



# ON THE ISSUES

*A Comparison of Republican and Democrat Platforms  
to FreedomWorks' Position on Major Issues*



*\*All quotations taken directly from the most recent Party Platform passed by either the [Republican National Convention](#) or the [Democratic National Convention](#). FreedomWorks positions are based on the [“FreedomWorks 2020 Policy Platform.”](#) Note that the [2020 RNC](#) elected to reaffirm the existing 2016 platform rather than modify it or adopt a new platform.*



# TAXES/SPENDING


## THE BOTTOM LINE:

**REPUBLICANS:** Government spending is an impediment to economic growth and **should be reduced**. The best way to solve our current fiscal problems is by **cutting spending** – not by increasing taxes. **Progressive taxation is anti-economic growth**, reducing investment and jobs. Corporate tax rates **should remain low** to keep the US competitive with other countries and help our economy.

**DEMOCRATS:** Government spending promotes jobs and prosperity and **should be increased** for the welfare of all Americans. The best way to solve our current fiscal problems is not through cutting spending but through **increasing taxes**, primarily on the wealthy. **Taxation needs to be more progressive** – with the wealthy paying more. **Corporate tax rates should be raised** so that corporations pay their fair share.

**FREEDOMWORKS:** Government **spending should be reduced**. Not only as an economic issue, but the government reduces individual freedom and should be limited to only performing the functions explicitly outlined in the Constitution. **Lowering taxation** on production, particularly corporate taxes, promotes greater prosperity as well promoting individual freedom to choose.

## THE BREAKDOWN:

REPUBLICAN	DEMOCRATS	
<p>“Republicans consider the establishment of a pro-growth tax code a moral imperative.”</p> <p>“We will seek simplicity and clarity so that every taxpayer can understand how much of their income is consumed by the federal government.”</p> <p>“We must impose firm caps on future debt, accelerate the repayment of the trillions we now owe in order to reaffirm our principles of responsible and limited government, and remove the burdens we are placing on future generations.”</p>	<p>“Democrats will reform the tax code to be more progressive and equitable...Including more generous, refundable tax credits to benefit low- and middle-income families.” “We will make sure the wealthy pay their fair share in taxes.”</p> <p>“Democrats will take action to reverse the Trump Administration’s tax cuts...”</p> <p>“Corporate tax rates, which were cut sharply by the 2017 Republican tax cut, must be raised, and “trickle-down” tax cuts must be rejected. Estate taxes should also be raised...”</p> <p>“Democrats will reform the tax code to be more progressive and equitable, and reduce barriers for working families to benefit from targeted tax breaks...”</p> <p>“Democrats believe we must act immediately to make ambitious investments that will support and create jobs.”</p>	<p>Taxation should be a means to fund only the legitimate roles of government and no more. The force of government (IRS) also should not be used as a tool for social change.</p> <p>Families and individuals are best able to decide what is in their own best interests. Helping others should be voluntary, and when allowed to be so, will flourish.</p> <p>Our lack of a balanced budget is both a threat to our national security and to our nation’s economic future. Spending levels must go down, lest the levels at which we borrow, reach a breaking point and collapse our economy or force future generations to pay.</p>



# SOCIAL SECURITY/WELFARE


## THE BOTTOM LINE:

**REPUBLICANS:** The government is responsible to provide a **basic social safety net** for those who need assistance, but programs should be re-structured to encourage independence from—not dependence on—government. **Social security** should be overhauled to put it on a sustainable financial footing (how is not defined in the platform). **Medicare options** should be offered as an alternative to government plans.

**DEMOCRATS:** The government is responsible to **care for its citizens** and social welfare programs should be expanded. **Social Security and Medicare benefits should be expanded.**

**FREEDOMWORKS:** **Government programs should be limited and short-term.** The path to individual thriving should be based on work or charity.

## THE BREAKDOWN:

REPUBLICAN	DEMOCRATS	 FreedomWorks
<p>“Saving Social Security is more than a challenge. It is our moral obligation to those who trusted in the government’s word.” To save Social Security, Republicans say the system must be overhauled, but the platform is silent on how to make this a reality.</p> <p>“We intend to save Medicare by modernizing it, empowering its participants, and putting it on a secure financial footing. We will preserve the promise of Medicaid as well...That is why we propose these reforms: Impose no changes for persons 55 or older. Give others the option of traditional Medicare or transition to a premium-support model... (guarantee to every enrollee an income-adjusted contribution toward a plan of their choice), with catastrophic protection.”</p>	<p>“Democrats will reject every effort to cut, privatize, or weaken Social Security...”</p> <p>“Social Security is the most enduring thread in our nation’s social safety net. We will enact policies to make Social Security more progressive, including increasing benefits for all beneficiaries, meaningfully increasing minimum benefit payments, increasing benefits for long-duration beneficiaries, and protecting surviving spouses from benefit cuts.”</p> <p>“Democrats will fight any efforts to cut Medicare benefits, and support finding financially sustainable policies to expand Medicare to cover dental, vision, and hearing.”</p> <p>“We will increase investments in public housing to expand availability.”</p> <p>“We will raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and guarantee equal pay for women.”</p>	<p>Social Security and Medicare are constantly teetering on insolvency, and tough but substantial reforms to them are the only way to ensure they are sustainable and available to the population, including raising the retirement age as Americans live longer.</p> <p>Retirement savings should be owned by the individual rather than subject to the whim of government policies. One effective way is through personal accounts like a 401(k) with both employer and employee contributing.</p> <p>Medicare should not be the main or only option for healthcare for seniors. The free market can provide far better choices and quality, and Americans should be allowed to opt out of Medicare in favor of these.</p> <p>There is dignity in work, and our social safety net must ensure welfare recipients are incentivized to be successful in work, such that their need for government assistance is only temporary and that they do not become permanently dependent on the state.</p>



# HEALTHCARE


## THE BOTTOM LINE:

**REPUBLICANS:** Healthcare is the work of doctors and other healthcare professionals who should have the right to decide how much and what kind of healthcare is best for their patients. The **current programs, where the government makes healthcare decisions, should be limited.**

**DEMOCRATS:** Healthcare is a human right and it is the **responsibility of the government to provide healthcare for all Americans.** The current programs need to be expanded. To assure affordability, the government should have a hand in determining prices in the private sector.

**FREEDOMWORKS:** Free markets will increase competition and drive down healthcare costs. Citizens will be best served by the private sector bearing most costs in healthcare, because the government creates incentives for higher costs that are borne by citizens, directly or indirectly.

## THE BREAKDOWN:

REPUBLICAN	DEMOCRATS	
<p>"Any honest agenda for improving healthcare must start with repeal of the dishonestly named Affordable Care Act of 2010: Obamacare."</p> <p>"We must recover the traditional patient-physician relationship based on mutual trust, informed consent, and confidentiality. To simplify the system for both patients and providers, we will reduce mandates and enable insurers and providers of care to increase healthcare options and contain costs."</p> <p>"To ensure vigorous competition in healthcare, and because cost-awareness is the best guard against over-utilization, we will promote price transparency so consumers can know the cost of treatments before they agree to them."</p>	<p>"Democrats believe health care is a human right. We will incentivize states to expand Medicaid and enroll low-income people who do not otherwise have health insurance in a new, high-quality public option without premiums."</p> <p>"Democrats believe we need to protect, strengthen, and build upon our bedrock health care programs, including the Affordable Care Act, Medicare, Medicaid, and the Veterans Affairs (VA) system."</p> <p>"Private insurers need real competition to ensure they have incentive to provide affordable, quality coverage to every American. To achieve that objective, we will give all Americans the choice to select a high-quality, affordable public option."</p>	<p>Healthcare is no different from other services in our society – all benefit from a free market system where supply, demand, and competition drive rates. Individuals, not the government, need to make their own healthcare decisions.</p> <p>The federal government should not be involved in providing healthcare other than as it relates to the limited safety net. Putting Americans and their doctors, not the government, in charge of health plans and decisions is the best way to increase the quality and lower the cost of healthcare.</p> <p>The further the government involves itself in our healthcare, the closer we move to government choosing who is and is not able to receive healthcare. This includes rate-setting, by which the government attempts to limit costs in the private market.</p> <p>States should be empowered to control their own insurance markets and should be able to sell insurance across state lines.</p>





# IMMIGRATION


## THE BOTTOM LINE:

**REPUBLICANS:** As an issue of national security, the first job of the federal government is to define and **protect borders** and entry points through which immigrants can come. The level of immigration should first consider **protecting jobs** of American citizens. Who is admitted should be **based on merit** rather than family ties. Existing illegal aliens should be **repatriated to their own country** except those in serious danger seeking political, not economic, asylum.

**DEMOCRATS:** Border protection must be overhauled to give more humane treatment to **asylum seekers**. Who is admitted should prioritize **uniting families** of current American citizens. Existing undocumented workers who were brought here by their parents, or have otherwise not come into the country legally, should be offered a **path to citizenship**.

**FREEDOMWORKS:** Legal immigration is vital to our economy. The choice of who to admit should be **based on merit**. Righting the maligned incentives of the system to reflect this will naturally solve many of the perceived hot-button immigration issues such as amnesty, family/chain migration, and birthright citizenship.

## THE BREAKDOWN:

REPUBLICAN	DEMOCRATS	 FreedomWorks
<p>Our immigration system must protect American working families and their wages, for citizens and legal immigrants alike, in a way that will improve the economy.”</p> <p>“[T]he interest of American workers must be protected over the claims of foreign nationals seeking the same jobs.”</p> <p>“We oppose any form of amnesty for those who, by breaking the law, have disadvantaged those who have obeyed it.”</p> <p>“Our highest priority, therefore, must be to secure our borders and all ports of entry and to enforce our immigration laws. That is why we support building a wall along our southern border and protecting all points of entry.”</p>	<p>“Democrats believe the United States should be a beacon of hope for those who are suffering violence and injustice, which is why we will protect and expand the existing asylum system and other humanitarian protections.”</p> <p>“We believe detention should be a last resort, not the default. Democrats will prioritize investments in more effective and cost-efficient community-based alternatives to detention.”</p> <p>“Democrats believe it is long past time to provide a roadmap to citizenship for the millions of undocumented workers, caregivers, students, and children who are an essential part of our economy and of the fabric of our nation.”</p>	<p>Robust, legal immigration is vitally important to our economic vibrancy. Choosing which individuals should be admitted into our country should be based on merit -- the contribution they can/want to make to our country -- as well as their desire to integrate into the fabric of America.</p> <p>First, we must secure the border. Second, we must address the issue of visa overstay. Third, but perhaps most importantly, we must screen entrants for national security concerns and for merits.</p>



# EDUCATION


## THE BOTTOM LINE:

**REPUBLICANS:** Government funding of K-12 education should allow **parents to choose** what schools their children attend, private or public. The government should **not mandate curricula** through a national standard. Government involvement in **higher education should be limited** and streamlined.

**DEMOCRATS:** Government funding of K-12 education should be provided **only to public schools** and that funding needs to increase particularly for neighborhoods of color. A **national standard** should be used to assure uniform quality. Government should **fund college education** for those who cannot afford it.

**FREEDOMWORKS:** Government funding (federal, state, and local) of K-12 should allow **parents to choose** their children's schools and the government should have **no role in determining educational standards**. The Department of Education should be terminated immediately.

## THE BREAKDOWN:

REPUBLICAN	DEMOCRATS	 FreedomWorks
<p>"Parents have a right to direct their children's education, care, and upbringing."</p> <p>"We reject a one-size-fits-all approach to education and support a broad range of choices for parents and children at the state and local level. We likewise repeat our long-standing opposition to the imposition of national standards and assessments, encourage the parents and educators who are implementing alternatives to Common Core, and congratulate the states which have successfully repealed it."</p> <p>"In order to encourage new modes of higher education delivery to enter market... states should be empowered to allow a wide array of accrediting and credentialing bodies to operate."</p>	<p>"Our public schools are bedrock community institutions, and yet our educators are underpaid, our classrooms are overstuffed, and our school buildings have been neglected, especially in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color."</p> <p>"Students should have multiple public school pathways to be able to access the opportunities they deserve."</p> <p>"Democrats believe that education is a public good and should not be saddled with a private profit motive, which is why we will ban for-profit private charter businesses from receiving federal funding."</p> <p>"[W]e will make public colleges and universities tuition-free for students whose families earn less than \$125,000—roughly 80 percent of the American people."</p>	<p>Offering school choice such that education dollars follow students instead of systems (i.e. not artificially propping up government schools if they are not the first choice of parents) is the best way to ensure quality education for our nation's children.</p> <p>Government funding of K-12 education should allow parents to choose where their children attend school. The federal government should have no role in determining educational standards.</p> <p>Subsidizing the costs of higher education has raised prices astronomically and siloed many students into traditional four-year colleges when they may be better suited to career training or technical education. Options for this should be expanded instead of being disincentivized by government policies.</p>



# REGULATION


## THE BOTTOM LINE:

**REPUBLICANS:** Government's role in the economy has grown far beyond the original intent of assuring public safety. Government must **reduce regulation** which has become a burden to economic growth and entrepreneurship.

**DEMOCRATS:** The government needs to assume a **larger regulatory role** with the intent of assuring greater economic equality, particularly for people of color.

**FREEDOMWORKS:** **Excessive regulation has become a threat** to individual freedom and prosperity and must be curbed.

## THE BREAKDOWN:

REPUBLICAN	DEMOCRATS	 FreedomWorks
<p>"Government cannot create prosperity, though government can limit or destroy it... Over-regulation is the quiet tyranny of the 'Nanny State.'"</p> <p>"We call on Congress to begin reclaiming its constitutional powers from the bureaucratic state by requiring that major new federal regulations be approved by Congress before they can take effect, such as through the Regulation Freedom Amendment."</p>	<p>"The economy is not working for the American people...That is why Democrats commit to forging a new social and economic contract with the American people...A new economic contract that raises wages and restores workers' rights to organize, join a union, and collectively bargain. One that at last supports working families and the middle class by securing equal pay for women and paid family leave for all...A new social and economic contract that at last grapples honestly with America's long and ongoing history of racism and disenfranchisement, of segregation and discrimination, and invests instead in building equity and mobility for the people of color who have been left out and left behind for generations."</p>	<p>The lack of oversight and accountability within the administrative state has eroded trust in executive agencies.</p> <p>Federal agencies often overstep their constitutional bounds in regulating, and Congress should reassert its constitutional role of legislative oversight.</p> <p>Bureaucrats should not be allowed to be unilateral arbiters and more congressional and judicial oversight of the executive is necessary.</p>





# ENERGY/ENVIRONMENT


## THE BOTTOM LINE:

**REPUBLICANS:** The **free market**, not government regulation, is the best arbiter of what forms of forms of energy are produced. **Private ownership** will result in the best stewardship of the environment.

**DEMOCRATS:** The government must have an **active role in regulating energy production** in order to protect Americans against climate change.

**FREEDOMWORKS:** Protection of the environment is best accomplished through the stewardship inherent in **private ownership**. The **free market** should be the determinant of what types of energy are produced.

## THE BREAKDOWN:

REPUBLICAN	DEMOCRATS	 FreedomWorks
<p>“Government should not play favorites among energy producers...we support the development of all forms of energy that are marketable in a free economy without subsidies, including coal, oil, natural gas, nuclear power, and hydropower.”</p> <p>“Energy is both an economic and national security issue. We support the enactment of policies to increase domestic energy production.” “Keeping energy in the earth will keep jobs out of reach for those who need them most.”</p> <p>“Conservation is inherent in conservatism...We assert that private ownership has been the best guarantee of conscientious stewardship, while some of the worst instances of degradation have occurred under government control.”</p>	<p>“Climate change is a global emergency. We have no time to waste in taking action... We will set a bold, national goal of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions for all new buildings by 2030...”</p> <p>“To reach net-zero emissions as rapidly as possible, Democrats commit to eliminating carbon pollution from power plants by 2035 through technology-neutral standards for clean energy and energy efficiency.”</p> <p>“Democrats will work with affected frontline communities to develop a screening and mapping tool to ensure racial and socioeconomic equity in federal climate, energy, and infrastructure programs...”</p> <p>“We can and must build a thriving, equitable, and globally competitive clean energy economy that puts workers and communities first and leaves no one behind.”</p>	<p>Whether termed “conservation” or “environmentalism,” everyone can agree that we have an obligation to be good stewards of the natural world, of which we are but one piece.</p> <p>Our environmental policy should embrace free market principles with regulatory structures and incentives that promote business and innovation. Climate is important, but ultimately, government mandates alone cannot protect our planet. It must come from the free market.</p> <p>The United States is not the primary source of harmful pollutants in the world and, therefore, it is important to look to other countries and hold them accountable for their actions, as well.</p> <p>Government should not be involved in determining what energy should be produced. Private producers should be free to succeed or fail based on consumer demand as a function of the free market.</p>



# FOREIGN POLICY/TRADE


## THE BOTTOM LINE:

**REPUBLICANS:** The government’s responsibility is to protect American jobs and the American way of life. Any treaty or **trade agreement entered into must prioritize its effect on the American people**. To maintain our national security requires a **strong military**.

**DEMOCRATS:** The US is **part of a global community** and cannot meet world problems alone. We must consider the needs of other countries in treaties and trade agreements which will, in turn, promote our own security. **Diplomacy**, not military strength, is what is required to achieve national security.

**FREEDOMWORKS:** Acting in **America’s self-interest** is the duty of government. **Free trade** is critical to economic success and restrictions to trade harm consumers.

## THE BREAKDOWN:

REPUBLICAN	DEMOCRATS	
<p>“As Americans and as Republicans we wish for peace - so we insist on strength. We will make America safe. We seek friendship with all peoples and all nations, but we recognize and are prepared to deal with evil in the world.”</p> <p>“We need better negotiated trade agreements that put America first.”</p> <p>“We cannot allow foreign governments to limit American access to their markets while stealing our designs, patents, brands, know-how, and technology.”</p> <p>We cannot allow China to continue its currency manipulation, exclusion of U.S. products from government purchases, and subsidization of Chinese companies to thwart American imports.</p>	<p>“We will place values at the center of our foreign policy. And we will reinvent alliances, partnerships, and international institutions to meet common challenges that no country can face on its own.”</p> <p>“Democrats believe that foreign assistance and development programs are powerful tools for promoting American, and global, security and prosperity.”</p> <p>“We will revitalize the power and purpose of American diplomacy to compete in a more contested world... And in today’s more competitive world, its renovation is a critical diplomatic priority.”</p>	<p>Our affairs internationally should put Americans first, which means ensuring that Congress debates when and where we go to war. To protect our troops, we should not be beholden to international organizations like the United Nations.</p> <p>We also need to promote a free trade policy between the US and other nations to best benefit our economic growth. Restricting trade between nations makes products more expensive for our country’s consumers.</p>



# CIVIL LIBERTIES/TECHNOLOGY


## THE BOTTOM LINE:

**REPUBLICANS:** The radical innovations brought by the advent of the internet have, for the most part, been beneficial for society. The best way to ensure the continued success of the online economy is to **keep the government out of the tech business.**

**DEMOCRATS:** Technology companies have increasing power in our society and are growing into anti-competitive monopolies. Just as the issues of the industrial revolution required the government to step in with a heavy regulatory hand, the current corporate climate requires **government regulation of “Big Tech.”**

**FREEDOMWORKS:** The government must not become an obstacle to the digital economy and should restrain itself from hampering much-needed progress.

## THE BREAKDOWN:

REPUBLICAN	DEMOCRATS	
<p>“No matter what the medium, citizens must retain the right to communicate with one another free from unlawful government intrusion.”</p> <p>“We will consistently support internet policies that allow people and private enterprise to thrive, without providing new and expanded government powers to tax and regulate so that the internet does not become the vehicle for a dramatic expansion of government power. The internet’s independence is its power.”</p> <p>“The only way to safeguard or improve these systems is through the private sector. The internet’s free market needs to be free and open to all ideas and competition without the government or service providers picking winners and losers.”</p>	<p>“We will recommit the United States to the principles of an open internet, including net neutrality, and vigorously oppose efforts to digitally silo off countries and populations from the rest of the world. Democrats believe that algorithms and platforms should empower people instead of the surveillance state.”</p> <p>“We expect technology companies and social media platforms to take responsibility and do more to preserve the openness of democratic societies and identify foreign disinformation.”</p>	<p>America’s dominance in technological innovation is the key to our continued prosperity.</p> <p>The best way for the government to protect our civil liberties is to take a hands-off approach. Historically, federal policies have only served to entrench authoritarian interests, so the best way to ensure liberty for the people is to limit the power of the government.</p>



# CONSTITUTION


## THE BOTTOM LINE:

**REPUBLICANS:** Adherence to the **original words and intent of the Constitution** is critical. The only way the meaning of the Constitution can change is when the document is formally amended by the people.

**DEMOCRATS:** The Constitution provides an important framework for our government, but has proven at times to be antithetical to progress. For this reason, the **Constitution must be a living document** that is interpreted in the light of changes in our society.

**FREEDOMWORKS:** The US Constitution is the bulwark of our Republic and defines the role of government in our system of governance. The role of the courts is to **interpret its words as literally as possible**.

## THE BREAKDOWN:

REPUBLICAN	DEMOCRATS	
<p>"We believe the Constitution was written not as a flexible document, but as our enduring covenant. We believe our constitutional system - limited government, separation of powers, federalism, and the rights of the people - must be preserved uncompromised for future generations."</p> <p>"We affirm that all legislation, regulation, and official actions must conform to the Constitution's original meaning as understood at the time the language was adopted."</p>	<p>"Every federal employee swears an oath to support and defend the Constitution. It is a sacred promise to the American people—that federal workers, both civil servants and political appointees, will put the interests of the many ahead of their own personal concerns."</p> <p>Although the party platform is silent on the issue, former President Barack Obama summed up the philosophy of a "living" Constitution in his farewell address: "Our Constitution is a remarkable, beautiful gift. But it's really just a piece of parchment. It has no power on its own. We, the people, give it power. We the people give it meaning — with our participation, and the choices we make."</p>	<p>The Constitution is a rigid document that should be interpreted as literally as possible to stay true to its careful crafting.</p> <p>The framework laid out by the founders in the Constitution called for a limited federal government, and the expansion of the government beyond those original boundaries should be opposed vehemently.</p>



# SOCIAL ISSUES


## THE BOTTOM LINE:

**REPUBLICANS:** Republicans are generally for the prohibition of abortion, believe that the traditional family is beneficial to human thriving, and that marriage should be between a man and a woman. They believe that an armed citizenry having the ability to defend themselves is critical to limiting the power of the government.

**DEMOCRATS:** Democrats are generally for allowing a legal right to abortion, believe that marriage is between two consenting adults regardless of sex, and that the citizenry's right to possess guns should be limited.

**FREEDOMWORKS:** FreedomWorks does not take a position on the questions of abortion, marriage, and gun rights, but recognize these issue areas as critical parts of both major party platforms.

## THE BREAKDOWN:

REPUBLICAN	DEMOCRATS	
<p>"[We] assert the sanctity of human life and affirm that the unborn child has a fundamental right to life which cannot be infringed. We support a human life amendment to the Constitution and legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to children before birth."</p> <p>"Foremost among those institutions is the American family. It is the foundation of civil society, and the cornerstone of the family is natural marriage, the union of one man and one woman."</p> <p>"We uphold the right of individuals to keep and bear arms, a natural inalienable right that predates the Constitution and is secured by the Second Amendment. Lawful gun ownership enables Americans to exercise their God-given right to self-defense for the safety of their homes, their loved ones, and their communities."</p>	<p>"Democrats are committed to protecting and advancing reproductive health, rights, and justice. We believe unequivocally, like the majority of Americans, that every woman should be able to access high-quality reproductive health care services, including safe and legal abortion."</p> <p>"...we know we still have work to do to ensure LGBTQ+ people are treated equally under the law and in our society. We will fight to enact the Equality Act and at last outlaw discrimination against LGBTQ+ people..."</p> <p>"Gun violence is a public health crisis in the United States... Democrats will enact universal background checks, end online sales of guns and ammunition, close dangerous loopholes that currently allow stalkers, abusive partners, and some individuals convicted of assault or battery to buy and possess firearms, and adequately fund the federal background check system... Democrats will ban the manufacture and sale of assault weapons and high capacity magazines."</p>	



*\*All quotations taken directly from the most recent Party Platform passed by either the [Republican National Convention](#) or the [Democratic National Convention](#). FreedomWorks positions are based on the [“FreedomWorks 2020 Policy Platform.”](#) Note that the [2020 RNC](#) elected to reaffirm the existing 2016 platform rather than modify it or adopt a new platform.*