

GEAUGA COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY

Platform of the Geauga County Republican Party

Ratified by the GCRP Central & Executive Committees on March 21, 2015

Preamble

The Geauga County Republican Party stands for policies and governance of moral and ethical nature that protect individual liberties, efficiently manage hardworking taxpayers' dollars, affirm individuals and families, and create a thriving local economy.

Because the United States of America is founded on the principles of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” and of equal opportunity for all, our platform shall always remain consistent with these principles.

Because it is our belief that limiting the size and scope of government best protects individual freedom and liberty, our platform supports limited government.

Because the family is the best place to develop values, principles, and morals, our platform supports a strong family with limitations on government interference.

Because a healthy free market economy is the foundation for individual prosperity, strong families, successful businesses, and funding of essential government services, our platform supports policies and practices that expand the private sector economy and reverse the expansion of government.

Because educating our youth and preparing our work force to attract new industries is crucial to the success and growth of the private sector, our platform stands for educational excellence and workforce development.

Because citizens deserve a government free from corruption at all levels, motivated by the creation of policies beneficial to its citizens and our region, our platform insists upon open government run by officials of integrity, who put the constitutional freedoms of citizens first.

Because citizens deserve exceptional, qualified candidates who put the needs of the people first, our platform supports the recruitment and development of excellent candidates and the promotion of elections free from dishonest practices.

Because this platform is designed to address issues of state and local government policies, it may be silent on matters of the Republican National Committee's platform that lie beyond our jurisdiction. However, insofar as there is no conflict with the statements and provisions herein, it shall be clear that we support the platform of the national party, of which we are a member. That platform is available for review at http://www.gop.com/2012-republican-platform_home/.

Purpose

The purpose of our platform is as follows:

1. To define the core principles of the Geauga County Republican Party.
2. To create a clarity of purpose and a strong, simple message from which to develop communication, education, and outreach efforts.
3. To inspire interest and involvement in the party and in our candidates, both from within our base and through the development of new relationships.
4. To increase outreach and offer an understanding of the Geauga County Republican Party for individuals who belong to communities who may not know us well.
5. To encourage and welcome participation by all who share these values and goals in the party.
6. To attract exemplary Republican candidates, and provide positions on which our candidates can run for office.
7. To ensure the voice of Geauga County Republicans is heard at the state and national level.

Platform

Individual Rights and Responsibilities

"Man is not free unless government is limited. As government expands, liberty contracts."
President Ronald Reagan

We believe, as did our Founders, that all mankind has been given the rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" by the Creator as set forth in our Declaration of Independence. As such, these rights are inalienable and are not to be infringed by government. We believe that the right to individual liberty means that men should live free under the form of government that they have chosen and that government should not direct the lives of its citizens by arbitrary laws and regulations.

We believe that governments only have powers that have been granted to them by the consent of those governed. We have, as a nation, established a Constitution, a foundation with fixed principles in which the powers granted to the government are clearly stated - granted by our consent.

The Right to Keep and Bear Arms: We believe that in order to protect ourselves, our family and our possessions we have the right to keep and bear arms. The corresponding responsibility of this

right is that we employ care and good judgment in the use of those arms so as not harm or threaten our neighbor.

Religious Freedom and Protection of Speech: As set forth in our Constitution, we believe that the individual expression of speech (the press included) and religion, the right to peaceably assemble, and the right to petition the government for redress of grievances are not to be infringed by the government. We pledge to respect the religious beliefs and rights of conscience of all Americans and to safeguard the independence of their institutions from government.

We believe that the right to pursue individual happiness is such that discrimination of any kind directed towards any individual is not acceptable. We believe that each of these Creator bestowed rights has a corresponding responsibility. That in the exercise of these rights we must take care not to tread upon the rights of our neighbor.

Liberty and Privacy: We believe also that we have the right to privacy both of our person and of our property. We believe that unreasonable searches and seizures are contrary to the intent of our Constitution. We believe that probable cause must be established prior to warrants being issued and searches or seizures being conducted. We believe that overhead surveillance of either us or our property is also in direct violation to our Constitution.

The Sanctity and Dignity of Human Life: We believe that the right to life extends to the unborn and to end of life matters.

Limited Government

“A government large enough to give you everything you need is a government large enough to take everything you have.” Thomas Jefferson

The Republican Party of Geauga County believes that the role of government is important but limited. Government should efficiently and cost effectively provide only those essential services that cannot be performed by individuals or private organizations. For all but these specific services, government should empower the private sector; for American ingenuity, work ethic, productivity, innovation, citizen-leadership, and fiscal responsibility have been the true foundation of our national greatness.

Fiscal Responsibility: We stand for limited government spending and fiscal responsibility. We support a federally balanced budget. Government should minimize the amount required by maintaining only necessary programs and projects, by ensuring that funds are used in the most resourceful and effective way possible, and by adopting a mindset of continuous improvement. Each program, public employee, and government priority must be constantly judged through the prism of fiscal responsibility and accountability, with measurements set that maximize the value of each dollar.

A successful budget process is a critical step in ensuring that government operates effectively and within its means. The budget process requires at least four important elements. First, the process should account for ALL revenue and spending, including entitlements as well as discretionary

expenditures. Second, the budget process should be easy to understand and completed in a timely manner. Third, the time horizon of the budgeting process must be long term to enable review of serious issues and introduction of needed structural reforms before crises arise. Fourth, the agreed upon budget and performance against the budget must be made available to the public. Throughout the course of any budget period, unforeseen situations which require modifications to the revenue and spending plan are inevitable. The mindset of elected officials must be that these unplanned events must be managed and offset as possible with modifications in other areas.

Taxation: We believe that Americans deserve to keep more of the money they earn and that lower taxes drive a strong, vibrant economy. The proper role of taxes is to fund essential and effective government services and should not be used to redistribute income. Our goal is a tax system that is simple, transparent, flatter, and fair, and which is not used to drive social policies.

Taxation should impose the lightest possible burden on production. We believe that reducing the corporate tax rate and implementing reforms related to research and development credits, corporate alternative minimum tax, and taxation of profits earned abroad is necessary to ensure that American businesses remain globally competitive while staying based locally. In doing so, we will spur job creation and retain needed investment and revenue.

National Security: We believe that peace is best achieved through strength. It requires defending America's homeland, including remaining vigilant in confronting global terrorism, maintaining a robust defense against the threats arising from nuclear proliferation, including a strong ballistic missile defense for America and our allies, and promoting an effective, capable intelligence community. It also requires a full commitment to America's Armed Forces to ensure they are modern, agile and adaptable to the unpredictable range of challenges in the years ahead. And it requires a sustained international effort, which complements our military activities, to develop and maintain alliances and relationships that will lead to greater peace and stability. While the United States participates in various international organizations which can serve the cause of peace and posterity, they must never substitute for principled American leadership nor prevent America from joining other democracies to protect our vital national interests.

We believe that a strong and well-trained American military is the foundation of our strength. The members of our military, and their families, should be treated with the utmost pride and dignity while in service and upon separation or retirement, and they should be compensated and cared for accordingly. We support greater transition assistance as servicemen return from combat and when they re-enter the civilian world. America has a sacred trust with our veterans, and we are committed to caring for them and their families.

Strong Family and American Values

"The family unit plays a critical role in our society and in the training of the generations to come." President Abraham Lincoln

We recognize this statement to be true and we support strong families and the defense of God-given American values. America was founded on the idea that individuals, not government, offer the

best promise for success and prosperity. American values, including respect for one another, hard work, honesty, caring for neighbors, respect for authority, responsibility for one's actions, and love of country, are the foundation of an American society that has experienced unparalleled advancements in the human condition. Americans value the worth and contribution of every person, and Republican candidates and elected officials should support policies and programs that advance individuals, offer a hand-up in time of need and not a permanent hand-out. Government should be discouraged from intervention that may entrap its citizens under a false promise of hope while restraining advancement otherwise achieved by the unleashed potential of an individual. Society benefits most when we encourage and realize the potential of all of our citizens.

Marriage: Strong, stable families are essential to the health and well-being of our communities. In the best of situations, at the center of every family is a marriage, with a mother and a father. History has shown that children do best when raised within what is defined today as a traditional marriage, and we support the Ohio Marriage Amendment which was passed by voters in 2004. However, we realize that there are many types of families today and that all families are welcomed, and must be nurtured and protected. All children deserve a strong family in which they are loved and cherished. Families form the basis of our neighborhoods, from which sprout cities, counties, states, and ultimately, our nation.

American values include the belief that holds the family as the essential unit of society. The principles and morals that a family adheres to are the foundation of how we teach our children to learn, grow, and function in the world. These principles and morals are the bedrocks of our free society. Individual liberty, so important in America, depends upon each person accepting responsibility for his or her own actions, learned and developed within the family. While American values and principles are at the core of our system of government, they must first be passed down within the foundation of strong families. An expanding government weakens the sense of individual responsibility and results in reliance on the government, and often discourages marriage and strong families.

Our candidates and elected officials must support proposals and policies in which the institution of the family can be encouraged to flourish and fulfill its role in advancing American principles and values, and subsequently, a better life and prosperity for all families in Geauga County.

Healthcare: We believe in a system that allows doctors to practice medicine and not be limited by government interference. With the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), physicians are convinced that their autonomy will be curtailed, and layers of bureaucracy will separate them from patients, ultimately rationing care and diminishing treatment options for certain patients, such as late-stage cancer patients and the elderly. As evidenced in many other countries, socialized medicine does not effectively serve the people. We support free market solutions that truly help control costs and provide greater access through health insurance that is portable, affordable, and tax deductible. We support legislation limiting frivolous lawsuits that are driving up the cost of healthcare. We support legislation that protects the most vulnerable and protects individuals during catastrophic incidences. We support the complete repeal and replacement, or minimally, the delay or defunding of the ACA, as it is detrimental to the people of Geauga County.

Economy

We believe a strong economy is one key aspect to defining the role the United States plays in the world. With a strong economy, the United States is less susceptible to outside influences, and we can influence world policies because other countries want access to our markets.

We believe the way to a strong economy is through an active private sector and limited but prudent government involvement. Simplified and limited regulations create more certainty for individuals and businesses which is a key driver for all players in the economy. Other factors that lead to a strong economy are job creation, effectiveness of small businesses and entrepreneurs, energy independence, protecting taxpayers, and appropriate immigration policies.

Job Creation: Job creation is one of the key drivers of economic success in the United States, because individuals drive the economy. Providing people with the opportunity to work and earn a wage creates consumers that drive the economy forward. We also believe that people and businesses hire people, and as such the focus should be on providing an environment where businesses can create jobs. We understand the government has a role to play in this endeavor, but it should be limited, and clearly not the key driver for job creation.

Small Business and Entrepreneurship: Small business and entrepreneurs are key pieces to driving the economy forward as they are the ones willing to take a chance on bringing new ideas to market. As such, they should be treated with the same importance to the economy as large corporations and this should be reflected in governmental policies.

Energy Independence: We believe energy independence will lead to long-term economic well-being as well as our country's security. By being less dependent on other countries to supply our energy needs, we will be less susceptible to worldly influences and less likely to be placed in a compromising positions in the world economy. As such, the government should pursue policies that will lead to energy independence.

Protecting Taxpayers: As government has no money except what taxpayers provide, we believe the government should be prudent with the money it spends on propping up failed businesses and funding incentive and social programs. We believe the market should determine what businesses succeed or fail, and that no business is "too big to fail." We also believe the government should drastically limit incentive programs. Lastly, we think social programs should be limited in their scope in the same manner as incentives. We believe this goes hand in hand with our position on a simplified tax system.

Immigration: We believe immigration has a significant impact on our economy, some positive and some negative. We understand that a large number of people come to the United States because of the economic opportunity this country provides, while others come here in the hope of handouts. We believe the government should adopt immigration policies that take into account the impact on both the economy and our social programs. We do not believe in accelerated paths to citizenship or amnesty, but we do believe that immigrants coming here for work purposes should have opportunities available to them.

Education

“Intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education.” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

According to Dr. King, education is more than gaining wisdom on a wide range of topics; it should also be about developing character. An excellent education should do both, in a safe and inspirational setting. Our children, the American leaders of tomorrow, deserve the best educational system that can be delivered. All students, regardless of background, social, or economic circumstance, deserve the opportunity to pursue the American Dream and to reach their full potential, whether special needs or gifted.

School Choice: We believe that parents have ultimate authority over their child’s education and should be able to select appropriate educational venues. We support the position that all venues should be supported by effective legislation and be appropriately funded. We believe that charter school credentialing and accountability standards should be strengthened, and that poorly performing schools should be de-certified or closed. All educational venues should be vetted and held accountable for performance and transparency.

Teachers & Administration: Great teachers change lives and are the heart of educational excellence. To attract and retain great teachers, we believe that pay structures must be competitive, and partially merit based, and that benefit packages are fair and consistent with employment practices of the community in general. When a reduction in workforce is necessary we believe that the practice of last hired first fired needs to be changed in order to keep excellent, innovative teachers. We encourage talented individuals to select teaching as a profession. To support diversity, our platform supports efforts to have more individuals with conservative values become teachers. We place a high value on teacher innovation. We believe that great teachers should be safe teachers, and all should be subject to background checks and skill-based assessments. We believe that teachers should be evaluated on a variety of measures and that non-performing teachers should be dismissed and replaced with effective educators.

Great administrators are critical to the success of every child’s educational venue. As such, employed administrators and boards of education should be held to the highest standards: strong leadership within the school system and accountability for success and performance of teachers and students in their buildings. Our students deserve to be safe in school, on school property, and in school-provided transportation.

Curriculum: Curriculum is the brick and mortar foundation of excellent education. As such, curriculum should ensure high academic standards. Curriculum should tie high school college preparatory, technical, and vocational tracts with career and entrepreneurial opportunities. Curriculum should include American citizenry, the U. S. Constitution, the Ohio Constitution, and the study of our nation’s founding, particularly an in-depth study of the Founding Fathers and founding documents. We believe that teaching American Exceptionalism and American values, such as the study of free markets, individual responsibility, ethics, discipline, personal competition, personal property rights, financial literacy, and respect for others, is essential. We believe in an “English First” approach to education.

We believe that parents and local school districts know what is best for our children, and that curriculum and education standards are best developed by experts from a wide variety of political and economic backgrounds and beliefs. We also believe that parents should be fully informed about what their children are being taught, and as such, curriculum should be reviewed by parents as part of the local curriculum approval process. We believe education is a state's right and is protected by the US Constitution and so oppose any attempt by the federal government to mandate, either directly or through manipulation of funding sources, educational standards. We believe the State of Ohio needs to replace the national standards developed by federal agencies with rigorous standards developed by the teachers and administrators of Ohio schools and approved by local school boards.

Higher Education: We believe strongly in an educational system that will provide higher education to those whose achievements deserve it, and that will give students the environment they want and need to succeed both in and beyond higher education. We believe that higher education must better equip students to have employment and to thrive in their chosen fields. We believe in limiting the federal government in education. We believe federal loans exacerbate the rise in student debt by their lack of transparency, and the fact that they are often more expensive than private loans. For these reasons, we believe that the federal government should no longer issue student loans. Greater private sector participation in loans and increased access to higher education savings accounts would drive tuition costs down.

Good Governance and Honest Elections

"Bad officials are elected by good citizens who do not vote." George Jean Nathan

The Republican Party of Geauga County resolves to recruit, develop, and support Republican candidates for public office in every municipality, township, and school board of this county in order to foster effective government. We believe in order to achieve good governance the characteristics of transparency, accountability efficiency and rule of law must be practiced by all government officials. The mindset of our republican officials should always be for continuous improvement and effectiveness.

Good Governance at the local level is the cornerstone to protecting the constitutional rights of citizens. It is essential that our elected officials should perform their duties in a moral and ethical manner. Good government should operate on just a minimum of the people's money. Services should be delivered to those in need in the most efficient and effective way possible.

Accountability & Transparency: In order to achieve these characteristics, the free flow of information to all citizens is vital. Any regulation or censorship would threaten the democratic process. The free exchange of ideas and thoughts encourages innovation and freedom. Information is the vehicle for freedom. It cannot be regulated.

We believe that all elected officials should be directly accountable to the citizens who elected them. They are obligated to keep the public informed by being transparent, providing information and striving to improve communication within all levels of government and the citizens.

Voter Integrity & Identification: One person, one vote. That is the foundation of the electoral process. Safeguards must be in place to deter voter fraud and inspire public confidence. Voting is a right, a privilege and a responsibility. We believe that the individual voice at the ballot box is the single most important factor to keep freedom alive. Every eligible voter must have access to vote. A fair, accessible electoral process is the best way to ensure liberty. Open, fair elections are the foundation of our representative government. Every effort must be made to ensure voting accessibility to every eligible voter and every effort must be made to safeguard the democratic process on every level, from voter registration, absentee military/overseas and in person voting

Proper identification at the polls is an important safeguard to thwart fraudulent votes from nullifying valid votes. When a voter provides proper ID, it ensures public confidence in the electoral process. Since proper identification is required in almost all transactions today, to expect less for something as sacred as a person's right to vote would be irresponsible.