

National Party Platform Positions during Abolition, Women's Suffrage and Civil Rights

Republican Party Founded 1854

The Republican party was officially formed on March 20, 1854 in Ripon, Wisconsin in a schoolhouse. Plans for the creation of the Republican Party were originally drawn up at meetings held in Ripon's First Congregational Church on February 28, 1854. The major immediate objective of the founders of the new party was to prevent the spread of slavery. [1]

Dred Scott Decision 1857

Democratic Platform 1860

"Resolved, That the enactments of the State Legislatures to defeat the faithful execution of the Fugitive Slave Law, are hostile in character, subversive of the Constitution, and revolutionary in their effect."

Republican Platform 1860

"That the new dogma that the Constitution, of its own force, carries slavery into any or all of the territories of the United States, is a dangerous political heresy, at variance with the explicit provisions of that instrument itself, with contemporaneous exposition, and with legislative and judicial precedent; is revolutionary in its tendency, and subversive of the peace and harmony of the country." "That, as our Republican fathers, when they had abolished slavery in all our national territory, ordained that 'no persons should be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law,' it becomes our duty, by legislation, whenever such legislation is necessary, to maintain this provision of the Constitution against all attempts to violate it; and we deny the authority of Congress, of a territorial legislature, or of any individuals, to give legal existence to slavery in any territory of the United States." "That we brand the recent reopening of the African slave trade, under the cover of our national flag, aided by perversions of judicial power, as a crime against humanity and a burning shame to our country and age; and we call upon Congress to take prompt and efficient measures for the total and final suppression of that execrable traffic."

Thirteenth Amendment 1865

Fourteenth Amendment 1868

Fifteenth Amendment 1870

First Black Elected to Congress 1870,

Republican Hiram Revels, Mississippi

First Female to address a National Convention 1876,

Sara Andrews spoke to the Republican National Convention against the disenfranchisement of women

First Hispanic to serve in Congress 1877,

Republican Romualdo Pacheco, California

First National Convention Presided over by a Black 1884,

John Roy Lynch, a three times congressman from Mississippi elected temporary meeting Chairman at the Republican Convention in Chicago

First Political Party National Delegates Women 1900,

Theresa Jenkins and Cora Carleton were elected Alternates to the Republican National Convention in Minnesota

Republican Platform 1908

"This great historic organization, that destroyed slavery, preserved the Union..." "In no other period since national sovereignty was won under Washington, or preserved under Lincoln, has there been such mighty progress in those ideals of government which make for justice, equality and fair dealing..." "The Republican party has been for more than fifty years the consistent friend of the American Negro. It gave him freedom and citizenship. It wrote into the organic law the declarations that proclaim his civil and political rights, and it believes to-day that his noteworthy progress in intelligence, industry and good citizenship has earned the respect and encouragement of the nation. We demand equal justice for all men, without regard to race or color; we declare once more, and without reservation, for the enforcement in letter and spirit of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments to the Constitution

which were designed for the protection and advancement of the negro, and we condemn all devices that have for their real aim his disfranchisement for reasons of color alone, as unfair, un-American and repugnant to the Supreme law of the land."

First Female Elected to Congress 1916,

Republican Jeannette Rankin, Montana

Republican Platform 1920

"We welcome women into full participation in the affairs of government and the activities of the Republican Party. We earnestly hope that Republican legislatures in states which have not yet acted on the Suffrage Amendment will ratify the amendment, to the end that all of the women of the nation of voting age may participate in the election of 1920 which is so important to the welfare of our country."

Nineteenth Amendment 1920

Republican Platform 1960

"This nation was created to give expression, validity and purpose to our spiritual heritage - the supreme worth of the individual. In such a nation - a nation dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal - racial discrimination has no place. It can hardly be reconciled with a Constitution that guarantees equal protection under law to all persons. In a deeper sense, too, it is immoral and unjust. As to those matters within reach of political action and leadership, we pledge ourselves unreservedly to its eradication. Equality under law promises more than the equal right to vote and transcends mere relief from discrimination by government. It becomes a reality only when all persons have equal opportunity, without distinction of race, religion, color or national origin, to acquire the essentials of life - housing, education and employment. The Republican Party - the party of Abraham Lincoln - from its very beginning has striven to make this promise a reality. We recognize that discrimination is not a problem localized in one area of the country, but rather a problem that must be faced by North and South alike. Nor is discrimination confined to the discrimination against Negroes. Discrimination in many, if not all, areas of the country on the basis of creed or national origin is equally insidious. Further we recognize that in many communities in which a century of custom and tradition must be overcome heartening and commendable progress has been made. The Republican Party is proud of the civil rights record of the Eisenhower Administration. More progress has been made during the past eight years than in the preceding 80 years." "Although the Democratic-controlled Congress watered them down, the Republican Administration's recommendations resulted in significant and effective civil rights legislation in both 1957 and 1960 - the first civil rights statutes to be passed in more than 80 years."

Roe v. Wade 1973

Republican Platform 1996

"As we strive to forge a national consensus on the divisive issues of our time, we call on all Republicans and all Americans to reject the forces of hatred and bigotry. Accordingly, we denounce all who practice or promote racism, anti-Semitism, ethnic prejudice, and religious intolerance." "We condemn the desecration of places of worship and are proud that congressional Republicans led the fight against church arson." "The sole source of equal opportunity for all is equality before the law. Therefore, we oppose discrimination based on sex, race, age, creed, or national origin and will vigorously enforce anti-discrimination statutes. We reject the distortion of those laws to cover sexual preference, and we endorse the Defense of Marriage Act to prevent states from being forced to recognize same-sex unions. Because we believe rights inhere in individuals, not in groups, we will attain our nation's goal of equal rights without quotas or other forms of preferential treatment." "We renew our historic Republican commitment to equal opportunity for women. In the early days of the suffragist movement, we pioneered the women's right to vote."

Sources: [1] *Grand Old Party, A Pictorial History of the First 100 Years of the Republican Party* by M.B. Schnapper
National Party Platforms 1840 - 1960, Second Edition, Kirk H. Porter and Donald Bruce Johnson
The University of Illinois Press, Urbana, Illinois, 1961

The Democratic Platform was adopted August 1996 at the National Convention in Chicago, Illinois.
The Republican Platform was adopted August 1996 at the National Convention in San Diego, California.