**Party Platforms**

In the chart you will find summaries of both the Republican and Democratic Party Platforms from 2008 and 2012. Remember, a **platform** is the official statement of a party’s stance on individual issues. Each issue statement is called a **plank**. Neither platform is labeled. Your task is to read through each plank of the party platforms and decide with plank you would support. Indicate your choice by placing a check mark next to the statement that most closely reflects your position.

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| **THE ECONOMY** | |
| **TAXES**   * Repeal the Bush tax cuts for families making more than $250,000. Provide additional tax cuts for middle class families. * Shut down "special interest loopholes and tax shelters" and use the money to "provide an immediate middle-class tax cut." * "Dramatically simplify tax filings so that millions of Americans can do their taxes in less than five minutes" | **TAXES**   * Make the 2001 and 2003 tax cut permanent. * "Major reduction" in the corporate tax code. * Ban internet taxes and new cell phone taxes. * "Religious organizations, charities and fraternal benevolent societies" should not be subject to taxation. |
| JOBS End tax breaks for companies that ship American jobs overseas and provide incentives for companies that keep and maintain good jobs in the United States. Invest in advanced energy technologies and create "millions of new, good 'Green Collar' American jobs." | JOBS Reduce corporate tax rate "so that American companies stay competitive with their foreign counterparts and American jobs can remain in this country." New nuclear energy plants will rejuvenate industrial and manufacturing base, "with nearly 15,000 high quality jobs created for every new nuclear plant built." |
| **HEALTHCARE** | |
| HEALTH CARE All Americans should have coverage they can afford. Families and individuals should have the option of keeping the coverage they have or choosing from a wide array of health insurance plans, including many private health insurance options and a public plan. Coverage should be made affordable for all Americans with subsidies provided through tax credits and other means. Insurance should be portable from job to job. | HEALTH CARE "We will not replace the current system with the staggering inefficiency, maddening irrationality, and uncontrollable costs of a government monopoly." Make insurance more affordable and more secure, and give employees the option of owning coverage that is not tied to their job. Everyone should receive the same tax benefit as those who are insured through work, whether through a tax credit or other means. |
| ABORTIONStrongly and unequivocally supports Roe v. Wade and a woman's right to make decisions regarding her pregnancy, including a safe and legal abortion, regardless of ability to pay. We oppose any and all efforts to weaken or undermine that right. Abortion is an intensely personal decision between a woman, her family, her doctor, and her clergy; there is no place for politicians or government to get in the way. | abortionFaithful to the "self-evident" truths enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, we assert the sanctity of human life and affirm that the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We support a human life amendment to the Constitution and endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children. |
| **ENERGY** | |
| ENERGY Reduce oil consumption by at least 35 percent, or ten million barrels per day, by 2030. "We can’t drill our way to energy independence … we must invest in research and development, and deployment of renewable energy technologies—such as solar, wind, geothermal, as well as technologies to store energy through advanced batteries and clean up our coal plants." Commit to fast-track investment of billions of dollars over the next ten years to establish a green energy sector. Stand up to "oil companies that spend hundreds of millions of dollars on lobbying and political contributions." | ENERGY "Aggressively support technological advances to reduce petroleum dependence." Support "accelerated exploration, drilling and development in America, from new oilfields off the nation’s coasts to onshore fields such as those in Montana, North Dakota, and Alaska." Pursue dramatic increases in the use of all forms of safe, affordable, reliable — and clean — nuclear power. Advocate a long-term energy tax credit equally applicable to all renewable power sources. Modernize the nation’s electricity grid. Support coal-to-liquid and gasification initiatives and investment in the development and deployment of carbon capture and storage technologies. |
| **NATIONAL SECURITY** | |
| WIRETAPPING Support "constitutional protections and judicial oversight on any surveillance program involving Americans." Review the current Administration’s warrantless wiretapping program: "We reject illegal wiretapping of American citizens, wherever they live." | WIRETAPPING "Although our country has thwarted new terrorist attacks since 2001, those threats do persist. That is why our reform of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act was so vital, and why the opposition to it was so wrong." |
| **IMMIGRATION** | |
| ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS Require those “living here illegally but otherwise playing by the rule” to “get right with the law.” Support a system that requires undocumented immigrants who are in good standing to pay a fine, pay taxes, learn English, and go to the back of the line for the opportunity to become citizens. | ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS No path to legalization. “We oppose amnesty. The rule of law suffers if government policies encourage or reward illegal activity.” Deny federal funds to “sanctuary cities” for illegal immigrants. (Senator John McCain co-sponsored a 2006 bill that called for establishing guest-worker program and setting up a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants that included learning English and paying fines.) |
| BORDER AND PORT SECURITY Support additional personnel, infrastructure, and technology on the border and at ports of entry. Increase the number Customs and Border Protection agents and equip them with “better technology and real-time intelligence.” | BORDER AND PORT SECURITY Give border patrol agents “the tools and resources they need to protect our sovereignty.” Complete the border fence quickly and securing the borders. Employ “complementary strategies” to secure the ports of entry. |
| **CIVIL RIGHTS** | |
| **GAY AND LESBIAN RIGHTS**  We support the right of all families to have equal respect, responsibilities, and protections under the law. We support marriage equality and support the movement to secure equal treatment under law for same-sex couples. We also support the freedom of churches and religious entities to decide how to administer marriage as a religious sacrament without government interference. | **GAY AND LESBIAN RIGHTS**  We reaffirm our support for a Constitutional amendment defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman. We applaud the citizens of the majority of States which have enshrined in their constitutions the traditional concept of marriage, and we support the campaigns underway in several other States to do so. |
| **CRIME** | |
| We will continue to fight inequalities in our criminal justice system. We believe that the death penalty must not be arbitrary. DNA testing should be used in all appropriate circumstances, defendants should have effective assistance of counsel, and the administration of justice should be fair and impartial. | Criminals behind bars cannot harm the general public. To that end, we support mandatory prison sentencing for gang crimes, violent or sexual offenses against children, repeat drug dealers, rape, robbery and murder. We support a national registry for convicted child murderers. We oppose parole for dangerous or repeat felons. Courts should have the option of imposing the death penalty in capital murder cases. |
| **GUN CONTROL** | |
| We recognize that the individual right to bear arms is an important part of the American tradition, and we will preserve Americans' Second Amendment right to own and use firearms. We believe that the right to own firearms is subject to reasonable regulation. We understand the terrible consequences of gun violence; it serves as a reminder that life is fragile, and our time here is limited and precious. We can focus on effective enforcement of existing laws, especially strengthening our background check system, and we can work together to enact commonsense improvements--like reinstating the assault weapons ban and closing the gun show loophole--so that guns do not fall into the hands of those irresponsible, law-breaking few. | We uphold the right of individuals to keep and bear arms, a right which preceded the Constitution and was solemnly confirmed by the Second Amendment. We acknowledge, support, and defend the law-abiding citizen's God-given right of self-defense. We call for the protection of such fundamental individual rights and we recognize the individual responsibility to safely use and store firearms. This also includes the right to obtain and store ammunition without registration. We support the fundamental right to self-defense wherever a law-abiding citizen has a legal right to be, and we support federal legislation that would expand the exercise of that right by allowing those with state-issued carry permits to carry firearms in any state that issues such permits to its own residents. |