

CONTRASTING NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTY PLATFORMS

The Parties in Their Own Words - A Documentary Comparison Across Generations

READ THE HISTORICAL RECORD. EXAMINE THE ISSUES. DECIDE FOR YOURSELF.

SEPTEMBER 2026

ISSUE	DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM RECORD	REPUBLICAN PLATFORM RECORD	DOCUMENTARY NOTE
SLAVERY & TERRITORIES	1856 - Declared "NON-INTERFERENCE BY CONGRESS WITH SLAVERY IN STATE AND TERRITORY, OR IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA." Supported faithful execution of the Fugitive Slave Law. 1860 - Reaffirmed the 1856 platform and said the party would abide by Supreme Court decisions on slavery in the territories. A Southern/Breckinridge faction adopted stronger federal protection for slave property.	1856 - Invoked the principle that "all men are endowed with the inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" and opposed establishing slavery in U.S. territories by positive legislation. 1860 - Declared: "That the normal condition of all the territory of the United States is that of freedom," and denied authority to give slavery legal existence in a U.S. territory.	The Democratic Party split in 1860; the reverse identifies the convention platform and Breckinridge faction separately.
RIGHT TO LIFE (ABORTION)	1992 - "Democrats stand behind the right of every woman to choose, consistent with Roe v. Wade, regardless of ability to pay." 1996 - Repeats the Roe / ability-to-pay position. 2000 - Again states the right to choose consistent with Roe, regardless of ability to pay. 2004 - Stands for a woman's right to choose consistent with Roe and regardless of ability to pay. 2024 - Pledges national legislation to restore Roe protections and repeal the Hyde Amendment.	1992 - "the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed." 1996 - Repeats that fundamental-right-to-life language and opposes public revenues for abortion. 2000 - Again states the unborn child's fundamental individual right to life. 2004 - Repeats that language and opposition to public revenues for abortion. 2024 - Says states are free to pass laws protecting life; opposes late-term abortion while supporting prenatal care, birth control and IVF.	Continuity through 2004 is followed by a materially different post-Dobbs Republican formulation in 2024.
MARRIAGE & FAMILY	1992 - Supported civil-rights protection for gay men and lesbians and ending discrimination based on sexual orientation. 1996 - Supported further inclusion of gay men and lesbians in national life. 2000 - Supported full inclusion of gay and lesbian families and equitable alignment of benefits. 2004 - Supported full inclusion and equal responsibilities, benefits and protections; said marriage historically was defined at state level. 2024 - Defends LGBTQI+ rights and cites the Respect for Marriage Act.	1992 - Spoke of traditional family values and judges respecting them. 1996 - Endorsed the Defense of Marriage Act. 2000 - Supported the traditional definition of marriage as the legal union of one man and one woman. 2004 - Sought to preserve legal recognition and benefits for the union of one man and one woman. 2024 - Promotes a culture valuing the "Sanctity of Marriage" and the foundational role of families.	Year-specific wording is used because the parties' formulations changed materially over time.
RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS	1992 - Supported a reasonable waiting period/background check for handgun purchasers and restrictions on assault weapons. 2000 - Called for stronger gun laws, child-safety locks, and a photo ID, full background check and gun-safety test for a new handgun. 2024 - Calls for universal background checks, safe-storage requirements, a national red-flag law, and bans on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines.	1992 - "Republicans defend the constitutional right to keep and bear arms." 1996 - Defended that constitutional right while supporting an instant check for convicted felons. 2000 - Defended the right while supporting criminal background checks and opposing federal licensing and national registration. 2024 - Lists "the right to keep and bear arms" among fundamental freedoms.	The website source archive provides fuller context behind shortened print excerpts.
TAXES & GOVERNMENT	1996 - Described the party as committed to targeted tax cuts. 2000 - Sought specifically targeted tax cuts. 2004 - Proposed rolling back Bush tax cuts for those making more than \$200,000. 2024 - Proposes raising the corporate tax rate from 21% to 28%, alongside other changes affecting corporations and high earners.	1996 - Supported an across-the-board 15% cut to marginal tax rates. 2000 - Called for a simpler, flatter and fairer tax system with broad tax cuts. 2024 - Calls for large tax cuts, including no tax on tips, and continuation of Trump-era tax policy.	The 28% corporate-rate proposal is a 2024 Democratic platform position.

Research and Publication: Brentwood News Service

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COMPANION REFERENCES & VERIFICATION LEDGER - SEPTEMBER 2026

Verification standard: Quotation marks are reserved for wording checked against platform text. Editorial summaries are not placed in quotation marks. The online archive provides direct links to underlying documents and additional historical context.

REF.	PARTY / YEAR	ITEM USED IN REPORT	PRIMARY / CONTROL SOURCE	VERIFICATION STATUS
D1856	Democratic 1856	Congressional non-interference with slavery; Fugitive Slave Law; territorial/state framework.	1856 Democratic Party Platform	APP; Porter & Johnson corroboration.
R1856	Republican 1856	Inalienable-rights language; opposition to legal establishment/extension of slavery in territories.	1856 Republican Party Platform	APP; Porter & Johnson corroboration.
D1860	Democratic 1860	Reaffirmed 1856; Supreme Court formulation. Breckinridge faction separately identified.	1860 Democratic + Breckinridge faction platforms	APP; party split expressly disclosed.
R1860	Republican 1860	Normal condition of U.S. territory as freedom; no legal existence for slavery there.	1860 Republican Party Platform	Verified against APP.
D92	Democratic 1992	Roe/ability-to-pay; civil-rights language; handgun waiting/background check.	1992 Democratic Party Platform	APP + Brentwood archival comparison.
R92	Republican 1992	Unborn-child right to life; keep and bear arms; traditional-family language.	1992 Republican Party Platform	APP + Brentwood archival comparison.
D96	Democratic 1996	Roe/ability-to-pay; targeted tax cuts; inclusion language.	1996 Democratic Party Platform	APP + Brentwood archival sheet.
R96	Republican 1996	15% marginal-rate cut; unborn-child right to life; keep and bear arms.	1996 Republican Party Platform	APP + Brentwood archival sheet.
D00	Democratic 2000	Roe/ability-to-pay; family inclusion; handgun ID/background/safety test.	2000 Democratic Party Platform	APP + archived platform.
R00	Republican 2000	Life; marriage; school choice; English; property; keep and bear arms.	2000 Republican Party Platform	APP + Brentwood archival comparison.
D04	Democratic 2004	Roe/ability-to-pay; family inclusion; tax rollback above \$200,000.	2004 Democratic Party Platform	Verified against APP.
R04	Republican 2004	Unborn-child right to life; public-funding opposition; marriage framework.	2004 Republican Party Platform	Verified against APP.
D24	Democratic 2024	Corporate rate 28%; Roe; Hyde; gun provisions; marriage equality.	Official 2024 Democratic Party Platform	Official DNC release + APP archival text.
R24	Republican 2024	Tax cuts/no tax on tips; arms; marriage; state life laws; IVF.	Official 2024 Republican Party Platform	Official GOP text + APP archival text.
2020	Continuity note	Democrats adopted 2020 platform; Republicans adopted no new platform.	2020 Democratic Platform / RNC resolution	RNC resolution independently documented.

About the project: Documentary voter-education research begun in 1990. Statements are presented from the parties' own national platforms so readers may examine the record and reach their own conclusions. The compiler attended the 1992 Republican National Convention as an alternate delegate and the 1996 and 2000 conventions as a delegate.

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