



## **Platform of the Republican Party of Cuyahoga County**

### **Preamble**

The Republican Party of Cuyahoga County stands for policies and governance that create a thriving local economy, efficiently manage hardworking taxpayers' dollars, affirm individuals and families, and protect individual liberties.

We, your family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and citizens that form the Republican Party of Cuyahoga County adhere to the simple understandings found in our nation's and state's constitutions and founding documents: the belief in life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, that all men are created equal, that we are grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, and those blessings and rights that come with it. We believe that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

We the people who make up the Republican Party of Cuyahoga County come together as one people, inclusive of all, with the same rights granted by nature and nature's God to govern ourselves in a limited republic we call The United States of America.

Our platform supports:

1. Free markets and a strong economy
2. Strong families and American Values
3. Excellent education and work force development
4. Respect for individuals – diversity and faith
5. Limited government and limited taxation
6. Ethical governance and smart regional policies
7. Protection for voters

This platform is designed to address issues over which we have influence, namely state and local government policies, therefore we may be silent on matters of the Republican National Committee's platform that lie beyond our jurisdiction. However, insofar as there is no conflict with the statements and provisions herein, it shall be clear that we support, in its entirety, the platform of the national party, of which we are a member. That platform is available for review at <https://www.gop.com/the-2016-republican-party-platform/>. This platform is consistent with President Donald J. Trump's vision; we encourage unity and action within the Republican Party to implement the agenda that over 60 million American voters want.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of our platform is as follows:

1. To define the core principles of the Republican Party of Cuyahoga County.
2. To create a clarity of purpose and a strong, simple message from which to develop communication, education, and outreach efforts.
3. To inspire interest and involvement in the party and in our candidates, both from within our base and through the development of new relationships.
4. To increase outreach and understanding of the Republican Party of Cuyahoga County for those individuals who may not know us well.
5. To encourage and welcome participation of all who share these values and goals.
6. To attract exemplary Republican candidates, and provide positions on which our candidates can run for office.
7. To establish a basis from which to counter negative and dishonest messaging and to expose corruption.

## **Platform**

### **Economic Growth and Fiscal Responsibility**

*“Freedom can never yield its fullness of blessings so long as the law or its administration places the smallest obstacle in the pathway of any virtuous citizen.”* President James A. Garfield

We believe that the citizens of Cuyahoga County deserve a bright economic future, and we advocate policies and positions that promote a healthy economy, business development, job creation, and fiscal responsibility. We look particularly to the following areas for economic growth and prosperity:

**Free Market:** We believe in a system of competitive capitalism that minimizes government intervention and maximizes the role of the free market, offering the greatest potential for individual prosperity. We believe that the free market is a function of the needs of consumers and of the contributions of individuals. It is driven by entrepreneurship, innovation, and hard work. We believe in the notion that any individual can rise to become a great inventor, a successful business leader or educator, or the next great political leader. The free market advances the best products and services, it creates new products to meet consumer needs, and it encourages education and training of workers. It promotes the natural ambition, creativity, and competitive spirit of individuals.

**Government Regulation:** We support limited government and less regulation. Excessive regulation from a government seeking to expand its control at the expense of a developing economy is not in our best interest.

**Tax Reform:** We believe that taxes should be used to secure our nation and benefit our citizens. It is essential for individuals, businesses, and corporations to pay taxes without the government's ability to hinder their growth and development to thrive in society. We believe in simplifying the tax code to allow every tax payer to use an easy way for paying taxes with minimal intrusion by the IRS. We believe that simplifying the tax code, reducing the tax rate, reducing the IRS role, and holding people accountable; all

these actions will result in growing the economy and prosperity in our society. We support all efforts of the administration to propose the largest economically responsible tax cuts. We hold our elected officials accountable to approving such proposals for the benefit of our citizens.

**Trade:** We embrace free trade as the ideal business environment, although we acknowledge that free trade is predicated on fair trade, where all parties must operate on a level playing field. We advocate full review and renegotiation of all trade agreements and we demand full disclosure and elimination of unethical trade practices by our trading partners. We embrace the free market, but we also expect fair trade and nothing less.

**Manufacturing and Technology:** We recognize that the strength of our regional economy has traditionally been dependent upon a strong industrial sector. As our communities evolve, we must also embrace new areas of growth, specifically, but not limited to healthcare, technology, and energy. We believe that the local skill set in this area is world-class, and we support its continued advancement. Our free market ideals must be employed to ensure that all economic sectors have a chance to thrive.

Northeast Ohio and Cuyahoga County are uniquely positioned as having some of the fastest growing and diverse high-tech, aerospace, and aviation industries in the world, and these industries are supported by an exceptional, regional supplier base. We encourage efforts by all levels of government to strengthen and expand these industry segments through particular attention to the various research facilities, universities, labs, and other entities which strive to plant the seeds of innovation and growth.

**Unions:** We view union-based labor as an integral part of the skilled workforce in the region. We support the right to organize and the right to not be forced to organize. We also believe that an employee will freely organize if the union offers something of substance for membership.

We support the concept of Binding Arbitration. This allows both sides to come to the bargaining table with reasonable demands which are presented to an independent third party arbitrator for resolution. We believe that a combined effort by both management and labor can result in an optimal skilled workforce that fosters pride and integrity in our region.

**Workforce:** In the interest of enhancing the overall competitiveness of the region and the advancement of the individual resident, we advocate for the greater use of education and training programs aimed at improving the skill set and versatility of the workforce of Cuyahoga County. Understanding the need for apprentice training, we support both private, (corporate and union-based apprentice training) and public efforts (expanded high school, and community college-based vocational training), to address the needs of the marketplace.

**Infrastructure Development:** To facilitate success in the ever-increasing competitive global economy, we believe that the citizens of Cuyahoga County deserve much-needed infrastructure improvement, neighborhood development, and upgraded port facilities to provide first class access to our region. Our citizens deserve effective, transparent management of these improvements with minimal bureaucracy, acting in the best interest of the general public in all such projects.

**Energy and Environment:** Advances in gas and oil extraction have allowed for the identification of large reservoirs of natural gas and oil reserves in our region and the inclusion of cleaner coal burning

processes provide the resources to serve our energy needs for decades to come.

We support research into ALL emerging energy technologies which potentially can become the next frontier of energy for our future. We will not support reckless attempts to co-opt this research for irresponsible political gains, or government subsidies for these technologies. For the long term, we will promote advanced technologies which can, with reduced carbon footprint:

- Produce lower cost and abundant electricity.
- Produce synthetic transportation fuels.
- Desalinate seawater to produce drinkable water.
- Produce fuel for space exploration.

We view both Lake Erie and our rivers as tremendous economic and environmental resources which should continue to be available to future generations. We have a responsibility to protect and ensure their health and survival. We support research efforts to expand our knowledge and to develop world-class expertise on the effects, processing, and responsible use of freshwater for multiple purposes.

In using all types of natural resources for the benefit of our citizens, we applaud efforts to study and improve technology responsibly, being mindful of factual adverse effects on the environment. Priority should be given to research efforts that examine the true cause-and-effect relationships of the latest methods used in extraction, processing, filtering, combusting, and other technologies.

**Healthcare:** A healthy society is crucial to the strength of our nation. We believe that the Affordable Care Act brought more harm than good. Americans could not keep their physician. Premiums increased and people were forced to buy in order to avoid penalties. The massive exit of healthcare insurance companies in many states left some with only one provider. Lack of competition among these insurers have made insurance unaffordable for many Americans. There are many Americans who cannot afford health-care insurance due to unspeakable circumstances, others with pre-existing conditions, and others who simply are unable to work. We believe there should be a safety net for these Americans and no American should be denied healthcare insurance because of a pre-existing condition. No American should be forced to buy a healthcare insurance or be penalized for not buying.

We support free market solutions that help to control costs and to provide greater access through health insurance that is portable and affordable, and we support the implementation of policies which limit the scope and magnitude of government interference in this sector. We support legislation which provides for fair tort reform, limiting frivolous lawsuits that are unnecessarily driving up the cost of healthcare. We also support a system which allows doctors and hospitals the freedom to practice medicine and provide care without requiring extensive mastery of a vast bureaucracy.

We support and advocate for any American to have the ability to purchase healthcare insurance across state lines. We ask major healthcare insurance companies cover all counties in each state in which they operate. Americans should be able to keep their physicians and choose their healthcare providers.

We support the repeal and replacement of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), as it is detrimental to the people of Cuyahoga County, our medical providers and institutions, and our local medical manufacturers.

We advocate for legislation that protects the most vulnerable and provides for individuals in catastrophic circumstances.

### **Strong Families and American Values**

*“The family unit plays a critical role in our society and in the training of the generations to come.”*  
President Abraham Lincoln. We recognize this statement to be true and we support strong families and the defense of God-given American values.

**American Values:** America was founded on the idea that individuals, not government, offer the best promise for success and prosperity. American values, including respect for one another, hard work, honesty, caring for neighbors, respect for authority, responsibility for one’s actions, and love of country, are the foundation of an American society that has experienced unparalleled advancements in the human condition. Americans value the worth and contribution of every person, and Republican candidates and elected officials should support policies and programs that advance individuals, offer a hand-up in time of need and not a permanent hand-out. Government should be discouraged from intervention that may entrap its citizens under a false promise of hope while restraining advancement otherwise achieved by the unleashed potential of an individual. Society as a whole, and specifically our county, benefits most when we encourage and realize the potential of all of our citizens.

**Respect for Life:** If we can’t respect the unborn human, how can we expect people to respect each other? Life begins at conception and Republican candidates and officials are expected to support this position.

**Family as the Center of Society:** We, the Republican Party of Cuyahoga County, promote, support, and uphold policies that protect and support the family. A family is the basic unit of our society and policy that promotes, supports, and upholds the traditional family ideal affords the most freedom for everyone.

American values include the belief that holds the family as the essential unit of society. The principles and morals that a family adheres to are the foundation of how we teach our children to learn, grow, and function in the world. These principles and morals are the bedrocks of our free society. Individual liberty, so important in America, depends upon each person accepting responsibility for his or her own actions, learned and developed within the family. While American values and principles are at the core of our system of government, they must first be passed down within the foundation of strong families. An expanding government weakens the sense of individual responsibility and results in reliance on the government; furthermore, wrong-headed governmental policies often discourage marriage, strong families, and individual responsibility.

Our candidates and elected officials must support proposals and policies in which the institution of the family can be encouraged to flourish and fulfill its role in advancing American principles and values, and subsequently, a better life and prosperity for all families in Cuyahoga County.

## **Educational Excellence**

*“Intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education.”* Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

According to Dr. King, education is more than gaining wisdom on a wide range of topics; it should also be about developing character. An excellent education should do both, in a safe and inspirational setting. Our children, the American leaders of tomorrow, deserve the best educational system that can be delivered.

**Putting Children First:** All students deserve the opportunity to seek the American Dream and to reach their full God-given potential. This begins with an excellent education. English should be the first language for teaching all subjects except Foreign Language. Schools should provide English language learning classes to all foreign speaking students so that they, too, can succeed in America. All children deserve the best available teaching methods that will maximize their individual abilities. Intervention should be available to help students achieve and remain at grade level.

Education decisions are best handled at the local level. Our elected officials should review and revise state laws and regulations that limit the overall success of education at the local level. We oppose any attempt by the federal government to force a curriculum or other burdensome controls upon the populace. Student safety and health should be paramount. We believe that great teachers should be safe teachers, and all should be subject to background checks and skill-based assessments.

**Parents:** Parents, having ultimate authority over their children, should be able to select appropriate educational venues, courses of study, and have access to family-based literacy programs. In general, greater parent involvement should be welcomed, and encouraged in all school settings.

**Teachers:** Great teachers change lives and are the heart of educational excellence. To attract and retain great teachers, we believe that pay structures must be competitive, with a merit based component, and benefit packages which are fair. We encourage talented individuals to select teaching as a profession. Our platform supports efforts to have more individuals with conservative values become teachers. We place a high value on teacher innovation.

**Curriculum:** Curriculum is the foundation of excellent education and should ensure high academic standards. Curriculum should include assessment of fundamentals, be dynamic, be fact-checked, and be upgraded continuously. Curriculum should tie high school college preparatory, technical, and vocational tracts with career and entrepreneurial opportunities by aligning relevant aspects of revised curriculum with existing and emerging industries.

We believe that teaching American exceptionalism and American values, such as the study of free markets, individual responsibility, ethics, discipline, personal competition, personal property rights, financial literacy, and respect for others, is essential to the continuation of our republic. History courses should include a study of our Founders, and their documents and Government and Civics course should include the Ohio and U.S. Constitutions.

We also believe that parents should be fully informed about what their children are being taught,

and as such, curriculum should be reviewed by parents as part of the local curriculum approval process. We are opposed to all forms of foreign investment in Ohio K-12 public education, whose motives are unclear, and any such investments in our public education programs should be illegal.

**Textbooks and Novels:** Textbooks are the conduits through which students can gain knowledge on a wide range of topics. Technology is the way of the future, and online textbooks should be considered. We encourage the use of virtual, audio, and digital textbooks which can be updated annually. Textbooks found to have egregious errors should be eliminated from use.

**Administration and Administrators:** Great administrators are critical to the success of every child's educational venue. As such, employed administrators and boards of education should be held to the highest standards of strong leadership within the school system and accountability for success and performance of teachers and students in their buildings. Administrators should strive to provide an environment free from bullying or other inappropriate behavior.

**Educational Venues:** We support parents' rights to choose from all venues of education, including home schooling, and we support the position that all venues should be supported by effective legislation and be appropriately funded. We encourage the review of K-12 administrative staffing practices and expenditures to ensure effective use of personnel and budgets. Revenues raised for K-12 education at local levels should remain under the purview of taxpayers, with limited involvement from federal and state mandates. We encourage support for colleges and universities with a conservative focus.

We support unique school scheduling that serves non-traditional community needs. We believe that charter school credentialing and accountability standards should be strengthened, and that poorly performing schools should be de-certified or closed. All educational venues should be vetted and held accountable for performance and transparency.

The use of school vouchers for all children should be encouraged. This way, if the parent feels their local system is lacking, they can use their voucher to move their child to a system they feel offers a better educational choice. The voucher system should allow the school systems the ability to set minimum standards for enrollment, with their systems' children getting primary positions for enrollment.

**Technology:** Technology is present in our society today and must be an integral part of our education. We support the use of a personal tablet for each student, grades 3-12. Administrators, teachers, and students alike should have ready access to protected high-speed Internet connections in all school buildings and on school properties, with appropriate safeguards and restrictions to inappropriate or unnecessary websites. On-going instruction on proper use and implementation of technology should be available for all, as technology is always advancing. We support teaching all forms of media.

### **Respect for Individuals: Diversity, Faith, and Community**

*"America is never wholly herself unless she is engaged in high moral principle. We as a people have such a purpose today. It is to make kinder the face of the Nation and gentler the face of the world. My friends, we have work to do."* President George H. W. Bush

**Respect for individuals:** The Republican Party of Cuyahoga County is made up of individuals of different backgrounds that come together on united beliefs:

- “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”
- That we are all Americans, from those who can trace their ancestry back to the founding of this nation or those that have come to these shores and taken the oath of citizenship and follow the laws of this great nation.
- We believe that everyone has the right to be treated the same under the law.
- We who call ourselves Americans have different opinions on life and we have the right to disagree and demonstrate in peaceful manner.

**Community:** We believe the best way to help and grow the community are by supporting faith-based organizations, providing safety, encouraging a thriving economy, and offering an excellent education where families can teach values to their children.

We believe that the best way to govern a community is not from miles away in the county, state or the federal government. It starts at the local level, giving the people of the community the right to govern themselves. A person who can govern oneself within the scope of limited government should be encouraged to take an active role in the community.

We believe that a robust economy is one that has diverse opportunities with limited taxes and regulations. This will lead to stronger families with brighter outlooks for the future. We believe that faith-based organizations are an integral part of a strong community.

**Diversity:** *“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”* Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. We are all Americans; out of many, one. We understand that everyone has a history, should know their history and be proud of who they are and we reject efforts to divide Americans and turn one group against another. We embrace diverse thinking, and look to engage new demographics, and outreach to groups and organizations that share a common vision for Cuyahoga County. We believe that diversity enhances our efforts in improving our community when done properly based on the individual’s qualifications, contribution, and ethical standards aligned with the Constitution. Through broad appeal to non-traditional Republican circles, our goal is to provide a positive alternative to the stagnant, ineffective, and corrupt governance under single-party rule.

**Faith and Religion:** *“The liberty enjoyed by the people of these States, of worshipping Almighty God agreeable to their consciences, is not only among the choicest of their blessings, but also of their rights.”* President George Washington

Our county is composed of individuals with various religious beliefs, who have the right to exercise religious freedoms and follow their beliefs, peacefully, underscoring our reverence for religious freedoms as defined by the Constitution and The Bill of Rights. We encourage such individualism. Faith-based organizations provide moral and ethical guidance for individuals and families. These organizations



have an important place in society, and we support their work. We strongly support efforts to maintain religious liberty without limitation or hindrance to someone's personal convictions. We stand with Article VI of the United States Constitution that there should never be a religious test to hold office.

**Immigration:** The United States prides itself for being a nation of immigrants. We believe that responsible and legal immigration results in a thriving society regardless of someone's race, faith, and gender. We also believe that the safety and security of the American people should come first under any circumstances and we stand with federal law against sanctuary cities. We believe that coming to the U.S. is a privilege not a right. In order for any individual to live in the United States and benefit from its God-given prosperity; this individual's allegiance ought to be only for the United States. The individual should be a contributor to society rather than a burden.

Throughout the years, the United States has proven to be the most generous nation on earth. We believe in enforcing the laws that have been enacted in Congress. We believe that securing our nation and reforming the immigration system should empower our society. The United States has the right to secure its borders through various methods in order to protect its citizens. We also believe in cooperating with other nations, and deport any individual who does not abide by our laws.

**Refugees:** The United States has been a leader in welcoming refugees who undergone various kinds of persecution and turmoil. We strive to help these individuals as long as it does not compromise the safety and security of our own citizens. We also believe that there should be a proper way of vetting refugees, especially from hot spots defined by our federal intelligence agencies. When necessary, the United States has the right to stop any form of immigration that imposes threat to our national security. On certain occasions, we believe that best solution may be "safe zones", allowing refugees to remain in their home county. These safe zones are designed to protect the refugees in areas controlled by the United Nations, away from conflict, and enable refugees to live safely until the conflict is resolved.

**Sanctuary Cities:** The RPCC reaffirms the necessity of states, cities, and local governments to abide by federal laws by prohibiting any policies that favors illegal aliens over American citizens' rights. We refuse to subject any American to harm, whether physical or economical. Some Americans have felt the adverse consequences of cheap labor. Over the last three decades, Americans have been harmed by criminal illegal aliens who hide in sanctuary cities. Cities that refuse to protect their own citizens by allowing criminals to live above the law should face legal consequences and elected officials should fight against the practice of sanctuary cities.

**Veterans:** Those who have fought and died to keep our country free deserve continued recognition and respect from our nation. We encourage the ongoing support of veterans, those on active duty, those who have been honorably discharged, and the families of our service men and women, all who have sacrificed for the freedoms we enjoy in the United States. We support improved quality of healthcare, including access to private healthcare.

**Youth:** Our youth are the leaders of tomorrow. We recognize the importance of leading by example in order to bring up a generation of leaders who will impact society in a various ways. In the words of Frederick Douglass, "*it is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men*". They embrace technology and want to take an active role in the work force, our country, and the political process. They share our concern for responsible leadership in government and in commerce. This group

will yield fresh thinking, energetic candidates, and we welcome them to our Party. We support initiatives that provide mentorships and internships that get them into employment, economic opportunities, and greater potential.

**Outreach:** While some groups may not be familiar with our principles that many of them hold. They are certainly familiar with the contributions of famous Republicans, such as President Abraham Lincoln, President Ronald Reagan, and Senator George Voinovich, and local leaders such as Judge Lillian Burke, Judge Sara Harper, and Commissioner Virgil Brown, Sr. Cuyahoga County embraces a rich and diverse cultural history. We wish to outreach to all people who share core principles with the Republican Party, such as respect for hard work, the desire for a good education, freedom of worship, and traditional family values. Our responsibility within the CCRP is to engage in effective means of outreach to create awareness of our mission and vision for the nation. This includes working with young Republicans in local colleges and universities and the use of social media.

### **Local Government: Results through Accountability**

*"Our differences are policies, our agreements principles."* President William McKinley

The Republican Party of Cuyahoga County resolves to recruit, develop, and support Republican candidates for public office in every municipality, township, and school board of this county in order to foster effective government. By effective government, we mean government that will provide services to the people in a cost effective, efficient, and honest manner. Our citizens deserve services that strengthen the family not undermine it, services that people cannot provide for themselves.

**Ethics:** The Constitutions of the United States and Ohio, our judicial systems, and politics in America are based on practices of high ethical standards. For a self-governing society to thrive, high ethical standards are required equally from its elected officials and its citizenry. Our Founding Fathers knew that a strong code of ethics was necessary for the survival of the Republic, and they based their founding visions on such ethical values.

Our party and its leaders, public figures, and elected officials should be role models, standing for issues, making decisions, and developing policies for the good of society. We are the party of Lincoln, and as such, have a responsibility to govern beyond expectations.

Therefore, the Republican Party of Cuyahoga County is hereby committed to supporting a code of high ethical standards in action, word, and deed, and expects all of its members, including elected and public officials, candidates, party leaders, committee leaders, ward leaders, precinct committee members, and community leaders to apply these standards by using their best efforts to employ personal characteristics of integrity, honesty, morality, civility, conviction, trust, and leadership.

Republican elected and appointed officials and candidates for public office and party leaders should demonstrate the highest commitment to ethics and strive to set an example in their professional and personal lives representative of high values and ethics and work to enact policies that uplift their communities to the high ethical standards for the good of their constituents.

*"Buy American, hire American."* President Donald J. Trump. Local Republican candidates support

the buying power of local governments to help the community. Where fiscally reasonable, we support the purchase of products made in Ohio and The United States of America. We support hiring American workers. We should use our local purchasing power to help our citizens, and support goods and services made in the U.S., contracting for U.S. and Ohio-made goods and services provides the advantage of reinvesting taxpayer money back into our own communities.

**Fiscal Responsibility and Accountability:** The Republican Party of Cuyahoga County stands for fiscal responsibility and accountability in government, particularly to safeguard the people against actions that deprive them of the money that they have earned either through hard work or retirement benefits. A republic must be an efficient government. Government should only take the minimum of the people's money for needed government projects and services, and ensure that those funds are spent in the most efficient and effective way possible. President Coolidge said, *"I want the people of America to be able to work less for the government and more for themselves. I want them to have the rewards of their own industry. This is the chief means of freedom."*

Every governmental entity should conduct a thorough and frequent review of how tax dollars are being spent and make it public. The mindset of our Republican elected officials should always be on continuous improvement, efficiency, and effectiveness. Republicans must always look to take account of how public money is spent and why. Creating and utilizing benchmarks regarding the cost benefit analysis of how tax dollars are spent must be paramount. Each program, public employee, and government priority must be constantly judged through the prism of fiscal responsibility and accountability, with measurements set that maximize the value of each dollar.

It is often stated that "wasteful" programs should be evaluated or eliminated. Republicans believe that the efficiency and effectiveness of government programs should be continuously assessed, with an ongoing focus on implementing strong standards and reviewing strategic planning at the first signs of failure. If a program has become "wasteful," then government was not doing its job. At the core of every Republican candidate and elected official's value system must be an over-arching belief that elected officials are to guard the interests of the people, and take pro-active measures to assure value in tax dollars. The Republican Party is the party of value through minimal intrusion into the pockets of the people. We seek to offer more take home pay, greater savings, and the highest value for the taxpayer dollar.

**Governance and Policy Review:** Republicans encourage elected officials to evaluate each ordinance, policy, and public law proposal through the scope of the impact of the proposal on the family and the community, on the ability of commerce to thrive, and on the cost-benefit relationship of whether or not the policy is beneficial or even needed. We ask that every aspect of local government be examined to ensure that government is providing only what the individual citizen or family cannot reasonably provide, and that the government avoids undertaking tasks which individuals can complete on their own or that the private sector can accomplish in a more effective manner.

**Common Sense Initiative:** We encourage our elected officials to apply Common Sense Initiative (CSI) principles to current and proposed regulations, as done in state government through the Office of CSI. Officials should thoroughly review all rules and laws of their governmental entity to assure that commerce and job creators can thrive, and that regulatory authority is not so burdensome as to deprive the community of jobs and commerce. Information about CSI can be found at [www.governor.ohio.gov/CSI](http://www.governor.ohio.gov/CSI).

**Vendor Selection and Oversight:** In the selection of vendors for local government, officials must ensure that strong ethics policies are in place, demanding the highest integrity of vendors, and putting assurances into law such that vendors, who have failed the public trust in the past, shall not conduct business with that community. We must never again allow corruption to take hold in the governments of Cuyahoga County.

**Transparency:** Government must be fully open and accountable to taxpayers, both individuals and business entities, who pay for these services. We support strong open records laws and thorough public discussion of issues, versus "executive sessions." We ask our leaders to provide sunlight to the process, allowing hardworking taxpayers the opportunity to be part of the decision making process. Legislative bodies should not pass "emergency" legislation unless an actual emergency exists. Republicans believe in deliberation and citizen participation.

**Eminent Domain/Asset Forfeiture:** The use of eminent domain, the taking of and paying for private property for public usage, should be rare and accomplished through legal, fair, and equitable means and should occur after due process of law. Such action should be the absolute last resort of a public entity.

**Taxation:** The power to levy taxes is the power to deprive residents and businesses of their hard earned income. Thus, it should be a very rare occasion to justify the increase of taxation and only when these questions have been answered affirmatively:

- Have we negotiated public employee contracts that are in line with the wages and benefits of those whom we serve?
- Is everything that the public entity does absolutely necessary or is it possible for the public entity to scale back or eliminate certain tasks as a cost savings to the governed?
- Does the benefit or purpose of the tax outweigh the harm inflicted upon those who are taxed?
- Republicans believe that successful public entities provide valuable services, and are delivered with excellence, at the lowest cost, and with minimal intrusion into the lives of the people.

**Law Enforcement:** The first duty of government is to keep its citizens safe. Supporting law enforcement means supporting our citizens. A well-trained and equipped law enforcement presence will help our local communities thrive. We encourage the collaboration between local leaders and law enforcement for the safety and benefit of all citizens.

**Gun Ownership:** We support the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and Article 1 Section 4 of the Ohio Constitution on the right of lawful ownership and use of firearms, the right of citizens to keep and bear arms for their defense and security.

**Boards and Commissions:** Republicans oppose unaccountable Boards and Commissions that possess taxing and spending authority, operate without the direct consent of elected representatives, and do not reflect the accurate financial status and population of the area. This party will seek petition with the Ohio General Assembly, and where appropriate place the appointing authority for these Board and Commissions under the County Council, making them directly accountable to the people through their elected representatives, and not special interest groups that benefit from the unelected and unaccountable nature of these entities. Additionally, the Boards as constituted should reflect the current and appropriate population of the county and City of Cleveland, and not reflect the population of prior decades. We seek

relief from the Ohio General Assembly; our citizens deserve these important entities to become fully accountable to the people:

- The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority
- North East Ohio Regional Sewer District
- Regional Transit Authority (RTA)
- Regional Income Tax Authority - RITA
- Central Collection Agency Division of Taxation Department of Finance City of Cleveland

**Collaboration:** This party believes in collaboration between government entities to create efficiencies. Such collaboration should not jeopardize public safety or the delivery of service, but should emphasize high cost items that can be shared with adjacent public entities in some circumstances. Consortiums of governmental entities that band together to purchase materials in larger quantities to save taxpayers' money, are viewed favorably. We believe in the right of communities to merge, based on the desires of their citizens.

**Regionalism:** The best government is that which is closest to the citizens. Our party encourages discussion about shared services and attracting commerce to Cuyahoga County. However, any discussions of tax sharing should not reward fiscally irresponsible, poorly run, and already highly-taxed communities at the expense of well-run communities. Decisions to share or collaborate must be made between the elected officials of local communities and their citizens, not outside entities with questionable motives. Regional collaborations should be voluntary and in the best interest of citizens and taxpayers. To be clear, while encouraging such collaborations, Republicans do not endorse any collaboration goals which we believe are in direct conflict with the sovereignty of the United States, and the prerogative of state and local governments.

We believe in competition between the cities to help grow the economy and the earning potential of the residents we serve, and we seek to remove the anti-poaching protocol.

Vibrant NEO 2040 is a thirty-year visioning and planning process, a major collaborative effort, originally grant-funded by the federal EPA, DOT, and HUD, and initiated by NEOSCC (Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium), a non-profit organization created through NOACA. Republicans prefer that NEOSCC allow all communities within its region to address collaborative issues solely through local elected officials via meaningful involvement and accountability to the voters and citizens of Cuyahoga County, and the 12-county region involved in this process, to promote transparency and to ensure that all proposals effectively serve the needs of the municipalities of the region.

This party recognizes the freedom and autonomy of local governments to meet the needs of their own communities both individually, and cooperatively and collaboratively with other communities. At the same time, we realize that entrepreneurial competition throughout is healthy for the successful recovery of our Northeast Ohio region, and that our competition as a region lies more importantly with other parts of the country, and other parts of the world, such as China, India, and Korea. Careful planning, cooperation, and community collaboration among local elected officials can strengthen our county, and our future.

## **Protecting Voters and the Election Process**

*“Unfortunately, the United States has a long history of voter fraud that has been documented by historians and journalists.”* Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens

Our electoral process is the cornerstone of our democratic republic. When the integrity of that foundation is violated, the future of America is endangered. We therefore support every effort to ensure the constitutional promise of one person, one vote and call for increased measures to thwart fraudulent votes from nullifying valid votes. We encourage our members to engage in the electoral process by serving as poll workers to ensure political balance at every voting precinct. Election fraud **is** voter suppression, and no individual candidate or issue is more important than free and fair elections in Cuyahoga County.

**Election Fraud:** Throughout the years, there have been numerous reports and allegations of voter impersonation, fictitious voter registration, and unverified votes being counted—even in Ohio. Because the integrity of our electoral system is the heart of our democracy, we take these allegations seriously. Public trust requires that potential for voter fraud, at both the registration and voting levels, be eliminated. It is essential that our elections be conducted with the utmost integrity, which ensures that every eligible voter has one vote that is properly cast and counted.

**Voter ID:** Voter photo identification is the central voter authentication method in nearly every democracy in the developed world. We agree with the bipartisan 2005 Commission on Federal Election Reform, co-chaired by former President Jimmy Carter and former Secretary of State James A. Baker III, that, *“The electoral system cannot inspire public confidence if no safeguards exist to deter or detect fraud or to confirm the identity of voters.”*

We reject the false narrative that verifying photo identification suppresses minority voting. Federal election data shows that greater numbers of minorities vote in states with strong voter ID laws.<sup>1</sup> The suggestion that some citizens are incapable of acquiring proper identification is insulting. Presenting a valid photo ID is required for routine transactions in everyday American life, and we demand the same verification process for our elections. Anyone who cannot afford a valid photo ID should promptly be provided one free of charge upon request.

**Absentee Voting Improvements:** Voting is an important civic exercise, and it is essential that all citizens be encouraged to vote. Absentee ballots were once limited to the military, the hospitalized and home-bound sick, the elderly, and those out of town on Election Day. In recent years, no-fault absentee voting has become widely used. However, in order to ensure one person, one vote within no-fault absentee voting, two deficient procedures must be corrected:

1. No one must be able to register and vote in the same day. This process discriminates against those voters who have registered within the time frame required by the Ohio Constitution (30 days prior to Election Day). Those who wish to vote via absentee ballot, whether in-person or mail, must have registered to vote 30 days prior to Election Day, just like all other voters. Laws must, then, be established that allow the local Board of Election time to verify the voter’s identity. This might

entail a restriction on absentee voting for a reasonable period of time after submitting a registration. Registering and voting on the same day does not allow the Board of Election adequate time to do their job.

2. In-person, absentee ballot voting at the Board of Election must be subject to the same voter ID requirements as on Election Day. Voting in-person by absentee ballot should not be treated differently than voting absentee by mail. When a registered voter requests an absentee ballot via the mail, the Board of Election has the opportunity to verify that voter's identity through a mailed post card and their signature. Unless an ID is provided during in-person absentee voting, the Board of Election has no opportunity to verify identity.

**Elimination of Invalid Voter Registrations:** Massive increases in absentee and early voting increases the importance of having accurate, up-to-date, and non-duplicative voter rolls. Old or invalid voter registrations invite fraud. Current efforts need to be bolstered in order to eliminate invalid registrations. Mass quantities of invalid voter registrations imperil the integrity of our elections, not only by inviting fraud, but also by placing unnecessary burdens on the electoral system.

Election boards, officials, and the public must take care to eliminate invalid or duplicative voter registrations, whether caused by death, voter mobility, or any other reason. The public should be encouraged to petition for effective methods of accomplishing this result. Notes from poll workers regarding invalid registrations must be investigated, not ignored. Current election law should be reviewed to ensure voter rolls are protected against fraud.

We encourage the Ohio Secretary of State to continue efforts to follow the provisions set forth in the 1993 National Voter Registration Act: to purge its records of all illicit registrations, to ensure its voter rolls do not contain fraudulent voter registrations and are true rolls of actual voters, and to maintain and utilize a reliable state voter registry database. Furthermore, we recommend that all state voter registries share information as people move from state to state.

**Prosecution of Voter Fraud:** Fraudulent voters are emboldened when voter fraud is not prosecuted. Every voter who deliberately votes twice in an election should be prosecuted. Laws should be reviewed and revised to protect honest voters.

**Increasing Voter Mobility and Voter Registration:** Republicans should engage citizens who have not engaged in the electoral process by embarking on measures to register new voters. A concerted effort should be made to reach out to minorities and independent voters, as well as community groups and college campuses, to ensure that every citizen who wishes to vote has the opportunity to do so. In addition, Republicans should increase efforts to identify those having difficulty getting to the polls on Election Day and assist in the transportation process.

## **ETHICS**

Ethics, the code of values and decent human behavior, will be defined and supported by the Republican Party of Cuyahoga County. Our party and its leaders, public figures, and elected officials are role models, standing for issues, making decisions, and developing policies for the good of society. We are the party of Presidents Lincoln, Garfield, McKinley, Eisenhower, and Reagan, and as such, have a responsibility to govern beyond expectations.

The Constitution of the United States, our judicial system, and politics in America are based on a practice of high ethical standards. For a self-governing society to thrive, high ethical standards are required equally from its elected officials and its citizenry. Our Founding Fathers knew that a strong code of ethics was necessary for the survival of the Republic.

The Republican Party of Cuyahoga County (RPCC) commits itself to applying a code of high ethical standards in action, word, and deed, and encourages all of its members, including elected and public officials, candidates, committee leaders, ward leaders, precinct committee members, and community leaders to apply these standards in obedience to the law of land, human and natural rights, equality of all citizens, concern for health and safety, personal characteristics of integrity, honesty, morality, civility, conviction, trust, and leadership, doing no harm in word or deed, transparency of actions, and concern for our environment.

Elected and appointed officials, candidates for public office, and party leaders must demonstrate the highest commitment to ethics in their political campaigns and their terms of office. This includes abiding by all federal, state, and local laws concerning the conduct of their campaign and policies, supporting high ethical standards while campaigning or in office, being an ethical role model for staff and constituency alike, treating constituents and staff in an ethical manner and with dignity and integrity, operating and communicating in a transparent, ethical, and upfront manner, implementing ethical hiring practices and hiring people of high integrity, frequently reviewing and revising governmental ethics policies, and setting an example in their professional and personal lives representative of high values and ethics. We expect campaign promises and pledges to be taken seriously by those fortunate enough to win an elected seat, and expect those promises and pledges to be kept.

Further, this party pledges to support elected officials and candidates for public office who will ensure that staff and employees are properly trained in ethics law and policy, will hold employees to high ethical standards, and will institute a culture of ethical behavior for staff and employees in their campaigns and in elective offices. Republicans will commit to continuous training and improvement of ethical behavior for themselves and their staff. Republican elected officials and candidates will choose to conduct commerce with ethical vendors.

With the explosion of social media for personal and political use comes the need for ethical guidelines that should be embraced by our party, our candidates, and our members. It has become easy to act in a mean-spirited manner behind the shroud of a computer or smart phone screen. Social media messages by Republicans should be accurate, fair, and respectful, even when we disagree with each other.

Republican elected officials and candidates should lead by example and exhibit ethical behavior, over and above standards, and constantly seek to enact policies that uplift their communities to the high ethical standards for the good of their constituents.



## **Recommendations**

Republican candidates and officeholders seeking endorsement from our county party for local office shall be provided copies of this platform, asked to support these principles, and encouraged to fashion their campaigns and governance around the principles set herein. We ask for reasonable fidelity to this platform by qualified, Republican elected officials. It should be so noted that this platform seeks to demonstrate the major differences between the two major parties' governing philosophies.

Transparency engenders accountability, and Republican principles represent affirmation of individuals and families, support for commerce which fuels our economy, and good government with the highest standards of integrity. We value the needs and rights of the people of Cuyahoga County, and we ask for their votes based on the objectives outlined in this platform, and the common sense belief that government is best when it governs least, allowing the private sector to flourish and its citizens to control their own lives. The voters of Cuyahoga County deserve no less.

**Revisions:** We do not claim perfection or infallibility, or that future situations will not change priorities or needs. Just as the RNC platform is subject to improvement every four years at the Republican National Convention, we recognize the value of continuous examination of specific provisions, and invite search into potential improvements of this platform – whether following the 2016 Republican National Convention or prior thereto. We welcome sincere comments from fellow Republicans in this regard.