

Louisiana Republican Party Platform 2008

Preamble

The Louisiana Republican Party represents the values of the majority of the citizens of Louisiana.

We believe in the power and freedom of individuals. We oppose all efforts to replace that power with undue governmental control.

Our nation was founded on faith in God, family, country, and freedom. Efforts to modify or replace these core values erode the foundations of our society for future generations.

The United States is a democratic republic governed by elected representatives. These Representatives must honor the original meaning of our Constitution, and must protect the inalienable rights of the American people as stated in the Bill of Rights.

The Republican Party is strong, principled and conservative. It is the Party that should lead the state of Louisiana. We want to represent every facet of American society, not by patronage but by principle, and not by dividing interests but by serving the good of all.

Membership in the Republican Party of Louisiana is open to all citizens residing in our state who share the values and beliefs expressed in this document. We recognize a duty to include all who share these values and beliefs, making a special effort to welcome and involve those from groups not traditionally associated with our Party.

Article I: Economic Policy

- 1.** We believe the free enterprise system is the most effective and the most just economic system known. Economic freedom is essential to human liberty. Denying economic freedom diminishes individual human dignity as well as the general welfare.
- 2.** Government ought to provide an unencumbered business-friendly environment for individual initiative and private enterprise that creates jobs and raises personal income. Government regulation and taxation reduce and redistribute income; they do not create it. We therefore support efforts to benefit all by removing the burden of excessive taxation and needless bureaucratic regulations that hamper economic growth.
- 3.** Tax policies that discriminate against marriage undermine our society. We support tax policies that help families afford children by natural birth or adoption and in addition tax policies that pass onto the next generation the fruits of the family's labor.
- 4.** We pay taxes to local, state and federal governments that exceed what is necessary. Government spending should not increase more than population growth and inflation combined. A Taxpayer Protection Act, incorporating this principle, would result in an overall reduction in tax rates.
- 5.** The best way to promote economic growth is to reduce the overall tax burden on Louisiana's businesses and individuals.
- 6.** When economic times are hard, government must reduce spending. Raising taxes to provide preferential treatment for some over others is wasteful and unfair.
- 7.** We support full funding of deep-water modernization of the port system in Louisiana since it is the single most important economic opportunity in the state.
- 8.** We favor the expansion of mutually advantageous world trade. To further this objective we shall press for the elimination of discriminatory practices against our

exports. Trade agreements should be entered into and maintained on a basis of true reciprocity.

9. We support the strengthening and promoting of safeguards from imports that negatively affect the welfare of American families. We oppose continued trade with foreign businesses that cannot or will not meet or surpass safety standards.

Article II: Family

1. We believe our nation's strength lies with the family. The family is where each new generation gains its moral anchor. It is the first school of good citizenship, the engine of economic progress, and a haven of security and understanding in an ever-changing world.

2. We believe homosexuality should not be established as an acceptable "alternative" lifestyle either in public education or in public policy. We do not believe public schools should be used to teach children that homosexuality is normal, and we do not believe that taxpayers should fund benefit plans for unmarried partners. We oppose special treatment by law based on nothing other than homosexual behavior or identity. We oppose actions, such as "marriage" or the adoption of children by same-sex couples. We support the Defense of Marriage Act and support constitutional amendments to both the U.S. and the Louisiana Constitutions to ensure that marriage is limited to the union of one man and one woman. We support limiting the jurisdiction of Federal courts over questions under the Defense of Marriage Act. We commend private organizations, such as the Boy Scouts, which defend moral decency and freedom according to their own well-established traditions and beliefs.

Article III: Individual Liberty

1. The Republican Party of Louisiana embraces the vision for America established by our nation's founders — the authors of the Declaration of Independence, the U. S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.

2. Our forefathers gave individuals four ways to protect themselves against the power of the state: (1) the soapbox (freedom of speech); (2) the ballot box (the right to vote); (3) the jury box (trial by peers); and (4) the cartridge box (right to bear arms). The Republican Party of Louisiana stands against efforts to erode these freedoms.

3. We urge both the Congress and the state legislature to pass legislation ending the ever-increasing, incessant, and calculated collection and dissemination of personal information on law-abiding citizens. We believe that cataloging and cross-indexing personal information such as fingerprints, Social Security numbers, and financial credit by agencies of government and businesses — completely unrelated to criminal activity — is contrary and destructive to our individual and collective freedom and privacy.

However, we support efforts to identify and to track terrorists, including provisions of the U.S. Patriot Act which treat terrorists no more favorably than organized criminals.

4. The state must not control or interfere with our freedom of religion and the voluntary expression thereof. We oppose efforts to remove the recognition of God from our schools and from our Pledge of Allegiance. State colleges and universities should not discriminate for or against any religion; and should not promote any religion through required reading assignments or courses.

5. Individual liberty and redistribution of wealth are not compatible. We oppose restricting the former for the sake of the latter.

6. Government should treat all citizens fairly and impartially and should assure equal opportunity for all without regard to wealth, race, religion, gender, or national origin. We oppose all forms of invidious discrimination. We also oppose efforts to include sexual orientation as a category for preferential treatment status under civil rights statutes at any level of government. Government must vigorously enforce individual civil rights as guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and by the Louisiana Constitution.

7. We strongly support the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution that guarantees the right of free and law-abiding citizens to keep and bear arms. We oppose any government effort to restrict the ownership, sale, purchase and “lawful carry” of firearms by law-abiding citizens.

Article IV: Sanctity of Life

1. The Republican Party of Louisiana believes strongly in the sanctity of all human life from fertilization (conception) until natural death.

2. We believe unborn children have constitutional rights to life and liberty, and we therefore urge the Supreme Court to overturn its decision in Roe v. Wade. Inasmuch as basic biology shows that life begins with fertilization of an ovum (oocyte) by a sperm, we support the adoption of a constitutional amendment establishing that human life begins at conception (fertilization). We also support limiting the jurisdiction of Federal Courts over questions regarding the right to life when rulings contradict basic biologic facts. We stand with the overwhelming majority of Americans who oppose efforts to mandate legalized abortion or to fund local, national, or international organizations that provide or promote abortion services. Abortion is never an acceptable method of birth control.

3. We oppose the heinous procedure known as partial-birth abortion. We applaud President Bush and the majority of the Congress who passed into law the federal Partial Birth Abortion Ban. Furthermore, we urge members of the Republican Party of Louisiana to support financially, or with in-kind contributions, only those candidates or nominees who support measures to end partial-birth abortions.

4. Recognizing that abortion is grievously harmful to women, men, families, and society at large, as well as fatal to the unborn child, we support and strongly encourage positive alternatives to abortion, such as adoption. We believe that biases against intact, caring families should be eliminated from adoption laws and tax codes. Adoption should be encouraged through significant tax credits, insurance reforms and legal reforms.

5. We oppose the erosion of parental rights and responsibilities by agents of the state when it comes to pregnant unmarried minors. Informed consent and parental consent must be prerequisite to any minor receiving invasive medical treatment including abortion. We strongly support the adherence to federal guidelines that prevent the use of federal funds to counsel for abortion.

6. We support all developments in biomedical research and technology that enhance and protect human life. But we oppose any new development that does not treat all human life as a precious gift of God, or that does not treat every individual human life as a locus of unique and irreplaceable dignity no matter how weak, immature, or dependent.

7. We oppose all procedures in research and medicine that involve the intentional destruction of innocent human life. We also oppose any cloning of human beings, the use of human embryos in research for purposes other than advancing their own health and safety, as well as all forms of active euthanasia or assisted suicide.

8. We urge the recruitment and support of candidates who will work hard to protect all innocent human life.
9. We support harsh criminal penalties for women convicted of using illegal drugs while they are pregnant, exposing their unborn to such drugs. This has been proven to increase the rate of birth defects.

Article V: State Government

1. The Republican Party of Louisiana encourages our state legislature to be efficient, effective, and responsive to the people as a part-time citizen legislature.
2. Legislative session limits must be accompanied by measures to ensure that policy decisions are made by elected legislators and are not made by un-elected state employees or legislative staff.
3. Government should encourage citizens to pursue happiness through honest, hard work and should not be in the business of subverting the rewards of honest labor. Therefore, we oppose any expansion of legally sanctioned gambling.
4. The state lottery has capitalized on broken dreams and personal irresponsibility, and has placed the burden of taxation most heavily on those who are least able to afford it. We support repeal of the Louisiana Lottery.
5. We oppose passing un-funded mandates at any level of government. We call on each level of government to fully fund the programs they establish or require of other levels of government.
6. Elected officials should not appear in “public service ads” funded in whole or in part with state funds, unless that official has already announced retirement from office.
7. All state funds should be used as appropriated and subject to audit.

Article VI: Election Laws

1. The ballot box is the only true protection citizens have against tyrannical abuse of power by the state and therefore the right to vote is a cherished privilege of citizenship and should not be granted to non-citizens under any circumstances. We oppose insidious practices that deny the majority of Louisiana citizens the honest representation they deserve.
2. Voters should select government officials and government officials should not select voters. We therefore support reasonable, compact, election districts and single-member legislative districts that do not split parishes, cities or towns unless absolutely necessary.
3. The voters of Louisiana will make the right choice at the ballot box when they have full and timely information on candidates' campaign finances. Prompt and accurate reporting is the best campaign finance reform. We oppose funding any election campaign with public funds.
4. We support separate primary elections for Republicans and Democrats.
5. We urge Congress to repeal the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act, since it abridges our freedom to speak on core political subjects.

Article VII: Education

1. The Republican Party of Louisiana believes strongly in the value of maintaining a good system of education, including public, private, religious and home schools. Good

education is impossible unless parents, not the state, have control over where their children are educated. We encourage affording parents and students a wide variety of educational options regardless of geographic, or socio-economic background. Such parental control must include parental choice for all children, including but not limited to tax credits, public and private endeavors, and vouchers.

2. Our current system of top-heavy, bureaucratic, centrally planned public education is failing to ensure the quality of education our children need and deserve. Therefore, we support measures that maintain the independence of Louisiana schools from the federal government. We support keeping all Louisiana education dollars in Louisiana without going to maintain unneeded bureaucrats at the national level.

3. Incremental change of this failing system, augmented by higher taxes, higher spending, and more regulation will not meet the needs of Louisiana's future citizens.

4. Real education reform means local control of curriculum, budget, textbook selection, and personnel in the public schools. We believe parents must have complete access to all information concerning curriculum and activities used in educating their children, and we believe parents must have access to all materials used for teacher development in the public school system.

5. Real reform must also include defining academic performance standards for both students and teachers, cutting administrative waste, and establishing part-time and alternative teacher certification. Our students must have the best possible teachers in the classroom. Teachers should be paid, retained, and promoted based on the quality of their work, not solely on the length of their service.

6. Students are not served by the ideological indoctrination inherent in outcome-based education. All children should be able to read and write at grade level and all high school graduates should be proficient at the twelfth grade level rather than at the eighth grade level currently allowed by the state. We believe the “No Child Left Behind” law has the correct goal of requiring schools to educate all children to grade level. Social promotion should be eliminated because it hurts children by promoting them before they are prepared for the next grade.

7. All schools should encourage patriotism and knowledge of the traditional values of Western civilization upon which our republic is based. We oppose using public dollars to fund attempts at social engineering contrary to the foundations on which our nation rests. We support daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in our schools, and we believe every classroom should display an American flag and a copy of our national motto — “In God We Trust.”

8. Republicans oppose mandatory sex education in public schools and believe sex education should not be included in any public school program without obtaining prior informed written parental consent from parents or guardians. Where sex education is included, we support teaching abstinence until marriage as the expected norm for acceptable sexual behavior. National studies have shown that the majority of Americans agree with this approach. The practice of abstinence until marriage is the only effective way to prevent teenage pregnancies, absentee fathers, abortion, and sexually transmitted diseases. It is also the most effective way to create healthy relationships and healthy self-esteem among young people.

9. We oppose the provision of school-based social services, including school-based clinics and mental health programs, which attempt to bypass parental authority and

responsibility.

10. Learning must rely on moral principles supported by our deepest convictions. We support the right of students to engage in voluntary prayer in school and the right of others to pray as well at public occasions such as commencement exercises, without the fear of retribution or persecution. We also strongly support equal access to school facilities.

11. Louisiana has traditionally provided affordable higher education to its citizens. But taxpayers should not be required to fund higher education for illegal immigrants.

12. We oppose the restriction of free speech and free assembly by public educational institutions on ideological or religious grounds.

Article VIII: Justice

1. One of the first duties of government is maintaining law and order, thereby allowing citizens freedom to pursue the blessings of life and liberty.

2. Law-abiding citizens often live in fear of crime in their neighborhoods and schools. By better allocation of resources and tax dollars, the crime rate can be reduced and the state can ensure the rights of innocent people and victims, as well as the legitimate rights of the accused. We support the principle of victim's rights, including restitution and notification.

3. The Republican Party of Louisiana believes that capital punishment, when properly applied, is a legitimate form of punishment only for the most severe and heinous crimes. When applied, capital punishment should be swift and unencumbered. We call for legislation to drastically reduce the time between death sentence and executions that lasts for years and years making a mockery of the law.

4. We support military-style boot camps and prisons with less attention to inmate comfort and more direction toward security, labor, and education. Prison labor should be used for construction of the facilities when possible. All inmates should be required to work and pay for their incarceration, including reasonable payment for health and dental care.

5. As more individuals have abandoned responsibility for their children, the cost to responsible citizens has increased. We support efforts to force "dead-beat" parents to meet their financial obligations.

6. We support measures to deny jurisdiction to federal courts in the areas of marriage and the right to life.

Article IX: Environment

1. We affirm our continuing commitment to stewardship of our God-given natural heritage that contributes so much to the quality of life in Louisiana. Republicans believe we all have a duty to protect air quality, water quality, productive forests, and abundant wildlife.

2. In general, we believe that extending and enforcing private property rights protects the environment better than increasing government regulation. To the extent government regulation is needed, it should be flexible and not proceed without first proving that the ecological benefits of new regulations warrant the cost.

3. When government takes the economic value of property by environmental regulatory action, it should compensate landowners in proportion to their loss.

4. Environmental policy should be based on sound science, not trendy pseudo-science. We should be more concerned with results than intentions.
5. The coastal wetlands, waters and barrier shorelines of Louisiana are vital to the communities, cultures, economies, and natural heritage of this state and this nation – they are truly America’s Wetland. This great treasure is disappearing at a rate of nearly 24 square miles each year. We recognize that without prompt and effective action America’s Wetland and the communities and way of life that are part of it will cease to exist, as we know them. The State of Louisiana with its Federal and local partners is in the process of developing a comprehensive plan and program to stem the collapse of America’s Wetland and restore it to a state of sustainable ecologic, cultural, and economic vibrancy. It will take the commitment and leadership of national, state, and local elected officials to shape and implement that plan and program. The Republican Party has a long history of leadership in the areas of conservation, environmental stewardship and the promotion of community values and economic progress. We propose that the Louisiana Republican Party make the restoration and stewardship of coastal Louisiana, which will result in a coast that is ecologically, culturally and economically vibrant and sustainable, a goal.

Article X: National Policy

1. We support our President in all phases of the War on Terror, including preventing rogue nations from having or obtaining weapons of mass destruction. We support our troops as they fight our enemies.
Americans owe our continued freedom and security to the deeds of these brave men and women.
2. The most important responsibility of the federal government assigned in the U.S. Constitution is “to provide a common defense” for the states and the nation. Our borders must be made more secure. The federal government should actively enforce its immigration laws
3. America's defense must be our top priority. The Republican Party of Louisiana opposes any attempts to weaken our national defense.
4. We oppose any foreign effort to influence our elections process and our ability to govern ourselves.
5. American participation in the United Nations, or any other international body, must never sacrifice the constitutional sovereignty of the United States. We oppose relinquishing U.S. freedom and independence to any organization or agency claiming authority to impose and enforce global regulations or standards upon the United States of America. We support withdrawal from any organization or agency, which violates these principles.
6. The Republican Party of Louisiana recognizes the need for legally binding treaties between nations, but we only support treaties that preserve American freedom and independence and are consistent with serving the common good of our people. Therefore, we strongly support efforts to revise or withdraw from any treaty that compromises our constitutional sovereignty, that undermines national defense, or that hinders American companies from competing internationally on a free-market basis.
7. As Republicans, we support spending cuts as the right means to balance the federal budget and tax rate reductions as the right way to stimulate the economy.
8. Individuals should work in return for public assistance. Our nation needs to change

from a welfare state to an opportunity society.

9. We affirm commitment to keep faith with both the past and the future by saving Social Security. We oppose annual raids on Social Security trust funds, and we support protecting these funds by balancing the federal budget apart from Social Security reserves, which should be entirely dedicated toward meeting future obligations. We support innovative solutions that will strengthen Social Security by offering today's workers more choice and control over their own retirement security, but in ways that do not harm anyone already on Social Security or anyone who is now close to being eligible for Social Security benefits.

10. We believe all Americans need access to high-quality healthcare at affordable prices with a range of options from which they can choose what is best for their own needs. Government should do nothing to harm the quality of healthcare in the private sector. Therefore, we support efforts to enhance available healthcare by balancing public policy with private-sector enterprise and personal responsibility. We do not believe free healthcare should be provided to illegal immigrants except for emergency services.

11. Government actions on healthcare must always complement and never supplant the private sector and always support and never hinder individual and family responsibilities. We support medical savings accounts as a good innovation because they combine personal responsibility with access to affordable healthcare.

12. The only honest and correct approach to the interpretation of our constitution and laws require keeping faith with their original intent. We call on Congress, the President, and the courts to abide by the Ninth and Tenth Amendment's constraints on federal power, and to oppose and reverse federal encroachments upon all powers and rights the Constitution of the United States has reserved to the states, or to the people.

13. We support the deportation of illegal immigrants.

Conclusion

1. We are proud to be citizens of the United States of America — a nation that has become the greatest in history because it is a nation built on the promise of freedom and opportunity for all. We pledge eternal vigilance in guarding the freedoms and opportunities now enjoyed by every citizen.

2. We open our arms to every citizen who shares the beliefs and values stated in this platform. We invite all Louisiana citizens to join the ranks of the Republican Party of Louisiana, a mighty force for the conservative values and vision that make us a nation that is good and great. We believe the values of the Republican Party embody the American Dream that brought our forefathers to this land and that draws people from all over the world to our shores today, and that is the vision that makes the United States of America the best and brightest nation on earth.

3. May we always enjoy the heritage and bounties with which we are now so richly blessed in the state of Louisiana.