Ohio Wesleyan University

Mock Convention

2016

Platform

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# 2016 OWU Mock Convention Platform

“*Back on the Right Track*”

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Preamble

Let it be known that in this, the 2016 Republican Platform, our great party has boldly confronted the most pressing issues of our time. In considering our nation’s grave problems, we have relied upon our Grand Party’s values: constitutional conservatism, personal liberty, religious freedom, and limited government. These values have informed the many decisions and recommendations presented below. Our platform is the presentation of these solutions, categorized in Social, Economic, and Foreign Policy sections.

The hope of the US Constitution is announced in its preamble: “...To form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility...promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our posterity.” These goals mirror those of our great party, and our government should focus its social policy around them. Our recommendations seek to return the federal government to a limited role in influencing social policy. Although the federal government may have had a benign impact on social policy in the past, its intrusion into sectors where it was never meant to go must be reversed.

It has also been observed that fully enjoying one’s liberties is impossible without economic self-determination. The right of the People to conduct their business affairs in a way that agrees with their beliefs must be defended. Moreover, in order to secure both prosperity and liberty for all, it is important that the federal government pursue policies that forward the long-term growth of our great nation. It is vital that the federal government stop subsidizing behaviors that destroy both fairness and efficiency in the marketplace. The provisions below seek to address the government’s abysmal fiscal policy.

Finally, it is the hope of all freedom loving people to live in prosperity and peace with one another. Unfortunately, this belief is not shared by all peoples and their governments. Therefore, it is necessary that our country defend itself against threats both old and new. In a world of growing insecurity, America must lead in diplomacy and military primacy. This platform acknowledges the reality that the world needs American leadership.

Now we place before you our humble suggestions. May God protect and bless our Great Union for all time.

Sincerely Yours,

The Platform Committee

Katie Berger
Caroline Hamilton
Ying He
Tyler Wake
SOCIAL POLICY

Immigration
More than ten million undocumented aliens currently reside in the United States, and that population is growing by 700,000 per year. These undocumented persons are using valuable resources designed for our citizens, and at a time of record government deficits, the country cannot sustain these levels of illegal immigration. The Republican party believes that is time for the federal government to once again protect and defend our borders.

The Republican Party emphasizes that the first step in solving our nation’s immigration crisis is complete control of our borders. The stream of new illegal immigrants entering our country must be stopped. As for the millions of illegal immigrants already residing in the United States, the Republican Party recognizes that mass deportation is not practical. Rather, we support a path for legal residency for undocumented immigrants already in our nation. We support the DREAM Act, which permits immigrant students who have grown up in the U.S. to apply for legal status if they go to college or serve in the military. However, parents should not be provided with incentives to send their children on a dangerous journey. These policies will serve as reasonable and effective solutions to our country’s immigration crisis.

Religious Liberty
Religious freedom is the cornerstone of civil liberties in the United States. The Republican Party believes that religious liberties in the Constitution supersede rights given by federal and state governments. The Obama administration has trampled over these sacred freedoms in a series of unconstitutional actions. With the election of a Republican president, it will be the policy of the administration to reverse these actions and return the “first freedom” to its proper place in American governance.

The legal authorization of the Department of Health and Human Services to force non-profit religious organizations to provide contraception, sterilization, and abortion-inducing drugs to its employees—in clear violation of these organizations’ religiously-informed beliefs and the free exercise clause of the First Amendment—will be ended. The authority of Health and Human Services to decide which businesses are considered religious organizations will be rescinded. The Republican Party believes, as supported by the Supreme Court in rulings such as Burwell vs Hobby Lobby, that the rights of proprietors to conduct their businesses in accordance with their religious convictions should not be infringed upon.

To demonstrate our commitment to religious freedom at home and abroad, the Justice Department of the new Republican administration will also pursue legal action against the cities of Boston, San Francisco, and District of Columbia and the state of Illinois under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act because of these entities’ revocation of the licenses and non-profit statuses of Catholic foster care and adoption services.
Abortion/Right to Life

In 1973, the Supreme Court handed down the decision of Roe v Wade, which recognized a woman’s constitutional right to an abortion through her right to privacy. Then, in 1992, the Court in Planned Parenthood v Casey reaffirmed the protected status of this supposed right. Because of these cases, public revenue and citizen’s tax dollars have been used to financially support abortions and provider organizations like Planned Parenthood.

The Republican Party firmly believes that an unborn child, like any individual in this country, has a right to life that should not be infringed upon by others. Life begins at conception, and the rights guaranteed in the Fourteenth Amendment to all Americans also apply to unborn children. Therefore, Roe and Casey must be overturned in order to solidify the necessary rights of unborn children. The Republican Party opposes using public revenues to promote or carry out abortions, as well as any healthcare options that include the coverage of abortion. Instead, we support incentives for those who choose adoption rather than abortion and encourage the private insurance sector to refrain from covering abortions. We recognize that there are problem pregnancies resulting from rape or incest, and providing these women with the resources they need is important, but not important enough to warrant the infringement on the rights of their children.

Second Amendment Rights

In recent history, our nation has experienced an increase in violent events involving guns. The response, on behalf of the Obama administration, is to increase gun regulation, making it increasingly more difficult for law-abiding citizens to obtain guns. However, as explicitly protected in the Second Amendment of the Constitution, citizens have the right to keep and bear arms. Americans must be able to defend themselves, their families, and their property through responsible gun ownership.

The Republican Party will continue to oppose any infringement of this right. We believe that it is in the power of the states to decide the parameters of gun ownership. Because we believe in responsible gun ownership, we also support increasing firearm education at the state level to ensure responsibility and defend liberty. The issues we are currently facing in regards to gun violence almost never involve weapons legally attained. We need to refocus our efforts on crime control, rather than punishing Americans simply for trying to exercise a right guaranteed to them by our Constitution.

Common Core/Education

As it stands today, the American education system is at the mercy of the Common Core curriculum, which was adopted in 2010. This program was designed to establish a set of guidelines that would foster high standardization among public schools in an effort to increase achievement across the nation. To monitor these levels of achievement, Common Core increased standardized testing. Unfortunately, rather than encouraging genuine learning, this educational plan has taken control away from parents and teachers, and has created a public school environment focused on teaching to a test.
The Republican Party views Common Core as a federal takeover of a very important state right, namely the right to educate its citizens. Rather than implementing an overarching and inefficient federal standard, we believe that education policy should be crafted by states, and that parents and local communities should be empowered to affect their children’s educational curricula. By returning education to the state, teachers will be more able to teach, and students will be more able to learn, ultimately leading to a more educated and higher achieving society.

Marijuana
As of the end of 2015, twenty-three states and the District of Columbia have legalized marijuana for medicinal purposes, and four states (Alaska, Oregon, Colorado, and Washington) as well as the District of Columbia have legalized marijuana for recreational purposes. In recognition of the Ninth Amendment’s reservations regarding state power, the Republican Party emphasizes that it is within the power of the each state to determine their drug policy. At this time, however, the Republican Party argues that not enough is known about the scientific characteristics or effects of the plant. Thus, additional research is necessary before a recommendation regarding widespread legalization of this drug could be advanced. It is our hope that states will carefully consider the consequences of marijuana before creating their own local policies.
ECONOMIC POLICY

Job Creation
One of the greatest problems facing the Western world is the high rate of unemployment among young adults and working-aged adults. The youth unemployment rate is an unconscionable 12.2%. The labor force participation rate (62.6%) is at its lowest point in 38 years.

The Republican Party’s economic priority is job creation. Our economic policies are designed to stimulate both the supply and demand for labor by eliminating unnecessary federal regulation. Federal programs, though benign in intention, have had a deleterious effect on the job market. For example, forcing employers to match payroll tax contributions and provide health insurance coverage increases the per employee cost and lowers the number of employees a business can economically afford. Our recommendations below are all geared towards increasing the number of jobs in the economy.

Deficit and National Debt
At the end of the 2016 fiscal year, the local, state, and federal debt is expected to be close to $23 trillion. While many politicians will argue that running our government at a deficit is normal, it cannot be disputed that the United States has reached unprecedented levels of debt. Just like a household cannot sustain perpetual debt, so too is our nation vulnerable to the harms of constantly needing to borrow more money to stay afloat.

For these reasons, reigning in the national deficit is one of the top priorities of the Republican Party. This can be achieved through cutting entitlement spending, raising the retirement age to 69, and reforming the tax code to foster economic growth. Additionally, we propose a balanced budget amendment and the presidential power to line item veto the US budget. As a nation, we need to realize that we cannot continue to spend money we do not have and get serious about reducing our deficit. This can most effectively be achieved by creating a nation that encourages entrepreneurship as well as reducing government spending.

Personal Income Tax and Credits
The current system regarding personal income tax and credits is not sustainable. Instead, the Republican Party believes in a simple tax code that eliminates special interest carve-outs that favor lobbyists and corrode public trust in the government. The Republican Party supports a graduated income tax; to simplify the tax code and eliminate the arbitrary power of government agencies, the number of brackets will be reduced to three with a lower amount of income tax paid by those in lower brackets.

Additionally, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) does not accomplish its goals of increasing the labor supply (a goal the Republican Party supports) and should be repealed. In order to encourage labor participation among the entirety of the working age population—not just parents—a new tax credit will come in the form of labor
subsidies that are distributed over the course of the year, as opposed to the EITC’s lump sum method.

To defray the cost of income tax reductions, which acts as a disincentive to work, and to encourage saving, the Republican Party supports a value-added method of sales tax. In this method, taxes will be applied at each point of sale in the supply chain. These suggestions will benefit the US economy at the individual level.

**Health Care**

The Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare, is a broad and sweeping federal policy that infringes on the prerogatives of state and local institutions. The Republican Party supports the repeal of Obamacare. In its place, we support the proposed the Health Care Choice Act. We favor free market principles and oppose government intervention in the healthcare industry. The Republican Party believes that giving insurance companies freedom to structure the policies they offer, including allowing exclusions for preexisting conditions, results in better healthcare outcomes.

The federal mandate that individuals purchase coverage represents but one more intrusion into the personal liberties of American workers and businesses. Instead, we support a tax credit that can be used to purchase private, affordable, portable health plans, as well as increasing the use of health savings accounts (HSAs) to help with out-of-pocket costs. The Republican Party endorses health plans that accompany a person regardless of where they live. To save on growing healthcare expenditures, we would raise Medicare’s eligibility age to 67 for all those who are currently below the age of 50. All Medicare benefits will be means-tested so that the benefits go to those who most need them.

**Social Security**

Social security is not only the backbone of most Americans’ retirement planning; it also aids disabled Americans. Approximately one third of retirees receive all their retirement funds from this system, two thirds of retirees get at least half of their retirement funds from social security, and over eleven million disabled citizens rely on these benefits. Unfortunately, the social security trust is on a path to bankruptcy. If nothing changes, the retirement trust is set to run out by 2033, and the disability trust could run out as early as 2016. Our social security program is struggling to remain solvent, yet there doesn’t seem to be any rush to fix this problem. The Republican Party seeks to address the underlying issues rather than simply reallocating money from one trust to cover the expenses of another, the direction taken by the Obama administration.

As a solution to the social security crisis, the Republican Party promotes privatizing social security, raising the retirement age to keep up with changes in life expectancy, and proposing means testing. The age at which full benefits would be available without penalty would be 67, and the earliest age at which benefits could be drawn would be 64. All benefits would be means tested against total net worth. We also advocate allowing workers to save up to $25,000 per year in Universal Savings Accounts (USAs).
Student Debt

Student debt in America today has risen above $1.3 trillion. This is higher than almost every other debt category, second only to mortgage debt. The Republican Party recognizes the importance of solving this critical issue and has provided a range of proposals all aimed at allowing American students to gain a practical education in order to become successful members of the workplace.

Most importantly, the involvement of the federal government should be drastically reduced, as education is a power that must be left to the states. Students should have better access to university information, such as employment statistics, and schools should be required to disclose how much one can expect to make when one graduates with a degree from that school. Further, the Republican Party believes that there should be options available for students with debt to refinance or consolidate their loans. The Republican Party supports the advancement of lower cost alternatives to a four year college education, including associate degrees, trade schools, and online opportunities. The Republican Party will continue to provide incentives for colleges to drive down costs while still ensuring a high quality education.

Environment

It is necessary that the United States pursue environmentally conscious resources that will power our growing nation. The Republican Party supports coal as a responsible and energy efficient resource. We also support exploration of natural gas and oil reserves, including drilling offshore and in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The Republican Party supports the Keystone Pipeline project, which would more safely transport natural gas. We advocate "cost-effective development of renewable energy" and favor aggressive development of renewable resources in the private sector.

Recently, the government has played too large a role in our nation’s energy policies. The Republican Party favors selling the rights to drill on federally held lands and reducing EPA regulations on that activity. In addition, the Republican Party approves current regulation and use of hydraulic fracturing as a part of the oil-harvesting process.

The Republican party believes that climate change cannot be simply attributed to man-made causes, and a single nation acting alone can make no difference. The Republican Party opposes treaties that would force the United States to reduce greenhouse gases while other large polluters continue to produce.
FOREIGN POLICY

ISIS--The Islamic State
ISIS is a terrorist organization of the most brutal variety. The Obama administration emphasizes containment; but as a nation, we need to take a strong stance against ISIS so as to eliminate them as a group, not just contain them. The only way to accomplish this goal is through the creation of a multinational coalition. The attacks from ISIS on NATO nations are simply unacceptable, and we must join together and fight this group until they are destroyed.

ISIS is a violent and dangerous terrorist organization; however, it is not exclusively an American fight. While the US must play a role in defeating the terrorist group, we need to focus on aiding our allies in the region. Our “boots on the ground” are the Kurdish forces fighting ISIS. We must aid these allies through weapons supplies, airstrikes, and special operations; however, at this point, sending US ground troops is unnecessary.

Syrian Refugee Crisis
What started as political uprisings in Syria have quickly turned to a full scale civil war. Since 2011, nearly 250,000 people have died as a result of this conflict, and it has created approximately eleven million refugees. With the rise of ISIS, this issue has become more urgent. As a result, the United States has been experiencing increasing pressure to open our borders to thousands of Syrian refugees. Currently, the United States under President Obama is accepting these refugees without proper background checks.

As a party, we believe that the United States is not in a position to accept Syrian refugees in this manner. Opening our nation to thousands of Syrians opens us to the potential of inviting terrorists and jihadis into our country. Clearly not every Syrian or Muslim is a terrorist wishing the US harm--however, it is almost impossible to determine this within the context of our current screening process. Rather than opening our borders, we should focus on creating safe havens within Syria and the Middle East for these refugees. We do not wish to turn a blind eye to the suffering of the Syrian people; but it is in our best national security interest not to admit Syrian refugees at this time.

Nuclear Weapons, North Korea, and Iran
Within the international community, there are several political actors seeking to create and/or expand their nuclear capabilities. At the forefront of this effort are North Korea and Iran. Recently, North Korea’s state-controlled media reported the successful testing of a hydrogen bomb, which constitutes a much more powerful version of a nuclear weapon. Although its success has been disputed, the mere attempt by this unstable authoritarian regime to possess such a powerful weapon is destabilizing. To make matters worse, its partner in this endeavor is Iran, a nation that has vowed to wipe Israel off the face of the planet.

Although the White House argues that its recent deal with Iran will prevent Iran from ever obtaining a nuclear weapon, the lifting of sanctions and the permissions granted to
Iran to pursue a nuclear program suggest otherwise. The economic surplus that the Iranian government now receives because of the deal will help them to finance terror across the globe.

Furthermore, while the United States under the Obama administration has been busy with Iran, North Korea has been all but ignored. North Korea is a volatile and untenable nation, and the Republican Party argues that more attention should be paid to their endeavors.

Finally, regarding Iran, North Korea, and any country that seeks to take up nuclear arms, the Republican Party--In the spirit of Ronald Reagan--supports anti-proliferation and arms agreements that limit the number and type of nuclear weapons in existence. The Iran deal should not be enforced by the next administration, and economic sanctions should be returned. Overall, the Republican Party urges a zero-tolerance policy concerning nuclear weapons around the globe.

**Cyber Security and Surveillance**

As the reliable party of national security, the Republican Party recognizes cybersecurity as the new battlefield between the US and its enemies. The Obama administration’s policies have emboldened other countries such as China, leading to unprecedented cyber-attacks, including the hacking of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The federal government’s computer systems should be modernized to ensure that its physical and technological security is guaranteed. In order to safeguard the morale and security of government workers, new personal identifiers, such as Social Security numbers and governmental ID numbers, should be issued to all those targeted in the OPM.

The Republican Party denounces military divisions devoted to conducting cyber espionage against civilian and governmental targets. We support a strategy of reciprocal cyber retaliation.

The Republican Party supports the actions of the National Security Administration (NSA) in gathering metadata on email and cell-phone calls, which is not a violation of the Fourth Amendment because it does not target individuals. Under a Republican Administration, the USA FREEDOM Act will be repealed and the monitoring authority of the NSA restored to the levels established by the PATRIOT Act. All diplomatic efforts should be expended so that Edward Snowden is extradited to the United States and tried under the Espionage Act of 1917 for actively conspiring against the Government of the United States. The Republican Party is certain that these efforts will restore security to our great nation.

**China**

In response to the recent and persistent hacking attempts, the Republican Party is calling for the United States to take offensive action against China. We believe that President Obama has been too soft on China. Instead of this passive approach, the Republican Party calls for a more aggressive strategy. China has committed acts of
cyber war, and a new commander in chief who will credibly stand up to these enemies is necessary. China’s current economic difficulties reflect the vulnerability of an authoritarian state; the Republican Party believes that the Obama administration has seriously downplayed the Chinese government’s human rights violations. The Republican Party emphasizes that we will stand on the side of the Chinese people rather than their autocratic rulers.
Minority Planks

Immigration
Border security is a national security issue and we should build a wall, triple border security, and implement surveillance and biometric tracking to secure the border. To protect American workers, we should enforce the rule of law and stop President Obama’s amnesty.

The border must be enforced and illegal immigrants should not be given a pathway to citizenship. The country should focus on deporting many of the most recent and dangerous of the eleven million illegal immigrants who have entered this country. Those who have been in the country for extended periods of time or have children who are citizens should be forced to pay a fine. Only if it is found they have no criminal history may they apply for legal working status in the US. They will not become citizens outside the normal naturalization process.

Marijuana
The current expansion of the usage of marijuana in America is a crisis that must be controlled. Twenty-three states and the District of Columbia have legalized marijuana for medicinal purposes, yet there is a startlingly low amount of research that has been completed regarding the consequences of marijuana. Furthermore, four states and the District of Columbia have also legalized recreational marijuana, despite this lack of conclusive educational research. Marijuana is a gateway drug, and legalizing its use only demonstrates to young Americans that smoking marijuana is a positive and desirable activity. The Republican Party believes that marijuana usage should not be legalized; instead, we will continue to enforce the federal ban on its use both medicinally and recreationally in every state. It is vital that the American people recognize the consequences of marijuana and act accordingly.

Environment
The Republican Party opposes the idea furthered by the Obama administration and others that climate change is occurring. Global warming is not a real phenomenon, and the Republican Party does not support action relating to this faux fear. The natural flux of the world’s climate is the explanation for recent weather and tidal patterns, not some man-made destruction of the ozone layer. Because of this, Congress should block any regulations on carbon dioxide, and strict carbon dioxide limits on existing coal-fired power plants should not be enforced.