

Republican Party of Minnesota -- 2012 Standing Platform

Statement of Principles

Promote Economic Prosperity

We support lowering the tax burden, exercising spending restraint, and creating and maintaining a fair, honest and competitive business environment to promote economic prosperity and once again make Minnesota the economic engine of the Upper Midwest.

Restore and Defend Civil Rights

We support defending the right to life, protecting religious, political and economic liberties, and respecting personal privacy and property to preserve civil rights and ensure that government treats all of its citizens equally under the law.

Protect our Health Care

We recognize that the United States has the most advanced health care system in the world, leading in innovation and new technology development. Through genuine market competition, we can continue this progress, making health care more affordable and available to more Americans, and moving as many people on the road to self-sufficiency.

Educate our Children

We support the belief that parents are responsible for their children's education and that parents, teachers and local school boards can make the best decisions about our children's education.

Strengthen our Families and Communities

We recognize the blessings that God has bestowed on this great Nation. We also recognize the sanctity of human life and the central role of the traditional family in our society. We work to defend those values in order to strengthen our families and communities.

Protect Public Safety

We believe that the most fundamental function of government is to keep citizens and our property secure.

Strengthen the Rule of Law

We support limiting the power of attorneys and frivolous lawsuits, increasing the responsibility of the jury, protecting judicial elections and holding judges accountable to strengthen the rule of law and prevent abuse of our legal system.

Enjoy and Protect our Natural Resources

We believe that proper stewardship of our natural resources and agricultural lands is best achieved through sound science and adherence to constitutionally guaranteed property rights.

Make Government Smaller and Better

We support keeping government functions in state, local or private hands, electing honest and responsive legislative bodies and advocating for fair election processes to make government smaller and better.

Defend America at Home and Abroad

We believe that we can maintain peace by having a strong national defense, securing our borders and by encouraging all people to seek freedom, democracy and free enterprise.

Section 1 – Promote Economic Prosperity

We support lowering the tax burden, exercising spending restraint, and creating and maintaining a fair, honest and competitive business environment to promote economic prosperity and once again make Minnesota the economic engine of the Upper Midwest.

Lower Tax Burden on Families and Businesses

Republicans support comprehensive tax reform and reprioritization of government spending. We support abolishing the current tax code and replacing it with a simpler, fairer tax system that favors a national sales tax or flat tax. Republicans also support a simplification of the state property tax system.

Republicans support limiting the ability of Congress and the Legislature to use tax increases as the first solution to every problem by requiring a supermajority vote in Congress or the Minnesota Legislature to enact such increases. We support a state constitutional amendment limiting growth in state spending to inflation plus population growth. Any surpluses should be returned to the taxpayers in proportion to the taxes paid. We support repeal of the “Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment.”

Republicans seek to reduce the current burden of taxation by cutting or eliminating capital gains taxes, taxes on marriage, sickness, death, inheritance, Social Security and veterans’ benefits and pensions. This would also include the onerous Alternative Minimum Tax. Republicans also support keeping internet sales and access free of taxation. Purchases by local government should be exempt from Minnesota state sales tax.

We support phasing out of Social Security while allowing Americans the flexibility of investing their Social Security payments while continuing to fulfill our obligation to older Americans (this would include prohibiting Congress from using Social Security funds for any other purpose). Republicans advocate maintaining a sound and stable, backed currency.

Exercise Spending Restraint

At the federal level, we support adopting a United States Constitutional amendment requiring a balanced budget and reduction of the national debt. At the state level, we support limiting proposed spending for a new biennium to no more than the actual receipts from the previous biennium’s revenue collections. Zero-based budgeting should replace baseline budgeting for state and federal budgets.

We should dedicate all taxes, fees, and licenses from their revenue streams to their appropriate program funding. Tax revenue from gas and motor vehicle taxes should not fund commuter rail and light rail construction and operation. Programs, such as public broadcasting, sports stadiums and the arts, should be funded by its users and voluntary donors, and not subsidized by the use of taxpayer money. Similarly, specific projects should not be funded through the use of ‘earmarks’ in appropriations and other bills. Public employee retirement fund deficits should not be funded by taxes, fees, or by borrowing from the public. No mandate can be imposed by any branch of government on any other unless it includes the funds necessary to support that mandate. We should repeal state and federal legislation that imposes mandated wage rates on government and school district projects.

Before any new government program is initiated, the program’s purpose, cost and estimated completion date must be established. There must also be ways of measuring program performance and procedures to dismantle in the case that the program does not meet expectations. We support the abolition of the Federal Reserve and requiring annual audits of the Federal Reserve in strict compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP).

Create and Maintain a Fair, Honest and Competitive Business Environment

We support a fair, honest and competitive business environment, and, therefore, oppose corporate welfare. Non-union contractors to government and school district projects should be granted equal access to projects without mandating that they sign project labor agreements. Government-mandated employee benefits should be abolished, allowing small businesses to assemble and pool assets for the purpose of funding employee health care insurance programs. We reject the Keynesian model of economics and believe it has no place in federal policy.

Section 2 – Restore and Defend Civil Rights

We support defending the right to life, protecting religious, political and economic liberties, and respecting personal privacy and property to preserve civil rights and ensure that government treats all of its citizens equally under the law.

Defend the Right to Life

Republicans believe that every innocent human being, born and unborn, has an inalienable right to life from conception to natural death. Any policy or law that attacks that belief is wrong and should be opposed. The U.S. and Minnesota Constitutions should be amended to restore legal protection to the lives of innocent human beings from conception to natural death. To that end, members of the Minnesota House and Senate should introduce and support legislation defining conception as: “when the DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid) of Mankind is joined.” We should also urge them to introduce and support ‘right to life’ legislation that establishes ‘personhood’ at the time of conception. We oppose partial birth abortions and we should eliminate forced taxpayer funding of abortion or abortion providers and abortions performed on minors without parental consent. We advocate providing women considering abortions with information on alternatives as well as information on the repercussions of choosing abortion. We advocate prohibiting U.S. promotion or funding of abortion in any nation.

Action should be taken leading to legislative guarantees and protection of the father’s inalienable right to decide against any unilateral or preemptive decision to terminate his child’s developing life.

Protect Religious, Political & Economic Liberties

We support protecting the right to religious expression for all peoples, including the public display of the Ten Commandments and the right to prayer at government events in the name of a specific deity. Everyone should have the right to form organizations based on their set of religious beliefs or principles including places of worship, charities, schools and hospitals. Religious organizations should not be compelled to act in conflict with their beliefs or teachings or fear losing their tax-exempt status because of their support for specific principles or political candidates. Organizations should have the right to set their own standards for membership and the right to maintain in their policies those aspects that support their fundamental and legal beliefs. Furthermore, we feel these rights extend to people of all nations and condemn religious, political, and ethnic persecution, including oppression, slave labor, torture and murder in any country.

We encourage respect for our American heritage and feel we should be defined as Americans, not divided into subcategories. We reject any form of preference or quota for employment, student admissions and faculty hiring, or set-asides in the awarding of government contracts. We call for the protection of Civil Rights statutes to be written to apply equally to all citizens of the United States, not to specific groups.

We support prohibiting the collection and storage of data on any person by any government agency for the purpose of indentifying and discriminating among such groups.

Respect the Right to Personal Privacy and Property

As Republicans, we respect personal privacy and personal property. Therefore, the federal government should not establish a national identification system for U.S. citizens. We support legislation prohibiting the collection or release of any personal, financial or other private information by anyone without the express consent of the person involved. Specifically, we seek to prohibit the use of Social Security numbers for any purpose other than Social Security identification.

We disapprove of federal, state and local governments taking private property for commercial or recreational use or for the sole purpose of increasing tax revenues rather than for the general public good or taking private

property from one owner in order to favor another private entity by way of eminent domain. We believe interference by the federal government in private contracts should be prohibited.

We reaffirm the constitutional right of an individual citizen to keep and bear arms. A responsible, competent citizen has the right to self defense through registration-free gun ownership and a 'must issue' carry permit system. We support removing restrictions on and liability for legitimate self defense. Therefore, a state-declared emergency may not include gun confiscation.

All workers in Minnesota have the right to work without being forced to join a union and to organize through secret ballot to join a union or other association. Employees who do join a union have the right to not have dues used for political purposes without their consent, including dues supporting political candidates or for any political purpose.

We support legislation prohibiting the USDA, the Minnesota Board of Animal Health, and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture from requiring federal and state premise and individual identification on all livestock animals used for small farm market, private, or individual use.

We believe in retaining a free and open internet and reject anti-piracy laws to the extent that they violate the online privacy of our citizens.

Section 3 – Protect our Health Care

We recognize that the United States has the most advanced health care system in the world, leading in innovation and new technology development. Through genuine market competition, we can continue this progress, making health care more affordable and available to more Americans, and moving as many people on the road to self-sufficiency.

Healthcare Responsibility

As Republicans, we support programs that introduce genuine market competition to our health care system, minimize or eliminate government interference in health care, provide freedom to purchase coverage from any U.S. insurance provider, and encourage patients to take greater responsibility for their own care and wellness. We seek the repeal of all state and federal programs that ration health care, including the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, health care exchanges, and the Independent Payment Advisory Board. We urge the Minnesota legislature to pass competitive, private, market-driven health insurance laws. Medicare reimbursement should not be determined by the location of the provider.

We support a freedom of choice in health care amendment to the Minnesota Constitution, including the freedom not to purchase health insurance and the freedom to pay directly for medical care. We believe parents must provide informed opt-in consent before newborn genetic testing and before the Minnesota Department of Health can retain their children's DNA. Furthermore, the Minnesota Department of Health should be required to destroy all DNA and genetic information collected without express parental consent. We support a conscience clause for health care workers, exempting them from performing procedures or dispensing medications that are contrary to their conscience.

We believe health savings accounts should be expanded so individuals can purchase and control their own health care and that all health care expenses should be fully tax deductible. Individuals should be able to purchase health care insurance from anywhere in the United States that offers benefits of their choosing and not based on insurance mandates set by the federal or state governments. Small businesses and other private organizations should be allowed to band together to purchase health insurance at group rates.

We recognize the need for medical malpractice reform as part of any effort to reduce health care costs.

Minnesota should prohibit any medical procedure or therapy that would deliberately cause or hasten death including physician-assisted suicide and deprivation of food and water. Minnesota lawmakers should also work to ban research, experimentation or sale of fetal tissue or body parts obtained through abortion, including use of embryos or embryonic stem cells for reproductive or so-called 'therapeutic' cloning. Procedures such as webcam abortions in which the RU-486 drug is administered via closed circuit connection also should be banned.

Data Transparency and Privacy

We support electronic health records, but believe that patient privacy laws should be strengthened to require informed, written and voluntary consent for all disclosures of patient data. Parents (or legal guardians) should maintain access to all of their minor child's health records, including sexual health records, without the minor child's consent. Additionally, all patient records should remain the sole property of the patient, or the patient's parent or legal guardian.

We advocate for greater transparency on the performance and costs of physicians, clinics and hospitals.

Innovation

We support streamlining the approval process for new drugs and medical devices.

We advocate granting States greater flexibility to enact reforms rather than imposing a “one size fits all” approach. We support creation of an interstate compact, placing all federal and state health care programs, including Medicare and Medicaid, under the member states’ control while enabling states to continue to receive federal funding.

Section 4 – Educate our Children

We support the belief that parents are responsible for their children's education and that parents, teachers and local school boards can make the best decisions about our children's education.

Protect Parental Choice

As Republicans, we seek to improve the quality of education by maximizing parental choice. This includes expanding support for charter schools, school choice programs, home school options, and a more competitive and accountable public school system. We also support preserving and expanding tax credits, deductions, and school voucher programs. We believe that parents should have the right to observe their child in the classroom.

We are firmly against the establishment of universal pre-school programs in Minnesota. We believe that there should be no universal health screening of students in K-12 schools, pre-schools and in early infancy. We also oppose social and emotional outcomes being incorporated into the school curricula.

Prepare our Students at all Levels

Minnesota should have a well-rounded knowledge-based curriculum to prepare our students to be good citizens, with an emphasis on hard work, honesty, home and family, as well as a respect for America's religious and civic heritage. This would be ensured by a statewide testing system on basic academic skills, as well as rigorous standards for core curricula determined by the local school district. However, schools should be required to notify parents in advance of administering non-academic tests and the notification must include an accurate description of the content of the test.

We support programs that help with the mastery of English as a second language.

Minnesota should devote the same amount of effort to educating gifted and talented students as it currently devotes to special education.

Emphasize Traditional American Values

We believe that every classroom should be required to display the United States flag and recite the Pledge of Allegiance daily. In keeping with our heritage, all history classes should include information about the important role religion played in our Nation's founding, including study of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and other original sources.

We should continue to encourage the voluntary expression of religious beliefs and traditions of students. Specifically, educators who discuss creation science should be protected from disciplinary action and science standards should recognize that there is controversy pertaining to the theory of evolution.

We believe that K-12 public school teachers should not initiate discussion, teach lessons, or provide resources to students on the topic of family structure, human sexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or transgenderism. Instead, we should require that K-12 public school teachers teach about sexual abstinence, that premarital sex and extramarital sex is wrong, and that the use of contraceptives is not safe sex. We oppose the dispensing of or referral for birth control drugs and devices in schools. Furthermore, we oppose dispensing any prescription drugs in schools without written consent of the parents.

Public universities should be required to protect academic and intellectual freedom of both professors and students.

Ensure Effective School Administration

All public schools, including colleges and universities should also be held accountable for all funds received and spent in accordance with the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). Effective administrations should spend at least 70% of the school district's budget in the classroom. We believe that education funding formulas should be simplified to make them more understandable, and funding categories eliminated, allowing local school boards to allocate state aid effectively. Once the State allocates funds to school districts, they may neither delay nor adjust payment of those funds. Public universities should be prohibited from imposing fees that support student clubs and organizations without student consent.

We support reforming tenure, limiting public school teachers' right to strike and restoring balance to the Public Employment Labor Relations Act. No penalty should be imposed on school districts that do not reach a contract agreement with teachers' unions. Teachers should be paid based on performance and there should be periodic competency testing for public school teachers in both the academic curriculum and the subjects they teach.

We believe that Minnesota's educational system would be more effective and efficient if we eliminated federal and reduced state bureaucracies' control. However, there should be no state and federal support of the International Baccalaureate (IB) program and the adoption of IB by local school districts. Funding or discounts based on the number of children who receive free or reduced meals should be eliminated. Minnesota should retain its current system of Independent School Districts rather than aligning school district boundaries with county boundaries. Republicans believe that we should abolish the U.S. Department of Education, as well as its unfunded mandates, and oppose any new state or federal law that seeks to centralize educational authority at the expense of local school boards. We oppose reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act and, until then, Minnesota should opt out.

Section 5 – Strengthen our Families and Communities

We recognize the blessings that God has bestowed on this great Nation. We also recognize the sanctity of human life and the central role of the traditional family in our society. We work to defend those values in order to strengthen our families and communities.

Protect our Families and Children

As Republicans, we believe in the sanctity of human life and marriage, and the central role of the traditional family in our society. In order to protect our families and communities, we need to change laws regarding marriage, divorce, adoption, child support, welfare, taxes and others. Grandparents and other relatives should be the first option when children cannot live with their parents. Racial preference is wrong; in cases of adoption, Minnesota should make it easier and less costly for a traditional married couple to adopt a child of any race. In child custody cases, privileges of the father should be restored to comply with the 14th Amendment. We support restricting the production, sale and promotion of vulgar and obscene material to children, and support the use of pornography-blocking software in publicly-financed institutions.

Defend the Definition of Marriage

We believe that marriage is between one man and one woman, and that the U.S. Constitution and the Minnesota Constitution should be amended to this effect. We oppose civil unions or their legal equivalents between same-sex couples and, therefore, domestic partner benefits should not be publicly funded.

Reform and Eliminate the Welfare System

People in need should be assisted primarily through private charity, including faith-based programs instead of government welfare programs. These programs should be encouraged through tax credits at the federal and state levels with the objective of replacing as much government-sponsored welfare with private incentives as possible. We believe in real welfare reform, which would require all able-bodied recipients to work in order to receive benefits, stop the practice of offering cash incentives for unmarried recipients to bear children, and require proof of legal citizenship and in-state residency and mandatory drug tests as a condition of receiving aid.

Limit the Influence of Gambling in our State

We seek to eliminate all state-sponsored gambling and oppose any expansion of gambling in Minnesota. In regards to casinos already in place, current gambling laws should be changed so that Minnesota is allowed to tax profits and revenue of tribal casino gambling in the state.

Section 6 – Protect Public Safety

We believe that the most fundamental function of government is to keep citizens and our property secure.

Secure and Punish Criminals

We support mandatory minimum prison sentences and substantially higher sentences for repeat offenders, ending probation for violent criminals, and establishing life sentences without the possibility of parole for the State's most dangerous sex offenders. We support the passage of Jessica's Law in Minnesota to ensure that child sex offenders be given a minimum sentence of 25 years without parole. We also seek to re-institute capital punishment for the most serious crimes.

Prisons that we build should not be designed for recreation because they are meant for the protection of the public and the punishment of criminals.

We support crime legislation that applies to all offenders of a specific crime and oppose any legislation that would designate 'hate crimes' against specific 'protected class' groups. Police should be instructed to check the immigration status of non-citizens and uphold existing laws. We support prohibiting the designation or funding of sanctuary cities for illegal aliens.

We support the repeal of any law which allows American citizens to be arrested and indefinitely detained without trial.

We support restoring States rights and individual freedom by eliminating federal drug laws. We reaffirm a state's right to regulate controlled substances, including illegal drugs.

Prevent Crime and Stop Recurring Criminal Behavior

Criminals should be required to provide complete restitution to victims and the state for crimes committed including supporting victim's rights and requiring offenders to be held personally responsible, including juveniles. As a condition of parole, an inmate must have participated in Adult Basic Education.

Rather than creating new and unnecessary laws restricting the use, transfer and ownership of firearms, we should enforce constitutional firearm laws. We agree with the "Castle Doctrine" which extends the right to self defense anywhere a person has a legal right to be.

Section 7 – Strengthen the Rule of Law

We support limiting the power of attorneys and frivolous lawsuits, increasing the responsibility of the jury, protecting judicial elections and holding judges accountable to strengthen the rule of law and prevent abuse of our legal system.

Limit Frivolous Lawsuits

Republicans believe that the legal system has been subject to abuse and in order to prevent this from occurring in the future, we seek to limit attorneys' fees in class action lawsuits and lawsuits where the plaintiffs receive insignificant damages. Abuse includes frivolous lawsuits, excessive numbers of lawsuits and lawsuits that are intended primarily to advance a political agenda. There should be federal legislation enacted to limit any party's liability in a civil case to its fair share of the damages. A prisoner should have limited ability to file frivolous lawsuits.

Increase the Responsibility of the Jury

Juries should be given the power to determine that a suit was without merit, and in some cases, require the plaintiff and his attorney to pay the defendant's attorneys' fees and court costs.

Protect Judicial Elections and to Hold Judges Accountable

We support contested, not "retention", election of judges as provided by the Minnesota Constitution and oppose any proposals to eliminate or limit these elections.

Judges should exercise their authority to review and, when necessary, limit excessive awards of damages and attorneys' fees. A code of judicial ethics, enforced by a legislative Board on Judicial Standards, should be established by statute as a check on judicial power.

We believe that in elections, the word "incumbent" should be removed after judicial candidates' names on the ballots and that judicial vacancies should be appointed only until the next general election. Also, those voting in judicial elections must be required to be residents in the county in which the judge will preside and that the voters should have the ability to remove any judge from office, regardless of whether someone chooses to run against them. The voters must have access to essential information about those judges on the ballot, through a transparent public evaluation process. The judiciary must openly and transparently have all administrative documents available to the public.

We seek to deny all state funds to ACORN, its derivatives and its affiliates.

As Republicans we support the nullification of unconstitutional federal law in accordance with state sovereignty and we support restoring states rights under the 10th amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The rule of Law in Minnesota is solely based on the United States and Minnesota Constitutions, not on international or Sharia law. Our legislators are our lawmakers. Judges are not to make or write law. When they act to do so, they need to be corrected by the Legislative Branch as provided by the Minnesota constitution. We support the continued election of County Sheriffs.

Section 8 – Enjoy and Protect our Natural Resources

We believe that proper stewardship of our natural resources and agricultural lands is best achieved through sound science and adherence to constitutionally guaranteed property rights.

Protect and Develop our Natural Resources

The Republican Party of Minnesota believes we are stewards of our natural resources and agricultural lands and the Constitution is our guide. We support maintaining clean air, water and land by addressing threats proven by peer-reviewed scientific research using sensible and economically reasonable solutions. We oppose policies, legislation and mandates that are based on the theory that humans are responsible for global climate change including the Theory of Man-Made Global Warming, as well as any energy policies that raise the cost of energy to consumers and do nothing to protect the environment. Those that cause the pollution should bear the cost of environmental clean-up.

We should follow commonsense practices in forest, wetlands and wildlife management, and promote multiple uses of natural resources in most cases. Republicans encourage free enterprise in the agricultural economy, and support technological advances in the creation, processing and use of agricultural products and natural resources.

The Republican Party of Minnesota opposes efforts to put all land or water under the control of the federal government. We should reduce or restrict government ownership of our land to no more than 40%. We believe that there should not be a net gain of land by the Minnesota DNR or nonprofit land trusts and that all conservation easements should have a sunset. The DNR and Soil and Water Conservation Districts should be prohibited from purchasing land using bonding.

We should eliminate government subsidies for production or refinement of all energy sources and oppose government mandates for any energy source. We oppose any and all legislation to regulate greenhouse gases such as cap and trade proposals. Therefore, we seek the repeal of Minnesota's Next Generation Energy Act of 2007. However, we support the adoption of an energy policy to encourage research and develop alternative forms of energy by private initiatives. We continue to promote the building of clean coal-fired and nuclear power plants. As Republicans, we believe that the federal government should be required to meet its obligation to store or recycle spent nuclear waste.

Protect the Rights of Townships and our Citizens

We believe that cities should not be allowed to annex townships without the approval of the affected residents. Also, townships and counties should decide on where to place feedlots and logging roads. The Republican Party of Minnesota supports compensating homeowners for property devaluation when it is a result of governmental action, and giving the right to all property owners to govern the legal consumption of tobacco within their properties.

Section 9 – Make Government Smaller and Better

We support keeping government functions in state, local or private hands, electing honest and responsive legislative bodies and advocating for fair election processes to make government smaller and better.

Keep Government Functions in State and Local Hands

We believe government functions should return to the hands of state and local governments where they will be carried out more efficiently and with greater accountability than at the federal level. We support reinstating the constitutional separation of powers and oppose legislation by executive order, judicial rulings, or unelected regulatory agencies. We reject Congress' practice of coercing state and local governments by withholding funds if states do not give the federal government jurisdiction. We advocate a constitutional amendment giving the President of the United States a line-item veto. We should eliminate the Metropolitan Council. We support stopping all stimulus spending, ending the TARP program and applying all unspent funds to reducing the national debt.

Elect Honest and Responsive Legislative Bodies

Republicans support reinstating a citizen legislature in Minnesota by holding legislative sessions in alternate years unless the governor calls a special session. State and federal lawmakers should be required to live by the same laws they pass. Legislators should be denied additional pay and per diem payments during special sessions. Any proposed legislation must include either a specific reference to the U.S. or Minnesota constitutional relevance/authority, or a notation/explanation as to why the legislation is not a constitutional violation. We should adopt an initiative and referendum law that would allow the citizens of Minnesota to vote on important issues. We support the election and appointment of strict constructionist judges who adhere to the principles expressed in the U.S. and Minnesota Constitutions.

We hold our elected officials accountable by supporting codes of conduct for all Minnesota elected officials that require resignation and loss of pension and benefits upon conviction of a felony or any crime involving dishonesty or moral turpitude. We advocate submitting to the people federal and state constitutional amendments for an effective recall procedure for all elected officials. We support term limits for all elected officials. All elected officials' compensation should be limited to salary during service, with no retirement benefit beyond Social Security.

We support requiring compensation packages (including salaries, pensions and medical benefits) for public workers to be no better than those enjoyed by private sector workers.

Advocate for Fair Election Processes

We support the current Electoral College system and oppose electing our president based on the national popular vote. We support fair redistricting without gerrymandering and with Senate districts that do not cross Congressional district boundaries. We must improve polling place procedures, specifically voter registration practices, requiring voters to be registered at least 30 days prior to an election and requiring that voters present a valid proof of U.S. citizenship and state residency and a photo ID at the time of registration and when voting. We oppose the implementation of any voting schemes that violate the principle of "one man, one vote" including "Instant Runoff Voting."

In order to uphold all Americans' rights to free speech, we support campaign finance law reform allowing American citizens to donate their time or money to political campaigns without limitation. We support requiring immediate and full disclosure of all sources of campaign funding and repealing the Bi-Partisan Campaign Reform Act (McCain-Feingold). We oppose reinstatement of the so-called "Fairness Doctrine." We oppose public financing of campaigns and political parties. All school district elections, including, but not

limited to, board elections and referenda, should be required to be held in November on regular election days. We oppose the deduction of union dues from government employees' paychecks.

Section 10 – Defend America at Home and Abroad

We believe that we can maintain peace by having a strong national defense, securing our borders and by encouraging all people to seek freedom, democracy and free enterprise.

Protect our Borders

We should continue to strengthen our borders against terrorism and illegal immigrants via increased border patrol funding and completion of the border fence. We are against amnesty for illegal aliens, including any program that will allow illegal aliens to remain in the United States, and we should continue with deportation. Also, children born to illegal aliens inside the United States should not automatically obtain citizenship. Ultimately, we should reduce the number of legal immigrants to help with assimilation and we should also allow for more extensive background checks before issuing visas. We strongly support making English the official language in Minnesota and the United States of America and that all state forms should be in English only. We must effectively limit the amount of access that illegal immigrants have to our society including employment, public benefits, scholarships, subsidies of any kind, driver's licenses, permits, identification cards or taxpayer identification numbers. We urge elimination of the Sanctuary City designation in Minnesota. However, we oppose participation in the "The Real ID Act."

Support our Troops and Allies

We should continue to build America's military so that they are well prepared, well armed and ready to protect our national security. We will deploy American troops overseas only to further American interests or to defend a faithful ally and only if they are under the command of American officers. Not only should the United States abstain from surrendering its national sovereignty to the United Nations or any other international organization, but we believe the United States should end its participation in the United Nations, Agenda 21, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund altogether.

We reaffirm our support for our troops, including active duty members, Reserves, National Guard, veterans and their mission. We believe that active duty members should be exempt from paying state income tax on all military income and that Minnesota law should recognize retired military personnel as veterans. We should maintain the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy and the 1993 law banning open homosexuals from serving in the military.

We will continue to support efforts to keep our nation safe and fight the Global War on Terror and oppose calls to "cut and run" until the job is finished. We believe it is important to continue assisting the people of Iraq and Afghanistan as they develop democratic institutions in their countries. As Republicans, we believe that we should deny foreign aid to any country that protects and supports terrorists. We support the continued development and deployment of defense systems and Strategic Missile Defense, to protect Americans from terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Enemy combatants and all non-U.S. citizen terrorists should be tried in military tribunals and should not be granted the constitutional rights of U.S. citizens. We oppose the implementation of foreign law on American soil.

Encourage International Trade

We reaffirm our commitment to free market economics including free and fair international trade and we seek to maintain commercial, cultural and diplomatic ties with many nations while also promoting American industry and commerce. We should also maintain trade policies that encourage other nations to seek democracy, capitalism and individual freedoms for their citizens. We should continue our efforts to become less dependent on foreign oil, including the development, promotion and conservation of all available fuel sources such as nuclear power and opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and other domestic sources.

Support International Relations

The Republican Party of Minnesota believes that foreign aid should in most cases be in the form of American goods, commodities and services.

As Republicans, we oppose the Law of the Seas Treaty (L.O.S.T.), any movement toward a North American Union including any NAFTA superhighway, and the ratification of the UN Rights of the Child Treaty. We continue to support the right of the State of Israel to exist and defend itself.

Commendatory

Since its inception, our party has embraced core American principles and chosen extraordinary leaders. Those leaders – like Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, and Ronald Reagan – not only embodied the very best in Republican values, but also led America to new triumphs of peace, prosperity, achievement and spirituality. Today we are blessed with a new generation of American and Minnesota leaders who proudly carry on those Republican traditions.

We commend the current elected Republican officials for their hard work and service to our nation and to the people of Minnesota including: U.S. Congressman Erik Paulsen, U.S. Congressman John Kline, U.S. Congresswoman Michele Bachmann, U.S. Congressman Chip Cravaack, House Republican Leader Kurt Zellers, Senate Republican Leader Dave Senjem and all the other endorsed, elected Republicans. We commend our Republican-led legislature's hard work during the past year and for their efforts at holding down taxes at this crucial time in our history. We commend legislators who support the party platform.

For their many acts of heroism and multiple tours of duty, for their unwavering dedication to the preservation of our freedom, for their unselfish sacrifice of life and their undying love of their fellow countrymen, we hereby grant our full support and gratitude to the heroes of the United States Military.

We recognize all state and local Republican officials and volunteers for their hard work, dedication, and sacrifice in order to strengthen the Party and further its principles. We support efforts to make the Republican Party an inclusive, majority party without compromising our values, principles, and ideals.

2012 Platform Committee

Harry Niska, *Chair*

Joe Westrup, *Vice Chair*

Don Evanson, *First District*

Kim Maas, *First District*

Jerry Ewing, *Second District*

Greg O'Connor, *Second District*

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Quinn Cheney, *Fourth District*

Bob Tatreau, *Fourth District*

Juliette Jordal, *Fifth District*

Alan Shilepsky, *Fifth District*

Andy Aplikowski, *Sixth District*

Kelly Gunderson, *Sixth District*

Ken Cobb, *Seventh District*

Bill Jarman, *Seventh District*

Shane Belding, *Eighth District*

Richard Lacher, *Eighth District*