



BENTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY
2020 PLATFORM
April 25, 2020

PREAMBLE

We esteem the unalienable 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 citizens 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 states' sovereignty as stated in the Tenth Amendment of the U.S. 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 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 should 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, providing for a strong national defense, respect for law and justice, economic and educational opportunity, and government fiscal restraint. Therefore, we offer the following platform:

NATIONAL DEFENSE

National Defense in all of its forms is the most important function of government, as established in our Constitution. Military strength is a cornerstone of U.S. national security that reaches far beyond our own boundaries. Our military strength is a key component of deterrence: dissuading potential adversaries from undertaking undesirable actions here and abroad, reassuring our allies, and enhancing peace and prosperity. 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. We support the addition of a United States Space Force and spending the funds necessary to obtain superiority in the realm of space defense and security. We support the national effort in the “War on Terror.” We are committed to support all military veterans and their survivors with the provision of complete medical, educational, and financial benefits for disabled and retired veterans for the duration of their lives.

We strongly support building the wall between the United States and Mexico to deter illegal immigration, as well as human and drug trafficking.

LAW AND JUSTICE

Citizens and business owners have a fundamental right to their freedom of conscience and religion. Our liberties are protected in the Bill of Rights and reaffirmed in Article 1 of the Washington State Constitution. “Hate speech laws” are not compatible with our right to free speech. We support the right of law-abiding citizens to bear arms without infringement or impairment from federal, state, or local governments.

Laws should reduce and deter crime through appropriate punishment, including the death penalty. Burden of proof shall be on the prosecution, never on the accused. Silence is not admission of guilt. We affirm the United States should never agree that citizens or permanent residents be permitted to practice Sharia Law rather than the laws of the United States and individual state governments.

Voting privileges belong only to U.S. citizens and identification should be required. Elections should be held at public polling places on paper ballots. Mail-in ballots should be for approved absentees only. Voter registration rolls should be verified and updated annually. Felons shall not be allowed to vote until their incarceration and all court-ordered stipulations have been fulfilled. We support the repealing of the Nation Popular Vote bill.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Free market capitalism creates jobs; therefore, it is imperative 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 require a business climate that will enable them to successfully compete locally, nationally, and globally.

Retaining our dams has a positive effect on trades and commerce, affecting our workforce in many areas: agriculture, marine transportation, trucking, flood control, and power.

TAXATION

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. Success and hard work should be rewarded by replacing the federal income tax system with the passage of H.R. 1040, the Flat Tax Act.

We support Washington State's continued rejection of a state income tax and the voter-approved 2/3rd-majority requirement to raise state taxes, becoming a Washington State Constitution amendment. We support limited government and minimized taxes and fees as required for appropriate government administration. 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. We support the thirty-dollar car tabs, as voted upon by the Washington State voters. Any proposed new tax must have a specific targeted purpose and a mandatory review date or date of elimination.

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 reforming and enforcing the immigration process to ensure it is legal, safe, orderly, and humane. 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 support expanding legal immigration to meet the needs of the American workforce by issuing seasonal work permits to permit temporary and agricultural employment and limiting permanent residency (i.e. Green Cards) to immigrants who have needed skills. It is in the national interest to know who is in the United States and no foreign national should be present in the country without a visa, temporary work permit, or other form of authorization.

EDUCATION

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, including public, charter, private, or home school and school vouchers. Parents should prepare their children for higher education or to be sufficiently prepared to succeed in any vocation chosen. Vocational and apprentice education at the high school level will prepare workers to enter the job force at graduation.

The U.S. Department of Education should be eliminated and those roles and decisions performed at the state, county, and local levels. 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. 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. Parents are responsible for teaching sexual topics and guidelines.

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 support neither free higher education for everyone nor the elimination of student debt. We support rewarding outstanding teachers with salaries that reflect their performance.

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 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 support a state law providing an optional ongoing deferral or temporary exemption from jury duty for primary caregivers as long as their full-time care is required.

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. We are committed to support additional behavioral health services in Washington State and Benton County. We do not support needle exchanges, however, needle exchange programs should be done in a licensed medical facility.

ENERGY

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 unsupported by sound scientific reason.

We are committed to U.S. energy independence and expanding economically feasible energy sources, including nuclear, hydroelectric, clean coal, natural gas, oil, wind, and solar. 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 support investment in safe nuclear energy, including the use of the Hanford Site for the demonstration and commercialization of small, modular nuclear reactors, reprocessing spent nuclear fuels, and long-term storage/disposal of nuclear waste. We also support Washington State's recent statutory inclusion of nuclear, hydroelectric, and renewable energy as "clean energy".

AGRICULTURE

General agriculture and viticulture are major industries and employers in Washington State. 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, 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, including railroads and Tri-Cities Regional Airport. Ben Franklin Transit should operate more efficiently with better fiscal responsibility and accountability.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

We support the promotion of cost-effective conservation techniques and technologies, along with continued examination of alternative energy opportunities. 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 states.

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

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 and support the completion of the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project, including the East High Canal and East Low Canal. We support the enhancement of existing water supply availability, increased private sector funding, and construction of new and renewed water supplies.