



THE NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY

2016 Platform
Adopted May 14, 2016

PREAMBLE

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* presents its Platform and renews its dedication to the following beliefs:

We believe the strength of our state is in its people. We believe the input and participation of each person is critical to maintaining a government that encourages individual initiative and the free enterprise system and that has given our nation economic prosperity second to none.

We believe that good government should guarantee to its individuals equality before the law regardless of race, creed, age, gender, national origin, or income level and that each person's ability, dignity, and freedom, as well as responsibilities, must be recognized and honored.

We believe that government should promote the health, welfare, and safety of the individual and that government's proper function is to do only those things which individuals cannot do for themselves.

We believe the foundation of the Republican Party is broad, and, regardless of its position on any particular issue, all Nebraskans are welcomed to join and support Republican philosophy, principles, and candidates.

With these principles, we believe that the *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* is the vehicle for persons who desire a positive and responsive government at the city, county, state, and national levels.

AGRICULTURE

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* recognizes agriculture in all its many facets, including farming, ranching, and agribusiness, as Nebraska's primary industry and the cornerstone of its economy.

We believe the agricultural economy must be consistently based in a market-oriented approach. We, however, recognize the potential need for isolated transitional programs that are balanced fairly so as to not adversely affect any single commodity.

We support the establishment of expanded markets as part of a fair and open global marketplace. We recognize that maintaining such a marketplace can require the enforcement of restrictions and the creation of reasonable regulations for that purpose.

We believe in a free and open marketplace functioning in fairness to family farms, ranches, and smaller and independent agribusiness operations, and we encourage the enforcement of state and federal anti-trust laws to their benefit.

We encourage incentives for new farmers and ranchers to help offset the dwindling number of Nebraska family farms and ranches. We also encourage the promotion of value added programs for agribusiness.

We encourage continuing research and development in agricultural products as well as the maintenance and support of research facilities. We further support programs designed to introduce creative agribusiness techniques and uses of agricultural products.

CRIME AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* believes the rights of society and the rights of the individual are both important and must be protected. We support the work of law enforcement across the state. The judicial system must impose swift and fair punishment for all crimes, violent and non-violent. Alternative punishment and rehabilitation for first time non-violent offenders should be supported. We support the work of faith-based organizations in providing support services for such alternatives.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse

The widespread abuse of drugs and the immoderate use of alcohol are threats to all members of society, especially our children. We urge strict enforcement of laws to control and punish those who deal in illegal drugs. We oppose the legalization of marijuana and other controlled substances. We recognize the need to increase the availability of drug and alcohol prevention and rehabilitation.

Capital Punishment

We support capital punishment for the most heinous crimes, sparingly applied. We call upon the members of the Unicameral to adopt and support sound methods for enforcement and we call upon the members of the Judiciary to limit endless appeals in a manner that is consistent with the due process rights of defendants.

Pornography

We oppose pornography in all forms. Because of the increasing prevalence of pornography in our society from modern technologies, we urge our elected officials to routinely examine the laws of our state to ensure the protection of our citizens, especially our children.

Right to Bear Arms

We support the 2nd Amendment of the United States Constitution and the statement of rights under the Nebraska State Constitution, both of which guarantee the individual right to bear arms.

Spouse and Child Abuse

We encourage our citizens, our elected officials and the courts to fight the growing tragedies of domestic violence and child abuse. We support development of protective legislation, programs and support reforms within state protective service organizations.

DEFENSE

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* believes the policy of “peace through strength” is essential for both the preservation of America and the promotion of freedom and self-government. The men and women of our armed forces should always be adequately compensated, equipped, and trained to be the finest soldiers in the world. Our greatest asset, the people on whom our security depends, deserves our constant long-term investment in quality, morale and safety. We object to the assignment of women to combat units. We strongly oppose placing the men and women of our armed forces under the command of the United Nations or any other foreign leadership. We support a return to the policy of the United States military to exclude homosexuals as a matter of good order, morale, and discipline. We support the continuous strengthening of our military and funding of further development of any national defense system which helps preserve and protect the United States and its citizens.

Violent radical Islamic Jihad presents a clear and present danger to the peace and stability of our nation and to the world at large. Islamic Jihad is committed to the destruction of Western civilization, the denial of religious freedom, and the subjugation of women. We are committed to defending our freedom and defeating Islamic terrorists.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* is dedicated to principles of full employment and the creation of economic opportunity for all citizens of Nebraska through the free enterprise system. We strongly support the free enterprise system as the best path to prosperity in the history of humanity. Burdensome taxes and regulations that unduly interfere with and impede free market economics because these government burdens decrease opportunity and increase suffering.

We support aggressive and judicious recruitment and retention of businesses for the state. We support a repeal of the capital gains tax to spur economic development and create jobs. We support the establishment of fair and equitable policies of taxation and the promotion of business expansion. We encourage the use of common sense in both the elimination and enforcement of governmental regulation.

Maintaining necessary infrastructure that would include quality roads, bridges and highways, among other essential services, is imperative in fostering economic growth, interstate commerce, international competitiveness and national security. We support the establishment of enterprise zones in areas where needed to stimulate growth and development. We encourage the promotion of electronic commerce as it facilitates opportunities for economic expansion, especially in rural communities. We recognize that the revitalization and repopulation of rural Nebraska is vital to the well-being of the entire state.

Homeownership expands personal liberty, builds communities, and helps Americans create wealth. Homeownership is best fostered by a growing economy with low interest rates, as well as prudent regulation, financial education to prevent another housing collapse, and targeted assistance to responsible borrowers.

EDUCATION

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* reaffirms the role of education in the development of effective and responsible citizens.

We believe that decisions regarding the education of children properly belong to parents and guardians. We reaffirm our belief that control of all aspects of public education should rest with local school boards, not state or federal agencies. We believe each student should be provided with the opportunity for an excellent academic education. We believe moral training based on principles established by God, under whom we profess to be a nation, should be returned to its proper and traditional place in the public schools. We oppose the instruction of Sharia law in our education system.

We urge citizens to require fiscal and educational accountability from policy makers, educational institutions and educational professionals to assure that quality services are being rendered. We support statewide assessments of educational achievement and the administration of the ACT or SAT to all Nebraska 11th-graders. We oppose testing to identify physical, psychological, emotional or developmental disabilities without parental consent. We recognize and commend the dedicated educators and administrators who strive to prepare the students for future decision making that will directly affect the freedom and security of the United States.

We encourage patriotism, respect for the American flag and an understanding of our nation's ideals, which make our form of government the best in the world.

We believe the family to be our country's basic institution and as such should be encouraged to take a larger, not smaller, role in education. We support parental choice in education based on a program of vouchers or tax credits, thus

creating better education through the principles of free market competition. These alternatives should include private, parochial and home schools.

ELECTIONS

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* supports reorganizing the presidential primary system on a regional basis. We also support Nebraska in joining 48 other states by returning to a “winner-take-all” format for allocating our five Electoral College votes for president. We support a closed primary system.

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* supports the Electoral College for electing the President of the United States and opposes efforts to undermine this process.

Initiative Petition and Referendum

The first power reserved by the people is the initiative whereby laws may be enacted and constitutional amendments adopted by the people independently of the Legislature. Initiative petition and referendum are the tools the people use to address their perceived needs or grievances. Signature requirements for initiative petitions and referendums should be based on the number of electors who voted in the most recent election for Governor as specified in Article III, section 4 of the Nebraska Constitution.

ENERGY

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* believes high prices for gasoline, diesel fuel, propane, home heating oil, and natural gas, which are hurting our families and our economy, are the result of failure in Washington, D.C. To reduce energy costs we support an all-of-the-above energy approach and oppose top-down federal environmental mandates which place an unnecessary, costly burden. We also support government policies to encourage and facilitate oil and gas exploration in the United States, including Alaska and off our coasts. Barriers should be removed so that new oil refineries can and will be constructed in the United States. In addition, government policy should encourage and facilitate the design and construction of safe nuclear power plants to supply the energy needed for future economic growth and to prevent massive price increases which will result in failure to develop additional electric energy supplies.

We acknowledge the importance of coal in the production of electricity in our state, and we oppose the federal government’s transparent effort to end the use of coal for that purpose without offering any market-based solution for the production of electricity in our state.

We support the development and production of alternative fuels such as ethanol and biodiesel and the expansion of energy security within our nation. We also support other alternative sources of energy such as wind, hydrogen, and geothermal if and when they are economically feasible without subsidy, and encourage all citizens to voluntarily do their part to conserve energy.

We oppose actions by the Congress that would increase the cost of energy to US consumers in the absence of clear proof that the current climate has been substantially changed by the activities of man and that any proposed solutions would be both science-based and cost-effective.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* affirms our continuing commitment to clean air and water, productive lands, forests, abundant wildlife and responsible stewardship of our God-given natural heritage.

We believe that Nebraska’s water is a resource vital to economic health and maintaining a high quality of life. Its preservation is essential and its management should occur on local and state levels and should address the potential of

future water shortage. Nebraska's water cannot be considered a saleable resource and must be protected from competing state and federal usage. We oppose the Waters of the U.S. regulation as yet another overreach of the EPA.

We support a pragmatic, effective, and reasonable approach to the protection of our environment. We support streamlining the environmental regulatory system, providing the protection of the environment while still encouraging business profitability and responsible growth. Scientifically sound solutions to environmental problems must be sought through the free market system. We acknowledge each individual's responsibility toward the preservation and enhancement of our environment and remain committed to programs such as recycling and tree planting.

Such policies as those concerning wetlands and endangered species must be balanced between environmental and economic concerns and should not threaten individual property rights.

FAMILY

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* affirms the family as the natural and indispensable institution for human development. A society is only as strong as its marriages and families, for the family nurtures those qualities necessary to maintain and advance civilization. We believe no-fault divorce should be limited to situations in which the couple has no children of the marriage. We believe that the citizens of each state have the right to define marriage in their state, and that the usurpation of that right by the U.S. Supreme Court was wrongful. We believe that the institution of marriage is crucial to the American family and that marriage should be defined as the legal union of one man and one woman.

We believe America was built on the institutions of home, family, religion, and neighborhood. From these basic building blocks came self-reliant individuals, prepared to exercise both rights and responsibilities. We oppose laws that would intrude unnecessarily on the rights of the family, contribute to the dissolution of the family, or interfere with parental rights, but we also recognize the need to prevent child and spouse abuse.

We urge Nebraska to continue to remove obstacles to the permanent placement or adoption of foster children in homes offering strong family life based on traditional values. We oppose state-sponsored discrimination against faith-based adoption agencies.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* believes less government is preferred. Government should make a dedicated effort to raise and use tax monies fairly, and public participation in every aspect of the budget process be strongly encouraged and facilitated. We oppose any unfunded mandate by state and federal government. Where appropriate, the private sector should be favored over the public sector.

Federal Government

We call upon Congress to reduce the size of federal government. The national debt and the federal budget deficit are unsustainable and threaten the economy and security of our nation and the well-being of future generations of Americans. We support a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

All tax monies not needed to efficiently run the federal government should be returned to all the taxpayers. In order to permit the continuation of the family farm and small business, we urge the repeal of the federal estate tax. To encourage capital accumulation, we urge the repeal of the capital gains tax. We call upon Congress to adopt the FAIR tax or a flat tax.

We encourage individual responsibility for retirement needs, children's higher education and better health care for our citizens. We urge the expanded use of the deductions for individual retirement accounts, educational IRA's and medical savings accounts.

State Government

We encourage our state leaders to continue to pursue the reduction of taxes for the benefit of our state. Any state revenues above reasonable reserves should be returned to Nebraska taxpayers. We support the repeal of the state inheritance tax and commend the Legislature for repealing the estate tax. We further commend the Legislature and Governor for adopting property tax relief. Nebraska remains a high-tax state, and we call upon the Governor and the Legislature to lower taxes and control spending in our state.

We urge the continual review of all tax entities in local and state government with the objective of eliminating unnecessary taxation and require all elected state officials to evaluate tax-spending policies to reduce property, sales and income tax and to reduce the size of state government when appropriate or necessary. We also oppose raising the gas tax and encourage alternative mechanisms to fund the infrastructure needs of our state's highway and expressway system.

We believe that gambling devastates the individual, the family and the community and therefore oppose any further gambling expansion in our state.

FLAG

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* supports a Federal Constitutional amendment to ban the desecration of the American flag.

FOREIGN POLICY

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* believes foreign policy must have a reasonable relationship to our national interests, and should never compromise the defense or security of the United States. We believe that the spread of religious, economic and political freedoms is the best guarantee of peace. We do not support the use of food as a weapon in foreign policy.

HEALTH CARE

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* believes that all citizens should have access to necessary, quality and affordable health care. We believe that reimbursement to providers must be adequate so that necessary health care services are available to all Nebraskans. Such reimbursements must be at a level that ensures providers' uncompensated care costs are not shifted to other paying consumers.

We oppose any attempt to socialize or nationalize the American health care system. We support the repeal and replacement of the Affordable Care Act – Obamacare – with market-based solutions. We oppose Medicaid expansion in Nebraska. We favor a tax policy that enhances the ability of individuals to purchase the health care of their choice. In order to give all citizens greater control over their health care options, we support measures such as medical savings accounts. We favor legislation to allow 100 percent deductibility for those who pay their own health insurance and long-term health care. We oppose employer mandates.

We support education to improve the health of Nebraskans. The right of individuals to be informed of possible exposure to health-harming elements must not be jeopardized by the legal basis of confidentiality.

We oppose taxpayer-funded abortion and contraceptive services or referrals by any official in a public school. These decisions properly belong with parents and guardians, and usurping this role undermines the integrity of the family.

We oppose taxpayer funding of any family planning programs that provide abortions or abortion referrals. We believe that all health care facilities, including abortion clinics, should be subject to the same state and federal regulations and inspections.

HOMELAND SECURITY

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* believes that the primary purpose of government is to provide for the safety and security of its citizens. We support efforts to defend the United States and the State of Nebraska from acts of terrorism and also support the allocation of resources to fund this priority.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* reaffirms our commitment to the principle that all people have the inalienable right to human dignity and equal treatment under the law. We believe that the concept of equal rights and equal responsibilities under the law is basic to a free society. We support equal compensation for equal work and encourage employers to rededicate themselves to that concept. We stand for the right of all persons to succeed based on merit rather than non-merit based considerations and, therefore, oppose preferences, set asides, or guaranteed equality of results.

Mindful of our religious diversity, we reaffirm our commitment to the freedoms of religion and speech guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. We firmly support the rights of all citizens to openly practice the same, including the rights of individuals to engage in voluntary prayer in schools or in any other public institution.

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* emphasizes its belief in personal responsibility and limited government interference in the lives of our citizens.

We believe that life begins at conception, and that all innocent human life is precious and should be protected. We support the reversal of *Roe vs. Wade* and an amendment to the United States Constitution banning abortions except those genuinely needed to save the life of the mother.

We endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to the unborn. We oppose using public revenues for abortion, and our Party will not fund organizations that advocate it. We oppose the introduction, testing or use of abortifacients. We call for the prosecution of those who traffic in the body parts of aborted unborn children and the defunding of any organization that engages in or allows such trafficking.

We are strongly opposed to any form of euthanasia or assisted suicide, and we believe that the traditional criteria for death should be applied before organ harvesting is allowed. We believe that the individual should make decisions regarding the artificial maintenance of his or her own life.

We believe that partial-birth abortion is tantamount to infanticide and should be banned across the nation. We oppose human cloning and research that destroys human embryos or uses fetal tissue from elective abortion.

We commend those who provide alternatives to abortion by meeting the needs of mothers and families and by offering adoption services. We urge greater commitment individually and collectively to meeting these needs. We reaffirm our support for appointment of judges who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life.

IMMIGRATION

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* recognizes that our country is enriched with the vast influence of immigrants from all over the world who have come to the United States for the unlimited opportunities, freedom, and prosperity offered to every working citizen.

We support, welcome, and encourage the assimilation of all legal immigrants and others who are here pursuant to due process and are productive, law-abiding citizens. In fairness to them, we support stringent federal efforts to stem the tide of illegal immigration.

We oppose providing taxpayer funded benefits to those who have broken our immigration laws, such as taxpayer subsidized in-state tuition for illegal immigrants, and encourage the Legislature to repeal such laws.

JUDGES

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* favors the appointment and confirmation of judges who will follow the Constitution as it is written and not legislate their personal preferences from the bench. We express our sorrow at the passing of Justice Antonin Scalia, who we acknowledge as one of the finest Justices ever to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* supports a Constitutional amendment and legislation establishing English as the official language of the United States.

SENIOR AMERICANS

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* believes that our senior citizens deserve the opportunity to live their lives with dignity and with continued confidence in the integrity of the Social Security system. We believe that the solvency of Social Security must be a continuing concern of our elected officials, as should matters of intergenerational equity. We favor a Social Security plan in which personal Social Security savings accounts would be optional, with workers given the choice of continuing to depend on the current system with current benefits.

Long-term health care is the greatest unmet essential need faced by older Americans. We encourage and support the private and charitable sectors' roles in assisting the elderly. We are committed to saving Medicare by putting it on sound financial footing.

SOCIAL SERVICES

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* believes that those who cannot provide for themselves should be assisted by both government and society, but that every effort should be made to help them become self-supporting, productive citizens with pride in their independence.

STATE GOVERNMENT

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* believes in a partisan legislature as an efficient and accountable branch of government. We support the public vote of our legislators for all legislative leadership posts. We call for increased transparency, efficiency and accountability, and the reduction of regulatory burdens, in our state government.

VETERANS

The *NEBRASKA REPUBLICAN PARTY* believes President Abraham Lincoln expressed it best when he stated that the obligation of our government was to “care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan.” We believe this has been the “implied contract” between the federal government and its citizen soldiers since this nation was formed.

Recognizing the special sacrifices of those that are serving and have served in our nation's armed forces, we support reasonable compensation and state income tax exemption for the pay of Nebraska residents on active duty and for retirement benefits of veterans and their survivors. We support legislation to end means testing related to veterans' benefits. We further support federal policies granting veterans greater flexibility and access to rightfully earned medical care.