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2012 Platform for the Republican Party of Arkansas

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PREAMBLE

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

We will protect and defend the State of Arkansas against usurpation of the State's rights as guaranteed by the Tenth Amendment to the US Constitution and the rights of Arkansas' citizens as guaranteed by the Ninth Amendment to the US 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 assistants such as czars without congressional oversight
- Create a leaner and more efficient government
- Promote national defense
- Enforce immigration laws
- Eliminate deficit spending and implement a balanced budget at all levels of government
- Strive for energy independence
- Support measures that 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 the effectiveness of government agencies and regulations.
- Eliminate duplication of function in government 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
- Use technology to provide greater transparency in government and access by all people
- Maintain a vigilant watch for infringement of 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 society. 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 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 sustainable 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, economic 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 provide new opportunities for service sector jobs. We support the Arkansas Department of Economic Development for the purpose of more effectively attracting good paying jobs to Arkansas, and to 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 in order for small businesses in Arkansas to survive and flourish. We strongly support Tort Reform to improve the environment for business growth and expansion thru an amendment to the State Constitution. The education and orientation of our youth in the free enterprise system, with the goal of developing the next generation of business leaders is also important.
3. We recognize the need for additional emphasis in the area of economic development in 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, access to capital and procurement assistance to struggling firms.

1
2 4. We support initiatives to create an "Ownership Society" which encourages an individual's
3 ability to control his or her own resources to invest into entrepreneurial initiatives (i.e., home
4 ownership and individual retirement accounts).
5

6 5. As Republicans, we favor free and fair trade with our nation's trading partners around the
7 world. We call on those nations with unfair trading practices to open their borders to the many
8 great products of the state of Arkansas. In the pursuit of free and fair trade, we should never
9 risk losing our nation's sovereignty nor blindly export jobs to other countries. Arkansas
10 waterways, one of the great assets of the State, should play a major role in developing the
11 state's economy. Developing waterway infrastructure will allow us to attract manufacturing,
12 distribution, and value-added companies. Due to our favorable mid-south location, we are
13 poised to become an import/export center for trade between the United States, the Caribbean,
14 and Central and South American markets. We encourage legislative and financial support of
15 the development of the inland waterways and related inter-modal facilities in Arkansas.
16

17 6. We strongly support efforts to make Arkansas the destination state for retirees from all over
18 America.
19

20 7. Technological advances must be maximized in order for our schools, businesses and farms
21 to prosper. .
22

23 24 **BUSINESS AND LABOR** 25

26 The economy of our nation and well-being of our citizens depends on a strong work ethic. The
27 individual worker has a cherished place in American society, which thrives when incentives are
28 directed toward production.
29

30 We strongly believe in a free enterprise system that encourages and promotes individual
31 incentives for those wishing to achieve "The American Dream." However, we also believe that
32 no business is too big to fail in a free market,
33

34 1. We believe that the cornerstone of Republican philosophy is the belief that each man and
35 woman is an individual who is responsible for his or her place in society. The individual is
36 encouraged to work to secure the benefits of society for himself/herself and for his/her family as
37 well as for those unable to care for themselves.
38

39 2. We believe no person is owed a living; however, we do realize that there are some
40 circumstances where individuals are not capable of earning a living wage. We support those
41 incentives that enable persons to seek employment on a timely basis, with a goal of becoming
42 self-sufficient.
43

44 3. We believe the business sector can properly function only if it operates using high legal and
45 ethical standards. Employees should realize that no business can exist long term unless it
46 makes an adequate profit. A successful business/employee relationship depends upon mutual
47 respect for each other and the ability to work as a cost-effective yet productive team.
48

49 4. We believe collective bargaining calls for reciprocal restraints. Federal law prevents an
50 employer from coercing, interfering with, or threatening an employee for engaging in the right to
51 organize and bargain collectively.
52

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

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

3
4 6. We believe employees should vote by secret ballot when determining whether to accept
5 union representation. We oppose all efforts to abandon this long standing practice.

6
7 7. We believe no employee should be forced to join or pay dues to a union as a condition of
8 employment. The Republican Party of Arkansas supports the state's right-to-work law.

9
10 8. We believe the public has a responsibility to compensate civil service employees fairly;
11 however, public employees have the responsibility to remain on their jobs even during contract
12 negotiation disputes.

13
14 9. We believe, because the Republican Party advocates policies that reflect the country's basic
15 principles of free enterprise and equal opportunity, it is in the public's best interest that
16 government contracting be performed through full and open competition. The presence of this
17 free-market competition assures taxpayers the best possible job and product for the taxpayers'
18 dollar. We oppose any government attempts to support anti-competitive market restrictions
19 such as union-only requirements that discriminate against individuals, companies or
20 organizations based on labor union affiliation.

21
22 10. We believe government over-regulation of business destroys the competitiveness of
23 Arkansas businesses and exports jobs from Arkansas to states and countries with fewer
24 regulations. It is important that future government policies continue to recognize that incentives
25 to work, produce and invest are important keys to our economic future. To achieve this
26 objective, Tort Reform delivered via an amendment to the state constitution is needed.

27
28 11. We believe immigration laws must be strictly enforced. Arkansas employers should not hire
29 anyone without the required documentation. The Republican Party of Arkansas also believes
30 that government at all levels should not reward those individuals who knowingly violate
31 established immigration laws to enter our state. Cities and states should not provide
32 "Sanctuary" to illegal immigrants.

33
34 12. We believe that government should be proactive in efforts to deal with illegal immigration.
35 The Social Security Administration should identify any multiple uses of Social Security numbers
36 and turn this information over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) within the
37 Department of Homeland Security.

38 39 40 **AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

41
42 Arkansas is a leader in agricultural production and our producers are excellent stewards of the
43 land on which that production takes place with respect to environmental quality and
44 conservation. Our farmers are major producers of rice, cotton, soybeans, poultry, beef and
45 many other staple products. Agriculture is Arkansas' number one industry and an essential part
46 of a thriving Arkansas economy. Believing this, we support:

47
48 1. Farm legislation that provides an adequate safety net for agricultural producers, promotes the
49 unencumbered free trade of U.S. farm products in the global marketplace, and provides
50 incentives for producers to implement progressive conservation practices on environmentally
51 sensitive lands.

52
53 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, many of whom are living in poverty. Education, healthcare, water treatment, and community facilities are often unavailable to people in these areas thus constraining their enjoyment of 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 of documentation for needed agricultural workers.

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

EDUCATION

Article 14 of the Arkansas Constitution which requires that "an adequate and efficient system of free public schools shall ever be preserved." We recognize that although the federal and state governments have spent more and more tax dollars in the public education system, the system 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 and that learning should be delivered effectively and efficiently. 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. Our education system should support and encourage that parental role. School choice made possible by scholarships or other funding sources 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 public school choice.

2. School administration should be conducted in an efficient and cost-effective manner. The primary emphasis of the education budget should be directed to 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 parents, communities, local school boards, and

1 state legislatures, not from the federal government. Legislation and funding should support
2 these goals and order of priority.

3
4 2. All students should receive a high-quality core curriculum to include English, mathematics,
5 science, geography, history, and computer science. We support learn-and-earn programs
6 which encourage students to earn income as they prepare for the work force while receiving
7 valuable experience.

8
9 3. Accountability and evaluation of student performance are the keys to reform in education.
10 Common sense values and skills are the core of good education.

11
12 4. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees the free exercise of
13 religion. We, therefore, support the right of the individual to pray in all public schools.

14
15 5. We support Alternative Certification Programs to increase the number of qualified and caring
16 teachers in our schools.

17
18 6. Sufficient resources should be available to assist low income students in their quest for
19 higher education. Federal and State aid should be limited to legal residents of the State of
20 Arkansas. We reject the use of public educational facilities and personnel to indoctrinate
21 students in sexual matters of any kind. We believe that the choices available to young people in
22 sexual matters are the proper realm of parents and their chosen faiths. We do not approve of
23 the use of tax dollars in the advancement of any experimental, social, or sexual agenda which
24 has not been tested and proven by centuries of collective wisdom to advance the causes of
25 public health, civil order and the well-being of children.

26
27 7. We promote both opportunity and responsibility for all. We must strive to improve the quality
28 and accessibility of literacy education for adults at every stage of life.

29
30 8. Teachers' time devoted to non-teaching duties during the academic day should be reduced,
31 so that more time is available for individual student attention. We encourage more volunteerism
32 such as mentoring programs, senior citizen tutors, parental involvement, and business
33 partnerships within the public schools.

34 35 36 **ELECTION REFORM**

37
38 Goal: To promote awareness and understanding of Arkansas election laws, prevent ballot fraud,
39 and conduct fair and honest elections.

40
41 To that end, the following are submitted:

42
43 1. Election laws must be vigorously enforced. Failure to comply must be reported to the
44 appropriate authorities immediately.

45
46 2. In the spirit of a positive approach to ballot security, we support efforts to provide assistance
47 to all county election commissioners for the purpose of training their workers to efficiently
48 perform their duties and to recognize any inconsistencies or irregularities in the election
49 process.

50
51 3. We support measures that ensure public officials and voters adhere to election laws. This
52 will deter voter fraud, voter impersonation, and multiple voting by the same person.
53 Presentation of a government issued photo I. D. with current address should also be required at

1 polling places.

2
3 4. We reaffirm the role of the county election commissioners in the conduct of all elections
4 including early voting. The early voting process should be handled similar to a normal polling
5 place on Election Day, including bi-partisan staffing and training by a state certified poll worker
6 trainer.

7
8 5. We strongly urge all Republican county chairmen or the selected designee on the election
9 commission, to familiarize themselves with Arkansas election laws and the American Disabilities
10 Act in order to implement them in every election.

11
12 6. We support the moving of Early Voting to a neutral location away from county premises
13 staffed by trained poll workers and administered by the county election commissioners.

14
15 7. We support the current term limits law as initiated by the people.

16
17 8. We oppose the use of taxpayer funds to influence any elections including initiative and
18 referendum elections.

19
20 9. We support the Electoral College process as it presently exists and oppose modifications
21 that would alter or diminish its role in electing the President.

22
23 10. We support absentee ballot procedures being reformed to eliminate the abuse of absentee
24 ballots by those who could actually vote in person.

25 26 27 **TAX REFORM AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY**

28
29 Tax Reform begins by electing qualified and trustworthy Republican candidates to office at
30 every level of government to ensure effective and responsible management of our resources.

31 32 **A. National Level**

33
34 1. We are concerned over the deficit spending prevalent in our federal government; therefore,
35 we support a Balanced Budget Amendment. We insist that our elected representatives pursue
36 policies of fiscal restraint, limited government, and lower taxes. This will involve major cuts in
37 federal spending, elimination of many "earmark" projects, elimination of agencies and personnel
38 where duplication is identified and where the purpose of such agency or personnel no longer
39 exists.

40
41 2. Restore America's entrepreneurial spirit by eliminating the current personal income tax. We
42 support a more efficient tax code that helps rather than hurts the economy.

43
44 3. Increases in capital gains taxes will have a dramatically negative effect on investment activity
45 and thus reduce economic growth.

46
47 4. We support reducing the maximum amount of Social Security Income subject to income tax
48 from 85% to 50%. Social Security should be treated like any other retirement plan on which tax
49 has been paid on the funds invested and therefore only the gain on the investment should be
50 subject to income tax when received by the taxpayer.

51
52 5. We support the permanent repeal of death taxes which are double taxation applied against
53 assets remaining after income taxes have originally been paid. Death taxes reduce the ability

1 of families to be self-sufficient, and they encourage retirees to settle in states that have no death
2 taxes. They are destructive to family farms and family-owned businesses.

3 4 **B. State Level**

5
6 1. Replace the State Income Tax with a more equitable method such as increasing the State
7 Sales Tax. Everyone would pay the same percentage and would know they are paying their fair
8 share for the government services available to all citizens. The maximum increase in State
9 Sales tax would be limited to no more than 2 percent.

10
11 2. In the interim and before the personal income tax can be eliminated, we wish to make clear
12 our position that we are opposed to income tax increases because they penalize creative
13 economic activity. We support legislation that would eliminate all income reported on IRS form
14 1099-R (i.e. retirement income) from the state income tax. This would increase the attraction of
15 Arkansas as a "Retiree Friendly" state and retiree spending would result in an increase in sales
16 and property tax revenues making this a revenue neutral change.

17
18 3. In the interim, we support the elimination of the Political Contribution Credit which is currently
19 allowed when there is a State Income Tax liability (Ref Tax Form AR1800). It appears unethical,
20 and even immoral, to allow tax money owed the state to be used as a political contribution. The
21 amount may seem insignificant but the principle is proper and righteous stewardship of public
22 funds.

23
24 4. In the interim, we support legislation to change the rules on "Deduction for Tuition Paid to
25 Post-Secondary Educational Institutions" (Ref Tax Form AR1075) by treating all tuition paid to 2
26 year, 4 year, or Technical Institute the same. The current rules allow a larger percentage
27 deduction for tuition paid to a 4 year institution. The proposed change would result in all
28 qualified post-secondary educational tuition being treated the same when itemizing deductions
29 on the personal Arkansas State Income Tax Return.

30
31 5. We support the permanent repeal of death taxes.

32
33 6. We support legislation that will permanently dedicate all General Improvement Funds to
34 critical state-wide needs such as Arkansas prisons, water resource development, highways,
35 higher education, and other critical needs, thus eliminating most pork barrel projects from state
36 funding.

37 38 **C. In General**

39
40 1. We are opposed to all unfunded federal and state mandates, because they cause severe
41 financial distress for state and local governments. We support reform of the state tax code to
42 make the passage of all taxes dependent upon three fourths of the legislators approving such
43 change.

44
45 2. We support federal and state tax codes that promote marriage and the family. Believing that
46 marriage is a divinely ordained union between one man and one woman, we do not believe that
47 the state or federal tax code should allow individuals in a same sex union to file a tax return
48 using the filing status of "Married filing Joint".

49
50 3. In conclusion, we call on Congress and the General Assembly to carefully weigh the costs
51 and benefits of each and every action they take, and to use the best possible means to
52 effectively achieve the desired ends on which we all agree: To use the tax code to promote and
53 encourage the creation of jobs, favorable economic climate for business, both small and large,

1 and viable partnerships between government and the private sector which permit the effective
2 transfer of technology and expertise for the general good. We support privatization of
3 government services provided control of the activity rests with the government agency, and that
4 government agencies are free to bid. Arkansas is a beautiful state that has many fine
5 attractions to bring visitors to our state. As Republicans we support the expansion of the
6 tourism industry and efforts to promote tourism in our state.

9 **CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

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

21 1. We believe that all criminal proceedings should be conducted and adjudicated based on the
22 constitutions and laws of the State of Arkansas and the United States alone without reference
23 to any foreign law.

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

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

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

40 4. Reform the grand jury system by requiring Circuit Judges to convene a grand jury when
41 10% of those voting in the last gubernatorial election in a county sign a petition calling for a
42 grand jury.

44 5. Construction of more prison space as needed and use of economic alternatives such as
45 private prisons.

47 6. Local and state administration of prisons, with emphasis on both punishment and
48 rehabilitation of prisoners.

50 7. Uniform and vigorous enforcement of the Domestic Abuse Act.

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

1
2 9. Reform and possible elimination of the parole process and furloughs for persons convicted of
3 violent crimes.

4
5 10. Prohibit the use of public office as a shield from prosecution. We support revocation of
6 pension rights or other benefits of public officials who are convicted of high crimes such as
7 felonies or serious misdemeanors committed while in office.

8
9 11. Initiate a monitoring system to ensure and increase accountability in all phases of the
10 judicial process.

11
12 12. We strongly believe that the ultimate solution to crime rests in individual responsibility and
13 accountability.

14
15 13. The Party maintains that the priority of our prisons must be the protection of society and the
16 punishment of the offender.

17
18 14. Prisoners should be required to perform meaningful work in proportion to their skills and
19 abilities.

20
21 15. No convicted felon should be given organ transplants at taxpayer's expense.

22
23 16. Capital punishment, when properly applied is a deterrent to crime and should be used. It
24 should also be done swiftly after the last appeal.

25
26 17. The Party believes an adult who commits forcible rape upon a minor deserves to be
27 imprisoned for life without parole.

28
29 18. We support legislation that is directed at protecting children from access to pornography
30 and we strongly urge parental responsibility in this area.

31
32 19. The present Sex Offender Residence Law covers level 3 and 4 wherein such individuals
33 cannot live within 2000 feet of a school, day care center or park. We believe the law should be
34 expanded to include all level 2 offenders where victims were 14 years old or younger.

35
36 20. We strongly support the effort to amend the state constitution to bring about Tort Reform in
37 the Criminal Justice System.

38 39 **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

40
41 America is a vibrant and progressive nation thanks to the free and open exchange of
42 information that has been firmly established through more than two centuries of daily practice
43 and the law. We enthusiastically uphold the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that
44 declares, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the
45 free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the
46 people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

47
48 The Arkansas Freedom of Information Act of 1967 was among the first achievements of
49 Governor Winthrop Rockefeller's administration. It is a tribute to Governor Rockefeller that for
50 more than three decades this Act has opened the actions of all levels of governmental bodies to
51 public view and scrutiny. We encourage strengthening this Act whenever weaknesses may
52 appear. We also oppose any type of regulation that negatively affects the ability of Arkansans
53 to obtain access to public information.

1 Republican leadership resulted in passage of our state online checkbook law. We support full
2 implementation of the law by all levels of government and related entities.

3 4 5 **HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS**

6
7 All Arkansans who believe in our goals of rewards equal to effort expended, freedom, justice,
8 and responsive government are urged to join us in promoting that human rights, civil rights, and
9 due process be equally available to all persons without regard to race, ethnic background, age,
10 gender, religion, or physical condition.

11
12 1. Bigotry has no place in our state. We denounce those persons, organizations, publications
13 and movements which practice or promote racism, hate actions or religious intolerance.

14
15 2. We believe all Americans should have equal opportunity to succeed regardless of race,
16 nationality, origin, gender or creed.

17
18 3. The Republican Party of Arkansas believes that unborn children have a fundamental
19 individual right to life, which cannot be infringed. We believe that all innocent human lives
20 should be respected and safeguarded from conception to natural death. We oppose assisted
21 suicide, euthanasia, genocide, infanticide, cloning, partial birth and all abortion, and
22 embryonic/fetal stem cell research. The Party affirms its support for a Human Life Amendment
23 to the U.S. Constitution. We endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth
24 Amendment's protections apply to unborn children. We oppose using public revenues for
25 abortion and organizations which advocate it. We support the appointment of judges who
26 respect traditional family values and the sanctity of human life. We urge the overturning of Roe
27 v. Wade.

28
29 4. We support state legislation that will ensure abortion coverage is prohibited from being
30 offered in state-sponsored health care exchanges, federal exchanges, federal-state
31 partnerships and high risk pools created under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

32
33 5. We commend those who provide alternatives to abortion by meeting the needs of pregnant
34 women and providing adoption services.

35
36 6 We fully support the Americans with Disabilities Act and the elimination of barriers in order to
37 ensure equal opportunities for the physically disabled.

38
39 **7.** We believe that every citizen has the opportunity to achieve the American Dream through hard
40 work, dedication, self-determination and that government should not be an obstacle to these but
41 instead support them through education, skills training and business opportunities that foster the
42 resourcefulness of the people to better themselves absent of dependency upon the government and
43 help our next generations envision a future brighter than the challenges of the past. We encourage
44 private groups and faith based organizations to use their own creativity and initiative to further develop
45 these opportunities for all citizens of Arkansas and the United State of America.

46
47 8. We strongly support Second Amendment rights. The Republican Party of Arkansas fully
48 recognizes the constitutional right of citizens to keep and bear arms. We recognize that
49 criminals, not guns, commit crimes. We believe that it is the responsibility of all gun owners to
50 safely operate and store their firearms. We believe there should be mandatory sentences for
51 criminals using a gun in the commission of a crime, or any other weapon or threat used to
52 debase, wound, or kill an innocent victim. We call on governments at all levels to strictly
53 enforce existing gun laws.

9. We support a national "right-to-carry" law for persons with concealed permits to travel freely on interstate journeys.

10. 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.

11. We support career education and job training for all citizens.

12. 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.

13. We recognize the importance of the Declaration of Independence in American history and the founding of our country. References to the Creator must remain in this document, on public buildings and in government sanctioned activities. We further express our belief that the reference to "One Nation Under God" must 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 statements regarding religion and morality made by our Founding Fathers are just as important today as they were 200 years ago.

14. Arkansas Republicans support positions that permit references to God in all school functions including athletic activities and graduations.

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 ideal environment for rearing children.

HOMELAND SECURITY AND THE WAR ON TERROR

We believe the global war against terrorism is the transcendent challenge of this generation. 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

1 funded medical care.

2
3 We grieve for the brave men and women who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for their country.
4 Their memory will live on in our hearts, and their sacrifice will never be forgotten or taken for
5 granted. We recognize and appreciate the sacrifice of their families and our obligation to them.
6 We oppose the acquisition of nuclear weapons by our adversaries, and support the Reagan
7 philosophy of Peace through strength. This should be achieved by maintaining our country's
8 nuclear weapons at a level capable of deterring enemy nations.
9

10 We are proud of the United States of America and the role our nation plays in spreading
11 freedom around the world. We also realize that once we lose the respect of our adversaries,
12 our liberty is in jeopardy. Therefore, we stand united against abusive dictators and threatening
13 regimes. Furthermore, we believe that the United States should stand with our friends and
14 allies around the world.
15

16 We believe that the enemy we face today in Islamic extremism is as menacing as the enemy we
17 faced in communism some years ago. Furthermore, we believe that recklessly downplaying the
18 nature and magnitude of the terrorist threat jeopardizes our liberty. Therefore, we support the
19 War Powers Act and active anti-terrorism efforts by our security agencies and military forces.
20

21 We support the war against radical Islamic terrorists and nations that support them. We reaffirm
22 our defense of religious freedom for all peaceful religions because this is the foundation upon
23 which our country was founded.
24

25 We support the law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other emergency responders who are
26 on the front line here at home.
27
28
29

30 **DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE**

31

32 Despite the historic progress made in reducing illegal drug use in the United States (50%
33 reduction since the late 1970's), substance abuse continues to threaten the strength of our
34 families, communities and work force. Arkansas Republicans support the balanced approach to
35 fighting illegal drug abuse including tough law enforcement, effective drug education efforts, and
36 drug treatment programs with accountability.
37

38 We oppose efforts to decriminalize or legalize harmful drugs including marijuana. We believe
39 that current medical evidence and research do not support the legalization of marijuana for
40 medical treatment.
41

42 We support periodic evaluations of education programs for tobacco, drug, and alcohol abuse
43 and further recommend increasing fees for multiple offenders. This increased funding will
44 provide for additional programs or improvements in the existing programs.
45

46 In Arkansas, we applaud the recent successful efforts to restrict the precursor chemicals used in
47 the manufacture of methamphetamine. Now, we recognize the greater challenge is the
48 methamphetamine imported to Arkansas by national and international criminal organizations.
49

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

1 narcotics efforts.

2
3 We support enhanced penalties for those who are found operating a methamphetamine lab and
4 engaged in the distribution of meth.

5
6 We support proven effective programs such as "Operation Weed and Seed" which targets high-
7 crime neighborhoods with a combined strategy of prevention and crime control.

8
9 We support the continued expansion of Drug Courts in Arkansas which combine effective
10 treatment with accountability and has been proven to reduce recidivism among participants. We
11 urge increased state funding of drug courts.

12
13 We recognize that there has been a historic disparity in the sentencing of cocaine offenders.
14 Those convicted of "crack cocaine" offenses have been sentenced to much longer prison
15 sentences than those convicted of "powder cocaine" offenses. This difference has resulted in a
16 greater incarceration rate for black offenders. We applaud the steps of the U.S. Sentencing
17 Commission in reducing this disparity.

18
19 We support an effective state parole system that assures adequate supervision including drug
20 screening. We also support an expansion of private sector efforts and community support for
21 the employment of offenders who have fulfilled their sentence. This reintegration of offenders
22 into society is essential to avoid recidivism.

23 24 25 **IMMIGRATION PLANK OF ARKANSAS FOR 2012**

26
27 As citizens of the United States --- a nation of immigrants --- the Republican Party of Arkansas
28 recognizes the important contributions immigrants from all nations have made to the economic
29 and cultural strength of the United States. We also believe that, as a nation of laws, the integrity
30 of our immigration system is undermined by the flagrant disregard of our laws by those who
31 illegally enter our country and those who overstay their visas.

32
33 We believe that the foundation of an effective immigration policy must begin by securing our
34 borders. We recognize that to protect our borders the federal government must continue to
35 accelerate border security measures such as increasing the number of border patrol agents and
36 greater utilization of technology and physical barriers.

37
38 Since it is estimated that 40% of the illegal aliens in our country are a result from overstaying a
39 legitimately issued visa and the Immigration and Naturalization Service has frequently
40 demonstrated the inability to process petitions for legal immigrants in a timely manner, we call
41 for the federal government to reorganize this agency so that it becomes more effective and
42 efficient in the execution of its assigned duties.

43
44 We also recognize that workers from other countries will continue to use every means to come
45 to the United States as long as there are employers who hire them. For that reason, we support
46 an employer verification system that will require the employer to verify legal status prior to hiring
47 or offering employment.

48
49 With this combination of effective border security, a comprehensive entry-exit system for foreign
50 visitors, and an employer verification system, we are convinced a nation as great as the United
51 States, can secure and protect its borders from those who would unlawfully enter or overstay.
52 This will restore integrity to the discredited immigration system that is vital to a prosperous
53 America.

1
2 We also support a greater partnership by the State of Arkansas and federal authorities in the
3 area of immigration enforcement. We are disappointed that the present Democrat Governor in
4 Arkansas refuses to direct the Arkansas State Police to be trained and engaged in immigration
5 enforcement even though federal and state legislation authorizes the partnership.
6

7 The State of Arkansas should verify proof of legal presence in the country before the issuance
8 of state identity documents such as driver's licenses. This is an essential requirement due to
9 the exploitation of identity documents by illegal aliens.
10

11 We support English being recognized as the official language of the United States of America.
12 This does not preclude governmental use of other languages in documents and forms. We
13 oppose the printing of voter registration forms in any language other than English.
14

15 We believe that a combination of raids, deportation, cessation of benefits, and enforcement of
16 immigration law by local police will remove the majority of illegal aliens from the State of
17 Arkansas. We therefore support a concentrated effort to use attrition and enforcement to
18 remove as many illegal aliens as possible without giving any path to citizenship or any other
19 reward to those who enter the state illegally.
20

21 We believe that a massive deportation is impractical. We support focusing deportation efforts
22 on criminal aliens while granting renewable legal residency status, to those who have
23 established roots in our society, meeting criteria such as worthiness, family ties, and payment of
24 a fine.
25

26 We recognize that Arkansas is blessed with a growing number of immigrants that are working
27 hard, fulfilling their obligation to community and country, and contributing to the social fabric of
28 this great State. We support efforts by immigrants to assimilate into our state, our language
29 and our culture.
30

31 32 **ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND ENERGY POLICY** 33

34 Arkansas Republicans should take a leadership role in challenging all private business and
35 citizens to protect natural resources and environment without further government regulations.
36 The health and beauty of the State of Arkansas and all of America is important to us and future
37 generations. We should encourage recycling to reduce waste, conservation of energy including
38 the use of renewable energy sources and choosing products which are not harmful to plants
39 and wildlife.
40

41 We also support local, state and federal programs, and market based incentives to promote a
42 thriving natural environment, enhancing quality of life, and advancement of economic prosperity
43 including:
44

- 45 1. Improvement of air quality.
- 46
- 47 2. Improvement of water quality and conservation of wetlands.
- 48
- 49 3. Cleanup and redevelopment of hazardous waste sites.
- 50
- 51 4. Promotion of land conservation and stewardship.
- 52
- 53 5. Development of a realistic growth-oriented and scientifically based approach to the questions

1 surrounding global climate change.

2
3 Our nation's dependence on foreign oil is a threat to national security, and the exorbitant energy
4 prices are a threat to our economy. We believe that a long-term strategy for energy
5 independence must include:

- 6
7 1. Establishment of a coherent policy that affords access to our vast natural resources while
8 protecting our natural environment.
9
- 10 2. Opening of the Outer Continental Shelf, oil shale regions, and other domestic sources of oil
11 for exploration and drilling now.
12
- 13 3. Loosening of the environmental regulations that make it impossible to build new oil refineries.
14
- 15 4. Investments in proven technologies that provide energy in a cost effective and
16 environmentally safe process.
17
- 18 5. Arkansas is among the top natural gas producing states and we support responsible
19 development and use of our domestic natural resources.
20

21 **HEALTHCARE ISSUES**

22
23 Healthcare is not a right; it is a service. As a compassionate society we will aid those in need;
24 however, a government takeover of healthcare is not only unconstitutional, but detrimental to
25 the entire health care system.
26

27 The Republican Party of Arkansas expresses support for:

- 28
29 1. Long-term Medicare solutions:
 - 30 a. Form a bipartisan commission to make recommendations.
 - 31 b. Assure long-term solvency by implementing cost saving measures that reduce
32 bureaucracy, fraud and abuse.
 - 33 c. Implement optional plans that combine public and private efforts to provide citizen
34 access to and choices among various kinds of coverage.
35
- 36 2. Medical Savings Accounts which allow people to own and control their healthcare.
37
- 38 3. Freedom to choose fee-for-service plans.
39
- 40 4. Choices among various managed care plans.
41
- 42 5. Optional long-term care choices, including nursing home, hospice and home health care for
43 certain diseases such as Alzheimer's.
44
- 45 6. Tax-deductible premiums for these and other such options.
46
- 47 7. Medicaid block grants to states with "No Federal Strings". Arkansas Republicans believe that
48 such strings defeat the purpose of state grants. Distribution of Medicaid grant funds should be
49 left to the discretion of each state.
50
- 51 8. We strongly support Medical tort liability reform thru an amendment to the state constitution:
52 Arkansas Republicans believe health care costs can be reduced by tort reform of medical
53 liability regulations and statutes by limiting the circumstances under which such cases may be

1 properly pursued and the extent of damage claims involving pain and suffering.

2
3 9. Freedom to choose doctors outside of the Medicare system: Arkansas Republicans hold that
4 neither Medicare patients nor doctors choosing to practice outside the Medicare system should
5 be fined or otherwise punished for non-cooperation with the Medicare system, and patients
6 should be free to voluntarily pay doctors out of personal funds for such medical care, even when
7 rendered outside the Medicare system.

8
9 10. The repeal of all statutes, laws and regulations that would permit the Medicare system to
10 pressure, prosecute, pursue, fine or otherwise punish any such patient or doctor.

11
12 11. Continuity of patient care when employers change health insurance plans and providers,
13 we support the flexibility for physicians to provide services for any managed health care plan in
14 any state that they are licensed to practice.

15
16 12. National legislation to treat mental and physical illnesses equitably and fairly.

17
18 13. Efforts to implement more access to Community Based Health Centers; to meet the health
19 care needs of the uninsured and underinsured in their communities.

20
21 14. Association Health Plans to help small businesses on behalf of their employees; Health
22 Savings Accounts so Americans can get help with out-of-pocket medical expenses; and a
23 creation of refundable tax credit to help low income families purchase health insurance.

24
25 15. Creation of a legal environment for pharmaceutical companies to develop new drugs and
26 lower costs to consumers.

27
28 16. Repeal of Obamacare.