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2023 Platform

**North Carolina
Republican Party**

2023 PLATFORM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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PREAMBLE

Ronald Reagan once said that, “America is too great for small dreams.” Throughout this great nation, people from all walks of life have dreamed of freedom, opportunity, and the chance to leave this world a better place for the next generation. The North Carolina Republican Party unequivocally defends that dream.

We are the party of individuals and the institutions they create together—families, schools, congregations, neighborhoods—to advance their ideals and realize their dreams. We are the party that encourages equality for all citizens and embraces the inherent value of every single human being God creates—born and unborn. We are the party that defends the religious beliefs and rights of conscience of all Americans and safeguards religious institutions against government control. **We are the party that affirms the guiding principles in our Declaration of Independence, and recognize God, not government, as the Author of these principles. It is the duty of governments to protect these rights.** We reaffirm the Constitution’s fundamental principles: limited government, separation of powers, individual liberty, and the rule of law. As a Party, we denounce bigotry, racism, sexism, antisemitism, ethnic prejudice, and religious intolerance. We recognize God—not government—as the Author of these principles. We are the party that stands strong against tyranny and will fight at home and abroad to protect the lives and fundamental liberties of all people. We are the party of a growing economy that gives everyone—regardless of background—a chance in life, an opportunity to learn, work and realize the prosperity that is made possible by the freedom we hold dear.

The Republican Party is committed to the values and ideals that are the true greatness of America, and we gladly join together to fight for justice, secure the blessings of liberty, and provide true opportunity and hope for generations to come.

ARTICLE I. FAMILY

1. Our nation's strength lies with the family. It is the first school of moral character, education, discipline, responsibility, patriotism, and good citizenship.
2. Traditional marriage and family, based on marriage between one man and one woman, is the foundation for a civil society. Therefore, we oppose the use of public funds or government entities to promote the deconstruction of the traditional family, or gender confusion among minors. We believe that there are only two genders—male and female.
3. We support actions to return marriage laws to the states; therefore, we support the marriage amendment as part of the North Carolina constitution and encourage all efforts to defend it.
4. We recognize and honor the courageous efforts of those who bear the many burdens of parenting alone, even as we affirm our support for traditional marriage.
5. We affirm the authority of parental rights over their children's welfare from conception to emancipation. We support laws that require written, notarized consent for all medical treatments such as but not limited to vaccinations, immunizations, mental health treatments of minor children, drug and alcohol treatment, and counseling and services related to immunizations, contraceptives, pregnancy and abortion. Government, however, should protect children from abuse and neglect, balancing parental rights with the protection of a child's health and safety.
6. We support efforts to make adoptions in North Carolina easier to access. We believe that children, when adopted in a "forever home," have the best chances for success in life. We applaud foster parents for their dedication and urge our state to ensure that the foster care system is efficient and puts the best interests of the child first. Supports should be provided for young adults as they transition out of the foster care system.

ARTICLE II. INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY

1. Liberty is founded upon a belief in the inherent dignity of the human person and recognition that individuals possess God-given inherent rights including, but not limited to: the right to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness. The fundamental role of government is to protect those inherent rights as recognized in our Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution, including its Bill of Rights, and the North Carolina Constitution, and its Declaration of Rights.
2. We support the free exercise of religion by all Americans. We oppose any restriction on the free exercise of religion such as removing prayer from governmental activities or name of God or similar terms from our public documents and institutions. We oppose any attempt of government to establish a state religion, or to foster one religion over another. We oppose any governmental coercive action aimed at limiting the free exercise of religion. We support the right of individuals and corporations to uphold their free exercise rights consistent with the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. We support the right of all institutions, including hospitals and schools, to refuse to provide contraceptive, abortion, or other services and procedures inconsistent with their religious tenets.
3. Government should treat all citizens impartially and equally under the law. Unjust discrimination is detrimental to freedom for all individuals and we oppose it in any form. The concept of guaranteed equity runs counter to our beliefs. Efforts to equalize outcomes result in unequal treatment of individuals and loss of personal freedom.
4. The Second Amendment and the NC Constitution guarantee the right of the individual to keep and bear arms. We support the constitutional ownership, sale, purchase and carry of firearms by law-abiding citizens. Further, we support reducing the number of “gun-free zones.” Gun owners have a right to confidentiality. Personal information acquired by government agencies for gun purchases and permitting should be available to law enforcement for investigative purposes only and not for public record.
5. Private property should not be taken by eminent domain except for a direct public use and upon prompt payment of just compensation.
6. We disagree with all censorship of constitutionally protected free speech, including—but not limited to—all social media platforms.

ARTICLE III. JUSTICE

1. One of the main duties of government is to maintain law and order, while securing for its citizens the freedom to pursue the blessings of liberty and the fruits of their labor.
2. We honor the men and women in uniform who protect citizens of North Carolina at home and abroad. We are grateful for our state and local law enforcement as well as our first responders for their public service to our citizens.
3. We call for mandatory sentencing for all violent crimes, especially crimes committed against those who are charged with protecting us. We support the death penalty for first-degree murder. Suppliers of illegal drugs should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Those who drive or operate a water craft while impaired must face stiff punishment. We support the diversion of first-time, nonviolent offenders to community sentencing, accountability courts, drug courts, veteran treatment courts, and guidance by faith-based institutions with proven track records of rehabilitation. We call for the examination of mandatory sentencing for non-violent crimes to ensure fairness and justice in its application.
4. We believe the state must protect the rights of victims and their families. We believe in a justice system that provides for restorative justice when applicable. Criminal justice reforms that reduce relapses by former offenders and assist them in seeking reentry as contributing members of society are applauded, including support for transitional housing and employment for recently released inmates.
5. Millions of lives are destroyed by predatory criminals that exploit children or other innocents via the internet or in person. We deplore pornography, sex trafficking, human trafficking, and the abduction, abuse, and exploitation of children, both born and unborn. We denounce domestic violence. We applaud the efforts of government to protect innocent lives from predators everywhere.
6. Prisons should focus on security, education, rehabilitation, and labor. Public officials must regain control of their correctional institutions so that every inmate is protected against cruel or degrading treatment. We encourage opportunities for literacy, vocational education, and substance abuse counseling to prepare prisoners for release into the community.
7. We support tort reform, including a cap on awards for pain and suffering, and structured payments of awards for lost income.

ARTICLE IV. SANCTITY OF LIFE

1. We believe in the sanctity of all human life. Unborn children have constitutional rights to life and liberty and, the government must respect and protect all innocent human life from conception to natural death.
2. We are the Party that offers real solutions for women. We have a moral obligation to assist women who face unexpected pregnancies and applaud organizations that empower women with compassionate, life-affirming resources and care.
3. We oppose infanticide and urge the enactment of laws to require medical care for babies who survive abortions.
4. We oppose efforts to mandate the provision of abortion or to fund with taxpayer dollars organizations that provide or promote abortion services. We oppose public school-based health clinics that provide referrals, counseling and related services for abortion and contraception.
5. We support requiring mandatory counseling before an abortion to ensure the pregnant woman knows all of the options and resources available to her and her baby including information about the possibility of reversing the intended effects of chemical abortion drugs.
6. We support the right of medical professionals to refuse to participate in abortions. We support the right of pharmacists to refuse to dispense abortion inducing drugs. We believe that state funded institutions should not provide abortion training.
7. We oppose all forms of euthanasia and assisted suicide, as they are the ultimate form of discrimination against persons with disabilities, including newborns, the elderly and infirm. We believe these individuals should be treated with love and respect, not as a burden. We also oppose basing the denial of life saving treatments on a perceived quality of life. We urge the General Assembly to enact legislation criminalizing assisted suicide.
8. We support developments in biomedical research that enhance and protect human life. We oppose human cloning and the destruction of human embryos, and we support adult stem cell research.
9. We support criminal penalties for harming or killing an unborn child when the mother is killed or injured in a criminal act.
10. We support laws which require written, notarized parental consent for an abortion and/or contraceptives for their minor children.
11. We oppose the sale, purchase, possession, or use of fetal tissue or body parts obtained from induced abortions.

ARTICLE V. STATE GOVERNMENT

We believe that in a free society, power should rest in the hands of the people. We believe in a limited government which serves the people, rather than one that burdens them.

We affirm three distinct and equal branches of government with a system of checks and balances. No branch shall usurp the powers of any other branch, except those provided by the State Constitution. The Governor's emergency powers which impact the rights of citizens should only be used with the consultation and approval of the Council of State.

We believe that government at all levels should not spend money it does not have and avoid passing on debts to future generations.

Government retirement and pension plans should be privately owned and portable.

We oppose unfunded state mandates, including state mandated local property tax exemptions for a particular type of business. We oppose excessive regulation of commerce and industry by either statute or administrative rule, and support sunset provisions that require reauthorization for a business regulatory statute or rule to continue in force.

No State funds should be spent without an explicit appropriation. We oppose “slush funds” as rewards for political support. Raiding of dedicated funds should not be allowed except in an emergency as determined by law. Every bill heard in committee should receive a recorded vote. The budget bill should be made public at least two legislative days before the final vote in each house. To assure transparency, every committee substitute to a pending bill should be scheduled in committee and on the floor in a manner that gives citizens sufficient notice to communicate with their legislators about the bill.

We support the issuance of a driver’s license or state identification card only to those who are lawful residents of the United States.

We support reforming the mental health system. The needs of patients must be the first priority. This includes diagnosis, comprehensive care, follow-up, and stiff penalties for those who abuse or exploit patients.

9. We affirm that the State of North Carolina is prohibited from taking discriminatory action against a person based on a religious or moral conviction.
10. We support efforts to ensure that habitual drug users are not on public assistance. We believe that drug tests are appropriate if there is a reasonable suspicion of illegal drug use.
11. We affirm that law enforcement should honor detainers for illegal aliens held on criminal charges.

ARTICLE VI. HEALTH CARE

1. We support the transformation of the health care industry to one which champions patient choice and increases cost transparency and competition.
2. We encourage businesses to respect the dignity and rights of conscience of their workers to make their own health care decisions.
3. We strongly oppose a single payer or government health system. We support competitive, free market private, and employer-based health insurance models, in which the citizens of NC can purchase and participate in their health care, including the choice of services and providers.
4. We support equal access to high quality, public and private health care regardless of location, race, age, or economic stature.
5. We support reasonable and responsive public health measures and policies to better address issues such as infectious diseases, addictions, and mental health.
6. We value the concept of preventative health care measures and their insurance coverage.
7. We support addressing the serious need for quality, prepared direct care givers for our state's most vulnerable citizens. We support standards for the training and certification of care givers and gerontology professionals along with guidelines for staffing standards.
8. We strongly oppose the socialistic practice of denying diagnostics and treatment to our state's senior citizens.
9. We oppose the use of public funds for transgender surgeries and/or treatments.
10. We support a ban on transgender surgeries or treatments for persons under 18 years of age.
11. We support preserving Medicaid's original design which provides publicly funded medical assistance for the poor, with a focus on dependent children and their mothers, the disabled and the elderly.
12. We support eliminating the state's Certificate of Need programs on the basis that they stifle competition, increase consumer health care costs, prevent health care investment dollars in our state, and negatively impact health outcomes.
13. We urge legislators to enact policies that support compassionate, home-based care for individuals with profound intellectual, physical, and mental disabilities.
14. We support conscience protection measures for healthcare workers in situations such as—but not limited to—abortion and transgender surgeries and treatments.
15. We support reforming the state's mental health system. The needs of patients must be the priority. This includes diagnoses, comprehensive care, follow up, and stiff penalties for those who abuse or exploit patients.

ARTICLE VII. EDUCATION

1. We support an educational system that provides all children access to an education that empowers them to reach their highest, God-given potential, allowing them to contribute to the betterment of our society. A North Carolina high school diploma should fully prepare students to enter college, technical school, or the workforce.

2. We believe education policies and budget decisions are best made by local and state governments, rather than national agencies, to ensure that North Carolina students graduate with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in today's global economy. The people of North Carolina support the highest, most rigorous educational standards that are developed through legislation by the NC General Assembly. All standards and reforms should aim to improve student achievement.
3. We support English as the official language of the United States. Therefore, we support the expedited use of English as a Second Language in the classroom as an assimilation tool.
4. Parents have the right to expect excellent public education. Parents also have the right and responsibility to direct their children's education, while students have the obligation to learn. Allowing choice and competition in education drives all schools towards quality outcomes. We applaud the expansion of vocational curricula and parent choice in North Carolina. We support maintaining and expanding opportunity scholarships and education savings accounts that support the education of children with disabilities and open doors for students in need. All education dollars for grades K-12 dispersed by the state should follow the student to whatever education choice is made by the parents; be it public, charter, or private.
5. We urge the NC General Assembly to enact legislation guaranteeing parental rights over sex and health education in NC. Parents must have access to all curricula and data about their children, including content that is stored electronically. Schools should not ask children to answer offensive or intrusive personal questionnaires without parental consent. We oppose sex education in public schools without parental consent. Public schools should not be permitted to teach children about homosexual behavior and gender identity. No birth control devices or drugs should be distributed in public schools. We support teaching abstinence until marriage as the expected norm for sexual behavior. Biological males should not be allowed to participate in women's sports.
6. We applaud the Republican led North Carolina General Assembly for consistently increasing teacher pay. Teacher compensation should be based on evaluations and market conditions. Teacher evaluations should be based on a variety of factors including, but not limited to, educational training, job longevity, administration-based performance measures, and student achievement.
7. We support teaching civil liberties and patriotism as an important part of becoming a good citizen. We support regular recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, displays of the American and North Carolina State flag, and use of our national motto "In God We Trust". Curricula must include civics so that students will be prepared to vote as informed citizens. We oppose curriculum that seeks to divide students based on race or gender. Instead, curricula should promote the unity of all students around American values such as liberty, justice and opportunity for all, and should encourage students to join together against all forms of oppression and injustice.
8. We believe in religious freedom, **which is inherent to the dignity of the individual**, and support the right of students and faculty to pray in school without censorship, as well as the respect for all religions. Schools should revitalize the Judeo-Christian values of Western civilization and teach American Exceptionalism.

9. We encourage both state and federal governments to help prospective students understand the real costs of lending and allow students to discharge their debts according to market principles. We support economic assistance for students that comes from both private and public sources using market lending principles.
10. We applaud the efforts of the Republican led General Assembly in supporting community colleges, as these colleges truly open doors and remove barriers to accessible, high-quality education for all citizens. Community colleges play a vital role in developing our workforce and they provide much needed basic literacy programs, vocational training, and university transfer options for students from all walks of life.
11. We believe it is a requirement of the state and county Boards of Education to ensure all schools provide a safe learning environment. Schools should provide a level of security which protects students and faculty from harm, consistent with the 2nd Amendment of the United States Constitution.

ARTICLE VIII. THE ECONOMY

1. We support capitalism as the main economic system in the United States and will continue to ensure that this country does not become a socialist or communist nation.
2. We support free market solutions for societal issues, which provide the most efficient use of our resources. We support an individual's ability to choose market-based solutions to retirement, utilities, health care and insurance, worker's rights, or any goods and services. We believe health savings and retirement accounts should be encouraged and free from taxation.
3. Recognizing that wealth creation is the product of human enterprise, the free enterprise system is the most effective and just economic system in the world. It creates opportunity, rewards self-reliance and hard work, and unleashes productivity that other societies can only imagine. It is an engine of charity, making America the most philanthropic nation on earth. Government should encourage honest, productive work through elimination of both gratuitous regulations and excessive taxation.
4. Economic freedom is essential to human liberty and dignity. It preserves the inherent right to liberty and ownership of private property. To protect this inherent right, government must provide an environment for individual initiative and enterprise. We support encouraging economic growth through reduced regulation and taxation, and we oppose corporate favoritism.
5. Government should tax only to raise money for its constitutional functions. We support a thorough review of expenditures each year, and we support a taxpayer's bill of rights. We support a federal and state balanced budget. We support the continuation of reforming the tax code to encourage economic growth that moves toward a system that taxes the broadest possible base of economic activity at the lowest possible rates.
6. We believe that capital gains, which are necessary for employment growth, should not be taxed as ordinary income. We believe dividend distributions should not be taxed, as that constitutes a double taxation on income.
7. Our nation's economic security depends on reliable and affordable energy. We support developing energy sources within the parameters of market forces. We support the elimination of mandated renewable energy quotas and subsidies that artificially raise energy costs or taxes. We support federal revenue sharing with those states directly affected by offshore exploration and development in federal waters.
8. We support agriculture, agribusiness, and commercial fishing as driving forces in North Carolina's economy. We support legislation to uphold these economic forces from burdensome and frivolous lawsuits and regulations.
9. We acknowledge that many North Carolina communities are underserved as to their health care needs. We support easing regulations and major reforms to Certificate of Need laws, as they can stifle competition, increase cost, and negatively impact health outcomes.

ARTICLE IX. THE ENVIRONMENT

1. As we are stewards of our God-given natural heritage, we have a duty to protect the earth's resources.
2. We support reasonable measures to keep our air, water, and soil free of substances that harm the health of our people as well as that of domestic animals and wildlife. We support the maintenance of adequate wildlife habitat.
3. We support a robust system of local, state and national parks to give our citizens access to nature.
4. We recognize that the theories of global warming and climate change are subject to scientific debate. We urge that both sides of this debate listen and engage with respect, and that drastic action that would raise energy costs and impair our citizens' quality of life not be undertaken without careful consideration and a thorough evaluation of scientific data.

ARTICLE X. ELECTIONS

1. The Elections Clause of the US Constitution is the primary source of constitutional authority to regulate elections and appoints states as the primary regulatory authority for the election process. Election laws and policies should ensure honesty and accuracy in all elections.
2. A free society demands an honest and accurate election process. Our laws and policies at every level of government should ensure that elections are conducted with absolute fairness and integrity, regardless of party registration, race, or socio-economic resources. Every vote should count and not be canceled out by illegal votes.
3. We support legislation requiring election judges at all election sites, including early voting sites. Poll observers should be allowed at every polling place and placed in a position that enables thorough observation. The rights of voters should be equally protected regardless of voting method.
4. We support enforced statewide procedures for updating voter rolls to ensure accuracy.
5. Current laws regarding absentee voting should be analyzed and tightened to ensure ballot security. The rights of all voters should be equally protected regardless of voting method.
6. We encourage election officials to report—and state and federal prosecutors to promptly investigate and prosecute—voter and election fraud.

7. We support the Electoral College as the Constitutional mode of electing our President and oppose all efforts to abolish it, as a national popular vote would be a grave threat to our federal system.
8. We support state efforts to ensure ballot access for the elderly, the disabled, military personnel, and all legitimate voters. We support laws with strict requirements regarding the postmark and return of absentee ballots by election date except as otherwise required by federal law.
9. We reaffirm our support of Voter ID and oppose the reinstatement of straight-ticket voting. Proof of citizenship should be required when registering to vote.
10. Voters should have timely information on candidates' campaign finances. We oppose funding election campaigns with public or foreign funds.
11. Neither the State Board of Elections nor the county boards of elections have the authority to accept private monetary donations for the purpose of administering elections or employing individuals on a temporary basis.

ARTICLE XI. FEDERAL POLICY

1. The US Constitution is the supreme law of this land. As such, it outlines the foundational principles of this great nation. These principles include a legislature which creates laws, an executive who enforces laws, and a judiciary which interprets laws. To this end, we support the separation of powers and all efforts to maintain independent branches of government, based on a strict interpretation of the constitution's original intent.
2. We call on Congress, the President and the courts to abide by Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution and the Ninth and Tenth Amendments, which were added to order to protect the rights of the States and the people. We oppose encroachment upon all powers that the Constitution has reserved to the States or to the people. On the basis of the Constitution and the intent of the Founding Fathers, we oppose statehood for the District of Columbia.
3. Membership in treaties and organizations should never dilute our sovereign right to govern or interfere in our electoral process. We oppose attempts by foreign governments and international organizations to infringe on our sovereignty.
4. A republican form of government is the foundation of freedom. We support the Electoral College as the constitutional mode of electing our President. We oppose tyranny in all of its forms.
5. Opposition to slavery is the foundation for the Republican Party. We oppose slavery, including human trafficking, in any form both foreign and domestic.

6. National security is one of the first and most important roles of government. We support a foreign policy of peace through strength that is accomplished with a strong military with the full gratitude and resources of the United States. Strength only exists when our borders are secure and our enemies deterred.
7. We oppose granting permanent resident status for those who, by violating the immigration law, disadvantage those who have obeyed it. Granting amnesty only rewards and encourages more law breaking. Employers should only hire those legally allowed to work in the United States.
8. We support policies which uphold the nation of Israel as a sovereign nation and Jerusalem as its capital.
9. We support free market solutions for societal issues, which provide the most efficient use of our resources. We support an individual's ability to choose market-based solutions to retirement, health care and insurance, worker's rights or any goods.
10. We support the principle of a "sound money" policy to sustain a stable US currency. The Comptroller General of the General Office of Accounting must perform an annual accounting of the Federal Reserve to ensure its transparency and accountability.
11. We support policies protecting all innocent human life, and therefore we oppose government efforts promoting abortion and infanticide. We support actions that prohibit the distribution of federal funds to any organization that promotes or provides abortions.
12. We are free because of those who have answered the call to serve. Our nation's veterans have been our nation's strength and remain a national resource. America has a sacred trust with our veterans, and we are committed to ensuring their and their families' care and dignity.

CONCLUSION

Thomas Jefferson said that "the price of freedom is eternal vigilance". We, the North Carolina Republican Party, are committed to remaining vigilant as we stand guard to protect the freedoms, we hold dear. Ronald Reagan stated that a strong Republican Party is like a stool that stands on three legs: strong defense, free enterprise, and strong moral values. Together, we will turn back the tide of socialism and preserve our nation as beacon of liberty, hope, and opportunity for all.

This document is respectfully submitted by the 2023 NCGOP Platform Committee