



Platform of the Republican Party of Cuyahoga County

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Preamble

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

The people of Cuyahoga County, whose hard work and ingenuity earned Greater Cleveland the legendary title, "The Best Location in the Nation," deserve to have that recognition again. The people and business leaders of Cuyahoga County, with their know-how and industriousness, are capable of accomplishing great things together. The path to prosperity requires embracing the jobs and industries of tomorrow.

Because the United States of America is founded on the principles of, "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," and that all men are created free and equal, our platform shall always remain consistent with these principles.

Because it is our belief that limiting the size and scope of government best protects individual freedom and liberty, our platform supports limited government.

Because the family is the best place to develop values, principles, and morals, our platform supports a strong family with limitations on government interference.

Because a healthy free market economy is the foundation for successful businesses, strong families, individual prosperity, safe and thriving neighborhoods, and funding of important government services, our platform supports policies and practices that expand the private sector economy and lessen the expansion of government.

Because educating our youth and preparing our work force to attract new industries is crucial to the success and growth of the private sector, our platform stands for educational excellence and workforce development.

Because citizens deserve a government free from corruption at all levels, motivated by the creation of policies beneficial to its citizens and our region, our platform insists upon open government run by officials of integrity, who put the constitutional freedoms of citizens first and who support smart, collaborative regional policies that afford the public opportunities for meaningful input.

Because citizens deserve exceptional, qualified candidates who put the needs of the people first, and who are selected through honest and truthful elections, our platform supports the recruitment and development of excellent candidates and the promotion of elections free from dishonest practices.

Because this platform is designed to address issues over which we have influence, namely state and local government policies, 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 http://www.gop.com/2012-republican-platform_home/.

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 offer an understanding of the Republican Party of Cuyahoga County for individuals who belong to communities who may not know us well.
5. To encourage and welcome participation by minorities who share these values and goals in the party.
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 reject those policies that have led to decades of economic deterioration, job loss, fiscal mismanagement, and political corruption.

Free Market: We believe that the free market offers the greatest potential for individual prosperity. The free market functions based upon the needs of consumers and 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. Some say that the free market is cruel and unforgiving. We reject that theory. The free market is always adjusting for the present and is the best way to get ahead in life. It does not restrict what job you can get, where you can live, or what you can buy. Rather, it 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. Conversely, mandated government programs, purportedly designed to help people, achieve the opposite by dictating where you can live, what you can buy, and where your children can get their education. Cruelty is creating dependency upon government programs. We support, and citizens deserve, a free market that offers just that – freedom for all to dream big and to realize those dreams.

Government Regulation: Unwarranted and excessive regulation from governments seeking to expand their control at the expense of a developing economy is not in our best interest. Examples of such oppressive regulation include:

1. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and its negative impact on the individual doctor-patient relationship, on the level of care received by patients, on small business and employees, and on numerous secondary companies, including medical suppliers and medical equipment manufacturers.
2. Over-regulation of hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) that is based upon inaccurate science, without due consideration for related studies which substantiate benefits when safely conducted under existing control technologies.
3. Efforts to over-regulate investment activities that undermine the ability of small investment firms to initiate, launch, and grow, while at the same time advocating “too big to fail” policies that are advantageous to large firms that are ultimately not held accountable for irresponsible actions.

Manufacturing: We recognize that the strength of our regional economy is dependent upon a strong manufacturing sector, a vital component of growth. Our local economy has historically been automotive-based, and we believe that the local skill set in this area is competitive with the rest of the world, and we support its continued advancement.

However, we must acknowledge the tremendous gains of other business and industrial sectors, most notably healthcare, high-tech, and energy. We support efforts to pay particular attention to these sectors through business development initiatives, enabling these industries to grow without unnecessary impediments.

Healthcare: The Cleveland area is profuse with excellent hospitals and health care institutions. We need a system that allows doctors to practice medicine and not be limited by onerous government interference. With the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), physicians are convinced that their autonomy will be curtailed, and layers of bureaucracy will separate them from patients, ultimately

rationing care and diminishing treatment options for certain patients, such as late-stage cancer patients and the elderly. Our regional institutions are cutting expenses and reducing staff in anticipation of higher costs, and reimbursements and physicians' earnings are already declining.

Our medical suppliers and manufacturers are among the federal health care losers, as every quarter they must send the federal government a flat 2.3% of their revenue. As a tax on sales, not profits, it can decimate the research and development budgets of smaller companies and cause the delay or demise of innovative new products. Others are cutting jobs to offset this loss in revenue in order to maintain profitability. Those that choose to pass along the tax to their customers will further balloon the cost of healthcare, not decrease it as promised. The ACA does nothing to bring down the cost of health care; it only lowers the amount of revenue for manufacturers, hospitals, and doctors. These costs are subsequently passed along to consumers.

As evidenced in many other countries, socialized medicine does not effectively serve the people. We support free market solutions that truly help control costs and provide greater access through health insurance that is portable, affordable, and tax deductible. We support legislation limiting frivolous lawsuits that are driving up the cost of healthcare. We support legislation that protects the most vulnerable and protects individuals during catastrophic incidences. We support the complete repeal and replacement, or minimally, the delay or defunding of the ACA, as it is detrimental to the people of Cuyahoga County, our medical providers and institutions, and our local medical manufacturers.

High-Tech Manufacturing: Northeast Ohio and Cuyahoga County are uniquely positioned as having one of the fastest growing and diverse high-tech, aerospace, and aviation industries in the world. Ohio already maintains a leadership position, supported by a strong supplier base in the region. We support efforts to strengthen and expand this industry segment through particular attention to the various research facilities, universities, and labs, and the various outreach agencies such as the Ohio Aerospace Institute, Jumpstart, Third Frontier, and others, who are striving to plant the seeds of industrial growth in this area.

To that end, we support efforts by all levels of government to encourage growth and expansion in this area. We do not find this contradictory to prudent fiscal management; on the contrary, successes already realized by research, development, and outreach facilities have helped to reshape our proud industrial base and provided our citizens with an avenue of prosperity for the 21st century. More emphasis must be placed on commercializing these successes and seeking the rewards of prudent public investment resulting in private sector jobs.

Energy and Environment: We have new developments in the energy sector which constitute a once-in-a-century opportunity. Advances in gas and oil extraction have allowed for the identification of a large reservoir of natural gas and oil reserves. Simply put, we have the chance to resolve our energy crisis for the next several decades.

We support continued research into other alternative technologies and methodologies which potentially can be the next frontier of energy for the future. This support comes with the understanding of specific expectations toward objectives and estimated outcomes based upon the current state of the

technology. We do not support reckless attempts to co-opt this research for irresponsible political gain, used on known failed technologies or projects with highly suspect motives. For the long term, we should promote advances, such as Liquid Fluoride Thorium Reactor (LFTR) technology, which can, without any carbon footprint:

1. Produce lower cost and abundant electricity.
2. Produce synthetic transportation fuels in the U.S. to limit our dependence on overseas oil.
3. Desalinate seawater to produce potable water.
4. Produce medical isotopes in abundance for diagnostic procedures and as a weapon against cancer.
5. Produce fuel for space exploration.

We view Lake Erie and our rivers as tremendous resources. We support ensuring availability for future generations, as well as protecting their place in the economic and environmental ecosystems. We support research efforts to expand our knowledge in order to become world-class experts on the effective processing and responsible use of freshwater for multiple purposes.

In using natural resources to advance economic health and energy expansion for the benefit of our citizens, we applaud efforts to study and improve these technologies 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.

Trade: While we embrace free trade as an ideal business environment, we recognize that trade agreements with countries such as China have not met expectations and have obstructed a level playing field. Ohio, as the third largest manufacturing state in the United States, and specifically northeast Ohio, as the largest single population center in the state, is directly affected by draconian federal trade policies that undermine our competitiveness and that, consequently, facilitate the growth of foreign competition. We advocate full review and renegotiation of all trade agreements that handicap our local businesses and industries, and we demand full disclosure and elimination of unethical trade practices by overseas trade partners. In the spirit of a free market, we expect fair trade and nothing less.

Workforce: Understanding the need for apprentice training, we advocate for the establishment and development of education and training programs aimed at improving the skill set and versatility of the workers in Cuyahoga County. We support both private and public efforts, reflective of the needs of the marketplace, to accomplish this in the interest of enhancing the overall competitiveness of the region, together with the advancement of individuals.

Unions: We believe in the duality of choice in the workforce. That is, we support the worker's fundamental right to organize as well as the worker's fundamental right to not be forced to organize. Both are decisions of the worker, and should not be impeded in either case by legislation. We strongly support unions that educate and develop their membership. These efforts can result in a skilled workforce that fosters pride and integrity. Unions are an important part of the heritage of our region, and

overall we appreciate the tremendous contributions that they have made to the health and well-being of our labor market.

Infrastructure Development: We believe that citizens of Cuyahoga County deserve the needed infrastructure (roads, bridges, etc.), neighborhood development (Waterfront, Flats, various precincts, etc.), Port Authority (Burke, Hopkins, Port of Cleveland), and governmental structure (county, cities, townships, villages, etc.) to facilitate success in an ever-increasing competitive global economy. In many cases, we opt for private investment for such development over less efficient and more costly public management. However, there are times when such projects will not launch without government participation. As such, we believe that the region should always have a list of prioritized projects so as not to overlook opportunities to replace bridges, roads, sewer and water systems, power grids, etc., in a timely fashion. Each of these systems has experienced failure over the past decade. Citizens of our region deserve effective, transparent management, with minimal bureaucracy, acting in the best interest of the general public in all such public projects.

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.

Family as the Center of Society: Families come in many varieties. Families of birth, foster and adoptive families, and extended families are all respected and valued. Strong, stable families are essential to the health and well-being of our communities. In the best of situations, at the center of every family is a marriage, with a mother and a father. History has shown that children do best when raised within what is defined today as a traditional marriage, and we support the Ohio Marriage Amendment which was passed by voters in 2004. However, we realize that there are many types of families today and that all families are welcomed, and must be nurtured and protected. All children deserve a strong family in which they are loved and cherished. Families form the basis of our neighborhoods, from which sprout cities, counties, states, and ultimately, our nation.

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.” 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. We support the Cleveland Transformation Policy as a framework for improving this district.

Putting Children First: All students, regardless of background, social, or economic circumstance, deserve the opportunity to seek the American Dream and to reach their full potential, which always begins with an excellent education and the opportunity to innovate. English should be the sole language for teaching all subjects except Foreign Language, and schools should provide English language learning classes to all foreign speaking students so that they, too, can more easily succeed in America. Gifted children and those with special needs deserve the best available methods that will maximize their individual abilities, thus, trials of alternative classroom structures, based on efficacy should be considered. Intervention should be available to help students achieve and remain at grade level.

We believe that parents have ultimate authority over their child’s education, with society and the school contributing greatly to the impact of K-12 education and the development of our children. Our elected officials should review and revise state laws and regulations that limit the overall success of education at the local level. Student safety and health should be paramount. Crisis intervention programs should be available through written board policies, permitting local school nurse services, and a process allowing parents to make decisions for outside-of-school medical needs of students, when necessary.

Parents: Parents, having ultimate authority over their children, should be able to select appropriate educational venues, have access to family-based literacy programs, and, in the spirit of openness, be able to volunteer in school buildings and classrooms, including the classrooms of students with special needs. In general, greater parent involvement should be welcomed 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, and partially merit based, and that benefit packages are fair and consistent with employment practices of the community in general. We encourage talented individuals to select teaching as a profession. Programs that attract new teachers, such as “Teach for America,” should be supported. To support diversity, our platform supports efforts to have more individuals with conservative values become teachers. We place a high value on teacher innovation. We believe that great teachers should be safe teachers, and all should be subject to background checks and skill-based assessments.

Curriculum: Curriculum is the brick and mortar foundation of excellent education. As such, curriculum should ensure high academic standards. Curriculum is not static, however. We believe that K-12 Ohio curricula should be fact-checked and upgraded. 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 Ohio industries.

Curriculum should include assessments of fundamentals, and the key academic areas of focus: Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Language Arts/Reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency), History, Government and Civics, Geography, Foreign Language, Arts and Music. Writing skills should be emphasized at all grade levels. To be competitive in today’s global economy, a foreign language should start in elementary school, continue in middle and high school, and be available to all students, not only in selective private schools.

Curriculum should include American citizenry, the U. S. Constitution, the Ohio Constitution, and the study of our nation’s founding, particularly an in-depth study of the Founding Fathers and founding documents. 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.

We encourage the comparison of American Exceptionalism to globalism and American traditions to those of other countries. A comprehensive comparison of modern government structures and economic systems should be taught. Students should possess a firm knowledge of the key characteristics and differences between democratic, monarchical, oligarchic, and authoritarian regimes, as well as basic political ideologies. The underlying policies and principles of capitalism, communism, socialism, and other economic systems should be explored, particularly encouraging the study of their market systems, their values placed on individual life, and how their governance impacts their societies.

With regard to the study of the formation of the world, all students should be taught to compare and contrast theories of evolution, creation and intelligent design so that they will develop an appreciation of the great variation in theories of how life on earth began.

We believe that parents, local school districts, and the state know what is best for our children, and that curriculum and education standards are best developed by experts from a wide variety of political and economic backgrounds and beliefs. 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. We oppose any attempt by the federal government to force a curriculum upon the populace, as in the case of Common Core.

Textbooks and Novels: If curriculum is the brick and mortar of education, then textbooks are the conduits through which students can gain knowledge on a wide range of topics. We encourage the use of virtual textbooks which can be updated annually. We support the Ohio State Board of Education securing input from experts to identify the best range of textbooks available for each subject. We discourage the use of reading assignments and textbooks that distort and omit facts, give one-sided or biased viewpoints, or that fail to give equal treatment to multiple aspects of important topics.

Textbook analyses by multiple national experts have determined that factual world and American history and climate-based science research have been censored from textbook content, and we support the reversal of this practice. Textbooks found to have egregious errors should be eliminated from use. Supplements should be added to textbooks that are determined to be deficient.

Novels and short story selections for English and American literature classes should represent a cross-section of economic and political viewpoints. The inclusion of lurid, grotesque, profane, and sexually focused reading assignments is strongly discouraged.

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: strong leadership within the school system and accountability for success and performance of teachers and students in their buildings. We believe that it is in the best interest of school systems for their superintendents to hold Master's in Business Administration (MBA) degrees in addition to education degrees. Our students deserve to be safe in school, on school property, and in school-provided transportation. No individual with any history of child abuse or endangerment should ever be allowed to work in any school venue. To ensure students' safety, all administrative candidates should undergo a background check prior to hire. In addition, 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.

Technology: Technology, or lack thereof, will make the difference between preparing our children to compete with global standards or allowing them to fall behind. We support the use of a personal tablet for each student, grades 3-12. Administrators, teachers, and students alike should have ready access to 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.

Diversity: On Faith, Respect for Individuals, 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

Republican philosophy advocates that we respect all life, that each person is an individual, blessed with unique talents, magnificent in their own right, regardless of economic background, color, ethnicity, age, religion, or gender, and that each person has unlimited potential to contribute to our country. We believe that every person should be encouraged to do just that. Indeed, as our platform states that we put children first, we cannot be in favor of abortion, which puts children last.

Freedom: Republican principles establish that every citizen has the right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” and that the attainment of these rights comes from individual pursuits, not from assignment by the government. Republicans must illustrate how the benefits offered by freedom come from individual effort and achievement. Freedom is not the government dictating how to live. Freedom means that families and individuals make these choices themselves.

Constitutional Rights: We believe that constitutional rights are bestowed to all U.S. citizens regardless of the origin of their birth, and that these rights are precious and hard-earned through the efforts and sacrifices of our Founding Fathers, our brilliant military, and those who fought so gallantly for our continuing freedom, and that these rights should be vigorously defended. Republicans believe that constitutional rights mean that our society is colorblind. We believe in respect and dignity for every citizen and although we do not seek to assign specific rights to particular lifestyles, we also do not seek to repress those individuals through any inordinate legislation or regulation.

Diversity: We embrace diverse thinking, and look to engage new demographics, and outreach to groups and organizations that share a common vision for Cuyahoga County. Through broad appeal to non-traditional Republican circles, our goal is to provide a positive alternative to the stagnant,

ineffective, and corrupt governance that residents have tolerated under a one-party, Democrat-dominated political landscape.

Business and Civic Leaders: Free markets are the foundation from which everything else is possible. We encourage the efforts of civic and business leaders to support good governance that creates an environment for businesses to thrive, to the benefit of all. Providing a safety-net for those in need is more difficult without a robust economy that generates tax revenue. We support good governance wherein civic leaders work together for the good of citizens, not for political advancements, publically demonstrating ways to solve problems together.

Faith and Religion: The Republican Party, which includes individuals from virtually every faith and organized religion, respects the right of every citizen to worship and follow his or her beliefs, peacefully, underscoring our reverence for religious freedoms as defined by the Constitution. 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.

Veterans: Men and women, who have fought and died to keep our county free, deserve continued recognition and respect from the Republican Party. We encourage the ongoing support of those who are on active duty, those who have been honorably discharged, and the families of those who have given the ultimate sacrifice for the freedoms we share in the United States.

Youth: Our youth are the leaders of tomorrow. They embrace technology and want to take an active role in the work force, our country, and the political process. They are concerned about their prospects for employment due to the sluggish economy. 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.

Outreach: While some groups may not be familiar with our principles, 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. Individual ethnic groups 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.

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 are 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.

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 Republican government 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.

Every governmental entity should conduct a thorough and frequent review of how tax dollars are being spent. 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.

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: 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. Such action should be the absolute last resort of a public entity.

Made-in-America: Local Republican candidates support the buying power of local governments to help the community. Where fiscally reasonable, we support the purchase of products and labor made in Ohio and The United States of America. 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.

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:

1. Have we negotiated public employee contracts that are in line with the wages and benefits of those whom we serve?
2. 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?
3. 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.

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:

1. The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority
2. The Metropolitan Park System (Metroparks)
3. North East Ohio Regional Sewer District
4. Regional Transit Authority (RTA)

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.

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.

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.

Protection for 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 in grave danger. For this reason we 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 election process by serving as poll workers to ensure political balance at each 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: Through the years there have been many reports and allegations of voter impersonation, fictitious voter registration, and unverified votes being counted, even in Ohio. Because the integrity of our election system is the heart of our democracy, we take these allegations seriously. Public trust requires that the potential for voter fraud, at both the registration and voting levels, be eliminated. We believe this will enable our elections to be conducted with the utmost integrity that will ensure that each eligible voter has one vote that will be properly cast and counted.

Voter ID: Voter photo identification is the central element 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 by the Democrat Party that verifying photo identification suppresses minority voting by pointing to federal election data that shows greater numbers of minorities voting in states with strong voter ID laws. We find the assertion by Democrats that some citizens are not capable of acquiring proper identification insulting to those citizens. Given that photo ID is now required for virtually every sort of transaction or service, we demand nothing less than the same verification process for our elections as the Affordable Care Act does for healthcare. We call for anyone without a verifying picture ID to be issued one, free of charge, promptly 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 their registration. Registering and voting in the same day does not allow the Board of Election time to do their job, and must be ruled illegal.
2. In-person, absentee ballot voting at the Board of Election must be subject to the same 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: The massive increases in absentee or early voting places an increased premium upon having valid, correct, up-to-date, and non-duplicative voter rolls. Old or invalid voter registrations are not acceptable and they constitute an open invitation to fraud that has been allowed to continue unnecessarily. Current efforts need to be bolstered in order to eliminate invalid registrations. Massive, invalid voter registration imperils the election system, not only by inviting fraud, but by placing unnecessary burdens on the election system.

Election boards, officials, and the public must spotlight the need for care in the elimination of invalid or duplicative voter registrations. Whether caused by death, voter mobility, or any other reason,

invalid registrations must be removed from the voter rolls. The public should be encouraged to petition for effective methods of accomplishing this result. As an example, notes from poll workers as to deceased individuals or persons relocated need to be acted upon in every case, not ignored or discarded. 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 that its voter rolls are clear of fraudulent voter registrations and are true rolls of actual voters, and to continue to maintain and utilize a reliable state voter registry database. Furthermore, we recommend that all States and U.S. voter registries in those states share information as people move from state to state.

Prosecution of Voter Fraud: Every voter known to have deliberately voted twice in a single election, whether in the same state or otherwise, should be prosecuted. Laws should be reviewed and revised to protect honest voters. Others, who may be tempted to commit voter fraud or other illegal activities, are encouraged by each instance when breaking the law is not prosecuted.

Increasing Voter Mobility and Voter Registration: Republicans should serve as the motivation and encouragement for those citizens who have not yet engaged in the election 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 voters having difficulty getting to the polls on Election Day and assist in the transportation process.

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.