

BENTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY 2016 PLATFORM

March 26, 2016

PREAMBLE

We cherish the inalienable rights and freedoms, endowed by our Creator, as enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Washington State Constitution. These rights are fundamental to the preservation of our Constitutional Republic and our American way of life. Key to maintaining our rights and freedoms is the acceptance of that responsibility by each individual. Parents are expected to carry out their responsibilities for moral, social, and religious teachings. A strong family is the core for building a strong nation. We uphold and respect traditional values affecting family, including the sanctity of human life, from conception to natural death, and marriage between one man and one woman.

The proper role of government is to provide for the people only those critical functions that cannot be performed by individuals or private organizations. The most effective, responsible, and responsive government is the government closest to the people. We believe in state's sovereignty as stated in the Tenth Amendment of the US Constitution. Government officials must be held accountable for their decisions and actions, and elected officials should have limited terms.

As we are a kind and compassionate nation, we understand that unfortunate circumstances can strike any of us at any time. Our heritage as a nation has always been one of self-sufficiency; and therefore, we believe in giving people a hand up, not a hand out. Government programs need to be limited to citizens that are truly in need and do not foster an entitlement society.

We believe in equality of opportunity in our diverse society, in which each individual is empowered to reach his or her full potential independent of race, religion, age, or gender. People should be judged on the merits of their individual performances.

We reaffirm the time-honored core values of the Republican Party, such as liberty with responsibility, economic and educational opportunity, respect for the law and justice, providing for a strong national defense, and government fiscal restraint. Therefore, we offer the following platform:

TAXATION

We support Washington's continued rejection of a state income tax and the Washington State voter approved 2/3rd majority requirement to raise state taxes becoming a Washington State Constitution Amendment. Eliminating the Business and Occupation (B&O) tax, and minimizing regulations, fees, licenses, and taxes will make Washington businesses more competitive. We support reviews of taxation on business to reduce regulations enabling businesses to compete in national and international markets. Success and hard work should be rewarded by replacing the federal income tax system and abolishing the IRS with the passage of the FairTax Act (HR25) which includes a House Joint Resolution to repeal the 16th Amendment.

We support a balanced budget by all levels of government and the elimination of federal debt. No government should place a tax on an estate or an inheritance.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Free market capitalism creates jobs; therefore, it is imperative that the legislature and government agencies decrease unnecessary regulations that cause intrusions and administrative delays that drive up business costs. Recruiting and retaining businesses and industries in the State of Washington requires a business climate that will enable them to successfully compete locally, nationally, and globally. State agencies should operate openly and consider the comments and concerns of citizens.

NATIONAL SECURITY

National security, in all of its forms, is the most important function of government, as established in our Constitution. We support our military service personnel (active duty, reservists and National Guard) wherever they serve and we demand they have the leadership, materiel, and manpower to successfully conduct their various missions. Our troops in combat must be protected in the most thorough and timely manner possible. We support the national effort in the War on Terror. Stability, peace, and democracy in countries that currently support terrorism are essential to defeating terror wherever it occurs. Terrorism is an act of war against the United States, so those non-U.S. citizens captured and charged with terrorism should be tried, and if convicted, sentenced by a military court as an enemy combatant. U.S. citizens should be tried under civilian law supported by the U.S. Constitutional Rights.

We are committed to the support of all military veterans and their survivors and the provision of complete medical, educational, and financial benefits for disabled veterans for the duration of their lives.

IMMIGRATION

We understand we are a nation of immigrants sharing a desire for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Our country will always attract good, honest people from throughout the world, looking for opportunities to build a better life. America is a stronger and better nation because of the hard work and entrepreneurial spirit of immigrants. We have lost control of entry and settlement of our immigrant population. We are a nation of laws that we all must respect, adhere to, and enforce.

Therefore, we support enforcing and reforming the immigration process to ensure it is legal, safe, orderly, and humane. However, we do not support amnesty or sanctuary cities. We do support securing our borders to stop the flow of illegal immigrants; we welcome those who follow the process and come here legally, helping new immigrants assimilate into American culture, with a path to citizenship, including learning the English language. We recommend tailoring the number of work permits for immigrants issued each year based on skills needed. We also support streamlining the existing guest worker programs and support measures to ensure the immigration process is structured to address the needs of national security.

EDUCATION

The U.S. Department of Education should be eliminated and those roles and decisions performed at the state, county, and local levels. We support teaching our founding documents including the, Declaration of Independence, Constitution of the United States, and Washington State Constitution. We support the teaching of citizenship and its obligations.

Education of our young people is an investment in our future. Parents have the obligation and right to choose each child's schooling from a variety of options – public, charter, private, or home school. Parents should prepare their children for higher education or to be sufficiently prepared to succeed in any vocation chosen. Increase support of vocational and apprentice education options at the high school level.

We continue to support the future growth of Washington State University Tri-Cities and Columbia Basin College to meet the needs of the community. We do not support free higher education for everyone or the elimination of student debt.

We support rewarding outstanding teachers with salaries that reflect their performance. The State should set minimum graduation requirements but leave curriculum decisions to local school boards. We support local control through select assessments to provide parents with up-to-date information about their children's meeting of state educational standards in mathematics, science, and reading comprehension. Emphasizing the importance of language skills for effective communication requires making the study and use of English in schools a top priority.

HEALTH CARE

We support a wellness program that includes education and information on nutrition and exercise. We support personal responsibility in taking care of ourselves for the prevention of chronic disease. Medical decisions are best made by the doctor and patient, not controlled by medical insurance or government.

We do not support mandated, socialized or a single payer health insurance system, with the exception of Medicare; therefore, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (“ObamaCare”) should be repealed. Taxpayer funds should not be used for abortions or any organizations that perform abortions. We support the effort to reduce the burdensome costs of health care by the use of private healthcare insurance providers, transparent pricing, self-pay options, tax free health savings accounts, limiting healthcare provider liability, and allowing individuals and business owners to seek health insurance across state lines.

We support legislation that fosters competition and encourages health insurance companies to enter and remain in the Washington State market. We continue to support the growth of the Tri-Cities as a medical care center. Funding of medical research, should be predicated on the basis of sound science.

LAW AND JUSTICE

Laws should reduce and deter crime through appropriate punishment. Persons convicted of a felony shall not vote until their incarceration and other court ordered stipulations have been fulfilled. We do not support usury level interest on fines.

Voting privileges belong only to U.S. citizens. Identification should be required for voting.

We support the right for our citizens to bear arms without infringement by the federal, state or local government. Citizens and business owners have a fundamental right regarding their freedom of conscience. These fundamental liberties are protected in the Bill of Rights and reaffirmed in Article 1 of the Washington State Constitution.

ENERGY

Low cost energy has been a major consideration for businesses to locate in Washington State. Maintaining an adequate, reasonably priced energy supply is essential for economic growth and competitiveness. We are committed to developing new, and upgrading existing, energy facilities and protecting the national power grid from an electromagnetic pulse.

The rapid pace of technological development demands we remain on the leading edge of innovation and science. We must provide a nurturing environment for new technologies. We support development of research and technologies, unfettered by government regulations that are not supported by sound scientific reason.

We endorse the use of sound scientific, economic, and engineering principles in the analyses of, and solutions to, environmental problems. We encourage a wide range of economic incentives and disincentives, provided that they are consistent with a strong preference for market-based solutions, small government, and personal responsibility.

We are committed to U.S. energy independence and expanding the economically feasible energy sources including nuclear, hydroelectric, clean coal, natural gas, oil, wind, and solar. Hydroelectric energy should be recognized as a renewable energy resource.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

We support investment in safe nuclear energy, reprocessing spent fuels, accelerating the construction of nuclear power plants, and permanent disposal of nuclear waste. We support the promotion of cost-effective conservation techniques and technologies along with the continued examination of alternative energy opportunities without government subsidies.

A balance can and must be achieved between economic viability and the need for a healthy and unpolluted environment. The rights of private property owners are paramount and must be protected from government regulations and eminent domain. We support returning most of the federally designated land back to the sovereign state.

We support continued adequate funding for the restoration and expeditious cleanup of the Hanford Site. We support the retention of dams and operation of the Columbia and Snake River Systems. We support the enhancement of existing water supply availability, increased private sector funding and construction of new and renewed water supplies.

AGRICULTURE

General agriculture and viticulture are major industries and employers in Washington. We recognize their importance to the general economy and support their retention and further growth. We support realistic regulations of agricultural practices, and expect all regulation of herbicide, pesticide, and fertilizer applications and field burning to be based on proven need and valid scientific evidence. Our agricultural products should have open and fair access to export markets. We support a balanced view in taking into consideration the economic impact of environmental concerns and water rights on farming, forestry, property rights, and other commercial activities.

We support the Benton County moratorium on the sale of recreational marijuana.

TRANSPORTATION

Washington State must have a safe and efficient transportation system. We support maintenance and updating of our present infrastructure. We support the continued improvement of our waterways, dams, and growth of the Ports and their services, railroads, Tri-Cities Regional Airport, and Ben Franklin Transit.