

# Where The Parties Stand

## PARTY PLATFORMS AND STANCES

Compiled by *Decision* staff



Every four years, as delegates from both major American political parties gather to officially nominate a presidential candidate and running mate, the party platforms are finalized and adopted, and policy positions are set for at least the next four years.

In August, with the coronavirus altering how the conventions conducted their business, the Republican Party met in Charlotte, North Carolina, streamlining its official proceedings and relying on its 2016 platform to stake out a consensus of who it is and what it believes. The Democratic Party, meeting in Milwaukee, chose to adopt a new party platform. What follows is a comparison—drawn from those platforms, the Democratic and Republican party websites, and public statements—on where the two major parties stand on key issues for evangelical voters.








**“I think it’s the duty of every individual Christian at election time to study the issues, study the candidates, then go to the polls and vote.” —BILLY GRAHAM, 1952**

ISSUE	DEMOCRATIC	REPUBLICAN
 <b>Abortion on Demand &amp; Federal Funding</b>	Democrats say they will “restore funding for Planned Parenthood” and will oppose and “fight to overturn federal and state laws that create barriers to women’s reproductive health and rights. We will repeal the Hyde Amendment, and protect and codify <i>Roe v. Wade</i> .” Congressional Democrats have repeatedly defeated “born-alive” protection bills and supported increased funding for abortion domestically and internationally.	In keeping with the belief that “the family is the bedrock of our nation,” the GOP platform affirms, “The unborn child has a fundamental right to life which cannot be infringed.” The GOP supports a Human Life Amendment and state laws requiring informed consent, parental consent, waiting periods and clinic regulation. The GOP has broadly supported President Trump’s ending of funds for international abortions and partial defunding of Planned Parenthood.
 <b>Religious Liberty &amp; Conscience Rights</b>	Although the party states: “Democrats celebrate America’s history of religious pluralism and tolerance,” the platform says they will “reject the Trump administration’s use of broad exemptions to allow businesses, medical providers, social service agencies and others to discriminate,” meaning policies would aim to give preference to LGBTQ rights in cases in which religious exercise and rights of conscience conflict with liberalized interpretations of sexuality.	Republicans affirm that religious freedom in the Bill of Rights protects the right of the people to practice their faith in their everyday lives. The platform endorses the First Amendment Defense Act, which would protect faith-based institutions and individuals from government discrimination. Additionally, the Trump administration has instructed federal agencies to accommodate rights of conscience for government employees, reversing Obama-era policies.

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 <p><b>Human Rights &amp; Global Religious Freedom</b></p>	<p>Democrats laud religious freedom as a “fundamental human right,” but will never “use it as a cover for discrimination.” The platform vows support for Iraq’s Christians and Yazidis, China’s persecuted Uyghurs and other religious minorities. Also: “We will restore the United States’ position of leadership on LGBTQ+ issues” in diplomacy and foreign policy, advancing the GLOBE Act and making LGBTQ issues a priority at the State Department, USAID and the National Security Council.</p>	<p>The GOP favors integrating human rights issues into every level of diplomatic relations. Beginning in 2018, the U.S. has hosted an annual Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom, drawing an international coalition to defend and promote global religious freedom. “Religious freedom for all people worldwide is a foreign policy priority of the United States, and the United States will respect and vigorously promote this freedom,” President Trump wrote on June 2.</p>
 <p><b>Federal Judges</b></p>	<p>The Democratic platform says: “Our courts should reflect our country. Democrats will appoint people to the bench who are committed to seeing justice be served, and treating each case on its merits. We will nominate and confirm federal judges who have diverse backgrounds and experiences, including as public defenders, legal aid attorneys and civil rights lawyers.” Candidate Biden has vowed to seek judges who “respect” the <i>Roe v. Wade</i> abortion ruling.</p>	<p>The GOP platform states: “A critical threat to our country’s constitutional order is an activist judiciary that usurps powers properly reserved to the people through other branches of government.” The party supports the appointment of justices and judges who respect the constitutional limits on their power and respect the authority of the states. President Trump has promised to continue working to appoint conservative federal judges.</p>
 <p><b>Economic Empowerment &amp; Poverty</b></p>	<p>The platform says: “Americans deserve an economy that works for everyone ... it is a moral and an economic imperative that we support working families by rebuilding the American middle class.” The party supports raising the minimum wage to \$15/hr., helping make home ownership more attainable, eradicating homelessness, “ending poverty and enabling all Americans to live up to their God-given potential.”</p>	<p>The GOP supports eradicating welfare dependence by proposing “the dynamic compassion of work requirements in a growing economy, where opportunity takes the place of a handout, where true self-esteem can grow from the satisfaction of a job well done.” The Trump administration included Opportunity Zones in the 2017 tax reform law to spur economic opportunity in poor areas.</p>





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 <p><b>National Defense</b></p>	<p>The platform says the U.S. military “must be the most effective fighting force in the world.” To keep it that way, Democrats “will bring forever wars to a responsible end,” rationalize the defense budget, invest in future technologies, repair civil-military relations, and strengthen the covenant with service members, veterans and military families. They vow to reverse the Trump administration’s transgender ban and rebuild trust in the VA while improving mental health outcomes for veterans.</p>	<p>The Republican platform favors building and maintaining a strong military as the path to peace and security. The party’s Principles for American Renewal says: “Keeping America safe and strong requires a strong military, growing the economy, energy independence and secure borders.” The party platform seeks to restore the nation’s military might and to rebuild troop numbers. Military pay has risen more than 2% each year since 2017, after six years of raises below 2%.</p>
 <p><b>The ‘Equality Act’ &amp; Sexual Orientation Gender Identity (SOGI) Laws</b></p>	<p>Candidate Biden has vowed to fast-track the Equality Act, which would federalize sexual orientation and gender identity in laws across the nation with detrimental outcomes for public education, domestic religious liberty and many other arenas. The Democratic Party has not taken a position on SOGI laws <i>per se</i>, but the party platform and party position statements, as well as legislative actions, have strongly supported “LGBTQ+” rights when they have conflicted with the religious beliefs of faith groups.</p>	<p>President Trump has continued to signal opposition to the Equality Act—a bill that would create legal chaos as sexual rights collide with the religious beliefs and practices of millions of Americans. The GOP platform doesn’t mention SOGI laws, but it includes strong statements in support of “traditional marriage and family” as “the foundation for a free society, and has for millennia been entrusted with rearing children and instilling cultural values.” It laments the Supreme Court ruling legalizing national gay marriage.</p>
 <p><b>Israel &amp; Jerusalem</b></p>	<p>“Democrats believe a strong, secure, and democratic Israel is vital to the interests of the United States. Our commitment to Israel’s security, ... its right to defend itself, and the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding is ironclad.” Democrats support Jerusalem as the capital and oppose efforts to “unfairly single out or delegitimize Israel.” They oppose settlement expansion and any steps that “undermine prospects for two states.”</p>	<p>Republicans express “unequivocal support for Israel,” pointing out that it is the only Middle Eastern country with freedom of speech and freedom of religion. The GOP recognizes “Jerusalem as the eternal and indivisible capital of the Jewish state.” The party opposes the U.N.’s treatment of Israel as a “pariah state.” In 2018, President Trump moved the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, fulfilling a campaign promise.</p>