

2010 Platform for the Republican Party of Arkansas

Platform Committee:

Joe LeBlanc, Chairman

Nate Bell

Davy Carter

Ann Clemmer

John Eves

Jonelle Fulmer

Prissy Hickerson

Arlon Hickman

Dr. John Jucas

Collette LeBlanc

Charlann Reely

PREAMBLE

We believe the U.S. Constitution is the foundational framework for our government and we will protect and defend its precepts. We believe that the U.S. Constitution is a literal document and that it is as relevant today as it was the day it was written. We will not support any legislation that violates our U.S. Constitution.

We will protect and defend the State of Arkansas against any usurpation of its State's rights as protected by Tenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

We, as members of the Republican Party of Arkansas, believe the Platform should express the will of the people and provide direction to our elected officials. Therefore, we offer this Platform as our blueprint for government of the people, by the people, and for the people based upon the following principles and focused on some clear objectives and strategies.

Basic Principles:

- THE POWER OF FAITH IN GOD
- THE SANCTITY OF LIFE
- INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY AND INITIATIVE
- INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AND LIBERTY SECURED BY A LIMITED GOVERNMENT
- LOWER TAXES TO PRODUCE ECONOMIC GROWTH
- STRONG NATIONAL DEFENSE
- THE PERSONAL RIGHT TO OWN AND BEAR ARMS
- THE EQUAL AND JUST ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAW

Objectives:

- Unify the people as Americans and remove entitlements (or privileges) for special interest groups
- Oppose presidential appointments of special assistance such as czars without congressional oversight
- Reduce the size of government
- Promote national defense
- Enforce immigration laws
- Implement a balanced budget at all levels of government and eliminate deficit spending
- Strive for energy independence
- Develop measures that will enhance economic growth and employment
- Promote agricultural and rural development

Strategies:

- Ensure a quality education for all citizens
- Emphasize constitutional government which defines the role of the Legislative, the Judicial, and the Executive Branches.
- Make English the official language of the United States of America

- Review government agencies and justify their existence
- Eliminate duplication where the same function exists in two or more agencies
- Implement tax reform and fiscal responsibility at all levels of government
- Reform the Justice System to produce speedy trials with equal enforcement of the law applicable to all citizens
- Make use of technology to provide transparency in government and access by all people
- Maintain a vigilant watch for issues that affect human and civil rights
- Protect the basic family unit based upon marriage between one man and one woman

The vigilance and action of concerned citizens is necessary to protect against the erosion of these basic principles underlying our American Way of Life. We believe these principles will guide our Republican leadership and allow us to return our nation to greatness and influence in the world to establish sound justice, relative peace, respect for the individual, and harmony with our Creator.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT

The State of Arkansas is truly the land of opportunity with our abundant natural resources and proud, hardworking people. Although our state has weathered the recent economic crisis better than states without a balanced-budget requirement, we continue to underperform in economic and per capita personal income growth. As Republicans, we believe that such growth is achieved through fiscally conservative policies of low taxes and free market initiatives. Our vision for Arkansas is dynamic: It is rooted in free enterprise, liberty, freedom, and the belief that the individual is able to make the right decisions for oneself.

As Arkansas Republicans, we believe that our state's economy will be enhanced by the following measures:

1. A Regional Economic Development Plan should be developed to expand our state's manufacturing base and service sector jobs with new opportunities. We support the Arkansas Department of Economic Development for the purpose of more effectively attracting high-tech and high quality corporate employers to Arkansas and also strongly encourage the expansion of businesses already located in Arkansas.
2. Government must create an atmosphere that supports growth in every sector, especially the small business sector. Small Business is the catalyst that drives our state's economy. All levels of government must work to become more understanding of small business and work to meet the needs of small businessmen and women. Burdensome regulation and over-taxation must cease for small businesses in Arkansas in order for them to survive and flourish. We strongly support education and orientation of our youth in the free enterprise system with the goal of encouraging the next generation of business leaders in Arkansas.
3. As a political party, we recognize the need for additional emphasis in the area of economic development in our underdeveloped communities. Therefore, we support the development of progressive programs to facilitate business development and economic growth for economically distressed areas. We further believe that improving the financial standing of all our citizens will reduce crime and government dependency in Arkansas. We support initiatives that provide business management training and access to capital and procurement assistance to struggling firms.
4. We also support initiatives to create an "Ownership Society" which encourages an individual's ability to control his or her own resources to invest into entrepreneurial initiatives

(i.e., home ownership and individual retirement accounts).

5. As Republicans, we are proud to favor free and fair trade with our entire nation's trading partners around the world. We call on those nations with trading practices unfair to our country to open their borders to the many great products that can come from the state of Arkansas. In our pursuit of free and fair trade, we should never risk losing our nation's sovereignty nor blindly export jobs to other countries that are not equally receptive to our exports. Arkansas waterways, one of the great assets of the State, could play a major role in developing the state's economy. Developing the waterway infrastructure will allow us to attract manufacturing, distribution, and value-added companies. Due to our favorable mid-south location, we can become an import/export center for trade between the United States, the Caribbean, and Central and South American markets. We encourage legislative and financial support to the development of the inland waterways and related inter-modal facilities of Arkansas.

6. Considering the great appeal of our state to many people, we strongly support efforts to make Arkansas the destination state for retirees from all over America.

7. Technological advances must be maximized and incentives provided in order for Arkansas to prosper. This must be done not only in our schools and businesses but also in agricultural industries.

BUSINESS AND LABOR

The economy of our nation and well-being of our citizens depends on a strong work ethic. The individual worker has a cherished place in American society, which thrives when incentives are directed toward production.

We strongly believe in a free enterprise system that encourages and provides individual incentives for those wishing to achieve "The American Dream." However, we also feel that no business is too big to fail in a free market environment.

1. We believe the cornerstone of Republican philosophy is the belief that each man or woman is an individual who is responsible for his or her place in society. The individual is encouraged to work to secure the benefits of that society for himself or herself and for his or her family as well as for those unable to care for themselves.

2. We believe no person is owed a living; however, we do realize that there are some circumstances where individuals are not capable of earning a living wage. We support those incentives that enable persons to seek employment on a timely basis, with a goal of becoming self-sufficient.

3. We believe the business sector can properly function only if it operates using high legal and ethical standards. Employees should realize that no business can exist long-term unless it makes an adequate profit. A successful business/employee relationship depends upon mutual respect for each other and their ability to work as a cost-effective yet productive team.

4. We believe collective bargaining calls for reciprocal restraints. Federal law prevents an employer from coercing, interfering with, or threatening an employee for engaging in the right to organize and bargain collectively.

5. We believe employers should have the right to provide employees with relevant information

in response to information given to their employees during attempts by representatives of labor organizations to initiate the formation of a union.

6. We believe employees should vote by secret ballot when determining whether to accept union representation. We oppose current efforts to abandon this long standing practice.

7. We believe no employee should be forced to join or pay dues to a union as a condition of employment. The Republican Party of Arkansas supports the state's right-to-work law.

8. We believe the public has a responsibility to compensate civil service employees fairly; however, public employees have the responsibility to remain on their jobs even during contract negotiation disputes.

9. We believe, because the Republican Party advocates policies that reflect the country's basic principles of free enterprise and equal opportunity, it is in the public's best interest that government contracting be performed through full and open competition, regardless of labor affiliation. The presence of this free-market competition assures the tax payers and consumers the best possible job and product for the taxpayers' dollar. We oppose any government attempts to support anti-competitive market restrictions such as union-only requirements that discriminate against individuals, companies, or organizations based on labor union affiliation.

10. We believe government over-regulation of business destroys the competitiveness of Arkansas businesses and exports jobs from Arkansas to states and countries with fewer regulations. It is important that future government policies continue to recognize that incentives to work, produce, and invest are important keys to our economic future.

11. We believe immigration laws must be strictly enforced. Arkansas employers should not hire anyone without the required documentation. The Republican Party of Arkansas also believes that government at all levels should not reward those individuals that knowingly violate our established federal and state laws to enter our state. Cities and states should not provide "Sanctuary" to illegal immigrants.

12. We believe that government should be proactive in efforts to find and deal with illegal immigration. The Social Security Administration should identify any multiple uses of Social Security numbers and turn this information over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) within the Department of Homeland Security.

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Arkansas is a leader in agricultural production, and our producers are excellent stewards of the land on which that production takes place with respect to environmental quality and conservation. Our farmers are major producers of rice, cotton, soybeans, poultry, beef, and many other staple food products. Agriculture is Arkansas' number one industry and an essential part of a thriving Arkansas economy. Believing this, we support programs including:

1. Farm legislation that provides an adequate safety net for agricultural producers, promotes the unencumbered free trade of U.S. farm products in the global marketplace, and provides funding and/or tax incentives for producers to implement progressive conservation practices on environmentally sensitive lands.

2. The reauthorization of the Farm Bill to provide an adequate safety net for Arkansas' farmers.

3. Quality of life enhancements for rural residents. Arkansas has a large rural population aside from those in commercial agriculture. Many of these people are living in poverty. Education, healthcare, water treatment, and community facilities are often unavailable to people in these areas thus constraining their enjoying an adequate quality of life. We support efforts to ensure a healthy and vibrant rural America where local communities and residents have opportunities and the human and financial tools to reach their goals.

4. Protection of private property owners' rights. The Republican Party of Arkansas believes that protection of private property rights is paramount. In light of the United State's Supreme Court decision in *Kelo v. New London*, the Republican Party of Arkansas calls on the Arkansas General Assembly to re-define the definition of "public use" to ensure that private property cannot be seized by government entities for private development.

5. Legislation providing a comprehensive Entry-Exit system documented for the needed agricultural workers to supplement our own workers.

6. Efforts to educate the American public regarding specifics of the Farm Bill which in addition to supporting the farmers also includes other programs such as food stamps, school programs, WIC, etcetera.

EDUCATION

We recognize that although the federal and state governments have spent more and more tax dollars in the public education system, the resulting education often leaves students unprepared to join the work force or attend institutions of higher learning. We believe that all Arkansas children deserve a quality education. Recognizing that for a republic to work it must have educated citizens, we offer the following statements:

1. Parents have the primary right and responsibility for the education of their children. The state education system should support and stimulate that parental role. School choice made possible by scholarships or a fair and well-conceived voucher program should be tested on a pilot program basis. Educational programs should promote a range of choice, to include home schooling, charter schools, private schooling, virtual schools, distance learning programs, and choice among public schools.

2. School administration should be conducted in an efficient and cost-effective manner. The primary emphasis of the education budget should be directed at the classroom.

3. We support the Republican efforts to enhance recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers and to increase teacher salaries based on performance.

The Republican Party of Arkansas should be the vanguard of a concerted effort between parents, teachers, administrators, local school boards, the Arkansas General Assembly, and other interested parties to support teachers in their efforts to control their classroom environment through the establishment of tougher disciplinary measures and the commitment to enforce those measures. We support implementation of reforms that have made a proven difference in actual operations of schools.

1. School mandates should come from the local school boards, communities, parents, and state legislatures, not from the federal government. Legislation and funding should support

these goals.

2. All high school students should receive a high-quality core curriculum to include English, mathematics, science, geography, history, and computer science. We support learn-and-earn programs which can encourage students to earn income as they prepare for the work force while receiving valuable experience.
3. Accountability and evaluation of performance is the key to reform in education; values are the core of good education.
4. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees the free exercise of religion. We, therefore, support the right of the individual to pray in public schools.
5. We support Alternative Certification Programs to increase the number of qualified and caring teachers in our schools.
6. Sufficient resources should be available to assist low income students in their quest for higher education. Federal and State aid should be limited to legal residents of the State of Arkansas. We reject the use of public educational facilities and personnel to indoctrinate students in sexual matters of any kind. We believe that the choices available to young people in sexual matters are the proper realm of parents and their chosen faiths. We do not approve of the use of tax dollars in the advancement of any experimental, social, or sexual agenda which has not been tested and proven by centuries of collective wisdom to advance the causes of public health, civil order, and the well-being of children.
7. We promote both opportunity and responsibility for all. We must strive to improve the quality and accessibility of education for adults at every level to overcome the problem of functional illiteracy.
8. Teachers' time devoted to non-teaching duties during the academic day should be reduced, so that more time is available for individual student attention. We encourage more volunteerism, such as mentor programs, senior citizen tutors, parental involvement, and business partnerships within the public schools.
9. We recommend an evaluation of the organizational relationship of the Education Department, the Education Co-ops, and local school districts, to eliminate duplication of efforts and resources.

ELECTION REFORM

Goal: To promote awareness and understanding of Arkansas election laws, prevent ballot fraud, and conduct fair and honest elections.

Towards that end, the following is submitted:

1. Election laws must be vigorously enforced. Failure to comply must be reported to the appropriate authorities immediately.
2. In the spirit of a positive approach to ballot security, we support efforts to give assistance to all county election commissioners to better prepare their workers to efficiently perform their duties and to recognize any inconsistencies or irregularities in the election process.

3. We support measures that ensure public officials and voters adhere to election law. This will deter voter fraud, voter impersonation, and multiple voting by the same person. A government photo I. D. with current address at their polling place should also be required.
4. We reaffirm the role of the county election commissioners in the conduct of all elections including early voting. The early voting process should be handled similar to a normal polling place on Election Day, including bi-partisan staffing and training by the state certified poll worker trainer.
5. We strongly urge all Republican county chairmen or the selected designee on the election commission, to familiarize themselves with Arkansas election laws and the American Disabilities Act in order to implement them in every election.
6. We support the moving of Early Voting to a neutral location away from county premises staffed by trained poll workers and administered by the county election commissioners.
7. We support the current term limits law as initiated by the people.
8. Recall legislation should be enacted to give the Arkansas voters power to remove elected officials for abuses of power in office.
9. We support the Electoral College process as it presently exists and oppose modifications that would weaken or diminish its role in electing the President.
10. We support absentee ballot procedures being reformed to eliminate the abuse of absentee ballots by those who could actually vote in person.

TAX REFORM AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Tax Reform begins by electing qualified and trustworthy Republican candidates to office at every level of government to ensure effective and responsible management of our resources.

A. National Level

1. We are concerned over the deficit spending prevalent in our federal government; therefore, we support a Balanced Budget Amendment. We insist that our elected representatives pursue policies of fiscal restraint, limited government, and lower taxes. This will involve major cuts in federal spending, elimination of many "earmark" projects, and elimination of agencies and personnel where duplication is identified and where the purpose of such agency or personnel no longer exists.
2. Restore America's entrepreneurial spirit by eliminating the current personal income tax. We support a more efficient tax code that helps rather than hurts the economy.
3. We believe that if the current capital gains tax provisions are allowed to expire, the increase in capital gains tax will have a dramatically negative effect on investment activity and thus reduce economic growth.
4. We support reducing the maximum amount of Social Security Income subject to income tax from 85% to 50%. Social Security should be treated like any other retirement plan on which tax has been paid on the funds invested, and therefore only the gain on the investment should be

subject to income tax when received by the taxpayer.

5. We support the permanent repeal of death taxes which are double taxation applied against assets remaining after income taxes have originally been paid. Death taxes reduce the ability of families to be self-sufficient, and they encourage retirees to settle in states that have no death taxes. They are destructive of family farms and family-owned businesses.

B. State Level

1. Replace the State Income Tax by a more equitable method such as increasing the State Sales Tax. Everyone would pay the same percentage and would know they are paying their fair share for the government services available to all citizens. The maximum increase in State Sales tax would be limited to no more than 2 percent.

2. In the interim and before the personal income tax can be eliminated, we wish to make clear our position that we are opposed to income tax increases because they penalize creative economic activity. We support legislation that would eliminate all income reported on IRS form 1099-R (i.e. retirement income) from the state income tax. This would increase the attraction of Arkansas as a "Retiree Friendly" state, and retiree spending would result in an increase in sales and property tax revenues making this a revenue neutral change.

3. In the interim, we support the elimination of the Political Contribution Credit which is currently allowed when there is a State Income Tax liability (Ref Tax Form AR1800). It appears unethical, and even immoral, to allow tax money owed the state to be used as a political contribution. The amount may seem insignificant but the principle is proper and righteous stewardship of public funds.

4. In the interim, we support legislation to change the rules on "Deduction for Tuition Paid to Post-Secondary Educational Institutions" (Ref Tax Form AR1075) by treating all tuition paid to 2 year colleges, 4 year colleges, or Technical Institutes the same. The current rules allow a larger percentage deduction for tuition paid to a 4 year institution. The proposed change would result in all qualified post-secondary educational tuition being treated the same when itemizing deductions on the personal Arkansas State Income Tax Return.

5. We support the permanent repeal of death taxes.

6. We support legislation that will permanently dedicate all General Improvement Funds to critical state-wide needs such as Arkansas prisons, water resource development, highways, higher education, and other genuine critical needs, thus eliminating most pork barrel projects from state funding.

C. In General

1. We are opposed to all unfunded federal and state mandates, because they cause severe financial distress for state and local governments. We support reform of the state tax code to make the passage of all taxes dependent upon two-thirds of the legislators approving such change.

2. We support federal and state tax codes that promote marriage and the family. Believing that marriage is a divinely ordained union between one man and one woman, we do not believe that the state or federal tax code should allow individuals in a same sex union to file a tax return using the filing status of "Married filing Joint".

3. In conclusion, we call on Congress and the General Assembly to carefully weigh the costs and benefits of each and every action they take, and to use the best possible means to achieve the desired ends on which we all agree: To use the tax code to promote and encourage the creation of jobs, favorable economic climate for business, both small and large, and viable partnerships between government and the private sector which permit the effective transfer of technology and expertise for the general good. We support privatization of government services provided control of the activity rests with the government agency, and government agencies are free to bid. Arkansas is a beautiful state that has many fine attractions to bring visitors to our state. As Republicans, we support the expansion of the tourism industry and all efforts to promote tourism in our state.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

We believe that an effective criminal justice system must act swiftly, impartially, and with certainty to punish wrongdoers in order to deter crime. No alteration to the criminal justice system can be expected to significantly diminish criminal conduct until we fully acknowledge the related impact of failed liberal social programs that have proven to actually encourage and subsidize the destruction of families. Even a perfect criminal justice system will deter criminal conduct and maintain safety and order only when all families fulfill their absolute responsibility to instill certain values in their children. To restore effectiveness and public confidence in the criminal justice system, so that citizens of Arkansas can enjoy a free and open society and feel secure in their persons and property, we believe the following:

1. The Party should encourage ongoing alternative juvenile reform programs appropriate, including private sector programs for juvenile sex offenders and "boot camps" as a method of reforming first time criminal offenders as an alternative to imprisonment alone. We hold the belief that juveniles and adults be held separately.

2. Victims of crime should have a voice in the criminal judicial system, not just the criminals. We insist that victims' rights are protected as follows:

- Full restitution for the victim at the expense of the perpetrator
- Protection from intimidation or violence by the offender
- Notification of court proceedings
- Right to remain in court during trials and hearings
- Has a voice in the plea bargain and sentencing proceedings
- Notice of escape or release of offenders.

3. Reform the grand jury system by requiring the Circuit Judge of a county to convene a grand jury when 10% of those voting in the last gubernatorial election in the county sign a petition calling for a grand jury.

4. Construction of more prison space as needed and use of economic alternatives such as private prisons.

5. Local and state administration of prisons, with emphasis on both punishment and rehabilitation of prisoners.

6. Uniform and vigorous enforcement of the Domestic Abuse Act.

7. Meaningful reform of the probation system, with accountability and increased monitoring.

8. Reform and possible elimination of the parole process and furloughs for persons convicted of violent crimes.
9. Prohibit the use of public office as a shield from prosecution. We support revocation of pension rights or other benefits of public officials who are convicted of high crimes such as felonies or serious misdemeanors committed while in office.
10. Initiate a monitoring system to ensure and increase accountability in all phases of the judicial process.
11. We strongly believe that the ultimate solution to crime problems lie in individual responsibility and accountability.
12. The Party maintains that the priority of our prisons is the protection of society and the punishment of the offender.
13. Prisoners should be required to perform meaningful work in proportion to their skills and abilities.
14. No convicted felon should be given organ transplants at taxpayer's expense.
15. Capital punishment, when properly applied, is a deterrent to crime and should be used. It should also be done swiftly after the last appeal.
16. The Party believes an adult who commits forcible rape upon a minor deserves to be imprisoned for life without parole.
17. While we support legislation that is directed at protecting children from access to pornography on the internet, we strongly urge parental responsibility in this area.
18. We believe in the sovereignty of the United States of America and our judicial system. We do not support the use or referencing of foreign or international laws within our judicial system.
19. The present Sex Offender Residence Law covers level 3 and 4 wherein such individuals cannot live within 2000 feet of a school, day care center, or park. We believe the law should be expanded to include the level 2 offenders.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

America is a vibrant and progressive nation thanks to the free and open exchange of information that has been firmly established through more than two centuries of daily practice and the law. We enthusiastically uphold the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that declares, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

The Arkansas Freedom of Information Act of 1967 was among the first achievements of Governor Winthrop Rockefeller's administration. It is a tribute to Governor Rockefeller that for more than three decades this Act has opened the actions of all levels of governmental bodies to public view and scrutiny. We encourage strengthening this Act whenever weaknesses may appear. We also oppose any type of regulation that negatively affects the ability of Arkansans to obtain access to public information.

In order to more fully allow citizen access to public information and to assure accountability of public funds, we encourage state government to post all public financial transactions on the Internet in a searchable format. This has been done in a number of states, and Arkansas is lagging in the use of technology to enhance citizen access to public information and to increase accountability.

HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS

All Arkansans who believe in our goals of rewards equal to effort expended, freedom, justice, and responsive government are urged to join us, Arkansas Republicans, in promoting that human rights, civil rights, and due process be equally available to all persons without regard to race, ethnic background, age, gender, religion, or physical condition.

1. Bigotry has no place in our state. We denounce those persons, organizations, publications, and movements which practice or promote racism, hate actions, or religious intolerance.

2. We believe all Americans should have equal opportunity regardless of race, nationality, origin, gender, or creed.

3. The Republican Party of Arkansas believes that the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life, which cannot be infringed. We believe that all innocent human lives should be respected and safeguarded from conception to natural death. We oppose assisted suicide, euthanasia, genocide, infanticide, cloning, partial birth and all abortion, and embryonic/fetal stem cell research. The Party affirms its support for a Human Life Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. We endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children. We oppose using public revenues for abortion and organizations which advocate it. We support the appointment of judges who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of human life. We urge the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*.

4. We support state legislation that will ensure abortion coverage is prohibited from being offered in the state-sponsored health care exchanges and high risk pools created under the recently passed Federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

5. We commend those who provide alternatives to abortion by meeting the needs of pregnant women and providing adoption services.

6. The use of government dependency programs deters initiative and entraps generations in despair. We encourage education, training, and business opportunities that offer hope and independence. We fully support the Americans with Disabilities Act and the elimination of barriers in order to ensure equal opportunities for the physically disabled. We support federal and state welfare reform initiatives such as Welfare-to-Work to help break the cycle of poverty. We encourage private groups and faith based organizations to use their own creativity and initiative to explore private alternatives to government assistance.

7. We strongly support Second Amendment rights. The Republican Party of Arkansas fully recognizes the constitutional right of citizens to keep and bear arms. We recognize that people, not guns, commit crimes. We believe that it is the responsibility of all gun owners to safely operate and store their firearms. We believe there should be mandatory sentences for criminals

using a gun in the commission of a crime, or any other weapon or threat used to debase, wound, or kill an innocent victim. We call on governments at all levels to strictly enforce existing gun laws.

8. The RPA supports a national "right-to-carry" law for persons with concealed permits to travel freely on interstate journeys.

9. We deplore all forms of discrimination based on creed, race, color, national origin, gender, age, and disabling conditions. We oppose the use of race and gender-based preferences in the areas of education and employment, particularly those national, state, and local laws which are inherently discriminatory and use government power to promote racial and gender groups over others, which is anathema to the American experiment in democracy.

10. We support education and training for all citizens in job opportunities.

11. The Republican Party of Arkansas believes all Americans have the right to practice their religious faith free of persecution, intimidation, and violence. We acknowledge that the church is a God-ordained institution with a sphere of authority separate from that of civil government. Thus, churches, synagogues, and other places of worship should not be regulated, controlled, or taxed by any level of civil government.

12. We recognize the importance of the Declaration of Independence in American history and the founding of our country. We desire any reference to the Creator remain in this document, on public buildings, and in government sanctioned activities and further express the reference to "One Nation Under God" be retained in the Pledge of Allegiance and "In God We Trust" on our monies. We reject the contention that these phrases violate the First Amendment. We believe the statements regarding religion and morality made by our Founding Fathers are just as important today as they were 200 years ago.

13. Arkansas Republicans support the positions that permit the references to God in schools and especially at graduation exercises.

FAMILY VALUES

The Republican Party of Arkansas supports the traditional definition of marriage as a God-ordained, legal and moral commitment between a man and a woman, and we believe that marriage is the foundational unit of a healthy society. We believe in the sanctity of marriage and that the integrity of this institution should be defended, protected, strengthened, and nurtured at all levels of government. We urge the repeal of laws that place an unfair tax burden on families, including the marriage penalty tax. We believe that each individual family has the primary responsibility for its own welfare, including education, moral training, and conduct.

We believe that the traditional family unit provides an optimum environment to rear, adopt, or be foster parents to children.

HOMELAND SECURITY AND THE WAR ON TERROR

We believe the global war against terrorism is the transcendent challenge of this generation. We further believe that in the present day the enemy of Islamic Terrorism is as grave a threat to the United States as that of the international communist conspiracy in the twentieth century.

Furthermore, we believe that recklessly downplaying the nature and magnitude of the terrorist threat jeopardizes our liberty. Therefore, we support the War Powers Act and Active Anti-Terrorism efforts by our military forces and security agencies.

Consequences continue to mount as a result of eliminating many prudent and obviously effective policies toward home land defense and the prevention of terrorism. We support a Homeland security policy that knows our enemy, stops terrorists before they attack, and treats terrorism as a martial rather than criminal offense.

We support reducing the strain on our military by increasing the statutory level of our armed forces. We back the increased support of our veterans particularly with high quality government funded medical care.

We grieve for the brave men and women who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for their country. Their memory will live on in our hearts, and their sacrifice will never be forgotten or taken for granted. We recognize and appreciate the sacrifice of their families and our obligation to them. We oppose the acquisition of nuclear weapons by our adversaries, and support the Reagan philosophy of Peace through strength. This should be achieved by maintaining our country's nuclear weapons at a level capable of deterring enemy nations.

We are proud of the United States of America and the role our nation plays in spreading freedom around the world. We also realize that once we lose the respect of our adversaries, our liberty is in jeopardy. Therefore, we stand united against abusive dictators and threatening regimes. Furthermore, we believe that the United States should stand with our friends and allies around the world.

We believe that the enemy we face today in Islamic extremism is as menacing as the enemy we faced in communism some years ago. Furthermore, we believe that recklessly downplaying the nature and magnitude of the terrorist threat jeopardizes our liberty. Therefore, we support the War Powers Act and active anti-terrorism efforts by our security agencies and military forces.

We support the war against radical Islamic terrorists and nations that support them. We reaffirm our defense of religious freedom for all peaceful religions because this is the foundation upon which our country was founded.

We support the law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other emergency responders who are on the front line here at home.

We support the people of New York in their opposition to the plan to conduct the trial of Khalid Shaikh Mohammed in New York.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE

Despite the historic progress made in reducing illegal drug use in the United States (50% reduction since the late 1970's), substance abuse continues to threaten the strength of our families, communities, and work force. Arkansas Republicans support the balanced approach to fighting illegal drug abuse including tough law enforcement, effective drug education efforts, and drug treatment programs with accountability.

We oppose efforts to decriminalize or legalize harmful drugs including marijuana. We believe

that current medical evidence and research do not support the legalization of marijuana for medical treatment.

We strongly support a ban on the sale of K2 "Spice"- a packet of herbs coated with synthetic chemical that mimics a marijuana high when smoked. We urge the legislature to ban the sale of K2 in Arkansas due to its uncertain future effects on our population.

We support periodic evaluations of education programs for tobacco, drug, and alcohol abuse and further recommend increasing fees for multiple offenders. This increased funding will provide for additional programs or improvements in the existing programs.

In Arkansas, we applaud the recent successful efforts to restrict the precursor chemicals used in the manufacture of methamphetamine. Now, we recognize the greater challenge is the methamphetamine imported to Arkansas by national and international criminal organizations.

We applaud the recent designation of part of Arkansas as the HIDTA (High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area) program which will increase federal funding for enforcement efforts against these major criminal organizations operating in Arkansas. In order to more effectively partner with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, we urge a greater commitment of state police resources to counter narcotics efforts.

We support enhanced penalties for those who are found operating a methamphetamine lab and engaged in the distribution of meth.

We support proven effective programs such as "Operation Weed and Seed" which targets high-crime neighborhoods with a combined strategy of prevention and crime control.

We support the continued expansion of Drug Treatment Courts in Arkansas which combines effective treatment with accountability and has been proven to reduce recidivism among participants. We urge increased state funding of drug treatment courts.

We recognize that there has been a historic disparity in the sentencing of cocaine offenders. Those convicted of "crack cocaine" offenses have been sentenced to much longer prison sentences than those convicted of "powder cocaine" offenses. This difference has resulted in a greater incarceration rate for black offenders. We applaud the recent steps of the U.S. Sentencing Commission in reducing this disparity.

We support an effective state parole system that assures adequate supervision including drug screening. We also support an expansion of private sector efforts and community support for the employment of offenders who have fulfilled their sentence. This reintegration of offenders into society is essential to avoid recidivism.

IMMIGRATION PLANK OF ARKANSAS FOR 2010

As citizens of the United States --- a nation of immigrants --- the Republican Party of Arkansas recognizes the important contributions immigrants from all nations have made to the economic and cultural strength of the United States. We also believe that, as a nation of laws, the integrity of our immigration system is undermined by the flagrant disregard of our laws by those who illegally enter our country and those who overstay their visas.

We believe that the foundation of an effective immigration policy must begin by securing our borders. We recognize that to protect our borders the federal government must continue to

accelerate border security measures such as increasing the number of border patrol agents and greater utilization of technology and physical barriers.

Since it is estimated that 40% of the illegal aliens in our country are a result from overstaying a legitimately issued visa and the Immigration and Naturalization Service has frequently demonstrated the inability to process petitions for legal immigrants in a timely manner, we call for the federal government to reorganize this agency so that it becomes more effective and efficient in the execution of its assigned duties.

We also recognize that workers from other countries will continue to use every means to come to the United States as long as there are employers who hire them. For that reason, we support an employer verification system that will require the employer to verify legal status prior to hiring.

With this combination of effective border security, a comprehensive entry-exit system for foreign visitors, and an employer verification system, we are convinced a nation, as great as the United States, can secure and protect its borders from those who would unlawfully enter or overstay. This will restore integrity to the discredited immigration system that is vital to a prosperous America.

We also support a greater partnership by the State of Arkansas and federal authorities in the area of immigration enforcement. We are disappointed that the present Democrat Governor in Arkansas refuses to direct the Arkansas State Police to be trained and engaged in immigration enforcement under federal and state legislation that authorizes the partnership.

The State of Arkansas should also work to verify proof of legal presence in the country before the issuance of state identity documents such as driver's licenses. This is an essential requirement to the exploitation of identity documents by illegal aliens.

We support English being recognized as the official language of the United States of America. This does not preclude governmental use of other languages in documentation and forms. We oppose the printing of voter registration forms in any language other than English. As for the situation of millions of illegal aliens in our country, we believe that the combination of raids, deportation, cutting benefits, and enforcement immigration law by local police will remove the majority of illegal aliens from the State of Arkansas. We therefore support a concentrated effort to use attrition and enforcement to remove as many illegal aliens as possible without giving any path to citizenship or any other reward to those residing in the state illegally.

As for the situation of millions of illegal aliens in our country, we believe that the current deportation procedures make impractical a massive deportation. We support focusing deportation efforts on criminal aliens while granting renewable legal residency status, to those who have established roots in our society, meeting criteria such as worthiness, family ties, and payment of a fine.

We recognize that Arkansas is blessed with a growing number of immigrants that are working hard, fulfilling their obligation to community and country, and contributing amply to the social fabric of this great State. We support their efforts of assimilation into our state, our language, and our culture.

ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND ENERGY POLICY

Arkansas Republicans should take a leadership role in challenging all private business and citizens to protect natural resources and environment without further government regulations. The health and beauty of Arkansas and indeed all of America is important to us and future generations. We should encourage recycling to reduce waste, conservation of energy including the use of renewable energy sources, and choosing products which are not harmful to plants and wildlife.

We also support local, state and federal programs, and market based incentives to promote a thriving natural environment, enhancing quality of life, and advancing economic prosperity including:

1. Improvement of air quality.
2. Improvement of water quality and conservation of wetlands.
3. Hazardous waste site cleanup and redevelopment.
4. Promotion of land conservation and stewardship.
5. Development of a realistic growth-oriented and scientifically based approach to global climate change.

Our nation's dependence on foreign oil is a threat to national security, and the exorbitant energy prices are a threat to our economy. We believe that a long-term strategy for energy independence must include:

1. Establishment of a coherent policy that affords access to our vast natural resources while protecting our natural environment.
2. Opening of the Outer Continental Shelf, oil shale regions, and other domestic sources of oil for exploration and drilling now.
3. Loosening of the environmental regulations that make it impossible to build new oil refineries.
4. Investments in new nuclear, hydroelectric, and wind power plants.

HEALTHCARE ISSUES

Healthcare is not a right; it is a service. As a compassionate society we will aid those in need; however, the government takeover of healthcare is not only unconstitutional, but detrimental to the entire health care system.

The Republican Party of Arkansas expresses support for:

1. Long-term Medicare solutions:
Form a bipartisan commission to make recommendations.
" Assure long-term solvency by implementing cost saving measures that reduce bureaucracy, fraud and abuse.
" Implement optional plans that combine public and private efforts to provide citizen access to and choices among various kinds of coverage.

2. Medical Savings Accounts allows people to own and control their healthcare.
3. Freedom to choose fee-for-service plans.
4. Choices among various managed care plans.
5. Optional long-term care choices, including nursing home, hospice, and home health care for certain diseases such as Alzheimer's.
6. Tax-deductible premiums for these and other such options.
7. Medicaid block grants to states with "No Federal Strings". Arkansas Republicans believe that such strings defeat the purpose of state grants. Distribution of Medicaid grant funds should be left to the discretion of each state.
8. Medical tort liability reform: Arkansas Republicans believe health care costs can be reduced by tort reform of medical liability regulations and statutes by limiting the circumstances under which such cases may be properly pursued and the extent of damage claims involving pain and suffering.
9. Freedom to choose doctors outside of the Medicare system: Arkansas Republicans hold that neither Medicare patients nor doctors choosing to practice outside the Medicare system should be fined or otherwise punished for non-cooperation with the Medicare system, and patients should be free to voluntarily pay doctors out of personal funds for such medical care, even when rendered outside the Medicare system.
10. The repeal of all statutes, laws, and regulations that would permit the Medicare system to pressure, prosecute, pursue, fine or otherwise punish any such patient or doctor.
11. Continuity of patient care when employers change health insurance plans and providers, we support the flexibility for physicians to provide services for any managed health care plan in any state that they are licensed to practice.
12. National legislation to treat mental and physical illnesses equitably and fairly.
13. Efforts to implement more access to Community Based Health Centers to better meet the health care needs of the uninsured and underinsured in their communities.
14. Association Health Plans to help small businesses on behalf of their employees; Health Savings Accounts so Americans can get help with out-of-pocket medical expenses; and a creation of refundable tax credit to help low income families purchase health insurance.
15. Creation of a legal environment for pharmaceutical companies to both develop new drugs and lower costs to consumers.
16. Repeal of Obamacare.