admiration and gratitude

To all who stand strong in the face of danger

So that the American people may be protected against it —

The men and women of our military,

of our law enforcement, and the first responders

of every community in our land —

And to their families.

Paid for by the Committee on Arrangements for the 2016 Republican National Convention

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Preamble

With this platform, we the Republican Party reaffirm the principles that unite us in a common purpose.

We believe in American exceptionalism.

We believe the United States of America is unlike any other nation on earth.

We believe America is exceptional because of our historic role — first as refuge, then as defender, and now as exemplar of liberty for the world to see.

We affirm — as did the Declaration of Independence: that all are created equal, endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

We believe in the Constitution as our founding document.

We believe the Constitution was written not as a flexible document, but as our enduring covenant.

We believe our constitutional system — limited government, separation of powers, federalism, and the rights of the people — must be preserved uncompromised for future generations.

We believe political freedom and economic freedom are indivisible.

When political freedom and economic freedom are separated — both are in peril; when united, they are invincible.

We believe that people are the ultimate resource — and that the people, not the government, are the best stewards of our country's God-given natural resources.

As Americans and as Republicans we wish for peace — so we insist on strength. We will make America safe. We seek friendship with all peoples and all nations, but we recognize and are prepared to deal with evil in the world.

Based on these principles, this platform is an invitation and a roadmap. It invites every American to join us and shows the path to a stronger, safer, and more prosperous America.

This platform is optimistic because the American people are optimistic.

This platform lays out — in clear language — the path to making America great and united again.

For the past 8 years America has been led in the wrong direction.

Our economy has become unnecessarily weak with stagnant wages. People living paycheck to paycheck are struggling, sacrificing, and suffering.

Americans have earned and deserve a strong and healthy economy.

Our standing in world affairs has declined significantly — our enemies no longer fear us and our friends no long trust us.

People want and expect an America that is the most powerful and respected country on the face of the earth.

The men and women of our military remain the world's best. The have been shortchanged in numbers, equipment, and benefits by a Commander in Chief who treats the Armed Forces and our veterans as a necessary inconvenience.

The President and the Democratic party have dismantled Americans' system of healthcare. They have replaced it with a costly and complicated scheme that limits choices and takes away our freedom.

The President and the Democratic party have abandoned their promise of being accountable to the American people.

They have nearly doubled the size of the national debt.

They refuse to control our borders but try to control our schools, farms, businesses, and even our religious institutions. They have directly attacked the production of American energy and the industry-related jobs that have sustained families and communities.

The President has been regulating to death a free market economy that he does not like and does not understand. He defies the laws of the United States by refusing to enforce those with which he does not agree. And he appoints judges who legislate from the bench rather than apply the law.

We, as Republicans and Americans, cannot allow this to continue. That is why the many sections of this platform affirm our trust in the people, our faith in their judgment, and our determination to help them take back their country.

This means removing the power from unelected, unaccountable government.

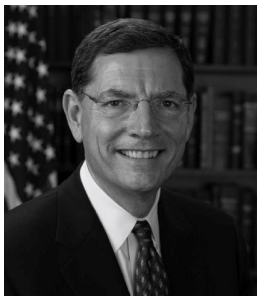
This means relieving the burden and expense of punishing government regulations.

And this means returning to the people and the states the control that belongs to them. It is the control and the power to make their own decisions about what's best for themselves and their families and communities.

This platform is many things: A handbook for returning decision-making to the people. A guide to the constitutional rights of every American. And a manual for the kind of sustained growth that will bring opportunity to all those on the sidelines of our society.

Every time we sing, "God Bless America," we are asking for help. We ask for divine help that our country can fulfill its promise. We earn that help by recommitting ourselves to the ideas and ideals that are the true greatness of America.

Governor Mary Fallin
CO-CHAIR



Senator John Barrasso
CHAIRMAN

Representative Virginia Foxx
CO-CHAIR

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Restoring the American Dream

Rebuilding the Economy and Creating Jobs

We are the party of a growing economy that gives everyone a chance in life, an opportunity to learn, work, and realize the prosperity freedom makes possible.

Government cannot create prosperity, though government can limit or destroy it. Prosperity is the product of self-discipline, enterprise, saving and investment by individuals, but it is not an end in itself. Prosperity provides the means by which citizens and their families can maintain their independence from government, raise their children by their own values, practice their faith, and build communities of cooperation and mutual respect. It is also the foundation for our nation's global leadership, for it is the vigor of our economy which makes possible our military strength and our national security.

Pundits and Democrats tell us that we should accept the new normal of a slow-growing economy. The consequences are too dire to ever accept that: President Obama and his party will set a record of being the first modern president ever to leave office without a single calendar year of three percent economic growth. As a result, the number of Americans living in poverty has increased by 7 million, our nation's economy has lost nearly $8 trillion of cumulative output compared with an average recovery, and the economic growth shortfall has left a cumulative real after-tax per person personal income shortfall of nearly $17,000 compared with an average recovery.

Under President Obama and the Democrats, new private-sector jobs are three million below where they should have been with just average modern post-recession growth. Our labor force participation rate has plunged to at or below 63 percent for far too long, lows last seen two generations ago before President Reagan was elected in 1980. Business closures have exceeded business startups throughout the Obama Presidency. Strong growth, more jobs, increasing incomes, and expanding opportunity are all in short supply under President Obama and the Democrats.

We repudiate the absurd idea this is the best America can do. The American people rejected that nonsense the last time it was offered, in the historic election of 1980, and we ask them to join us now to again repudiate the false gospel of America's diminishment and retreat. We offer instead our vision of an opportunity society based on the economics of inclusion.

Fair and Simple Taxes for Growth

Republicans consider the establishment of a pro-growth tax code a moral imperative. More than any other public policy, the way government raises revenue — how much, at what rates, under what circumstances, from whom, and for whom — has the greatest impact on our economy's performance. It powerfully influences the level of economic growth and job creation, which translates into the level of opportunity for those who would otherwise be left behind. Getting our tax system right will be the most important factor in driving the entire economy back to prosperity.

Republicans consider the establishment of a pro-growth tax code a moral imperative.

The current tax code is rightly the object of both anger and mockery. Its length is exceeded only by its complexity. We must start anew. That will be an enormous undertaking and, if it is to succeed, it must command the attention and approval of the American people. It cannot be engineered from the top down, but must have a common sense approach, and be simplified.

Our proposal is straightforward. Wherever tax rates penalize thrift or discourage investment, they must be lowered. Wherever current provisions of the code are disincentives for economic growth, they must be changed. We will not divide the American people into winners and losers. We will eliminate as many special interest provisions and loopholes as possible and curb corporate welfare, especially where their erosion of the tax base has created pressure for higher rates. We will be mindful of the burdens on families with children and the impact on an aging population. We will seek simplicity and clarity so that every taxpayer can understand how much of their income is consumed by the federal government.

We will welcome all to this enterprise — to discuss, debate, challenge, and amend — so that together we can restore economic growth for the American people and, even more important, renew their faith in the future.

Our Tax Principles

To ensure that past abuses will not be repeated, we assert these fundamental principles. We oppose retroactive taxation. We condemn attempts by activist judges at any level of government to seize the power of the purse from the people's elected representatives by ordering higher taxes.

We oppose tax policies that deliberately divide Americans or promote class warfare. Because of the vital role of religious organizations, charities, and fraternal benevolent societies in fostering generosity and patriotism, they should not be subject to taxation and donations to them should remain deductible. To guard against hypertaxation of the American people in any restructuring of the federal tax system, any value added tax or national sales tax must be tied to the simultaneous repeal of the Sixteenth Amendment, which established the federal income tax.

A Competitive America

Competitiveness equals jobs. That equation governs our policies regarding U.S. corporations in the global economy. Private investment is a key driver of economic growth and job creation. After falling dramatically during the recession, private investment has recovered at a disappointing pace due in part to high corporate tax rates and increasing regulatory burdens and uncertainty.

American businesses now face the world's highest corporate tax rates. That's like putting lead shoes on your cross-country team. It reduces companies' ability to compete overseas, encourages them to move abroad, lessens their investment, cripples job creation here at home, lowers American wages, and fosters the avoidance of tax liability — without actually increasing tax revenues. A more damaging policy is hard to imagine. We propose to level the international playing field by lowering the corporate tax rate to be on a par with, or below, the rates of other industrial nations. We endorse the recommendation of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, as well as the current Administration's Export Council, to switch to a territorial system of taxation so that profits earned and taxed abroad may be repatriated for job-creating investment here at home. We believe American companies should be headquartered in America. We should reduce barriers to accomplishing that goal.

A Winning Trade Policy

International trade is crucial for all sectors of America's economy. Massive trade deficits are not. We envision a worldwide multilateral agreement among nations committed to the principles of open markets, what has been called a "Reagan Economic Zone," in which free trade will truly be fair trade for all concerned.

We need better negotiated trade agreements that put America first. When trade agreements have been carefully negotiated with friendly democracies, they have resulted in millions of new jobs here at home supported by our exports. When those agreements do not adequately protect U.S. interests, U.S. sovereignty, or when they are violated with impunity, they must be rejected.

We cannot allow foreign governments to limit American access to their markets while stealing our designs, patents, brands, know-how, and technology. We cannot allow China to continue its currency manipulation, exclusion of U.S. products from government purchases, and subsidization of Chinese companies to thwart American imports. The current Administration's way of dealing with these vio-

lations of world trade standards has been a virtual surrender.

Republicans understand that you can succeed in a negotiation only if you are willing to walk away from it. A Republican president will insist on parity in trade and stand ready to implement countervailing duties if other countries refuse to cooperate.

At the same time, we look to broaden our trade agreements with countries which share our values and commitment to fairness, along with transparency in our commercial and business practices. In pursuing that objective, the American people demand transparency, full disclosure, protection of our national sovereignty, and tough negotiation on the part of those who are supposed to advance the interests of U.S. workers. Significant trade agreements should not be rushed or undertaken in a Lame Duck Congress.

Freeing Financial Markets

The Republican vision for American banking calls for establishing transparent, efficient markets where consumers can obtain loans they need at reasonable rates based on market conditions. Unfortunately, in response to the financial institutions crisis of 2008-2009, the Democratic-controlled Congress enacted the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, otherwise known as Dodd-Frank. They did not let the crisis go to waste but used it as an excuse to establish unprecedented government control over the nation's financial markets. The consequences have been bad for everyone except federal regulators.

Rather than address the cause of the crisis — the government's own housing policies — the new law extended government control over the economy by creating new unaccountable bureaucracies. Predictably, central planning of our financial sector has not created jobs, it has killed them. It has not limited risks, it has created more. It has not encouraged economic growth, it has shackled it.

Since the enactment of Dodd-Frank, the number of community banks has significantly declined, and the cost and complexity of complying with the law has created impediments to the remaining banks' ability to support the customers they serve. From 13,000 community banks in 1985, only 1,900 remain. Still, the majority of agricultural loans and small business loans are made by community banks. From start-ups foregone to home loans not made, Dodd-Frank's excessive regulation and burdensome requirements have helped contribute to the slow economy we all endure today under President Obama and the Democrats.

Community banks are essential to ensuring small businesses have easy and affordable access to the capital they need to grow and prosper. Community banks should be relieved of excessive regulations. We support removing roadblocks and regulations that prevent access to capital.

The worst of Dodd-Frank is the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, deliberately designed to be a rogue agency. It answers to neither Congress nor the executive, has its own guaranteed funding outside the appropriations process, and uses its slush fund to steer settlements to politically favored groups.

Its Director has dictatorial powers unique in the American Republic. Its regulatory harassment of local and regional banks, the source of most home mortgages and small business loans, advantages big banks and makes it harder for Americans to buy a home. Its one-size-fits-all approach to every issue threatens the diversity of the country's financial system and would leave us with just a few enormous institutions, as in many European countries.

If the Bureau is not abolished, it should be subjected to congressional appropriation. In that way, consumer protection in the financial markets can be advanced through measures that are both effective and constitutional. Any settlements arising from statutory violations by financial institutions must be used to make whole the harmed consumers, with any remaining proceeds given to the general Treasury. Diversion of settlement funds to politically-connected parties should be a criminal offense.

Republicans believe that no financial institution is too big to fail. We support legislation to ensure that the problems of any financial institution can be resolved through the Bankruptcy Code. We endorse prudent regulation of the banking system to ensure that FDIC-regulated banks are properly capitalized and taxpayers are protected against bailouts. We will end the government's use of disparate impact theory in enforcing anti-discrimination laws with regard to lending.

Responsible Homeownership and Rental Opportunities

Homeownership expands personal liberty, builds communities, and helps Americans create wealth. "The American Dream" is not a stale slogan. It is the lived reality that expresses the aspirations of all our people. It means a decent place to live, a safe place to raise kids, a welcoming place to retire. It bespeaks the quiet pride of those who work hard to shelter their family and, in the process, create caring neighborhoods.

The Great Recession devastated the housing market. U.S. taxpayers paid billions to rescue Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, the latter managed and controlled by senior officials from the Carter and Clinton Administrations, and to cover the losses of the poorly-managed Federal Housing Administration. Millions lost their homes, millions more lost value in their homes.

More than six million households had to move from homeownership to renting. Rental costs escalated so that today nearly 12 million families spend more than 50 percent of their incomes just on rent. The national homeownership rate has sharply fallen and the rate for minority households and young adults has plummeted. So many remain unemployed or underemployed, and for the lucky ones with jobs, rising rents make it harder to save for a mortgage.

There is a growing sense that our national standard of living will never be as high as it was in the past. We understand that pessimism but do not share it, for we believe that sound public policies can restore growth to our economy, vigor to the housing market, and hope to those who are now on the margins of prosperity.

Our goal is to advance responsible homeownership while guarding against the abuses that led to the housing collapse. We must scale back the federal role in the housing market, promote responsibility on the part of borrowers and lenders, and avoid future taxpayer bailouts. Reforms should provide clear and prudent underwriting standards and guidelines on predatory lending and acceptable lending practices. Compliance with regulatory standards should constitute a legal safe harbor to guard against opportunistic litigation by trial lawyers.

We call for a comprehensive review of federal regulations, especially those dealing with the environment, that make it harder and more costly for Americans to rent, buy, or sell homes.

For nine years, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have been in conservatorship and the current Administration and Democrats have prevented any effort to reform them. Their corrupt business model lets shareholders and executives reap huge profits while the taxpayers cover all loses. The utility of both agencies should be reconsidered as a Republican administration clears away the jumble of subsidies and controls that complicate and distort home-buying.

The Federal Housing Administration, which provides taxpayer-backed guarantees in the mortgage market, should no longer support high-income individuals, and the public should not be financially exposed by risks taken by FHA officials. We will end the government mandates that required Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and federally-insured banks to satisfy lending quotas to specific groups. Discrimination should have no place in the mortgage industry.

Zoning decisions have always been, and must remain, under local control. The current Administration is trying to seize control of the zoning process through its Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing regulation. It threatens to undermine zoning laws in order to socially engineer every community in the country. While the federal government has a legitimate role in enforcing non-discrimination laws, this regulation has nothing to do with proven or alleged discrimination and everything to do with hostility to the self-government of citizens.

America on the Move

Our country's investments in transportation and other public construction have traditionally been non-partisan. Everyone agrees on the need for clean water and safe roads, rail, bridges, ports, and airports. President Eisenhower established a tradition of Republican leadership in this regard by championing the creation of the interstate highway system. In recent years, bipartisan cooperation led to major legislation improving the nation's ports and waterways.

Our Republican majority ended the practice of earmarks, which often diverted transportation

spending to politically favored projects. In the current Congress, Republicans have secured the longest reauthorization of the Highway Trust Fund in a decade and are advancing a comprehensive reform of the Federal Aviation Administration to make flying easier and more secure.

The current Administration has a different approach. It subordinates civil engineering to social engineering as it pursues an exclusively urban vision of dense housing and government transit. Its ill-named Livability Initiative is meant to "coerce people out of their cars." This is the same mentality that once led Congress to impose by fiat a single maximum speed limit for the entire nation, from Manhattan to Montana. Our 1980 Republican Platform pledged to repeal that edict. After the election of Ronald Reagan, we did.

Now we make the same pledge regarding the current problems in transportation policy. We propose to remove from the Highway Trust Fund programs that should not be the business of the federal government.

More than a quarter of the Fund's spending is diverted from its original purpose. One fifth of its funds are spent on mass transit, an inherently local affair that serves only a small portion of the population, concentrated in six big cities. Additional funds are used for bike-share programs, sidewalks, recreational trails, landscaping, and historical renovations. Other beneficiaries of highway money are ferry boats, the federal lands access program, scenic byways, and education initiatives. These worthwhile enterprises should be funded through other sources.

We propose to phase out the federal transit program and reform provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act which can delay and drive up costs for transportation projects. We renew our call for repeal of the Davis-Bacon law, which limits employment and drives up construction and maintenance costs for the benefit of unions. Recognizing that, over time, additional revenue will be needed to expand the carrying capacity of roads and bridges, we will remove legal roadblocks to public-private partnership agreements that can save the taxpayers' money and bring outside investment to meet a community's needs. With most of the states increasing their own funding for transportation, we oppose a further increase in the federal gas tax.

Although unionization has never been permitted in any government agency concerned with national security, the current Administration has reversed that policy for the Transportation Security Administration. We will correct that mistake. Americans understand that, with the threat of terrorism, their travel may encounter delays, but unacceptably long lines at security checks can have the same impact as a collapsed bridge or washed out highway. TSA employees should always be seen as guardians of the public's safety, not as just another part of the federal workforce.

> We envision government at all levels as a partner with individuals and industries in technological progress, not a meddlesome monitor.

Amtrak is an extremely expensive railroad for the American taxpayers, who must subsidize every ticket. The federal government should allow private ventures to provide passenger service in the northeast corridor. The same holds true with regard to high-speed and intercity rail across the country. We reaffirm our intention to end federal support for boondoggles like California's high-speed train to nowhere.

Building the Future: Technology

The digital revolution has transformed how we work, learn, sell, shop, socialize — in short, how we live. Technological change drives our positions with regard to STEM education, business and corporate involvement with educational certifications, workforce issues, privacy, cyber and national security, energy development, regulation, and other elements of our campaign for growth and jobs. It is why we propose to simplify the tax code, reduce corporate rates, transition to a territorial system, and create incentives for investment and innovation.

We envision government at all levels as a partner with individuals and industries in technologi-

cal progress, not a meddlesome monitor. We want to create a business climate that rewards risk and promotes innovation, a learning system that gives Americans the skills needed to seize the opportunities of the 21st century, and an international order that maintains a fair and open global market for America's goods and services. We intend to advance policies that protect data privacy while fostering innovation and growth and ensuring the free flow of data across borders.

Together, broadband and good ideas have become the 21st century engines of American ingenuity. Innovation, by its nature, is disruptive. In challenging legacy forms of business, innovation creates new jobs, gives access to new markets, opens opportunity to underserved populations, and expands consumer choice. Government must give America's innovators the freedom to create and, on their merits, succeed or fail.

Our agenda includes balanced protections for intellectual property, explained elsewhere in this document. We intend to facilitate access to spectrum by paving the way for high-speed, next-generation broadband deployment and competition on the internet and for internet services. We want government to encourage the sharing economy and on-demand platforms to compete in an open market, and we believe public policies should encourage the innovation and competition that are essential for an Internet of Things to thrive.

Government must keep pace with the technology deployed in the private sector. There is an urgent need to modernize the federal government's legacy systems and to recruit the skilled technical personnel who can advance the adoption of innovation in the public sector. At the cost of billions, the current Administration has done little to advance our goal of universal broadband coverage. That hurts rural America, where farmers, ranchers, and small business people need connectivity to operate in real time with the world's producers. Almost ten million Americans have given up wired broadband connections in just the last two years alone, and millions more have never been connected in the first place.

We encourage public-private partnerships to provide predictable support for connecting rural areas so that every American can fully participate in the global economy.

The public-private partnerships between NASA, the Department of Defense, and commercial companies have given us technological progress that has reduced the cost of accessing space and extended America's space leadership in the commercial, civil, and national security spheres. The entrepreneurship and innovation culture of the free market is revitalizing the nation's space capabilities, saving taxpayer money, and advancing technology critical to maintain America's edge in space and in other fields.

To protect our national security interests and foster innovation and competitiveness, we must sustain our preeminence in space by launching more scientific missions, guaranteeing unfettered access, and ensuring that our space-related industries remain a source of scientific leadership and education.

Building the Future: America's Electric Grid

Our nation's interstate electric transmission system has long been a catalyst for developing and delivering low cost energy while spurring economic growth throughout the United States The grid is aging, vulnerable to cyber and terrorist threats, and unprepared to serve our energy needs of tomorrow. It should not take seven to ten years to plan and construct a transmission line. We support expedited siting processes and the thoughtful expansion of the grid so that consumers and businesses continue to have access to affordable and reliable electricity.

Start-up Century: Small Business and Entrepreneurship

A central reason why the 20th century came to be called the American Century was the ability of individuals to invent and create in a land of free markets. Back then they were called risk-takers, dreamers, and small business owners. Today they are the entrepreneurs, independent contractors, and small business men and women of our new economy. Their innovation drives improvement and forces long-established institutions to adapt or fade away. Many of them are so young they remember little if anything of the last century because dy-

namic progress does not look back. As in the past, they still create most new jobs and form the commercial network that holds communities together. Their enterprise is the lifeblood of our economy, but it is weakening.

More businesses are closing in our country than are starting. Older firms are an increasing proportion of companies. Productivity growth has slowed. This is not the way to jumpstart a new era of growth. We need to consider the effect of capital gains rates on the availability of venture capital, as well as the positive impact of expensing on start-up firms.

We should reduce the occupational licensing laws that shut untold millions of potential workers out of entrepreneurial careers. We must overturn the regulatory nightmare, created by the Dodd-Frank law, for the community banks and savings and loans that provide nearly half of all small-business loans and over three-quarters of all agricultural loans. Indeed, the world of the app economy cries out for the comprehensive regulatory reform proposed elsewhere in this platform. We must challenge established interests and traditional business patterns to facilitate market entry of new business models, including inventive means of transport, delivery, and communication.

As incubators of unconventional thinking, our country's existing research infrastructure — the National Labs, the National Institutes of Health, NASA, and elements of the Defense Department — have the potential to form partnerships with small businesses to create an American Start-Up Century.

The Federal Reserve

Because the Federal Reserve's monetary policy decisions affect job creation, upward mobility for workers, and equitable prosperity, they should be transparent. Similarly, the Federal Reserve's important role as a lender of last resort should also be carried out in a more transparent manner. The Republican Party will advance legislation that brings transparency and accountability to the Federal Reserve, the Federal Open Market Committee, and the Federal Reserve's dealing with foreign banks.

The first step is through an annual audit of the Federal Reserve's activities. Such an audit would need to be carefully implemented so that the Federal Reserve remains insulated from political pressures and its decisions are based on sound economic principles and sound money rather than political pressures for easy money and loose credit.

Determined to crush the double-digit inflation that was part of the Carter Administration's economic legacy, President Reagan, shortly after his inauguration, established a commission to consider the feasibility of a metallic basis for U.S. currency. In 2012, facing the task of cleaning up the wreckage of the current Administration's policies, we proposed a similar commission to investigate ways to set a fixed value for the dollar.

With Republican leadership, the House of Representatives has passed legislation to set up just such a commission. We recommend its enactment by the full Congress and the commission's careful consideration of ways to secure the integrity of our currency.

Workplace Freedom for a 21st Century Workforce

The greatest asset of the American economy is the hard-working American. That is why our first priority is getting people back to work by fostering the kind of growth that creates jobs. That overarching goal unites all the sections of this platform. It runs through our commitments on education and workforce development. It underlies our approach to welfare reform, regulatory reform, and our determination to advance the kind of trade agreements that multiply opportunities for workers here at home. It also impels us to challenge the anachronistic labor laws that limit workers' freedom and lock them into the workplace rules of their great-grandfathers.

Instead of facilitating change, the current Administration and its agents at the National Labor Relations Board are determined to reverse it. They are attacking the franchise model of business development, which is essential to the flexibility and creativity of the new economy. They are wielding provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act from the 1930s, designed to fit a manufacturing workplace, to deny flexibility to both employers and employees. They have repealed union transparency rules that allowed members to discover what was being

done with their dues. They have outlawed alternatives to unions even when they were favored by the workers.

Their Project Labor Agreements discriminate against the overwhelming majority of workers by barring them from jobs on taxpayer-funded projects. Their patronizing and controlling approach leaves workers in a form of peonage to the NLRB. We intend to restore fairness and common sense to that agency.

Technology has already created jobs that did not exist fifteen years ago, and today's workers need flexibility and family-friendly options to make the most of them, especially portability in pension plans and health insurance.

We intend to encourage those trends by bringing labor law into the 21st century. It should encourage cooperation between management and workers, not conflict. All workers, including union members, must be free to accept raises and rewards without veto power from union officials. All unionized workers should be able to find out what is going on in their union trust funds and in their executive compensation. We support the right of states to enact Right-to-Work laws and call for a national law to protect the economic liberty of the modern workforce.

All Americans deserve the opportunity to pursue their American dream free from discrimination. Clear nondiscrimination policies ensure all employees have the chance to succeed based solely on their merits. These policies are vital to creating an inclusive, innovative, and competitive workforce.

Republicans believe that the employer-employee relationship of the future will be built upon employee empowerment and workplace flexibility. We therefore endorse employee stock ownership plans that enable workers to become capitalists, expand the realm of private property, and energize a free enterprise economy.

Minimum wage is an issue that should be handled at the state and local level.

A Federal Workforce Serving the People

The federal workforce is larger and more highly paid than ever. The taxpayers spend an average of $35,000 a year per employee on non-cash benefits, triple the average non-cash compensation of the average worker in the private sector. Federal employees receive extraordinary pension benefits and vacation time wildly out of line with those of the private sector.

We urge Congress to bring federal compensation and benefits in line with the standards of most American employees. A Republican administration should streamline personnel procedures to expedite the firing of bad workers, tax cheats, and scammers. The unionization of the federal workforce, first permitted by Democrat presidents in the 1960s, should be reviewed by the appropriate congressional committees to examine its effects on the cost, quality, and performance of the civil service. Union representatives in the federal workforce should not be paid to conduct union business on the public's time.

Reducing the Federal Debt

Our national debt is a burden on our economy and families. The huge increase in the national debt demanded by and incurred during the current Administration has placed a significant burden on future generations. We must impose firm caps on future debt, accelerate the repayment of the trillions we now owe in order to reaffirm our principles of responsible and limited government, and remove the burdens we are placing on future generations.

A strong economy is one key to debt reduction, but spending restraint is a necessary component that must be vigorously pursued.

A Rebirth of Constitutional Government

We the People

We are the party of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The Declaration sets forth the fundamental precepts of American government: That God bestows certain inalienable rights on every individual, thus producing human equality; that government exists first and foremost to protect those inalienable rights; that man-made law must be consistent with God-given, natural rights; and that if God-given, natural, inalienable rights come in conflict with government, court, or human-granted rights, God-given, natural, inalienable rights always prevail; that there is a moral law recognized as "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God"; and that American government is to operate with the consent of the governed. We are also the party of the Constitution, the greatest political document ever written. It is the solemn compact built upon principles of the Declaration that enshrines our God-given individual rights and ensures that all Americans stand equal before the law, defines the purposes and limits of government, and is the blueprint for ordered liberty that makes the United States the world's freest and most prosperous nation.

We reaffirm the Constitution's fundamental principles: limited government, separation of powers, individual liberty, and the rule of law. We denounce 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. We continue to encourage equality for all citizens and access to the American Dream. Merit and hard work should determine advancement in our society, so we reject unfair preferences, quotas, and set-asides as forms of discrimination. Our ranks include Americans from every faith and tradition, and we respect the right of each American to follow his or her deeply held beliefs.

Our Constitution is in crisis. More than 90 percent of federal requirements are now imposed by regulatory agencies, without any vote of the House or Senate or signature of the President. The current Administration has exceeded its constitutional authority, brazenly and flagrantly violated the separation of powers, sought to divide America into groups and turn citizen against citizen. The President has refused to defend or enforce laws he does not like, used executive orders to enact national policies in areas constitutionally reserved solely to Congress, made unconstitutional "recess" appointments to Senate-confirmed positions, directed regulatory agencies to overstep their statutory authority, and failed to consult Congress regarding military action overseas. He has changed what John Adams called "a government of laws and not of men" into just the opposite.

Democrats in Congress have enabled, supported, and defended each of these breaches. They have applauded the President's efforts to do an end-run around Congress and stymied Republican efforts to restrain executive lawlessness. Democrats in Congress have also endorsed an anti-constitutional agenda of their own. Forty-eight Democratic senators, for instance, voted to amend the Bill of Rights to give government officials control over political speech. Democrats in Congress have likewise proposed bills that would limit religious liberty, undermine property rights, and eviscerate the Second Amendment.

In a free society, the primary role of government is to protect the God-given, inalienable rights of its citizens. These constitutional rights are not negotiable for any American. We affirm that all legislation, regulation, and official actions must

conform to the Constitution's original meaning as understood at the time the language was adopted.

Our most urgent task as a Party is to restore the American people's faith in their government by electing a president who will enforce duly enacted laws, honor constitutional limits on executive authority, and return credibility to the Oval Office. We need a Republican president who will end abuses of power by departments and agencies, like the IRS and the EPA, and by the White House itself. Safeguarding our liberties requires a president who will respect the Constitution's separation of powers, including the authority of Congress to write legislation and define agency authority. Americans also deserve a president who will speak for our nation's history and values, not apologize for them to our enemies.

The Judiciary

The rule of law is the foundation of our Republic. A critical threat to our country's constitutional order is an activist judiciary that usurps powers properly reserved to the people through other branches of government. Only a Republican president will appoint judges who respect the rule of law expressed within the Constitution and Declaration of Independence, including the inalienable right to life and the laws of nature and nature's God, as did the late Justice Antonin Scalia. We are facing a national crisis in our judiciary. We understand that only by electing a Republican president in 2016 will America have the opportunity for up to five new constitutionally-minded Supreme Court justices appointed to fill vacancies on the Court. Only such appointments will enable courts to begin to reverse the long line of activist decisions — including *Roe*, *Obergefell*, and the Obamacare cases — that have usurped Congress's and states' lawmaking authority, undermined constitutional protections, expanded the power of the judiciary at the expense of the people and their elected representatives, and stripped the people of their power to govern themselves. We believe in the constitutional checks and balances and that the Founders intended the judiciary to be the weakest branch. We encourage Congress to use the check of impeachment for judges who unconstitutionally usurp Article I powers. In tandem with a Republican Senate, a new Republican president will restore to the Court a strong conservative majority that will follow the text and original meaning of the Constitution and our laws.

The legitimate powers of government are rooted in the consent of the American people. Judicial activism that includes reliance on foreign law or unratified treaties undermines American sovereignty. Foreign laws and precedents should not be used to interpret our Constitution or laws, nor should foreign sources of law be used in state courts' adjudication of criminal or civil matters.

We also affirm the wisdom of President George Washington's warning to avoid foreign entanglements and unnecessary alliances. We therefore oppose the adoption or ratification of treaties that would weaken or encroach upon American sovereignty or that could be construed by courts to do so. We will not recognize as binding upon the United States any international agreement forged without the constitutionally required assent of two-thirds of the United States Senate.

Administrative Law

Article I of the Constitution directs that "All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States...." For more than a century, however, Congress has delegated increasing amounts of legislative authority to executive departments, agencies, and commissions, laying the foundation for today's vast administrative state. Unelected bureaucrats in the executive branch now write countless rules with the force of law and arbitrarily punish individuals who disobey those rules. The Constitution makes clear that these powers were granted to Congress by the people and must therefore remain solely with the people's elected representatives. We call on Congress to begin reclaiming its constitutional powers from the bureaucratic state by requiring that major new federal regulations be approved by Congress before they can take effect, such as through the Regulation Freedom Amendment. We further affirm that courts should interpret laws as written by Congress rather than allowing executive agencies to rewrite those laws to suit administration priorities.

Defending Marriage Against an Activist Judiciary

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*, which in the words of the late Justice Antonin Scalia, was a "judicial Putsch" — full of "silly extravagances" — that reduced "the disciplined legal reasoning of John Marshall and Joseph Storey to the mystical aphorisms of a fortune cookie." 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. The Court twisted the meaning of the Fourteenth Amendment beyond recognition. To echo Scalia, we dissent. We, therefore, support the appointment of justices and judges who respect the constitutional limits on their power and respect the authority of the states to decide such fundamental social questions.

The First Amendment: Religious Liberty

The Bill of Rights lists religious liberty, with its rights of conscience, as the first freedom to be protected. Religious freedom in the Bill of Rights protects the right of the people to practice their faith in their everyday lives. As George Washington taught, "religion and morality are indispensable supports" to a free society. Similarly, Thomas Jefferson declared that "No provision in our Constitution ought to be dearer to man than that which protects the rights of conscience against the enterprises of the civil authority." Ongoing attempts to compel individuals, businesses, and institutions of faith to transgress their beliefs are part of a misguided effort to undermine religion and drive it from the public square. As a result, many charitable religious institutions that have demonstrated great success in helping the needy have been barred from receiving government grants and contracts. Government officials threaten religious colleges and universities with massive fines and seek to control their personnel decisions. Places of worship for the first time in our history have reason to fear the loss of tax-exempt status merely for espousing and practicing traditional religious beliefs that have been held across the world for thousands of years, and for almost four centuries in America. 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.

We pledge to defend the religious beliefs and rights of conscience of all Americans and to safeguard religious institutions against government control.

We pledge to defend the religious beliefs and rights of conscience of all Americans and to safeguard religious institutions against government control. We endorse the First Amendment Defense Act, Republican legislation in the House and Senate which will 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. We encourage every state to pass similar legislation. We likewise endorse the efforts of Republican state legislators and governors who have defied intimidation from corporations and the media in defending religious liberty. We support 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.

Our First Amendment rights are not given to us by the government but are rights we inherently possess. The government cannot use subsequent amendments to limit First Amendment rights. The Free Exercise Clause is both an individual and a collective liberty protecting a right to worship God according to the dictates of conscience. Therefore, we strongly support 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.

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

We support the public display of the Ten Commandments as a reflection of our history and our country's Judeo-Christian heritage and further affirm the rights of religious students to engage in voluntary prayer at public school events and to have equal access to school facilities. We assert the First Amendment right of freedom of association for religious, private, service, and youth organizations to set their own membership standards.

The First Amendment: Constitutionally Protected Speech

The rights of citizenship do not stop at the ballot box. Freedom of speech includes the right to devote resources to whatever cause or candidate one supports. We oppose any restrictions or conditions that would discourage citizens from participating in the public square or limit their ability to promote their ideas, such as requiring private organizations to publicly disclose their donors to the government. Limits on political speech serve only to protect the powerful and insulate incumbent officeholders. We support repeal of federal restrictions on political parties in McCain-Feingold, raising or repealing contribution limits, protecting the political speech of advocacy groups, corporations, and labor unions, and protecting political speech on the internet. We likewise call for an end to the so-called Fairness Doctrine, and support free-market approaches to free speech unregulated by government.

We believe the forced funding of political candidates through union dues and other mandatory contributions violates the First Amendment. Just as Americans have a First Amendment right to devote resources to favored candidates or views, they have a First Amendment right not to be forced to individually support individuals or ideologies that they oppose. We agree with Thomas Jefferson that "To compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves and abhors is sinful and tyrannical."

The Second Amendment: Our Right to Keep and Bear Arms

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. Lawful gun ownership enables Americans to exercise their God-given right of self-defense for the safety of their homes, their loved ones, and their communities.

We salute the Republican Congress for defending the right to keep and bear arms by preventing the President from installing a new liberal majority on the Supreme Court. The confirmation to the Court of additional anti-gun justices would eviscerate the Second Amendment's fundamental protections. Already, local officials in the nation's capital and elsewhere are defying the Court's decisions upholding an individual right to bear arms as affirmed by the Supreme Court in *Heller* and *McDonald*. We support firearm reciprocity legislation to recognize the right of law-abiding Americans to carry firearms to protect themselves and their families in all 50 states. We support constitutional carry statutes and salute the states that have passed them. 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.

We condemn frivolous lawsuits against gun manufacturers and the current Administration's illegal harassment of firearm dealers. We oppose federal licensing or registration of law-abiding gun owners, registration of ammunition, and restoration of the ill-fated Clinton gun ban. We call for a thorough investigation — by a new Republican administration — of the deadly "Fast and Furious" operation perpetrated by Department of Justice officials who approved and allowed illegal sales of guns to known violent criminals.

The Fourth Amendment: Liberty and Privacy

Affirming the Fourth Amendment "right of the people to be secure in their houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures," we call for strict limitations on the use of aerial surveillance on U.S. soil, with the exception of patrolling our national borders for illegal entry and activity. We oppose any attempts by government to require surveillance devices in our daily lives, including tracking devices in motor vehicles.

In recent years, technology companies have responded to market demand for products and services that protect the privacy of customers through increasingly sophisticated encryption technology. These increased privacy protections have become crucial to the digital economy. At the same time, however, such innovations have brought new dangers, especially from criminals and terrorists who seek to use encryption technology to harm us. No matter the medium, citizens must retain the right to communicate with one another free from unlawful government intrusion. It will not be easy to balance privacy rights with the government's legitimate need to access encrypted information. This issue is too important to be left to the courts. A Republican president and a Republican Congress must listen to the American people and forge a consensus solution.

The Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) and the Foreign Bank and Asset Reporting Requirements result in government's warrantless seizure of personal financial information without reasonable suspicion or probable cause. Americans overseas should enjoy the same rights as Americans residing in the United States, whose private financial information is not subject to disclosure to the government except as to interest earned. The requirement for all banks around the world to provide detailed information to the IRS about American account holders outside the United States has resulted in banks refusing service to them. Thus, FATCA not only allows "unreasonable search and seizures" but also threatens the ability of overseas Americans to lead normal lives. We call for its repeal and for a change to residency-based taxation for U.S. citizens overseas.

The Fifth Amendment: Protecting Human Life

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 urge all states and Congress to make it a crime to acquire, transfer, or sell fetal tissues from elective abortions for research, and we call on Congress to enact a ban on any sale of fetal body parts. In the meantime, we call on Congress to ban the practice of misleading women on so-called fetal harvesting consent forms, a fact revealed by a 2015 investigation. We will not fund or subsidize healthcare that includes abortion coverage.

We support the appointment of judges who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life. We oppose the non-consensual withholding or withdrawal of care or treatment,

including food and water, from individuals with disabilities, newborns, the elderly, or the infirm, just as we oppose euthanasia and assisted suicide.

We affirm our moral obligation to assist, rather than penalize, women who face an unplanned pregnancy. In order to encourage women who face an unplanned pregnancy to choose life, we support legislation that requires financial responsibility for the child be equally borne by both the mother and father upon conception until the child reaches adulthood. Failure to require a father to be equally responsible for a child places an inequitable burden on the mother, creating a financial and social hardship on both mother and child. We celebrate the millions of Americans who open their hearts, homes, and churches to mothers in need and women fleeing abuse. We thank and encourage providers of counseling, medical services, and adoption assistance for empowering women experiencing an unintended pregnancy to choose life. We support funding for ultrasounds and adoption assistance. We salute the many states that now protect women and girls through laws requiring informed consent, parental consent, waiting periods, and clinic regulation. We condemn 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.

We applaud the U.S. House of Representatives for leading the effort to add enforcement to the Born-Alive Infant Protection Act by passing the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act, which imposes appropriate civil and criminal penalties on healthcare providers who fail to provide treatment and care to an infant who survives an abortion, including early induction delivery whether the death of the infant is intended. We strongly oppose infanticide. Over a dozen states have passed Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Acts prohibiting abortion after twenty weeks, the point at which current medical research shows that unborn babies can feel excruciating pain during abortions, and we call on Congress to enact the federal version. Not only is it good legislation, but it enjoys the support of a majority of the American people. We support 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.

We call on Congress to ban sex-selection abortions and abortions based on disabilities — discrimination in its most lethal form. We oppose embryonic stem cell research. We oppose federal funding of embryonic stem cell research. We support adult stem cell research and urge the restoration of the national placental stem cell bank created by President George H.W. Bush but abolished by his Democrat successor, President Bill Clinton. We oppose federal funding for harvesting embryos and call for a ban on human cloning.

The Democratic Party is extreme on abortion. Democrats' almost limitless support for abortion, and their strident opposition to even the most basic restrictions on abortion, put them dramatically out of step with the American people.

The Democratic Party is extreme on abortion. Democrats' almost limitless support for abortion, and their strident opposition to even the most basic restrictions on abortion, put them dramatically out of step with the American people. Because of their opposition to simple abortion clinic safety procedures, support for taxpayer-funded abortion, and rejection of pregnancy resource centers that provide abortion alternatives, the old Clinton mantra of "safe, legal, and rare" has been reduced to just "legal." We are proud to be the party that protects human life and offers real solutions for women.

The Fifth Amendment: Protecting Private Property

The Framers of our government knew, from history and experience, that when private property is not secure, freedom is at risk. That is why the Fifth

Amendment declares that private property may not be "taken for public use without just compensation." The Supreme Court's *Kelo* decision undermined this safeguard by allowing local governments to seize a person's home or land not only for vital public use, but also for "public purpose," which thus allowed the government to seize it for transfer to private developers or other private entities. We call on any state legislatures that have not already done so to nullify the impact of *Kelo* within their jurisdiction by legislation or state constitutional amendments declaring that private property may be taken only for true public use, and we join House Republicans in supporting the Private Property Rights Protection Act.

The government at every level must always pay just compensation whenever it takes private property to achieve a compelling public use, with the money coming from the budget of the agency performing the taking. This includes the taking of water rights and the taking of property by environmental regulations that destroy or diminish the property's value.

Civil asset forfeiture was originally intended as a way to cripple organized crime through the seizure of property used in a criminal enterprise. Regrettably, it has become a tool for unscrupulous law enforcement officials, acting without due process, to profit by destroying the livelihood of innocent individuals, many of whom never recover the lawful assets taken from them. When the rights of the innocent can be so easily violated, no one's rights are safe. We call on Congress and state legislatures to enact reforms to protect law-abiding citizens against abusive asset forfeiture tactics.

The Fifth Amendment: Intellectual Property Rights

Private property includes not only physical property such as lands and homes, but also intellectual property like books and patents. Article 1, section 8 of the Constitution gives Congress the power to safeguard intellectual property rights for "Authors and Inventors." By protecting the proprietary rights of creators and innovators, the Constitution promotes the general welfare by providing incentives for investment in all sorts of technology and artistic works. Intellectual property is a driving force in today's global economy of constant innovation. It is the wellspring of American economic growth and job creation. With the rise of the digital economy, it has become even more critical that we protect intellectual property rights and preserve freedom of contract rather than create regulatory barriers to creativity, growth, and innovation.

Protecting intellectual property is also a national security issue. We must guard against counterfeit parts that can compromise the reliability of our weapons systems and the safety of military personnel. Today, the worst offenses against intellectual property rights come from abroad, especially in China. We call for strong action by Congress and a new Republican president to enforce intellectual property laws against all infringers, whether foreign or domestic.

The Ninth Amendment: The People's Retained Rights

The Ninth Amendment to the Constitution declares that "[t]he enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people." This provision codifies the principle that our national government derives its power from the governed and that all powers not delegated to the government are retained by the people. We call upon legislators to give full force to this fundamental principle. We welcome to our ranks all citizens who are determined to reclaim the rights of the people that have been ignored or usurped by the federal and intrusive state governments.

The Tenth Amendment: Federalism as the Foundation of Personal Liberty

Federalism is a cornerstone of our constitutional system. Every violation of state sovereignty by federal officials is not merely a transgression of one unit of government against another; it is an assault on the liberties of individual Americans. Hence the promise of the Tenth Amendment: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." The Constitution gives the federal government very few powers, and they are specifically enumerated;

the states and the people retain authority over all unenumerated powers. In obedience to that principle, we condemn the current Administration's unconstitutional expansion into areas beyond those specifically enumerated, including bullying of state and local governments in matters ranging from voter identification (ID) laws to immigration, from healthcare programs to land use decisions, and from forced education curricula to school restroom policies. We pledge to restore the proper balance and vertical separation of powers between the federal government and state governments — the governments closest to, and most reflective of, the American people. We encourage states to reinvigorate their traditional role as the laboratories of democracy, propelling the nation forward through local and state innovation.

Big government undermines federalism through more than 1,100 grants-in-aid programs that consume more than one-sixth of the federal budget for matters that should be the exclusive responsibility of the states. Through these programs, money originating from state taxpayers is returned to the states, usually greatly reduced, with myriad strings attached. These grants turn state and local elected officials into agents of the federal government. The web of conditions and regulations — especially the requirement of matching funds that comes with federal grants — transforms recipients into appendages of the Washington bureaucracy. We call upon Congress to help a Republican president to reduce and ultimately eliminate this system of conditioned grants so that state and local taxpayers can decide for themselves what is best for their own communities.

Honest Elections and the Electoral College

We oppose the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact and any other scheme to abolish or distort the procedures of the Electoral College. An unconstitutional effort to impose National Popular Vote would be a grave threat to our federal system and a guarantee of corruption, as every ballot box in every state would offer a chance to steal the presidency. We urge state legislatures that have voted for this proposal to rescind their approval.

Honest Elections and the Right to Vote

Honest elections are the foundation of representative government. We pledge to protect the voting rights of every citizen, as well as their rights of conscience when they are harassed or denied a job because of their contributions to a candidate or a cause. We support state efforts to ensure ballot access for the elderly, the handicapped, military personnel, and all legitimate voters. We urge state and local officials to take all appropriate steps to allow voters to cast their ballots in a timely manner. We are concerned, however, that some voting procedures may be open to abuse. For this reason, we support legislation to require proof of citizenship when registering to vote and secure photo ID when voting. We strongly oppose litigation against states exercising their sovereign authority to enact such laws. In addition, to guarantee that everyone's vote is counted, we urge that electronic voting systems have a voter-verified paper audit trail. We urge every state to join the Interstate Voter Registration Cross Check Program to keep voter rolls accurate and to prevent people from voting in more than one state in the same election. To guard against foreign involvement in our elections, we call for vigilance regarding online credit card contributions to candidates and campaigns.

The members of our Armed Forces must not be denied the basic rights that they are defending for others. Our troops, wherever stationed, must be allowed to vote in a timely manner. We call upon the entire military chain of command to ensure the voting rights of our citizen soldiers.

The Constitution gives Congress authority to conduct the decennial census "in such Manner as they shall by Law direct." In order to preserve the principle of one person, one vote, we urge our elected representatives to ensure that citizenship, rather than mere residency, be made the basis for the apportionment of representatives among the states.

America's Natural Resources: Agriculture, Energy, and the Environment

We are the party of America's growers, producers, farmers, ranchers, foresters, miners, commercial fishermen, and all those who bring from the earth the crops, minerals, energy, and the bounties of our seas that are the lifeblood of our economy. Their labor and ingenuity, their determination in bad times and love of the land at all times, powers our economy, creates millions of jobs, and feeds billions of people around the world. Only a few years ago, a bipartisan consensus in government valued the role of extractive industries and rewarded their enterprise by minimizing its interference with their work. That has radically changed. We look in vain within the Democratic Party for leaders who will speak for the people of agriculture, energy and mineral production.

Abundant Harvests

Agricultural production and exports are central to the Republican agenda for jobs, growth, expanded trade, and prosperity. Because our farmers and ranchers care for the land, the United States does not depend on foreign imports for sustenance. Americans spend a smaller percentage of their income on food than any other nation. On average, one American farm produces enough food to feed 155 people. No other nation has been as generous with food aid to the needy. We have good reason to celebrate our domestic security in food.

We are the largest agricultural exporter in the world, and our exports are vital for other sectors of our economy. Those exports drive additional economic growth as each dollar of agricultural exports generates another $1.27 in business activity. That is why we remain committed to expanding trade opportunities and opening new markets for agriculture. Under a Republican president, America's trade negotiators will insist that our global trading partners adhere to science-based standards with regard to food and health regulations. We will not tolerate the use of bogus science and scare tactics to bar our products from foreign markets, nor will we allow insufficient health and safety standards for products imported for our consumption.

We must also ensure that domestic policies do not compromise our global competitiveness through overregulation and undue interference in the marketplace. There is growing recognition that federal dairy policies, crafted during the Great Depression, are increasingly an impediment to the ability of our dairy producers to meet the expected doubling in global demand coming by 2030. We oppose the policies pushed by special interest groups seeking to stop or make more expensive our current system of safe, efficient, and humane production of meat. Congress has repeatedly had to block the current Administration's draconian rules concerning the marketing of poultry and livestock. This regulatory impulse must be curbed, not on a case-by-case basis, but through a fundamental restructuring of the regulatory process. In the meantime, the intrusive and expensive federal mandates on food options and menu labeling should be ended as soon as possible by a Republican Congress. We oppose the mandatory labeling of genetically modified food, which has proven to be safe, healthy, and a literal life-saver for millions in the developing world.

The Democratic Administration's sustained support for additional regulation of agriculture has directly resulted in higher costs of production for those who produce the food we eat. This federal regulatory overreach has resulted and will continue to result in higher food prices for Americans. These higher food costs are particularly challenging for those Americans struggling to make ends meet.

Like the rest of the economy, agriculture has suffered through eight years of the Democrats'

regulatory juggernaut, particularly from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). States, not Washington bureaucrats, are best equipped to engage farmers and ranchers to develop sound farm oversight policies. The EPA's Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule, issued jointly with the Army Corps of Engineers, is a travesty. It extends the government's jurisdiction over navigable waters into the micro-management of puddles and ditches on farms, ranches, and other privately-held property. Ditches, dry creek beds, stock ponds, prairie potholes, and other non-navigable wet areas are already regulated by the states. WOTUS is now subject to judicial review and must be invalidated, but that will not be sufficient. Unelected bureaucrats must be stopped from furthering the Democratic Party's political agenda through regulatory demands forced upon citizens and businesses beyond that which is required by law. We must never allow federal agencies to seize control of state waters, watersheds, or groundwater. State waters, watersheds, and groundwater must be the purview of the sovereign states.

Farmers and ranchers are among this country's leading conservationists. Modern farm practices and technologies, supported by programs from the Department of Agriculture, have led to reduced erosion, improved water and air quality, increased wildlife habitat, all the while maintaining improved agricultural yields. This stewardship of the land benefits everyone, and we remain committed to conservation policies based on the preservation, not the restriction, of working lands. For this reason, ranching on public lands must be fostered, developed, and encouraged. This includes providing for an abundant water supply for America's farmers, ranchers, and their communities.

Farming and ranching remain high-risk endeavors, and they cannot be isolated from market forces. No segment of agriculture can expect treatment so favorable that it seriously disadvantages workers in other trades. Federal programs to assist farmers in managing risk must be as cost-effective as they are functional, offering tools that can improve producers' ability to operate when times are tough while remaining affordable to the taxpayers. Even so, the expansion of agricultural exports through the vigorous opening of new markets around the world is the surest path to farm security.

While uncertainty about natural weather and markets is a risk farmers and ranchers always face, government should not add to their uncertainty by inaction and delay. Thanks in large part to a lack of leadership from the current Administration and congressional Democrats, the last Farm Bill took far too long to enact, creating instability about farm policy for nearly two years. Republicans are dedicated to leading this country forward, which includes getting things done on time, including the next Farm Bill.

The Democrats play politics with farm security. Much of the Democrats' delay had nothing to do with the vital role of American agriculture. It concerned their efforts to expand welfare through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which now comprises more than 70 percent of all farm bill spending. During the last eight years of a Democratic Administration, nearly all the work requirements for able-bodied adults, instituted by our landmark welfare reform of 1996, have been removed. We will restore those provisions and, to correct a mistake made when the Food Stamp program was first created in 1964, separate the administration of SNAP from the Department of Agriculture.

Like all other sectors of our society, agriculture is directly impacted by the constant advance in technology. Agriculture now faces a revolution in the generation of "Big Data" — information produced not only through public oversight of regulations and programs, but also from private business records of farming and ranching operations. In the interest of protecting the safety of our farmers and ranchers, we will advance policies to protect the security, privacy, and most of all, the private ownership of individual farmers' and ranchers' data.

The U. S. Forest Service, within the Department of Agriculture, controls around 200 million acres of land with enormous natural resources, especially timber, a renewable resource providing jobs for thousands of workers that should be used to the best economic potential for the nation. Many of our national forests are in worsening health with the threat of invasive species, insect mortality, and the severe risk of wildfire. The increase in

catastrophic wildfires has been needlessly killing millions of animals and destroying homes and watersheds for decades in the western states. The expense to suppress wildfires related to failed federal forest policies continues to increase. When timber is managed properly, the renewable crops will result in fewer wildfires and, at the same time, produce jobs in the timber industry for countless families. We believe in promoting active, sustainable management of our forests and that states can best manage our forests to improve forest health and keep communities safe.

A New Era in Energy

Our country has greater energy resources than any other place on earth. Our engineers and miners, the men and women whose labor taps the forces of nature, are the best in the world. Together, the people of America's energy sector provide us with power that is clean, affordable, secure, and abundant. Their work can guarantee the nation's energy security for centuries to come if, instead of erecting roadblocks, government facilitates the creation of an all-of-the-above energy strategy.

Our country has greater energy resources than any other place on earth. Our engineers and miners, the men and women whose labor taps the forces of nature, are the best in the world.

We applaud congressional Republicans for doing just that through far-sighted legislation. Both Houses have passed bills that will modernize pipelines and the electric grid, protect the grid from disruption, expedite energy exports, and lower energy costs. A Republican administration will build on those policies to find new ways to store electricity, a breakthrough of extraordinary import.

Planning for our energy future requires us to first determine what resources we have in reserve. Thirty years ago, the world's estimated reserves of oil were 645 billion barrels. Today, that figure is 1.65 trillion barrels. The more we know what we will have in the future, the better we can decide how to use it. That is why we support the opening of public lands and the outer continental shelf to exploration and responsible production, even if these resources will not be immediately developed. Because we believe states can best promote economic growth while protecting the environment, Congress should give authority to state regulators to manage energy resources on federally controlled public lands within their respective borders.

The Democratic Party's energy policy can be summed up in a slogan currently popular among its activists: "keep it in the ground." Keeping energy in the earth will keep jobs out of reach of those who need them most. For low-income Americans, expensive energy means colder homes in the winter and hotter homes in the summer, less mobility in employment, and higher food prices. The current Administration, and particularly its EPA, seems not to care. Its Clean Power Plan — the centerpiece of the President's war on coal — has been stayed by the Supreme Court. We will do away with it altogether. The Democratic Party does not understand that coal is an abundant, clean, affordable, reliable domestic energy resource. Those who mine it and their families should be protected from the Democratic Party's radical anti-coal agenda.

The Democratic Party's campaign to smother the U.S. energy industry takes many forms, but the permitting process may be its most damaging weapon. It takes an average of 30 days for states to permit an oil or gas well. It takes the federal government longer than seven months. Three decades ago, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) leased 12.2 million acres. In 2014, it leased only one-tenth of that number. Our nuclear industry, cleanly generating almost 20 percent of our electricity from its 99 plants, has a remarkable safety record, but only a handful of plants have been permitted in over three decades. Permitting for a safe, non-polluting hydroelectric facility, even one that is being relicensed, can take many years because of the current President's hostility to dams. The Keystone Pipeline has become a symbol of everything wrong with the

current Administration's ideological approach. After years of delay, the President killed it to satisfy environmental extremists. We intend to finish that pipeline and others as part of our commitment to North American energy security.

Government should not play favorites among energy producers. The taxpayers will not soon forget the current Administration's subsidies to companies that went bankrupt without producing a kilowatt of energy. The same Administration now requires the Department of Defense, operating with slashed budgets during a time of expanding conflict, to use its scarce resources to generate 25 percent of its electricity from renewables by 2025. Climate change is far from this nation's most pressing national security issue. This is the triumph of extremism over common sense, and Congress must stop it.

We support the development of all forms of energy that are marketable in a free economy without subsidies, including coal, oil, natural gas, nuclear power, and hydropower. A federal judge has struck down the BLM's rule on hydraulic fracturing and we support upholding this decision. We respect the states' proven ability to regulate the use of hydraulic fracturing, methane emissions, and horizontal drilling, and we will end the Administration's disregard of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act with respect to the long-term storage of nuclear waste. We encourage the cost-effective development of renewable energy sources — wind, solar, biomass, biofuel, geothermal, and tidal energy — by private capital. The United States is overwhelmingly dependent on China and other nations for rare earth and other hardrock minerals. These minerals are critical to advanced technology, renewable energy, and defense manufacturing. We support expediting the permitting process for mineral production on public lands. We support lifting restrictions to allow responsible development of nuclear energy, including research into alternative processes like thorium nuclear energy.

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We oppose any carbon tax. It would increase energy prices across the board, hitting hardest at the families who are already struggling to pay their bills in the Democrats' no-growth economy. We urge the private sector to focus its resources on the development of carbon capture and sequestration technology still in its early stages here and overseas.

American energy producers should be free to export their product to foreign markets. This is particularly important because of international demand for liquefied natural gas, and we must expedite the energy export terminals currently blocked by the Administration. Energy exports will create high paying jobs throughout the United States, reduce our nation's trade deficit, grow our economy, and boost the energy security of our allies and trading partners. We remain committed to aggressively expanding trade opportunities and opening new markets for American energy through multilateral and bilateral agreements, whether current, pending, or negotiated in the future.

Energy is both an economic and national security issue. We support the enactment of policies to increase domestic energy production, including production on public lands, to counter market manipulation by OPEC and other nationally-owned oil companies. This will reduce America's vulnerability to energy price volatility.

Environmental Progress

Conservation is inherent in conservatism. As the pioneer of environmentalism a century ago, the Republican Party reaffirms the moral obligation to be good stewards of the God-given natural beauty and resources of our country. We believe that people are the most valuable resources and that human health and safety are the proper measurements of a policy's success. We assert that private ownership has been the best guarantee of conscientious stewardship, while some of the worst instances of degradation have occurred under government

control. Poverty, not wealth, is the gravest threat to the environment, while steady economic growth brings the technological advances which make environmental progress possible.

The environment is too important to be left to radical environmentalists. They are using yesterday's tools to control a future they do not comprehend. The environmental establishment has become a self-serving elite, stuck in the mindset of the 1970s, subordinating the public's consensus to the goals of the Democratic Party. Their approach is based on shoddy science, scare tactics, and centralized command-and-control regulation. Over the last eight years, the Administration has triggered an avalanche of regulation that wreaks havoc across our economy and yields minimal environmental benefits.

The central fact of any sensible environmental policy is that, year by year, the environment is improving. Our air and waterways are much healthier than they were a few decades ago. As a nation, we have drastically reduced pollution, mainstreamed recycling, educated the public, and avoided ecological degradation. Even if no additional controls are added, air pollution will continue to decline for the next several decades due to technological turnover of aging equipment. These successes become a challenge for Democratic Party environmental extremists, who must reach farther and demand more to sustain the illusion of an environmental crisis. That is why they routinely ignore costs, exaggerate benefits, and advocate the breaching of constitutional boundaries by federal agencies to impose environmental regulation. At the same time, the environmental establishment looks the other way when environmental degradation is caused by the EPA and other federal agencies as was the case during the Animas River spill.

Our agenda is high on job creation, expanding opportunity and providing a better chance at life for everyone willing to work for it. Our modern approach to environmentalism is directed to that end, and it starts with dramatic change in official Washington. We propose to shift responsibility for environmental regulation from the federal bureaucracy to the states and to transform the EPA into an independent bipartisan commission, similar to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, with structural safeguards against politicized science. We will strictly limit congressional delegation of rule-making authority, and require that citizens be compensated for regulatory takings.

We will put an end to the legal practice known as "sue and settle," in which environmental groups sue federal agencies whose officials are complicit in the litigation so that, with the taxpayers excluded, both parties can reach agreement behind closed doors. That deceit betrays the public's trust; it will no longer be tolerated. We will also reform the Equal Access to Justice Act to cap and disclose payments made to environmental activists and return the Act to its original intent.

We will enforce the original intent of the Clean Water Act, not it's distortion by EPA regulations. We will likewise forbid the EPA to regulate carbon dioxide, something never envisioned when Congress passed the Clean Air Act. We will restore to Congress the authority to set the National Ambient Air Quality Standards and modernize the permitting process under the National Environmental Policy Act so it can no longer invite frivolous lawsuits, thwart sorely needed projects, kill jobs, and strangle growth.

The federal government owns or controls over 640 million acres of land in the United States, most of which is in the West. These are public lands, and the public should have access to them for appropriate activities like hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting. Federal ownership or management of land also places an economic burden on counties and local communities in terms of lost revenue to pay for things such as schools, police, and emergency services. It is absurd to think that all that acreage must remain under the absentee ownership or management of official Washington. Congress shall immediately pass universal legislation providing for a timely and orderly mechanism requiring the federal government to convey certain federally controlled public lands to states. We call upon all national and state leaders and representatives to exert their utmost power and influence to urge the transfer of those lands, identified in the review process, to all willing states for the benefit of the states and the nation as a whole. The residents of state and local communities know best how to protect the land where they work and live. They practice boots-on-

the-ground conservation in their states every day. We support amending the Antiquities Act of 1906 to establish Congress' right to approve the designation of national monuments and to further require the approval of the state where a national monument is designated or a national park is proposed.

There is certainly a need to protect certain species threatened worldwide with extinction. However, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) should not include species such as gray wolves and other species if these species exist elsewhere in healthy numbers in another state or country. To upset the economic viability of an area with an unneeded designation costs jobs and hurts local communities. We must ensure that this protection is done effectively, reasonably, and without unnecessarily impeding the development of lands and natural resources. The ESA should ensure that the listing of endangered species and the designation of critical habitats are based upon sound science and balance the protection of endangered species with the costs of compliance and the rights of property owners. Instead, over the last few decades, the ESA has stunted economic development, halted the construction of projects, burdened landowners, and has been used to pursue policy goals inconsistent with the ESA — all with little to no success in the actual recovery of species. For example, we oppose the listing of the lesser prairie chicken and the potential listing of the sage grouse. Neither species has been shown to be in actual danger and the listings threaten to devastate farmers, ranchers, and oil and gas production. While species threatened with extinction must be protected under the ESA, any such protection must be done in a reasonable and transparent manner with stakeholder input and in consideration of the impact on the development of lands and natural resources.

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. The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is a political mechanism, not an unbiased scientific institution. Its unreliability is reflected in its intolerance toward scientists and others who dissent from its orthodoxy. We will evaluate its recommendations accordingly. We reject the agendas of both the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, which represent only the personal commitments of their signatories; no such agreement can be binding upon the United States until it is submitted to and ratified by the Senate.

We demand an immediate halt to U.S. funding for the U.N.'s Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in accordance with the 1994 Foreign Relations Authorization Act. That law prohibits Washington from giving any money to "any affiliated organization of the United Nations" which grants Palestinians membership as a state. There is no ambiguity in that language. It would be illegal for the President to follow through on his intention to provide millions in funding for the UNFCCC and hundreds of millions for its Green Climate Fund.

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.

Government Reform

Making Government Work for the People

Founding Father and Constitution Framer James Wilson declared that in America, "the people are the masters of government," but that in other countries, "the government is master of the people." We pledge to make government work for the people, rather than the other way around. Much of what the federal government does can be improved, much should be replaced, and much needs to be done away with or returned to the states. It is long past time for just tinkering around the edges of a bloated and unresponsive bureaucratic state. Its poorly managed programs, some begun generations ago, are ill-suited to meet present needs and future requirements. Its credit card budgets impose massive indebtedness on every American today and on children yet unborn. The more it intrudes into every aspect of American life the more it alienates the citizens who work, pay taxes, and wonder what has happened to the country they love. We agree with Thomas Jefferson that "[t]he multiplication of public offices, increase of expense beyond income, growth and entailment of a public debt, are indications soliciting the employment of the pruning knife."

Balancing the Budget

The federal fiscal burden threatens the security, liberty, and independence of our nation. The current Administration's refusal to work with Republicans took our national debt from $10 trillion to nearly $19 trillion today. Left unchecked, it will hit $30 trillion by 2026. At the same time, the Administration's policies systematically crippled economic growth and job creation, driving up government costs and driving down revenues. When Congressional Republicans tried to reverse course, the Administration manufactured fiscal crises — phony government shutdowns — to demand excessive spending. The Administration's demands have focused on significantly expanding government spending and benefits for its preferred groups, paid for through loans that our children and grandchildren will have to pay. This is the path to bankrupting the next generation.

The Republican path to fiscal sanity and economic expansion begins with a constitutional requirement for a federal balanced budget. We will fight for Congress to adopt, and for the states to ratify, a Balanced Budget Amendment which imposes a cap limiting spending to the appropriate historical average percentage of our nation's gross domestic product while requiring a super-majority for any tax increase, with exceptions only for war or legitimate emergencies. Only a constitutional safeguard such as this can prevent deficits from mounting to government default.

Republican budgets will prioritize thrift over extravagance and put taxpayers first. We support the following test: Is a particular expenditure within the constitutional scope of the federal government? If not, stop it. Has it been effective in the past and is it still absolutely necessary? If not, end it. Is it so important as to justify borrowing, especially foreign borrowing, to fund it? If not, kill it.

Preserving Medicare and Medicaid

More than 100 million Americans depend on Medicare or Medicaid for their healthcare; with our population aging, that number will increase. To preserve Medicare and Medicaid, the financing of these important programs must be brought under control before they consume most of the federal budget, including national defense. The good news is that it can be done, and it can be done without endangering the elderly and the needy who depend on those programs. We intend to save Medicare by modernizing it, empowering its participants, and putting it on a secure financial footing. We will preserve the promise of Medicaid as well by making

that program, designed for 1965 medicine, a vehicle for good health in an entirely new era.

Medicare's long-term debt is in the trillions, and it is funded by a workforce that is shrinking relative to the size of future beneficiaries. Obamacare worsened the situation — and imperiled seniors — by imposing hundreds of billions of dollars in cuts to Medicare providers to pay for its new spending. When a vital program is so clearly headed for a train wreck, it's time to put it on a more secure track. That is why we propose these reforms: Impose no changes for persons 55 or older. Give others the option of traditional Medicare or transition to a premium-support model designed to strengthen patient choice, promote cost-saving competition among providers, and better guard against the fraud and abuse that now diverts billions of dollars every year away from patient care. Guarantee to every enrollee an income-adjusted contribution toward a plan of their choice, with catastrophic protection. Without disadvantaging present retirees or those nearing retirement, set a more realistic age for eligibility in light of today's longer life span.

This is an agenda to improve healthcare, not just to manage its costs. We reject the Democrats' approach of rationing inherent in Obamacare. We recognize the de facto rationing of healthcare caused by reduced access to doctors who increasingly opt out of participating in Medicare and Medicaid. We will not accept that or any other approach which denies care — or lowers its quality — for America's elderly.

Medicaid presents related, but somewhat different challenges. As the dominant force in the health market with regard to long-term care, births, and persons with mental illness, it is the next frontier of welfare reform. It is simply too big and too flawed to be administered from Washington. Most of the vaunted expansion of health insurance coverage under Obamacare actually has been an unprecedented expansion of the Medicaid rolls in many states. We applaud the Republican governors and state legislators who have undertaken the hard work of modernizing Medicaid. We will give them a free hand to do so by block-granting the program without strings. Their initiatives — whether premium supports for purchasing insurance, refundable tax credits, alternatives to hospitalization for chronic patients, disease prevention activities, and other innovations — are the best strategy for preserving Medicaid for those who need it the most. Block granting Medicaid is particularly needed to address mental health care. Mental illness affects people from all walks of life, but there has been little success in developing effective system-wide medical models for addressing mental health. For a variety of unique reasons, government is often the first frontier for people experiencing mental health problems — from first responders who deal with crises to publicly funded mental health facilities and prisons where large numbers of inmates suffer from mental illnesses. Using block grants would allow states to experiment with different systems to address mental health and develop successful models to be replicated in states across the nation. The current federally dictated mental health care regime is wasteful and ineffective, and moving to a block grant approach would allow for state and local governments to create solutions for individuals and families in desperate need of help in addressing mental illness. We respect the states' authority and flexibility to exclude abortion providers from federal programs such as Medicaid and other healthcare and family planning programs so long as they continue to perform or refer for elective abortions or sell the body parts of aborted children.

Saving Social Security

We reject the old maxim that Social Security is the "Third Rail" of American politics, deadly for anyone who would change it. The Democratic Party still treats it that way, even though everyone knows that its current course will lead to a financial and social disaster. Younger Americans have lost all faith in the program and expect little return for what they are paying into it. As the party of America's future, 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. Of the many reforms being proposed, all options should be considered to preserve Social Security. As Republicans, 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.

Protecting Internet Freedom

The survival of the internet as we know it is at risk. Its gravest peril originates in the White House, the current occupant of which has launched a campaign, both at home and internationally, to subjugate it to agents of government. The President ordered the chair of the supposedly independent Federal Communications Commission to impose upon the internet rules devised in the 1930s for the telephone monopoly. He has unilaterally announced America's abandonment of the international internet by surrendering U.S. control of the root zone of web names and addresses. He threw the internet to the wolves, and they — Russia, China, Iran, and others — are ready to devour it.

We salute the Congressional Republicans who have legislatively impeded his plans to turn over the Information Freedom Highway to regulators and tyrants. That fight must continue, for its outcome is in doubt. We will consistently support internet policies that allow people and private enterprise to thrive, without providing new and expanded government powers to tax and regulate so that the internet does not become the vehicle for a dramatic expansion of government power. The internet's independence is its power. It has unleashed innovation, enabled growth, and inspired freedom more rapidly and extensively than any other technological advance in human history. We will therefore resist any effort to shift control toward governance by international or other intergovernmental organizations. We will ensure that personal data receives full constitutional protection from government overreach. The only way to safeguard or improve these systems is through the private sector. The internet's free market needs to be free and open to all ideas and competition without the government or service providers picking winners and losers.

America's immigration policy must serve the national interest of the United States . . .

Immigration and the Rule of Law

Our party is the natural home for those who come in search of freedom and justice. We welcome all to the Great Opportunity Party.

The greatest asset of the American economy is the American worker. Our immigration system must protect American working families and their wages, for citizens and legal immigrants alike, in a way that will improve the economy. Just as immigrant labor helped build our country in the past, today's legal immigrants are making vital contributions in every aspect of national life. Their industry and commitment to American values strengthens our economy, enriches our culture, and enables us to better understand and more effectively compete with the rest of the world.

We are particularly grateful to the thousands of new legal immigrants, many of them not yet citizens, who are serving in the Armed Forces and among first responders. Their patriotism should encourage all to embrace the newcomers legally among us, assist their journey to full citizenship, and help their communities avoid isolation from the mainstream of society. We are also thankful for the many legal immigrants who continue to contribute to American society. To that end, we both encourage the preservation of heritage tongues and support English as the nation's official language, a unifying force essential for the advancement of immigrant communities and our nation as a whole.

America's immigration policy must serve the national interest of the United States, and the interests of American workers must be protected over the claims of foreign nationals seeking the same jobs. With all our fellow citizens, we have watched, in anger and disgust, the mocking of our immigration laws by a president who made himself superior to the will of the nation. We stand with the victims of his policies, especially the families of murdered innocents. Illegal immigration endangers everyone, exploits the taxpayers, and insults all who aspire to enter America legally. We oppose any form of amnesty for those who, by breaking the law, have disadvantaged those who have obeyed

it. The executive amnesties of 2012 and 2014 are a direct violation of federal law and usurp the powers of Congress as outlined in Article I of the Constitution. These unlawful amnesties must be immediately rescinded by a Republican president. In a time of terrorism, drug cartels, human trafficking, and criminal gangs, the presence of millions of unidentified individuals in this country poses grave risks to the safety and sovereignty of the United States. Our highest priority, therefore, must be to secure our borders and all ports of entry and to enforce our immigration laws.

That is why we support building a wall along our southern border and protecting all ports of entry. The border wall must cover the entirety of the southern border and must be sufficient to stop both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. We insist upon workplace enforcement of verification systems so that more jobs can be available to all legal workers. Use of the E-verify program — an internet-based system that verifies the employment authorization and identity of employees — must be made mandatory nationwide. We reaffirm our endorsement of the SAVE program — Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements — to ensure that public funds are not given to persons not legally present in this country. We demand tough penalties against those who engage in identity theft, deal in fraudulent documents, and traffic in human beings. The Department of Homeland Security must use its authority to keep dangerous aliens off our streets and to expedite expulsion of criminal aliens. Gang membership should be a deportable offense. Any previously deported illegal alien who continues to show a lack of respect for our borders and rule of law must be penalized. This is why we support stiffer penalties, such as a mandatory minimum sentence of five years, for any illegal alien who illegally re-enters our nation after already having been deported.

Because "sanctuary cities" violate federal law and endanger their own citizens, they should not be eligible for federal funding. Using state licenses to reward people in the country illegally is an affront to the rule of law and must be halted.

In light of both current needs and historic practice, we urge the reform of our guest worker programs to eliminate fraud, improve efficiency and ensure they serve the national interest. In light of the alarming levels of unemployment and underemployment in this country, it is indefensible to continue offering lawful permanent residence to more than one million foreign nationals every year. The Supreme Court has correctly recognized that states have the constitutional authority to take steps to reduce illegal immigration. We condemn the Obama Administration's lawsuits against states that are seeking to reinforce federal law. We support the right of the states to enact laws deterring illegal aliens from residing within their states.

From its beginning, our country has been a haven of refuge and asylum. That should continue — but with major changes. Asylum should be limited to cases of political, ethnic or religious persecution. As the Director of the FBI has noted, it is not possible to vet fully all potential refugees. To ensure our national security, refugees who cannot be carefully vetted cannot be admitted to the country, especially those whose homelands have been the breeding grounds for terrorism.

Reforming the Treaty System

We intend to restore the treaty system specified by the Constitution: The president negotiates agreements, submits them to the Senate, with ratification requiring two-thirds of the senators present and voting. This was good enough for George Washington but is too restrictive for the current chief executive, who presumes to bind this country to bilateral and multilateral agreements of his devising. His media admirers portray his personal commitments — whether on climate change, Iranian weapons, or other matters — as done deals. They are not, and a new Republican executive will work with the Congress to reestablish constitutional order in America's foreign relations. All international executive agreements and political arrangements entered into by the current Administration must be deemed null and void as mere expressions of the current president's preferences. Those which are in the national interest but would traditionally have been made by treaty must be abrogated, renegotiated as treaties, and transmitted to the Senate for its advice and consent as required by

the Constitution. The United States will withdraw from all agreements and arrangements failing those standards.

Internal Revenue Service

Many good civil servants work at the IRS, but the agency itself is toxic. Its leadership employs known tax delinquents, rehires workers previously fired for misconduct, spends user fees without congressional oversight, and awards bonuses for customer service that would put any private company out of business. Worst of all, the IRS has become an ideological attack dog for the worst elements of today's Democratic Party. It systematically targets conservative, pro-life, and libertarian organizations, harassing them with repeated audits and denying their tax exempt status. Its commissioner has lied to Congress, hidden evidence, and stonewalled investigations. He should be impeached by the House of Representatives and convicted by the Senate. We value the right of America's churches, pastors, and religious leaders to preach and speak freely according to their faith. Republicans believe the federal government, specifically the IRS, is constitutionally prohibited from policing or censoring the speech of America's churches, pastors, and religious leaders. We support repeal of the Johnson Amendment, which restricts First Amendment freedoms of all nonprofit organizations by prohibiting political speech. We also support making the federal tax code so simple and easy to understand that the IRS becomes obsolete and can be abolished.

Audit the Pentagon

No major part of the Department of Defense has ever passed an audit. Republican leaders in Congress have called for a full financial audit of the Pentagon to ensure that every dollar spent is truly benefitting our national security. Every taxpayer must be prepared to pass an audit, and we urge Congress to demand the same level of accountability from the Pentagon and the Department of Defense.

Improving the Federal Workforce

We recognize the dedication of most employees of the federal government and thank them for their service, with special praise for the whistleblowers who risk their careers to expose waste, fraud, and misuse of power. None of them should ever be compelled to join a union or pay dues to it. In fairness to their fellow workers, union representatives should not be allowed to engage in union-related activities while on the public's time. The inability of federal managers to discipline and, if necessary, dismiss problem staff members is an affront to every conscientious worker, as is the misuse of funds for lavish conferences and routine bonuses. The appointees of a Republican president will work with career managers to end those abuses and enforce high standards for all federal employees. We reaffirm the existing protections that provide all employees of the federal government the opportunity to pursue their desire to serve their country free from discrimination.

We call for renewed efforts to reduce, rather than expand, government responsibilities, and we urge particular attention to the bloated public relations budgets of the departments and agencies. The federal government spends too much of the people's money telling the people what they should do.

Advancing Term Limits

Our national platform has repeatedly endorsed term limits for Members of Congress. In response, the GOP Leadership in 1996 brought to a vote, in both the House and Senate, a constitutional amendment. It failed to secure the necessary two-thirds vote in the House, where 80 percent of Republicans voted for it and 80 percent of Democrats voted against it. Every Senate Republican voted to allow a vote on term limits, but the Democrats killed it by a filibuster. Blocked by that opposition, Republicans sought other ways to modernize the national legislature. They set term limits for their own committee chairs and leadership positions, and by law they required Congress to live by the same rules it imposes on others. To make further progress, to advance a constitutional amendment for consideration by the states, we must expand the current Republican majorities in both chambers.

Regulation: The Quiet Tyranny

Over-regulation is the quiet tyranny of the "Nanny State." It hamstrings American businesses

and hobbles economic growth. The Great Recession may be over, but in the experience of most Americans, the economy is still sick. The federal regulatory burden has been a major contributor to that stagnation.

The ability of the American people to govern themselves has been undermined by a vast array of agencies with sweeping power to regulate every aspect of American life. They legislate as if they were Congress. They decide guilt and issue penalties as if they were courts. They collectively impose many billions of dollars in costs to the economy. The current President and his allies on Capitol Hill have used those agencies as a super-legislature, disregarding the separation of powers, to declare as law what they could not push through the Congress.

The Environmental Protection Agency has rewritten laws to advance the Democrats' climate change agenda. The Department of Health and Human Services has ignored the enacted text of the Affordable Care Act to do whatever it wants in healthcare. Both the Department of Labor and National Labor Relations Board have scrapped decades of labor law to implement the agenda of big labor. The Dodd-Frank law, the Democrats' legislative Godzilla, is crushing small and community banks and other lenders. The Federal Communications Commission is imperiling the freedom of the internet. We support reinstating the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933 which prohibits commercial banks from engaging in high-risk investment.

Sensible regulations can be compatible with a vibrant economy. They can prevent the strong from exploiting the weak. Right now, the regulators are exploiting everyone. We are determined to make regulations minimally intrusive, confined to their legal mandate, and respectful toward the creation of new and small businesses. We will revisit existing laws that delegate too much authority to regulatory agencies and review all current regulations for possible reform or repeal. We endorse Republican legislation, already passed by the House, to require approval by both houses of Congress for any rule or regulation that would impose significant costs on the American people. Further, Congress should work towards legislation that requires removal of a regulation of equal or greater economic burden when a new regulation is enacted.

Because regulations are just another tax on the consumers, Congress should consider a regulatory budget that would cap the costs federal agencies could impose on the economy in any given year.

Crony Capitalism and Corporate Welfare

Cronyism is inherent in the progressive vision of the administrative state. When government uses taxpayer funding and resources to give special advantages to private companies, it distorts the free market and erodes public trust in our political system. By enlarging the scope of government and placing enormous power in the hands of bureaucrats, it multiplies opportunities for corruption and favoritism. It is the enemy of reform in education, the workplace, and healthcare. It gives us financial regulation that protects the large at the cost of the small. It is inherent in every part of the current healthcare law, which is packed with corporate welfare. Crony capitalism gives us special interest tax breaks, custom-designed regulations, and special exemptions for favored parties. The Solyndra debacle is a perfect example. It creates both subsidies and restrictions to tilt the market one way or the other. By putting the weight of government behind the status quo, it leads to economic stagnation. We applaud the Republican Members of Congress who have taken the lead in fighting crony capitalism and urge others to rally to their cause.

Honoring Our Relationship with American Indians

Based on both treaty and other law, the federal government has a unique government-to-government relationship with and trust responsibility for Indian Tribal Governments, American Indians, and Alaska Natives. These obligations have not been sufficiently honored. The social and economic problems that plague Indian country have grown worse over the last several decades; we must reverse that trend. Ineffective federal programs deprive American Indians of the services they need, and long-term failures threaten to undermine tribal sovereignty itself.

American Indians have established elected

tribal governments to carry out the public policies of the tribe, administer services to its tribal member constituents, and manage relations with federal, state, and local governments. We respect the tribal governments as the voice of their communities and encourage federal, state, and local governments to heed those voices in developing programs and partnerships to improve the quality of life for American Indians and their neighbors in their communities.

Republicans believe that economic self-sufficiency is the ultimate answer to the challenges confronting Indian country. We believe that tribal governments and their communities, not Washington bureaucracies, are best situated to craft solutions that will end systemic problems that create poverty and disenfranchisement. Just as the federal government should not burden states with regulations, it should not stifle the development of resources within the reservations, which need federal assistance to advance their commerce nationally through roads and technology. Federal and state regulations that thwart job creation must be withdrawn or redrawn so that tribal governments acting on behalf of American Indians are not disadvantaged. It is especially egregious that the Democratic Party has persistently undermined tribal sovereignty in order to provide advantage to union bosses in the tribal workplace. Native communities should have the same authority as state governments in labor matters, so that union bosses and the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) cannot undermine the authority of tribal governments.

Republicans recognize that each tribe has the right of consultation before any new regulatory policy is implemented on tribal land. To the extent possible, such consultation should take place in Indian country with the tribal government and its members. Before promulgating and imposing any new laws or regulations affecting trust land or members, the federal government should encourage Indian tribes to develop their own policies to achieve program objectives, and should defer to tribes to develop their own standards, or standards in conjunction with state governments.

Republicans reject a one-size-fits-all approach to federal-tribal-state partnerships and will work to expand local autonomy where tribal governments seek it. Better partnerships will help us to expand economic opportunity, deliver top-flight education to future generations, modernize and improve the Indian Health Service to make it more responsive to local needs, and build essential infrastructure in Indian country in cooperation with tribal neighbors. Our approach is to empower American Indians, through tribal self-determination and self-governance policies, to develop their greatest assets, human resources and the rich natural resources on their lands, without undue federal interference.

Like all Americans, American Indians want safe communities for their families; but inadequate resources and neglect have, over time, allowed criminal activities to plague Indian country. To protect everyone — and especially the most vulnerable: children, women, and elders — the legal system in tribal communities must provide stability and protect property rights. Everyone's due process and civil rights must be safeguarded.

We support efforts to ensure equitable participation in federal programs by American Indians, including Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians, and to preserve their culture and languages that we consider to be national treasures. Lastly, we recognize that American Indians have responded to the call for military service in percentage numbers far greater than have other groups of Americans. We honor that commitment, loyalty, and sacrifice of all American Indians serving in the military today and in years past and will ensure that all veterans and their families receive the care and respect they have earned through their loyal service to America.

Americans in the Territories

Throughout the history of our nation, the patriotism exhibited by our brothers and sisters in the territories of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico has often gone unacknowledged. Year after year, the citizens quietly, without fanfare, send their sons and daughters into the U.S. Armed Services. We honor the extraordinary sacrifices of the men and women of the territories who protect our freedom through their service in the U.S. Armed Forces. Geographically, the territories and commonwealths, especially those in the Pacific, are of vital importance to our national secu-

rity as the outermost line of defense and gateway to America against potential encroachment by foreign powers. We welcome their greater participation in all aspects of the political process and affirm their right to seek the full extension of the Constitution with all the rights and responsibilities that entails.

We recognize the challenges facing all the U.S. territories in an era of dramatic global economic change. They need venture capital to retain existing industries and develop new ones. A stronger private sector can reduce dependence on public employment and lead toward self-sufficiency. Their development of local energy options will be crucial to reduce dependence on costly imported fuel.

The territories' economic stability and potential for growth must be considered in any trade agreements between the United States and other Pacific nations. They should be given flexibility or exemption from laws that increase costs for their populations, such as the minimum wage and the Jones Act concerning shipping. All unreasonable impediments to their prosperity should be removed, including unreasonable U.S. customs practices. Territories such as American Samoa should be able to properly develop their resources, including fishing, when jobs and the economy depend on it.

We call for the appointment of a commonwealth and territories advisory committee consisting of representatives from all five U.S. territories. The committee will be integrated into the president's transition team and be tasked with performing a holistic review of all federal regulations affecting the territories and commonwealths. We further call for the appointment of a Special Assistant to the President responsible for day-to-day interaction with the territories and commonwealths. This position will be the direct connection for the Office of Insular Affairs, the citizens of the territories and commonwealths, and the White House.

The Territory of Puerto Rico

We support the right of the United States citizens of Puerto Rico to be admitted to the Union as a fully sovereign state. We further recognize the historic significance of the 2012 local referendum in which a 54 percent majority voted to end Puerto Rico's current status as a U.S. territory, and 61 percent chose statehood over options for sovereign nationhood. We support the federally sponsored political status referendum authorized and funded by an Act of Congress in 2014 to ascertain the aspirations of the people of Puerto Rico. Once the 2012 local vote for statehood is ratified, Congress should approve an enabling act with terms for Puerto Rico's future admission as the 51st state of the Union.

Preserving the District of Columbia

The nation's capital city is a special responsibility of the federal government because it belongs both to its residents and to all Americans, millions of whom visit it every year. Congressional Republicans have fostered homeownership and open access to higher education for Washington residents. Against the opposition of the current President and leaders of the Democratic Party, they have established and expanded the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, through which thousands of low-income children have been able to attend a school of their choice and receive a quality education.

Republicans have been in the forefront of combating chronic corruption among the city's top Democratic officials. We call for congressional action to enforce the spirit of the Home Rule Act, assuring minority representation on the City Council. That council, backed by the current mayor, is attempting to seize from the Congress its appropriating power over all funding for the District. The illegality of their action mirrors the unacceptable spike in violent crime and murders currently afflicting the city. We expect Congress to assert, by whatever means necessary, its constitutional prerogatives regarding the District.

Since the Supreme Court's decisions affirming the Second Amendment rights of its citizens, city officials have engaged in a campaign of massive resistance by denying virtually all applications for gun ownership. The Republican Congress should be prepared, upon the inauguration of a Republican president, to enact legislation allowing law-abiding Washingtonians to own and carry firearms.

Statehood for the District can be advanced only by a constitutional amendment. Any other approach would be invalid. A statehood amendment was soundly rejected by the states when last proposed in 1976 and should not be revived.

Great American Families, Education, Healthcare, and Criminal Justice

American Values

We are the party of independent individuals and the institutions they create together — families, schools, congregations, neighborhoods — to advance their ideals and make real their dreams. Those institutions, standing between the citizen and the power of government, are the pillars of a free society. They create spaces where the power of government should not intrude. They allow Americans to work together to solve most of the problems facing their communities. They thus reduce the need for intervention by government in the form of more and bigger programs or a larger public workforce. They minimize decision-making by those who hold or are appointed to office. That is precisely why today's progressives distrust and seek to control them — because this is more than a conflict of ideas. It is a struggle for power.

Our society is at a crossroads. For several generations, an expansive federal regime has marginalized and supplanted the institutions holding our society together. No wonder, then, that so much seems to be coming apart now. The question is whether we are going to reinvigorate the private-sector institutions under citizen control or allow their continued erosion by the forces of centralized social planning. In that divide, the Republican Party stands with the people.

Marriage, Family, and Society

Foremost among those institutions is the American family. It is the foundation of civil society, and the cornerstone of the family is natural marriage, the union of one man and one woman. Its daily lessons — cooperation, patience, mutual respect, responsibility, self-reliance — are fundamental to the order and progress of our Republic. Strong families, depending upon God and one another, advance the cause of liberty by lessening the need for government in their daily lives. Conversely, as we have learned over the last five decades, the loss of faith and family life leads to greater dependence upon government. That is why Republicans formulate public policy, from taxation to education, from healthcare to welfare, with attention to the needs and strengths of the family.

It is also why everyone should be concerned about the state of the American family today, not because of ideology or doctrine, but because of the overwhelming evidence of experience, social science, and common sense. All of which give us these truths about traditional marriage: Children raised in a two-parent household tend to be physically and emotionally healthier, more likely to do well in school, less likely to use drugs and alcohol, engage in crime or become pregnant outside of marriage. We oppose policies and laws that create a financial incentive for or encourage cohabitation. Moreover, marriage remains the greatest antidote to child poverty. The 40 percent of children who now are born outside of marriage are five times more likely to live in poverty than youngsters born and raised by a mother and father in the home. Nearly three-quarters of the $450 billion government annually spends on welfare goes to single-parent households. This is what it takes for a governmental village to raise a child, and the village is doing a tragically poor job of it.

The data and the facts lead to an inescapable conclusion: Every child deserves a married mom and dad. The reality remains that millions of American families do not have the advantages that come with that structure. We honor the courageous efforts of those who bear the burdens of parenting alone and embrace the principle that all Americans should be treated with dignity and respect. But respect is not enough. Our laws and our government's regulations should recognize marriage as the union of one man and one woman and actively promote married family life as the basis of a stable and prosperous

society. For that reason, as explained elsewhere in this platform, we do not accept the Supreme Court's redefinition of marriage and we urge its reversal, whether through judicial reconsideration or a constitutional amendment returning control over marriage to the states. We oppose government discrimination against businesses or entities which decline to sell items or services to individuals for activities that go against their religious views about such activities.

Families formed or enlarged by adoption strengthen our communities and ennoble our nation. Private entities which facilitate adoptions enrich our communities. We support measures such as the First Amendment Defense Act to ensure these entities do not face government discrimination because of their views on marriage and family. We applaud the Republican initiatives which have led to an increase in adoptions, an achievement which should be recognized in any restructuring of the federal tax code. While the number of children in foster care has stabilized, teens who age out of that setting often are abruptly left to face the world on their own. We urge states and community groups to help these young adults become independent.

Thirty years ago, President Reagan commissioned a Special Working Group on the Family to study how government at all levels could be more supportive of family life. We urge marriage penalties to be removed from the tax code and public assistance programs. We invite all who care about children to join us in this proposal to ensure that all federal programs, in the words of President Kennedy, "stress the integrity and preservation of the family unit."

A Culture of Hope

We have been fighting the War on Poverty for 50 years and poverty is winning. Our social safety net — about 80 separate means-tested programs costing over $1 trillion every year — is designed to help people born into or falling into poverty. It rarely lifts them out. Its apologists judge success by the amount of money spent to keep people in the system. That is a cruel measurement. Republicans propose to evaluate a poverty program by whether it actually reduces poverty and increases the personal independence of its participants. The results are damning: intergenerational poverty has persisted and worsened since 1966.

This year marks another important anniversary; it has been 20 years since the landmark Republican welfare reform of 1996 broke away from the discredited Great Society model. By making welfare a benefit instead of an entitlement, it put millions of recipients on a transition from dependence to independence. Welfare rolls declined by half as recipients and prospective recipients discovered a better way to reach their goals. Best of all, about 3 million children moved out of poverty. Today that progress has been lost. Defying the law as it was plainly written, the current Administration has nullified any meaningful work requirement and made TANF a mockery of the name we gave it: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. This decision ensures that those families will remain needy and cut off from the economic mainstream of American society.

This is the progressive pathology: Keeping people dependent so that government can redistribute income. The result is 45.8 million people on food stamps and 77 million on Medicaid, plus another 5.7 million in the Children's Health Insurance Program. This is the false compassion of the status quo. We propose instead the dynamic compassion of work requirements in a growing economy, where opportunity takes the place of a hand-out, where true self-esteem can grow from the satisfaction of a job well done.

We call for removal of structural impediments which progressives throw in the path of poor people: Over-regulation of start-up enterprises, excessive licensing requirements, needless restrictions on formation of schools and day-care centers serving neighborhood families, and restrictions on providing public services in fields like transport and sanitation that close the opportunity door to all but a favored few. We will continue our fight for school choice until all parents can find good, safe schools for their children. To protect religious liberty we will ensure that faith-based institutions, especially those that are vital parts of underserved neighborhoods, do not face discrimination by government. We propose new partnerships between those who manage federal programs and those who are on the front lines of fighting poverty on the ground. We must

encourage their efforts to reclaim their communities from the culture of poverty. To advance this process, we urge greater state and local responsibility for, and control over, public assistance programs.

Education: A Chance for Every Child

Education is much more than schooling. It is the whole range of activities by which families and communities transmit to a younger generation, not just knowledge and skills, but ethical and behavioral norms and traditions. It is the handing over of a cultural identity. That is why American education has, for the last several decades, been the focus of constant controversy, as centralizing forces from outside the family and community have sought to remake education in order to remake America. They have done immense damage. The federal government should not be a partner in that effort, as the Constitution gives it no role in education. At the heart of the American Experiment lies the greatest political expression of human dignity: The self-evident truth that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness." That truth rejects the dark view of the individual as human capital — a possession for the creation of another's wealth.

Parents are a child's first and foremost educators, and have primary responsibility for the education of their children. Parents have a right to direct their children's education, care, and upbringing. We support a constitutional amendment to protect that right from interference by states, the federal government, or international bodies such as the United Nations. We reject a one-size-fits-all approach to education and support a broad range of choices for parents and children at the state and local level. We likewise repeat our long-standing opposition to the imposition of national standards and assessments, encourage the parents and educators who are implementing alternatives to Common Core, and congratulate the states which have successfully repealed it. Their education reform movement calls for choice-based, parent-driven accountability at every stage of schooling. It affirms higher expectations for all students and rejects the crippling bigotry of low expectations. It recognizes the wisdom of local control of our schools and it wisely sees consumer rights in education — choice — as the most important driving force for renewing education. It rejects excessive testing and "teaching to the test" and supports the need for strong assessments to serve as a tool so teachers can tailor teaching to meet student needs.

Maintaining American preeminence requires a world-class system of education in which all students can reach their potential.

We applaud America's great teachers, who should be protected against frivolous lawsuits and should be able to take reasonable actions to maintain discipline and order in the classroom. Administrators need flexibility to innovate and to hold accountable all those responsible for student performance. A good understanding of the Bible being indispensable for the development of an educated citizenry, we encourage state legislatures to offer the Bible in a literature curriculum as an elective in America's high schools. We urge school districts to make use of teaching talent in the business community, STEM fields, and the military, especially among our returning veterans. Rigid tenure systems should be replaced with a merit-based approach in order to attract the best talent to the classroom. All personnel who interact with school children should pass background checks and be held to the highest standards of personal conduct.

Academic Excellence for All

Maintaining American preeminence requires a world-class system of education in which all students can reach their potential. Republicans are leading the effort to create it. Since 1965, the federal government, through more than 100 programs in

the Department of Education, has spent $2 trillion on elementary and secondary education with little substantial improvement in academic achievement or high school graduation rates. The United States spends an average of more than $12,000 per pupil per year in public schools, for a total of more than $620 billion. That represents more than 4 percent of GDP devoted to K-12 education in 2011-2012. Of that amount, federal spending amounted to more than $57 billion. Clearly, if money were the solution, our schools would be problem-free.

More money alone does not necessarily equal better performance. After years of trial and error, we know the policies and methods that have actually made a difference in student advancement: Choice in education; building on the basics; STEM subjects and phonics; career and technical education; ending social promotions; merit pay for good teachers; classroom discipline; parental involvement; and strong leadership by principals, superintendents, and locally elected school boards. Because technology has become an essential tool of learning, it must be a key element in our efforts to provide every child equal access and opportunity. We strongly encourage instruction in American history and civics by using the original documents of our founding fathers.

Choice in 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. Empowering families to access the learning environments that will best help their children to realize their full potential is one of the greatest civil rights challenges of our time. A young person's ability to succeed in school must be based on his or her God-given talent and motivation, not an address, ZIP code, or economic status. We propose 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.

In sum, on the one hand enormous amounts of money are being spent for K-12 public education with overall results that do not justify that spending level. On the other hand, the common experience of families, teachers, and administrators forms the basis of what does work in education. In Congress and in the states, Republicans are bridging the gap between those two realities. Congressional Republicans are leading the way forward with major reform legislation advancing the concept of block grants and repealing numerous federal regulations which have interfered with state and local control of public schools. Their Workplace Innovation and Opportunity Act — modernizing workforce programs, repealing mandates, and advancing employment for persons with disabilities — is now law. Their legislation to require transparency in unfunded mandates imposed upon our schools is advancing. Their D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program should be expanded as a model for the rest of the country. We deplore the efforts of Congressional Democrats and the current President to eliminate this successful program for disadvantaged students in order to placate the leaders of the teachers' unions.

To ensure that all students have access to the mainstream of American life, we support the English First approach and oppose divisive programs that limit students' ability to advance in American society. We renew our call for replacing "family planning" programs for teens with sexual risk avoidance education that sets abstinence until marriage as the responsible and respected standard of behavior. That approach — the only one always effective against premarital pregnancy and sexually-transmitted disease — empowers teens to achieve optimal health outcomes. We oppose school-based clinics that provide referral or counseling for abortion and contraception and believe that federal funds should not be used in mandatory or universal mental health, psychiatric, or socio-emotional screening programs. The federal government has pushed states to collect and share vast amounts of personal student and family data, including the collection of social and emotional data. Much of this data is collected without parental consent or notice. This is wholly incompatible with the American Experiment and our inalienable rights.

Title IX

We emphatically support the original, authentic meaning of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. It affirmed that "no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." That language opened up for girls and women a world of opportunities that had too often been denied to them. That same provision of law is now being used by bureaucrats — and by the current President of the United States — to impose a social and cultural revolution upon the American people by wrongly redefining sex discrimination to include sexual orientation or other categories. Their agenda has nothing to do with individual rights; it has everything to do with power. They are determined to reshape our schools — and our entire society — to fit the mold of an ideology alien to America's history and traditions. Their edict to the states concerning restrooms, locker rooms, and other facilities is at once illegal, dangerous, and ignores privacy issues. We salute the several states which have filed suit against it.

Sexual assault is a terrible crime. We commend the good-faith efforts by law enforcement, educational institutions, and their partners to address that crime responsibly. Whenever reported, it must be promptly investigated by civil authorities and prosecuted in a courtroom, not a faculty lounge. Questions of guilt or innocence must be decided by a judge and jury, with guilt determined beyond a reasonable doubt. Those convicted of sexual assault should be punished to the full extent of the law. The Administration's distortion of Title IX to micromanage the way colleges and universities deal with allegations of abuse contravenes our country's legal traditions and must be halted before it further muddles this complex issue and prevents the proper authorities from investigating and prosecuting sexual assault effectively with due process.

Improving Higher Education

Our colleges, universities, and trade schools, large and small, public and private, form the world's greatest assemblage of learning. They drive much of the research that keeps America competitive and, by admitting large numbers of foreign students, convey our values and culture to the world. Their excellence is undermined by an ideological bias deeply entrenched within the current university system. Whatever the solution may be in private institutions, in state schools the trustees have a responsibility to the taxpayers to ensure that their enormous investment is not abused for political indoctrination. We call on state officials to preserve our public colleges, universities, and trade schools as places of learning and the exchange of ideas, not zones of intellectual intolerance or "safe zones," as if college students need protection from the free exchange of ideas. A student's First Amendment rights do not end at the schoolhouse gates. Colleges, universities, and trade schools must not infringe on their freedom of speech and association in the name of political correctness. We condemn the campus-based BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) campaign against Israel. It is anti-Semitism and should be denounced by advocates of academic freedom.

College Costs

The cost of a college education has long been on an unsustainable trajectory, rising year by year far ahead of inflation. Nationwide, student debt now exceeds credit card debt with average debt levels per student totaling roughly $27,000. Delinquency rates on student loans are now as high as they were on subprime mortgages during the housing crisis. Over half of recent college grads are unemployed or underemployed, working at jobs for which their expensive educations gave them no preparation. We need new systems of learning to compete with traditional four-year schools: Technical institutions, online universities, life-long learning, and work-based learning in the private sector. Public policy should advance their affordability, innovation, and transparency and should recognize that a four-year degree from a brick-and-mortar institution is not the only path toward a prosperous and fulfilling career.

The federal government should not be in the business of originating student loans. In order to bring down college costs and give students access to a multitude of financing options, private sector participation in student financing should be restored. Any regulation that increases college costs

must be challenged to balance its worth against its negative economic impact on students and their families.

In order to encourage new modes of higher education delivery to enter the market, accreditation should be decoupled from federal financing, and states should be empowered to allow a wide array of accrediting and credentialing bodies to operate. This model would foster innovation, bring private industry into the credentialing market, and give students the ability to customize their college experience.

Restoring Patient Control and Preserving Quality in Healthcare

Any honest agenda for improving healthcare must start with repeal of the dishonestly named Affordable Care Act of 2010: Obamacare. It weighs like the dead hand of the past upon American medicine. It imposed a Euro-style bureaucracy to manage its unworkable, budget-busting, conflicting provisions. It has driven up prices for all consumers. Their insurance premiums have dramatically increased while their deductibles have risen about eight times faster than wages in the last ten years. It drove up drug prices by levying a $27 billion tax on manufacturers and importers and, through mandated price cuts for drugs under Medicare and Medicaid, forced pharmaceutical companies to raise prices for everyone else. Its "silver plans," the most common option on the government insurance exchanges, limit people's access to their own doctor through narrow networks and restrict drug coverage, forcing many patients to pay for extremely costly medicines for their chronic diseases.

We agree with the four dissenting judges of the Supreme Court: "In our view, the entire Act before us is invalid in its entirety." It must be removed and replaced with an approach based on genuine competition, patient choice, excellent care, wellness, and timely access to treatment. To that end, a Republican president, on the first day in office, will use legitimate waiver authority under the law to halt its advance and then, with the unanimous support of Congressional Republicans, will sign its repeal. The Supreme Court upheld Obamacare based on Congress' power to tax. It is time to repeal Obamacare and give America a much-needed tax cut.

In its place we must combine what worked best in the past with changes needed for the future. We must recover the traditional patient-physician relationship based on mutual trust, informed consent, and confidentiality. To simplify the system for both patients and providers, we will reduce mandates and enable insurers and providers of care to increase healthcare options and contain costs. Our goal is to ensure that all Americans have improved access to affordable, high-quality healthcare, including those struggling with mental illness.

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, that price millions of low-income families out of the insurance market. To guarantee first-rate care for the needy, we propose to block grant Medicaid and other payments and to assist all patients, including those with pre-existing conditions, to obtain coverage in a robust consumer market. Through Obamacare, the current Administration has promoted the notion of abortion as healthcare. We, however, affirm the dignity of women by protecting the sanctity of human life. Numerous studies have shown that abortion endangers the health and well-being of women, and we stand firmly against it.

To ensure vigorous competition in healthcare, and because cost-awareness is the best guard against over-utilization, we will promote price transparency so consumers can know the cost of treatments before they agree to them. We will empower individuals and small businesses to form purchasing pools in order to expand coverage to the uninsured. We believe that individuals with preexisting conditions who maintain continuous coverage should be protected from discrimination. We applaud the advance of technology in electronic medical records while affirming patient privacy and ownership of personal health information.

Consumer choice is the most powerful factor in healthcare reform. Today's highly mobile workforce needs portability of insurance coverage that can go

with them from job to job. The need to maintain coverage should not dictate where families have to live and work. We propose to end tax discrimination against the individual purchase of insurance and allow consumers to buy insurance across state lines. In light of that, we propose repealing the 1945 McCarran-Ferguson Act which protects insurance companies from anti-trust litigation. We look to the growth of Health Savings Accounts and Health Reimbursement Accounts that empower patients and advance choice in healthcare.

Our aging population must have access to safe and affordable care. Because most seniors desire to age at home, we will make homecare a priority in public policy and will implement programs to protect against elder abuse.

Protecting Individual Conscience in Healthcare

America's healthcare professionals should not be forced to choose between following their faith and practicing their profession. We respect the rights of conscience of healthcare professionals, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and organizations, especially the faith-based groups which provide a major portion of care for the nation and the needy. We support 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. We support the right of parents to determine the proper medical treatment and therapy for their minor children. We support the right of parents to consent to medical treatment for their minor children and urge enactment of legislation that would require parental consent for their daughter to be transported across state lines for abortion. Providers should not be permitted to unilaterally withhold services because a patient's life is deemed not worth living. American taxpayers should not be forced to fund abortion. As Democrats abandon this four decade-old bipartisan consensus, we call for codification of the Hyde Amendment and its application across the government, including Obamacare. We call for a permanent ban on federal funding and subsidies for abortion and healthcare plans that include abortion coverage.

Better Care and Lower Costs: Tort Reform

Medical malpractice lawsuits have ballooned the cost of healthcare for everyone by forcing physicians to practice defensive medicine through tests and treatments which otherwise might be optional. Rural America is especially affected as obstetricians, surgeons, and other providers move to urban settings or retire in the face of escalating insurance premiums. Many Republican Governors have advanced the legal reforms necessary to reverse that trend. We support state and federal legislation to cap non-economic damages in medical malpractice lawsuits, thereby relieving conscientious providers of burdens that are not rightly theirs and addressing a serious cause of higher medical bills.

Advancing Research and Development in Healthcare

American medicine is poised to enter a new era of technological advance. Federal and private investment in basic and applied biomedical research holds enormous promise, especially with diseases and disorders like autism, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's. Just as we today take for granted wonders that seemed impossible a few decades ago — MRIs and CAT scans, robotic surgery, and in utero treatment — patients a decade hence will have care and treatment that will make much of today's medicine look primitive. Modern miracles involving genetics, the immune system, cures for deadly diseases, and more are in the research pipeline. This is the consequence of marrying significant investment, both public and private, with the world's best talent, a formula that has for a century given the American people the world's best healthcare. We are determined that it should continue to do so, especially as we confront new dangers like Ebola, Zika, Chikungunya, and antibiotic-resistant pathogens.

To continue our headway against breast and prostate cancer, diabetes, and other killers, research must consider the needs of formerly neglected demographic groups. We call for expanded support for the stem cell research that now offers the greatest hope for many afflictions — through adult stem cells, umbilical cord blood,

and cells reprogrammed into pluripotent stem cells — without the destruction of embryonic human life. We urge a ban on human cloning for research or reproduction, and a ban on the creation of, or experimentation on, human embryos for research. We applaud Congress' ban on the FDA approval of research involving three-parent embryos. We believe the FDA's approval of Mifeprex, a dangerous abortifacient formerly known as RU-486, threatens women's health, as does the agency's endorsement of over-the-counter sales of powerful contraceptives without a physician's recommendation. We support cutting federal and state funding for entities that endanger women's health by performing abortions in a manner inconsistent with federal or state law.

Putting Patients First: Reforming the FDA

The United States has led life sciences and medical innovation for decades, bringing millions of high-paying jobs to our country and helping Americans and people around the world live longer, healthier lives. Unfortunately, the continuously increasing burden of governmental regulation and red tape is taking its toll on our innovative companies, and their pipeline of new life-saving devices and drugs to our nation's patients is slowing and diminishing. The FDA has slowly but relentlessly changed into an agency that more and more puts the public health at risk by delaying, chilling, and killing the development of new devices, drugs and biologics that can promote our lives and our health. The FDA needs leadership that can reform the agency for our century and fix the lack of predictability, consistency, transparency and efficiency at the agency. The FDA needs to return to its traditional emphasis on hard science and approving new breakthrough medicines, rather than divert its attention and consume its resources trying to overregulate electronic health records or vaping. We pledge to restore the FDA to its position as the premier scientific health agency, focused on both promoting and protecting the public health in equal measure, so we can ensure that Americans live longer, healthier lives, that the United States remains the world leader in life sciences and medical innovation, that millions of high-paying, cutting-edge device and drug jobs stay in the United States, that U.S. patients benefit first and most from new devices and drugs, and that the FDA no longer wastes U.S. taxpayer and innovators' resources through bureaucratic red tape and legal uncertainty. We commend those states that have passed Right to Try legislation, allowing terminally ill patients the right to try investigational medicines not yet approved by the FDA. We urge Congress to pass federal legislation to give all Americans with terminal illnesses the right to try.

Advancing Americans with Disabilities

Under the last two Republican presidents, landmark civil rights legislation affirmed the inherent rights of persons with disabilities. Republicans want to support those rights by guaranteeing access to education and the tools necessary to compete in the mainstream of society. This is not just a moral obligation to our fellow Americans with disabilities. It is our duty to our country's future to tap this vast pool of talented individuals who want to work and contribute to the common good. For that reason, Republican leadership led to enactment of the ABLE Act (Achieving a Better Life Experience) and the Steve Gleason Act. The former, for the first time, lets people with disabilities maintain access to services while saving to develop assets. The latter, bearing the name of the former NFL player with ALS, provides access to speech-generating devices. In addition, our Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act will make it easier for students with disabilities to pursue competitive employment.

Persons with disabilities are nearly twice as likely to be self-employed as the general population. To encourage their entrepreneurship, it makes sense to include them in the Small Business Administration's 8(a) certification program, which opens up federal contracting for emerging businesses. Any restructuring of the tax code should consider ways in which companies can benefit from the talent and energy of their disabled employees.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has opened up unprecedented opportunities for many students. Congressional Republicans will lead in its reauthorization, as well as renewal of the Higher Education Act, which can offer students with disabilities increased access to the general curriculum. Our TIME Act (Transition to Integrated and Meaningful Employment) will modernize the

Fair Labor Standards Act to encourage competitive employment for persons with disabilities. We affirm our support for its goal of minimizing the separation of children with disabilities from their peers. We endorse efforts like Employment First that replace dependency with jobs in the mainstream of the American workforce.

We oppose the non-consensual withholding of care or treatment from people with disabilities, including newborns, the elderly, and infirm, just as we oppose euthanasia and assisted suicide, which endanger especially those on the margins of society. We urge the Drug Enforcement Administration to restore its ban on the use of controlled substances for physician-assisted suicide.

Ensuring Safe Neighborhoods: Criminal Justice and Prison Reform

The men and women of law enforcement — whether patrolling our neighborhoods or our borders, fighting organized crime or guarding against domestic terror — deserve our gratitude and support. Their jobs are never easy, especially in crisis situations, and should not be made more difficult by politicized second-guessing from federal officials. The current Administration's lack of respect for them, from White House intervention in local arrests to the Attorney General's present campaign of harassment against police forces around the country, has been unprecedented. With all Americans, we mourn those whom we have lost to violence and hatred. To honor their sacrifice, we recommit ourselves, as individuals and as a party, to the rule of law and the pursuit of justice.

The conduct of the Department of Justice has included refusal to enforce laws, stonewalling congressional committees, destroying evidence, reckless dealing with firearms that led to several deaths on both sides of our border, and defying a citation for contempt. It has urged leniency for rioters while turning a blind eye to mob attacks on peaceful citizens exercising their political rights. A new administration must ensure the immediate dismissal and, where appropriate, prosecution of any Department officials who have violated their oath of office.

The next president must restore the public's trust in law enforcement and civil order by first adhering to the rule of law himself. Additionally, the next president must not sow seeds of division and distrust between the police and the people they have sworn to serve and protect. The Republican Party, a party of law and order, must make clear in words and action that every human life matters.

Two grave problems undermine the rule of law on the federal level: Over-criminalization and over-federalization. In the first case, Congress and federal agencies have increased the number of criminal offenses in the U.S. Code from 3,000 in the early 1980s to more than 4,500 today. That does not include an estimated 300,000 regulations containing criminal penalties. No one, including the Department of Justice, can come up with accurate numbers. That recklessness is bad enough when committed by Congress, but when it comes from the unelected bureaucrats of the federal agencies, it is intolerable. The power of career civil servants and political appointees to criminalize behavior is one of the worst violations of constitutional order perpetrated by the administrative state.

To deal with this morass, we urge caution in the creation of new "crimes" and a bipartisan presidential commission to purge the Code and the body of regulations of old "crimes." We call for mens rea elements in the definition of any new crimes to protect Americans who, in violating a law, act unknowingly or without criminal intent. We urge Congress to codify the Common Law's Rule of Lenity, which requires courts to interpret unclear statutes in favor of a defendant.

The over-federalization of criminal justice is one of many ways in which the government in Washington has intruded beyond its proper jurisdiction. The essential role of federal law enforcement personnel in protecting federal property and combating interstate crime should not be compromised by diversion to matters properly handled by state and local authorities.

We applaud the Republican Governors and legislators who have been implementing criminal justice reforms like those proposed by our 2012 platform. Along with diversion of first-time, nonviolent offenders to community sentencing, accountability courts, drug courts, veterans treatment courts, and guidance by faith-based institutions with proven track records of

rehabilitation, our platform emphasized restorative justice to make the victim whole and put the offender on the right path. As variants of these reforms are undertaken in many states, we urge the Congress to learn from what works. In the past, judicial discretion about sentences led to serious mistakes concerning dangerous criminals. Mandatory minimum sentencing became an important tool for keeping them off the streets. Modifications to it 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.

The constitutionality of the death penalty is firmly settled by its explicit mention in the Fifth Amendment. With the murder rate soaring in our great cities, we condemn the Supreme Court's erosion of the right of the people to enact capital punishment in their states. In solidarity with those who protect us, we call for mandatory prison time for all assaults involving serious injury to law enforcement officers.

We call on the Congress to make the federal courts a model for the rest of the country in protecting the rights of victims and their families. They should 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 established under President Reagan for that sole purpose.

Public officials must regain control of their correctional institutions, some of which have become ethnic and racial battlegrounds. Persons jailed for whatever cause should be protected against cruel or degrading treatment by other inmates. Courts should not tie the hands of prison officials in dealing with these problems. We encourage states to offer opportunities for literacy and vocational education to prepare prisoners for release to the community. Breaking the cycle of crime begins with the children of those who are prisoners. Deprived of a parent through no fault of their own, youngsters from these families should be a special concern of our schools, social services, and religious institutions.

The internet must not become a safe haven for predators. Pornography, with its harmful effects, especially on children, has become a public health crisis that is destroying the lives of millions. We encourage states to continue to fight this public menace and pledge our commitment to children's safety and well-being. We applaud the social networking sites that bar sex offenders from participation. We urge energetic prosecution of child pornography, which is closely linked to human trafficking.

Combatting Drug Abuse

The progress made over the last three decades against drug abuse is eroding, whether for cultural reasons or for lack of national leadership. In many jurisdictions, marijuana is virtually legalized despite its illegality under federal law. At the other end of the drug spectrum, heroin use nearly doubled from 2003 to 2013, while deaths from heroin have quadrupled. All this highlights the continuing conflicts and contradictions in public attitudes and public policy toward illegal substances. Congress and a new administration should consider the long-range implications of these trends for public health and safety and prepare to deal with the problematic consequences.

The misuse of prescription painkillers — opioids — is a related problem. Heroin and opioid abuse touches our communities, our homes, and our families in ways that have grave effects on Americans in every community. With a quadrupling of both their sales and their overdose deaths, the opioid crisis is ravaging communities all over the country, often hitting rural areas harder than urban. Because over-prescription of drugs is such a large part of the problem, Republican legislation now allows Medicare Part D and Medicare Advantage plans to limit patients to a single pharmacy. Congressional Republicans have also called upon the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to ensure that no physician will be penalized for limiting opioid prescriptions. We look for expeditious agreement between the House and Senate on the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, which addresses the opioid epidemic from both the demand and supply sides of the problem.

America Resurgent

A Dangerous World

Alexander Hamilton wrote in Federalist 23 that the first of the "principal" constitutional obligations of the federal government is to provide for the "common defense" of the United States, and President George Washington wisely reminded us that "To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace."

After nearly eight years of a Democratic Commander-in-Chief who has frequently placed strategic and ideological limitations and shackles on our military, our enemies have been emboldened and our national security is at great risk. Our country faces a national security crisis, and only by electing a Republican to the White House will we restore law and order to our land and safety to our citizens.

We are the party of peace through strength. We believe that American exceptionalism — the notion that our ideas and principles as a nation give us a unique place of moral leadership in the world — requires the United States to retake its natural position as leader of the free world.

Tyranny and injustice thrive when America is weakened. The oppressed have no greater ally than a confident and determined United States, backed by the strongest military on the planet.

Quite simply, the Republican Party is committed to rebuilding the U.S. military into the strongest on earth, with vast superiority over any other nation or group of nations in the world. We face a dangerous world, and we believe in a resurgent America.

In all of our country's history, there is no parallel to what President Obama and his former Secretary of State have done to weaken our nation. Our aging naval capabilities are inadequate for their job. The Air Force fields the smallest and oldest force of combat aircraft in its history. The Marines have only two-thirds the number of battalions they have historically needed to meet day to day operational demands. The Army is at its lowest troop levels since before World War II. Our U.S. Ambassador and American personnel were left without adequate security or backup halfway across the world in Benghazi. In summary, we have returned to the hollow force days of Jimmy Carter.

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Also neglected are our strategic forces, especially the development and deployment of ballistic missile defenses. The Ground-Based Midcourse Defense system has been delayed and underfunded. To curry favor with Russia, defense installations in Poland and the Czech Republic have been neutralized and the number of planned interceptors in Alaska has been reduced. A New START agreement (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty), so weak in verification and definitions that it is virtually impossible to prove a violation, has allowed Russia to build up its nuclear arsenal while reducing ours. Meanwhile Moscow has repeatedly violated the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty (a treaty agreeing to the elimination of land-based mid-range nuclear missiles) with impunity, covertly testing missiles banned under that agreement.

In the international arena, a weak Administration has invited aggression. The results of the Administration's unilateral approach to disarmament are already clear: An emboldened China in the South China Sea, a resurgent Russia occupying parts of Ukraine and threatening

neighbors from the Baltic to the Caucasus, and an aggressive Islamist terror network in the Middle East. We support maintaining and, if warranted, increasing sanctions, together with our allies, against Russia unless and until Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity are fully restored. We also support providing appropriate assistance to the armed forces of Ukraine and greater coordination with NATO defense planning. All our adversaries heard the message in the Administration's cutbacks: America is weaker and retreating. Concomitantly, we honor, support, and thank all law enforcement, first responders, and emergency personnel for their service.

Confronting the Dangers

In the face of these threats, the first order of business for a Republican president and Congress will be to restore our nation's military might. Republicans continue to support American military superiority which has been the cornerstone of a strategy that seeks to deter aggression or defeat those who threaten our vital national security interests. We must rebuild troop numbers and readiness and confirm their mission: Protecting the nation, not nation building. The United States should meet the Reagan model of "peace through strength" by a force that is capable of meeting any and all threats to our vital national security. We will no longer tolerate a President whose rules of engagement put our own troops in harm's way or commanders who tell their soldiers that their first duty is to fight climate change.

A Republican administration will begin at once to undo the damage of the last eight years. We must move from a budget-based strategy to one that puts the security of our nation first. This means that our Republican president's strategic vision will include the development of a balanced force to meet the diverse threats facing our nation. Special Operations Forces are simply not intended to deal with the full spectrum of threats. We need a Reagan-era force that can fight and win two-and one-half wars ranging from counterterrorism to deterring major power aggressors.

We should abandon arms control treaties that benefit our adversaries without improving our national security. We must fund, develop, and deploy a multi-layered missile defense system. We must modernize nuclear weapons and their delivery platforms, end the policy of Mutually Assured Destruction, and rebuild relationships with our allies, who understand that as long as the U.S. nuclear arsenal is their shield, they do not need to engage in nuclear proliferation.

While immigration is addressed in more detail elsewhere, we cannot ignore the reality that border security is a national security issue, and that our nation's immigration and refugee policies are placing Americans at risk. To keep our people safe, we must secure our borders, enforce our immigration laws, and properly screen refugees and other immigrants entering from any country. In particular we must apply special scrutiny to those foreign nationals seeking to enter the United States from terror-sponsoring countries or from regions associated with Islamic terrorism. This was done successfully after September 11, 2001, under the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System, which should be renewed now.

Supporting Our Troops: Resources to do Their Job

We owe it to the American people and to those who fight our wars that we remain the strongest military on earth and be prepared to defeat any adversary under any circumstances on any battlefield, including land, air, sea, or cyber. Successive years of cuts to our defense budget have put an undue strain on our men and women in uniform. This is especially harmful at a time when we are asking our military to do more in an increasingly dangerous world. The U.S. defense budget has suffered a 25 percent cut in real dollars in the five years since sequestration. We support lifting the budget cap for defense and reject the efforts of Democrats to hold the military's budget hostage for their domestic agenda. Congress and the Administration should work together to approve military spending at the level necessary to defend our country. We must not be encumbered by decades-old, legacy procurement processes. America's incredible talent and ingenuity must be unleashed by modernizing the military procurement system and embracing competition among traditional and non-traditional suppliers. Competitive acquisition

and maintenance of weapon systems, including the sustainment and support of such systems, will benefit the U.S. economy, U.S. taxpayers, and most important, the American warfighter. Increased competition will enable new Department of Defense suppliers, particularly small businesses, to participate in the defense sector. That will promote new demand for skilled-labor jobs, while making the Department's procurement more cost-efficient. The increased agility and effectiveness will ensure that our troops are equipped with the right resources more quickly than our current procurement systems allow.

Supporting Our Troops: Standing by Our Heroes

With Republican leadership, the Congress recently passed legislation that begins to reverse America's military decline. The National Defense Authorization Act of 2016 begins to correct the shortfalls in our military readiness by reversing troop cuts, increasing investments in training and maintenance, and rebuilding facilities. It gives our troops the full pay raise to which they are entitled under the law and gives the next administration the ability to review operations and funding, make adjustments, and ask for more money if necessary. All this represents a sound start in supporting those who put their lives on the line in defense of our country, while protecting our national security in a dangerous world.

Military families must be assured of the pay, healthcare, housing, education, and overall support they have earned. In recent years, they have been carrying the burden of budgetary restraint more than any other Americans through cuts in their pay, health benefits, and retirement plans. About 75 percent of enlistees come from military families. We cannot expect that level of patriotic commitment to continue among young people who have experienced the way their families have been treated.

We must ensure that the nation keeps its commitments to those who signed on the dotted line of enlistment. The repeated troop deployments during conflicts in the Middle East have been unusually hard on all members of their households, worsening unemployment and underemployment among spouses. In many cases, they and their children have been at war for 14 years. We must strengthen existing programs that offer families readjustment information and counseling, and we urge states to help by providing job programs, license reciprocity, one-stop service centers, and education.

The burden of our country's extended military involvement in the Middle East has taken a toll on our service personnel. Suicides among our military — active duty troops, reservists, National Guardsmen, and veterans — are at shocking levels, while post-service medical conditions, including addiction and mental illness, require more and more assistance. More than ever, our government must work with the private sector to advance opportunities and provide assistance to those wounded in spirit as well as in body, whether through experimental efforts like the PAWS (Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemen) program for service dogs or through the faith-based institutions that have traditionally been providers of counseling and aid.

We support the rights of conscience of military chaplains of all faiths to practice their faith free from political interference. We reject attempts by the Obama Administration to censure and silence them, particularly Christians and Christian chaplains. We support an increase in the size of the Chaplain Corps. A Republican commander-in-chief will protect the religious freedom of all military members, especially chaplains, and will not tolerate attempts to ban Bibles or religious symbols from military facilities. A Republican commander-in-chief will also encourage education regarding the religious liberties of military personnel under both the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and the current National Defense Authorization Act.

Our country's all-volunteer force has been a success. We oppose the reinstatement of the draft, except in dire circumstances like world war, whether directly or through compulsory national service. We support the all-volunteer force and oppose unnecessary policy changes, including compulsory national service and Selective Service registration of women for a possible future draft. We reiterate our support for both the advancement of women in the military and their exemption from direct ground combat units and infantry battalions. We affirm the

cultural values that encourage selfless service and superiority in battle, and we oppose anything which might divide or weaken team cohesion, including intra-military special interest demonstrations. In particular, we warn against modification or lessening of standards in order to satisfy a non-military agenda imposed by the White House. We call for an objective review of the impact on readiness of the current Administration's ideology-based personnel policies, and will correct problems with appropriate administrative, legal, or legislative action. We reject the use of the military as a platform for social experimentation and will not accept or continue attempts to undermine military priorities and mission readiness. We believe that our nation is most secure when the president and the administration prioritize readiness, recruitment, and retention rather than using the military to advance a social or political agenda. Military readiness should not be sacrificed on the altar of political correctness. We oppose legislative attempts to modify the system of military justice that would undermine its fairness and due process rights for all concerned, both the accuser and the accused.

America has a sacred trust with our veterans, and we are committed to ensuring them and their families' care and dignity.

Citizen Soldiers:
National Guard and Reserves

Our Reserve and National Guard forces are national assets that must be nurtured in a manner commensurate with their role as America's sentinels. Their historic mission as citizen-soldiers is a proud tradition linking every town and city across America to liberty's cause. Since September 11, 2001, the National Guard has transformed from a strategic reserve to a fully integrated operational fighting force. The Guard has bled on missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans, and the Sinai. Today, more than fifty percent of our Guardsmen have combat experience. The Guard has demonstrated its value to the nation not only in war but during emergencies here at home such as Hurricane Katrina and Super Storm Sandy.

To avoid the overextension of our military, we support a larger active force and oppose the current Administration's cuts to the National Guard and Reserves. Those reductions are dangerous and counter-productive because the men and women of the Guard and Reserve tend to be older and more experienced than their active duty counterparts.

Guard and Reserve forces are currently deployed at historically high rates. The Army Reserve alone has soldiers in 30 countries. To its credit, the Republican Congress, by passing the National Defense Authorization Act, has moved to ensure these troops have what they need. That provision has triggered another veto threat from the Commander-in-Chief, even though the bill passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in both the House and Senate. He would have the members of the Reserve and Guard train on, and potentially be deployed with, equipment that is no longer used by their active duty comrades. We cannot tolerate this endangerment of both our troops and our national security. Therefore, we recommend a permanent line item for National Guard affairs, one that is not eliminated by the President and reinstated by Congress. The guard is too essential to our national defense to be a secondary decision.

Honoring and Supporting Our Veterans:
A Sacred Obligation

Our nation's veterans have been our nation's strength and remain a national resource. Their service to their country — as community leaders, volunteers, mentors, educators, problem solvers, and public officials — continues long after they leave the military. In the same way, our obligation to the one percent who defend the other ninety-nine percent does not end when they take off the uniform. America has a sacred trust with our veterans, and we are committed to ensuring them

and their families' care and dignity. The work of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is essential to meet our commitments to them: Providing health, education, disability, survivor, and home loan benefits, and arranging memorial services upon death. We heed Abraham Lincoln's command "to care for him who bore the battle." To care, as well, for the families of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, who must be assured of meaningful financial assistance, remains our solemn duty.

As shown by recent controversies at the Department, senior leaders must be held accountable for ensuring that their subordinates are more responsive to veterans' needs. The VA has failed those who have sacrificed the most for our freedom. The VA must move from a sometimes adversarial stance to an advocacy relationship with vets. To that end, we will empower the Secretary to hold all VA employees accountable and will seek fundamental change in the VA's senior leadership structure by placing presidential appointees, rather than careerists, in additional positions of significant responsibility. We cannot allow an unresponsive bureaucracy to blunt our national commitment. The VA must strengthen and improve its efforts through partnerships with private enterprises, veteran service organizations, technology and innovation, and competitive bidding to enable the VA to better provide both quality and timely care along with all earned benefits to our nation's veterans and their families. This will allow the VA to reduce the backlog and save immense resources all at the same time. Therefore, let us look to innovative solutions that allow higher quality VA care, reduce backlogs, and save immense resources all at the same time.

Our wounded warriors, whether still in service or discharged, deserve the best medical care the country can provide. We must make military and veterans' medicine the gold standard for mental health, traumatic brain injury, multiple traumas, loss of limbs, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Those injuries require a new commitment of targeted resources and personnel for treatment and care to advance recovery. That includes allowing veterans to choose to access care in the community and not just in VA facilities, because the best care in the world is not effective if it is not accessible. We will seek to consolidate the VA's existing community care authorities to make a single program that will be easily understood by both veterans and VA healthcare providers.

Like the rest of American medicine, the VA faces a critical shortage of primary care and mental health physicians. That's why there are long waiting times to see a doctor and why doctors are often frustrated by the limited time they have with their patients. This is especially the case with mental health care, which often amounts to prescribing drugs because there are not enough psychologists and psychiatrists to do anything else. Inadequate treatment of PTSD drives other problems like suicide, homelessness, and unemployment. This situation may not be quickly reversed, but a Republican administration will begin, on day one, to undertake the job.

As a nation, we honor the sacrifice of our fallen service members at the graves where we lay them to rest in national, state, and veterans' cemeteries around the world. In doing so, we make it clear that their ultimate sacrifice and service to our country will never be forgotten. As a party, we seek to honor their sacrifice and comfort their families by ensuring all veterans' cemeteries are adequately equipped and a standard of care established, using Arlington Cemetery as a guide, that is befitting their service.

The level of financial distress and homelessness among vets is a shame to the nation. For a veteran, a job is more than a source of income. It is a new mission, with a new status, and the transition can be difficult. We urge the private sector to make hiring vets a company policy and commend the organizations that have proven programs to accomplish this. We will retain the preference given to veterans when they seek federal employment. We urge closer coordination with the state offices for veterans' affairs, particularly with regard to expediting disability claims, since those closest to an individual can often best diagnose a problem and apply a remedy. We will halt the current Administration's unconstitutional automatic denial of gun ownership to returning members of our Armed Forces who have had representatives appointed to manage their financial affairs. We urge state education officials to promote the hiring

of qualified veterans as teachers in our public schools. Their proven abilities and life experiences will make them more successful instructors and role models for students than would any teaching certification.

Over-prescription of opioids has become a nationwide problem hindering the treatment of veterans suffering from mental health issues. We therefore support the need to explore new and broader ranges of options, including faith-based programs, that will better serve the veteran and reduce the need to rely on drugs as the sole treatment.

America: The Indispensable Nation

For the last several generations, our country's two major political parties were dedicated to the nation's security and the advance of freedom around the world. Both had learned from mistakes of the past and realized that a weak America invited aggression. Both recognized the need to stand with friends and oppose those who wished us evil. Whatever their disagreements, both the Republican and Democratic parties stood for peace through strength — and strength meant American military superiority.

This bipartisan commitment has tragically changed. The leadership of the Democratic Party, both those in office and those who seek it, no longer see America as a force for good in the world. They do not stand by allies or stand strong against our foes. They pander to world opinion and neglect the national interest. They cannot be trusted to advance either the cause of liberty or our national security in the dangerous years in which we live.

We affirm our party's tradition of world leadership established by President Eisenhower and followed by every Republican president since. It stands for enormous power — and the prudence to use it sparingly, precisely, and only in grave necessity. It stands for involvement, not intervention. It requires consultation, not permission to act. It leads from the front — and ensures all others do their parts as well. It embraces American exceptionalism and rejects the false prophets of decline and diminution. It is, in sum, the way we will lead the world into a new century of greater peace and prosperity — another American Century.

Challenges of a Changing Middle East

The Middle East is more dangerous now than at any time since the Second World War. Whatever their disagreements, presidents of both parties had always prioritized America's national interests, the trust of friendly governments, and the security of Israel. That sound consensus was replaced with impotent grandstanding on the part of the current President and his Secretaries of State. The results have been ruinous for all parties except Islamic terrorists and their Iranian and other sponsors.

We consider the Administration's deal with Iran, to lift international sanctions and make hundreds of billions of dollars available to the Mullahs, a personal agreement between the President and his negotiating partners and non-binding on the next president. Without a two-thirds endorsement by the Senate, it does not have treaty status. Because of it, the defiant and emboldened regime in Tehran continues to sponsor terrorism across the region, develop a nuclear weapon, test-fire ballistic missiles inscribed with "Death to Israel," and abuse the basic human rights of its citizens. A Republican president will not be bound by it. We must retain all options in dealing with a situation that gravely threatens our security, our interests, and the survival of our friends.

Over the last four years we have seen the rise of a murderous fanaticism in the form of ISIS, the so called Islamic State. Its reach now extends far beyond the Middle East to virtually every continent. ISIS has brought ancient butchery into the 21st century. Nations are imploding, erasing long-established borders. The Obama Administration and its Secretary of State so mishandled the Arab Spring that it destabilized the entire region. The hope some saw in the Arab Spring has transformed into disappointment. The dictator of Syria, Bashar Assad, has murdered hundreds of thousands of his own people and created millions of refugees, and an American president has been unable to rally the world against him. Understandably, our allies fear for their future in a region far more dangerous than it was eight years ago.

A Republican administration will restore our nation's credibility. We must stand up for our friends, challenge our foes, and destroy ISIS. Hezbollah, controlling over 100,000 missiles in Lebanon, must be isolated and Lebanon's independence restored.

We will support the transition to a post-Assad Syrian government that is representative of its people, protects the rights of all minorities and religions, respects the territorial integrity of its neighbors, and contributes to peace and stability in the region. The Iraqi people have been on the front lines in the fight against terror. Hundreds of thousands have been killed, and the attacks against them continue, even in Baghdad. Our partnership with them should continue as long as ISIS and others like it survive in the region. We are deeply concerned that, in the face of genocide against them, Christian communities in cities like Erbil are receiving no financial support from either the U.S. government or the UN to help with displaced persons and urban refugees. Their survival is sustained only by private charities. This must change immediately. Defeating ISIS means more than pushing back its fighters while abandoning its victims. It must mean aiding those who have suffered the most — and doing so before they starve. It means supporting the long-term survival of indigenous religious and ethnic communities, punishing the perpetrators of crimes against humanity, and conditioning humanitarian and military assistance to governments on their observable commitment to human rights.

We continue to support the Kurdish people, whose bravery and cooperation with our forces merit our respect and their autonomy. Many countries in the region have given, and continue to give, substantial assistance to the United States because they understand that our struggle against terrorism is not an ethnic or religious fight. They consider violent extremists to be abusers of their faith, not its champions. We applaud their courage and value their counsel. The U.S. government, together with its global partners, should mobilize its political, economic, and military assets to support the creation of a safe haven in northern Iraq to protect those ethnic and religious minorities continuing to face genocide at the hands of ISIS.

Our Unequivocal Support for Israel

Like the United States of America, the modern state of Israel is a country born from the aspiration for freedom and stands out among the nations as a beacon of democracy and humanity. Beyond our mutual strategic interests, Israel is likewise an exceptional country that shares our most essential values. It is the only country in the Middle East where freedom of speech and freedom of religion are found. Therefore, support for Israel is an expression of Americanism, and it is the responsibility of our government to advance policies that reflect Americans' strong desire for a relationship with no daylight between America and Israel. We recognize Jerusalem as the eternal and indivisible capital of the Jewish state and call for the American embassy to be moved there in fulfillment of U.S. law.

It is the responsibility of our government to advance policies that reflect Americans' strong desire for a relationship with no daylight between America and Israel.

We reaffirm America's commitment to Israel's security and will ensure that Israel maintains a qualitative military edge over any and all adversaries. We support Israel's right and obligation to defend itself against terror attacks upon its people and against alternative forms of warfare being waged upon it legally, economically, culturally, and otherwise. 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.

The United States seeks to assist in the establishment of comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, to be negotiated among those living in the region. We oppose any measures intended to impose an agreement or to dictate borders or other terms, and we call for the immediate termination of all U.S. funding of any entity that attempts to do so. Our party is proud to stand with Israel now and always.

U.S. Leadership in the Asian Pacific

We are a Pacific nation with economic, military, and cultural ties to all the countries of the oceanic rim and treaty alliances with Japan, South Korea, Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand. With them, we look toward the establishment of human rights for the people of North Korea. We urge the government of China to recognize the inevitability of change in the Kim family's slave state and, for everyone's safety against nuclear disaster, to hasten positive change on the Korean peninsula. The United States will continue to demand the complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear weapons program with full accounting of its proliferation activities. We also pledge to counter any threats from the North Korean regime.

We salute the people of Taiwan, with whom we share the values of democracy, human rights, a free market economy, and the rule of law. Our relations will continue to be based upon the provisions of the Taiwan Relations Act, and we affirm the Six Assurances given to Taiwan in 1982 by President Reagan. We oppose any unilateral steps by either side to alter the status quo in the Taiwan Straits on the principle that all issues regarding the island's future must be resolved peacefully, through dialogue, and be agreeable to the people of Taiwan. If China were to violate those principles, the United States, in accord with the Taiwan Relations Act, will help Taiwan defend itself. We praise efforts by the new government in Taipei to continue constructive relations across the Taiwan Strait and call on China to reciprocate. As a loyal friend of America, Taiwan has merited our strong support, including free trade agreement status, the timely sale of defensive arms including technology to build diesel submarines, and full participation in the World Health Organization, International Civil Aviation Organization, and other multilateral institutions.

China's behavior has negated the optimistic language of our last platform concerning our future relations with China. The liberalizing policies of recent decades have been abruptly reversed, dissent brutally crushed, religious persecution heightened, the internet crippled, a barbaric population control two-child policy of forced abortions and forced sterilizations continued, and the cult of Mao revived. Critics of the regime have been kidnapped by its agents in foreign countries. To distract the populace from its increasing economic problems and, more importantly, to expand its military might, the government asserts a preposterous claim to the entire South China Sea and continues to dredge ports and create landing fields in contested waters where none have existed before, ever nearer to U.S. territories and our allies, while building a navy far out of proportion to defensive purposes. The complacency of the Obama regime has emboldened the Chinese government and military to issue threats of intimidation throughout the South China Sea, not to mention parading their new missile, "the Guam Killer," down the main streets of Beijing, a direct shot at Guam as America's first line of defense. Meanwhile, cultural genocide continues in Tibet and Xinjiang, the promised autonomy of Hong Kong is eroded, the currency is manipulated, our technology is stolen, and intellectual property and copyrights are mocked in an economy based on piracy. In business terms, this is not competition; it is a hostile takeover. For any American company to abet those offenses, especially governmental censorship and tracking of dissenters, is a disgrace.

The return to Maoism by China's current rulers is not reason to disengage with the Chinese people or their institutions. We welcome students, tourists, and investors, who can see for themselves our vibrant American democracy and how real democracy works. We caution, however, against academic or cultural operations under the control of the Chinese government and call upon American colleges to dissociate themselves from this increasing threat to academic freedom and honest research.

Most of the nations of Southeast Asia have set aside crippling ideologies and sought material progress in free enterprise and democracy. We congratulate the people of Burma on their emergence from authoritarian rule and urge their respect for the rights of their country's minority populations. Our improved relations with Vietnam — including arms sales — must advance efforts to obtain an accounting for, and repatriation of the remains of, Americans who gave their lives in the cause of Vietnamese freedom. We cannot overlook the continued repression of fundamental rights and

religious freedom, as well as retribution against ethnic minorities and others who assisted U.S. forces during the conflict there.

India is our geopolitical ally and a strategic trading partner. The dynamism of its people and the endurance of their democratic institutions are earning their country a position of leadership not only in Asia but throughout the world. We encourage the Indian government to permit expanded foreign investment and trade, the key to rising living standards for those left out of their country's energetic economy. For all of India's religious communities, we urge protection against violence and discrimination. Republicans note with pride the contributions to our country that are made by our fellow citizens of Indian ancestry.

Conflicts in the Middle East have created special political and military challenges for the people of Pakistan. Our working relationship is a necessary, though sometimes difficult, benefit to both, and we look toward the strengthening of historic ties that have frayed under the weight of international conflict. This process cannot progress as long as any citizen of Pakistan can be punished for helping the War on Terror. Pakistanis, Afghans, and Americans have a common interest in ridding the region of the Taliban and securing Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. That goal has been undermined by the current Administration's feckless treatment of troop commitments and blatant disregard of advice from commanders on the ground, particularly with regard to Afghanistan. A Republican president will work with all regional leaders to restore mutual trust while insisting upon progress against corruption and the narcotic trade that fuels insurgency.

Renewing the European Alliance

With bipartisan support, President Truman forged the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as an alliance of the western democracies. Its continued effectiveness is vital, especially in light of recent military challenges in Eastern Europe. With the American people spending on defense, per capita, four times the amount spent by Europeans, we demand, as we have in the past, that our fellow members of NATO fulfill their commitments and meet their need for greater investment in their armed forces.

Our historic ties to the peoples of Europe have been based on shared culture and values, common interests and goals. Their endurance cannot be taken for granted, especially in light of the continent's economic problems and demographic changes. We recognize with regret the increasing trend among many of our allies to move away from rights and liberties that Americans hold dear, especially freedom of speech. It would be a tragic irony if the nations of Europe which withstood Soviet repression were to now impose a form of it upon themselves.

We honor our special relationship with the people of the United Kingdom and are grateful for their staunch support in the fight against terrorism. We respect their decision concerning their nation's relationship to the European Union and pledge that, however much other international relationships may change, those who were first to our side in our hour of loss will always rank first in our policies and our esteem.

We thank the several nations of Europe that have contributed to a united effort in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. Their support and sacrifice in the fight against Islamic terrorism will not be forgotten. We applaud the ongoing reconciliation in Northern Ireland and hope that its success might be replicated in Cyprus. We urge greater coordination in economic and security affairs between the United States and the republics of Eastern Europe. We urge that Poland be granted visa waiver status and we support placement of NATO troops in Poland.

For the people of Russia, we affirm our respect and our determination to maintain a friendship beyond the reach of those who wish to divide us. We have common imperatives: Ending terrorism, combating nuclear proliferation, promoting trade, and more. We also have a common problem: The continuing erosion of personal liberty and fundamental rights under the current officials in the Kremlin. Repressive at home and reckless abroad, their policies imperil the nations which regained their self-determination upon the collapse of the Soviet Union. We will meet the return of Russian belligerence with the same resolve that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union. We will not accept any territorial change in Eastern Europe imposed

by force, in Ukraine, Georgia, or elsewhere, and will use all appropriate constitutional measures to bring to justice the practitioners of aggression and assassination.

We urge greater attention in U.S. diplomacy, trade, and strategic planning, to the nations of Eurasia, formerly parts of the Soviet Empire. Caught between their two authoritarian neighbors, their path toward democratic institutions has been uncertain. We urge our government and our allies to work toward the integration of the Central Asian republics into the global economy through foreign investment, which can bring with it market and political reforms and a firmer establishment of the rule of law. Those developments will not only improve the living conditions throughout that vast area but are likely to reduce the lure of the radical ideologies that already threaten the region.

Family of the Americas

Our future is intimately tied to the future of the Americas. Family, language, culture, environment, and trade link us closely with both Canada and Mexico. Our relations with both of these friends will be based upon continuing cooperation and our mutually shared interests. Our attention to trade and environmental issues will contribute to strong economic growth and prosperity throughout the Americas.

We thank our neighbors in Mexico and Canada who have been our partners in the fight against terrorism and the war on drugs. The Mexican people deserve our assistance as they bravely resist the drug cartels that traffic in death on both sides of our border. Their rich cultural and religious heritage, shared by many millions of our fellow citizens, should foster greater understanding and cooperation between our countries.

Our Canadian neighbors can count on our cooperation and respect. To advance North America's energy independence, we intend to reverse the current Administration's blocking of the Keystone XL Pipeline. Apart from its economic value, that project has become a symbol in the contest between the public's desire for economic development and the government's hostility to growth. We stand with the people.

We express our solidarity with all the peoples of the Western Hemisphere. Their aspirations for economic betterment and political liberty have deserved better from our government than its policies of the last eight years. The current Administration has abandoned America's friends and rewarded its enemies. A Republican president will never embrace a Marxist dictator, in Venezuela or anywhere else. The current chief executive has allowed that country to become a narco-terrorist state, an Iranian outpost threatening Central America, and a safe haven for the agents of Hezbollah. Now, with their country ruined by socialism and on the verge of chaos, the Venezuelan people are fighting to restore their democracy and regain their rights. When they triumph, as they surely will, the United States will stand ready to help them restore their country to the family of the Americas.

We affirm our friendship and admiration for the people of Colombia and call on the Republican Congress to express its solidarity with their decades-long fight against the terrorist FARC. Their sacrifice and suffering must not be betrayed by the accession to power of murderers and drug lords.

We want to welcome the people of Cuba back into our hemispheric family — after their corrupt rulers are forced from power and brought to account for their crimes against humanity. We stand with the Women in White and all the victims of the loathsome regime that clings to power in Havana. We do not say this lightly: They have been betrayed by those who are currently in control of U.S. foreign policy. The current Administration's "opening to Cuba" was a shameful accommodation to the demands of its tyrants. It will only strengthen their military dictatorship. We call on the Congress to uphold current U.S. law which sets conditions for the lifting of sanctions on the island: Legalization of political parties, an independent media, and free and fair internationally-supervised elections. We call for a dedicated platform for the transmission of Radio and TV Martí and for the promotion of internet access and circumvention technology as tools to strength Cuba's pro-democracy movement. We support the work of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba and affirm the principles of the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966, recognizing the rights of Cubans fleeing Communism.

Africa: The Promise and the Challenge

We recognize Africa's extraordinary potential. Both the United States and our many African allies will become stronger through investment, trade, and promotion of the democratic and free market principles that have brought prosperity around the world. We pledge to be the best partner of all African nations in their pursuit of economic freedom and human rights. The Republican Congress has extended to 2025 the African Growth and Opportunity Act, and President George W. Bush's health initiatives — AIDS relief under PEPFAR and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria — continue to save millions of lives. Peace Corps volunteers and U.S. Seabees teach and build in villages that know firsthand our country's idealism.

We stand in solidarity with those African countries now under assault by the forces of radical Islam: Boko Haram, al-Shabaab, and others like them. Their terror falls on both Muslims and Christians, on anyone who will not submit to their savage ideology. We urge governments throughout the continent to recognize this threat to their own people. We support closer cooperation in both military and economic matters with those on the front lines of civilization's battle against the forces of evil.

Sovereign American Leadership in International Organizations

There is no substitute for principled American leadership. Since the end of World War II, the United States, through the founding of the United Nations and NATO, has participated in a number of international organizations which can, but sometimes do not, serve the cause of peace and prosperity. While acting through them our country must always reserve the right to go its own way. We must not be silent about our country's cause. That is why we have long supported our country's international broadcasting to Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

Our continued participation in the United Nations should be contingent upon the enactment of long-overdue changes in the way that institution functions. American taxpayers, the chief funders of the U.N., deserve full transparency in the financial operations of its overpaid bureaucrats. We should no longer tolerate its managerial scandals, its Human Rights Council composed of some of the world's worst tyrants, and its treatment of Israel as a pariah state. The U.N.'s Population Fund has, from its origin, been rooted in no-growth policies that limit economic development in the countries needing it most. Its complicity in China's barbaric program of forced abortion led President Reagan to set a wall of separation — his Mexico City Policy, which prohibits the granting of federal monies to non-governmental organizations that provide or promote abortion. We affirm his position and, in light of plummeting birth rates around the world, suggest a reevaluation of the U.N.'s record on economic progress.

Precisely because we take our country's treaty obligations seriously, we oppose ratification of international agreements whose long-range implications are ominous or unclear. We do not support the U.N. Convention on Women's Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the U.N. Arms Trade Treaty, as well as various declarations from the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development. Because of our concern for American sovereignty, domestic management of our fisheries, and our country's long-term energy needs, we have deep reservations about the regulatory, legal, and tax regimes inherent in the Law of the Sea Treaty. We emphatically reject U.N. Agenda 21 as erosive of U.S. sovereignty, and we oppose any form of Global Tax.

To shield members of our Armed Forces and others in service to America from ideological prosecutions overseas, the Republican Party does not accept the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. We support statutory protection for U.S. personnel and officials as they act abroad to meet our global security requirements, and we deplore the current inaction of the Administration in that regard. Our service members must be subject only to American law.

Defending International Religious Freedom

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, an initiative of Congressional Republicans, has been neglected by the current

Administration at a time when its voice more than ever needs to be heard. Religious minorities across the Middle East have been driven from their ancient homelands, and thousands, there and in Africa, have been slaughtered for their faith in what the State Department has, belatedly, labeled genocide. The United States must stand with leaders, like President Sisi of Egypt who has bravely protected the rights of Coptic Christians in Egypt, and call 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. At a time when China has renewed its destruction of churches, Christian home-schooling parents are jailed in parts of Europe, and even Canada threatens pastors for their preaching, a Republican administration will return the advocacy of religious liberty to a central place in its diplomacy, will quickly designate the systematic killing of religious and ethnic minorities a genocide, and will work with the leaders of other nations to condemn and combat genocidal acts.

America's Generosity: International Assistance that Makes a Difference

Foreign aid must serve America's interests first. In today's world of complex challenges, international assistance is a critical tool for advancing America's security and economic interests by preventing conflict, building stability, opening markets for private investment, and responding to suffering and need with the compassion that is at the heart of our country's values. A strong commitment to international development and diplomacy, alongside defense, was a key component of President Reagan's "peace through strength" strategy. It can sometimes serve as an alternative means of keeping the peace, far less costly both in dollars and in human lives than military engagement. The Millennium Challenge Corporation, spearheaded by the last Republican Administration, has established a new model of foreign assistance that helps ensure taxpayer dollars are spent on projects that are effective, results-driven, transparent, and accountable. We must embrace this model throughout our foreign assistance programs and efforts as a catalyst for private sector investment to combat corruption, strengthen the rule of law, and open new markets for American goods and services in a competitive global economy. Foreign assistance programs must not only project the best of American values, but must work to create self-sustainability and leverage the resources and capacity of the private sector. Even more important is the overseas assistance — billions of dollars and volunteer hours — provided by America's foundations, educational institutions, faith-based groups, and charitable individuals. Their essential role in international development should be weighed in any revision of the tax code.

The advance of political freedom and entrepreneurial capitalism drives economic growth, catalyzes private sector development, and is the only sustainable solution to poverty. Over the last 50 years, the level of private investment overseas from the United States has eclipsed aid many times over. Our development strategy must build on recent Republican efforts to use foreign assistance to catalyze private sector investment and expertise in addressing global challenges that can build a more stable world and advance America's national security and economic interests.

The integrity of our country's foreign assistance program has been compromised by the current Administration's attempt to impose on foreign recipients, especially the peoples of Africa, its own radical social agenda while excluding faith-based groups — the sector with the best track record in promoting development — because they will not conform to that agenda. We pledge to reverse this course, encouraging more involvement by the most effective aid organizations and trusting developing peoples to build their futures through their own values.

Advancing Human Rights

To those who stand in the darkness of tyranny, America has always been a beacon of hope, and so it must remain. Radical Islamic terrorism poses an existential threat to personal freedom and peace around the world. We oppose its brutal assault on all human beings, all of whom have inherent dignity. The Republican Party stands united with all victims of terrorism and will fight at home and abroad to destroy terrorist organizations and protect the lives and fundamental liberties of all people. Republicans have led the way in promoting initiatives that have protected and rescued millions of the world's

most vulnerable and persecuted. Standing up for repressed religious groups, prisoners of conscience, women trafficked into sexual slavery, and those suffering from disease or starvation is not just consistent with American values. It advances important security and economic interests as well. A Republican administration will never say, as Hillary Clinton did as Secretary of State in 2009, that raising human rights concerns "can't interfere with the global economic crisis, the global climate change crisis, and the security crisis."

The United States needs a radical rethinking of our human rights diplomacy. A Republican administration will adopt 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. Republican policy will reflect the fact that the health of the U.S. economy and environment, the safety of our food and drug supplies, the security of our investments and personal information in cyberspace, and the stability and security of the oceans will increasingly depend on allowing the free flow of news and information and developing an independent judiciary and civil society in countries with repressive governments such as China, Russia, and many nations in the Middle East and Africa.

Liberty to Captives: Combatting Human Trafficking

As an estimated 21 million people worldwide are trapped in modern day slavery, we are reminded to be vigilant against human trafficking in whatever form it appears. We will use 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. Building on the accomplishments of the last Republican administration in implementing the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, we call for 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. We will highlight the need to stop slave labor, taking steps to prevent overseas labor contractors who exploit foreign workers from supporting military bases abroad or exporting goods to the United States. A Republican administration will strategize with partners around the world to prevent the demand for trafficking victims that makes exploitation lucrative and will prosecute sex tourists and domestic buyers to the fullest extent of the law. We will work 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.

America's continuing participation in the international campaign against human trafficking merits our support. The goal of our domestic anti-trafficking programs should be the rescue and safe return of victims to their homes, not creating a long-term dependency upon public support. We call for greater scrutiny of overseas labor contractors to prevent abuses against temporary foreign workers brought to the United States. The horrific deaths of smuggled workers on our southwestern border at the hands of drug cartels and other gangs highlight the need for total security in that region.

Facing 21st Century Threats:

Cybersecurity in an Insecure World

Cyber attacks against our businesses, institutions, and the government itself have become almost routine. They will continue until the world understands that an attack will not be tolerated — that we are prepared to respond in kind and in greater magnitude. Despite their promises to the contrary, Russia and China see cyber operations as a part of a warfare strategy during peacetime. Our response should be to cause diplomatic, financial, and legal pain, curtailing visas for guilty parties, freezing their assets, and pursuing criminal actions against them. We should seek to weaken control over the internet by regimes that engage in cyber crimes. We must stop playing defense and go on offense to avoid the cyber-equivalent of Pearl Harbor.

The Republican Congress has passed important legislation to advance information-sharing among entities endangered by cyber attacks. We will explore the possibility of a free market for Cyber-Insurance and make clear that users have a self-

defense right to deal with hackers as they see fit. It is critical that we protect the cyber supply chain to ensure against contamination of components made all over the world, sometimes in offending countries. Our own cyber workforce should be expanded with the assistance of the military, business, and hacker communities to better protect our country.

Protection Against an Electromagnetic Pulse

A single nuclear weapon detonated at high altitude over this country would collapse our electrical grid and other critical infrastructures and endanger the lives of millions. With North Korea in possession of nuclear missiles and Iran close to having them, an EMP is no longer a theoretical concern — it is a real threat. Moreover, China and Russia include sabotage as part of their warfare planning. Nonetheless, hundreds of electrical utilities in the United States have not acted to protect themselves from EMP, and they cannot be expected to do so voluntarily since homeland security is a government responsibility. The President, the Congress, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Defense, the States, the utilities, and the private sector should work together on an urgent basis to enact Republican legislation, pending in both chambers, to protect the national grid and encourage states to take the initiative to protect their own grids expeditiously.

Confronting Internet Tyranny

Internet firewall circumvention and anti-censorship technology must become a national priority in light of the way authoritarian governments such as China, Cuba, and Iran restrict free press and isolate their people limiting political, cultural, and religious freedom. Leaders of authoritarian governments argue that governments have the same legal right to control internet access as they do to control migrant access. A focus on internet freedom is a cost-effective means of peacefully advancing fundamental freedoms in closed and authoritarian societies. But it is also an important economic interest, as censorship constitutes a trade barrier for U.S. companies operating in societies like China with advanced firewall protection policies.

A Republican administration will champion an open and free internet based on principles of free expression and universal values and will pursue policies to empower citizens and U.S. companies operating in authoritarian countries to circumvent internet firewalls and gain accurate news and information online.

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