

REPUBLICAN PARTY OF ARKANSAS PLATFORM 2020

OUR PRINCIPLES

- The power of faith in God Almighty
- The sanctity of life
- Individual responsibility and initiative
- Individual freedom and liberty secured by a limited government
- Private property
- Lower taxes to produce economic growth
- Strong national defense
- The personal right to own and bear arms
- The equal and just enforcement of the law
- Separate and equal branches of government

Preamble

We, the Republican Party of Arkansas, believe the United States Constitution is the fundamental framework for our federal government and is a **literal document that is as relevant today as it was when our nation's Founders adopted it**. We support its precepts and, as patriots, vow to defend the rights of our fellow Arkansans guaranteed by the Bill of Rights generally, and the Ninth and Tenth Amendments specifically.

We believe our platform affirms the greatness and exceptional nature of our country, the importance of our Great State as an equal member of a Union built upon a foundation of great dreams and grand realities, and the spirit of a people who live by the simplest and most poignant mission statement of all: ***Regnat Populus***, the People Rule.

We believe in the power of faith in God Almighty and reaffirm that **God is the source of our rights**, and they are protected by imperfect individuals who rely on their God-given gifts to serve their neighbors.

We believe that the self-evident truths at our nation's founding are **still self-evident today**.

We are created equally with **Individual freedoms and liberties** that, through our own exercise of **individual responsibility and initiative**, can result in great outcomes independent of government.

As we are endowed with these abilities by God Almighty at our creation, we assert the **sanctity of human life** and affirm that unborn children have a right to live that cannot be infringed.

Without the personal right to **own private property**, individual rights are diminished.

We recognize the importance of **lower taxes** to spur economic growth and to ensure that individuals reap more of the benefits of their hard work.

We strongly believe in the **equal and just enforcement of the law**, especially as it pertains to an overreaching government threatening private lands, businesses, and inherent freedoms.

Our self-evident rights must always **continue to be secured** at the individual, state, national, and international levels.

We believe in a **strong national defense** and honor those men and women who, for the long history of our country, have stood sentry on our behalf and, in some cases, given us their last full measure of devotion.

We also believe in **securing our national borders** to protect our homeland while still welcoming legal immigrants and visitors.

Without the **right to own and bear arms** to serve as an individual's hedge against government overreach and as a means for self-defense in our home, on our property, and of our person, none of our rights and freedoms can be guaranteed.

Our republican form of **limited government requires three separate and independent branches** (Legislative, Executive, Judicial) as spelled out in both our federal and state constitutions in order to facilitate a robust system of checks and balances so that no one branch of government—whether located in Washington, D.C., or Little Rock—should wield more authority than the other two.

We therefore submit this platform to the people of Arkansas and to its elected representatives to serve as a roadmap to our state's continued prosperity and as an invitation to hardworking Arkansans to **join us on our continuing journey to realize a positive conservative vision** of a strong and modern Arkansas.

May God continue to pour out His blessings on the Great State of Arkansas and forever shed His grace on the United States of America.

Economic Prosperity and Job Growth

The State of Arkansas is the Land of Opportunity. The abundant resources of our Natural State are blessings equaled only by the **hardworking people who call her home**.

Our state is home to global leaders of their industries which began as small businesses. Today, other entrepreneurs are using their God-given talents to build futures for their families as well as their neighbors whom they will employ.

However, despite our history of business successes, a global pandemic has harmed hardworking Arkansans and the small businesses who employ them.

We salute the Arkansas-based businesses and entrepreneurs who made innovative changes to their work focus in order to **protect their fellow Arkansans** during the pandemic and to weather the economic downturn inflicted upon them through no fault of their own.

As Republicans, we believe it is our responsibility to empower our citizens to **repair, renew, and restore**—in an expeditious and safe manner— our dynamic economy rooted in **free enterprise, economic freedom, and personal liberty**.

Our primary belief for a strong economy for our state is this:

PEOPLE CREATE BUSINESSES; BUSINESSES CREATE JOBS; GOVERNMENT DOES NOT!

Arkansas's **small businesses are the drivers of our economy**. All levels of government must do all they can to understand and meet the needs of small businesses during our recovery.

We adamantly believe a strong and dynamic economy should **span the width and breadth of our state**.

In order to continue moving forward in our economic recovery, businesses in Arkansas need to operate **freely from overly burdensome regulation and over-taxation**.

We support government development of programs that facilitate the creation of new business and encourage growth in economically distressed areas.

Our state's response to the global pandemic illustrates our **strong belief in being individually responsible for their place in society** and our compassion by helping our neighbors obtain and secure the rewards of hard work to provide for themselves, their families and those unable to care for themselves.

We strongly support the use of economic development investments to help establish domestic businesses in Arkansas so that our citizens do not have to rely on sources beyond our borders that affect our security or our independence.

As part of our responsibility to strengthen our state's economic footing and to overcome

circumstances where an individual may not earn a living wage, we continue to support programs and incentives that **enable people to seek employment with the goal of becoming self-sufficient.**

Our responsibility for economic recovery requires us to promote Arkansas, its products, and its produce in the national and global marketplaces.

While we favor free and fair trade, we **oppose sacrificing Arkansas-based jobs to other countries** in the pursuit of trade agreements, and we similarly oppose trade policies or agreements that encumber the ability of Arkansans to export their products.

Our farmers are excellent stewards of their land, and they provide the world with safe and wholesome food and natural resources. **We support Arkansans' rights to use their land in the way they see fit,** including the use of diverse production methods and technologies free from burdensome federal regulations.

Our state's farm production holds a preeminent place on the world stage, and we support efforts to open new international markets to our products. Additionally, we support policies that will increase the ability of our farmers and producers to sell directly to our citizens.

We support recycling to reduce waste, energy conservation, and the use of **cost-effective renewable energy.** We believe economic prosperity can be advanced through market-based initiatives that maintain air and water quality, conserve our world-renowned wetlands and natural beauty, and clean and redevelop waste sites **without additional overreaching intervention from government or international agreements.**

We further believe our nation should continue to **move away from dependence on foreign sources of energy by utilizing domestic resources**—especially those located within our state's borders—while protecting our environment. We also support efforts that would allow energy resources developed in Arkansas to be further utilized domestically and exported globally.

While our state has many blessings for which to be thankful, our most valuable economic resource is the hardworking people that epitomize the Land of Opportunity.

Recognizing the importance of all Arkansans possessing the opportunity to be able to put a roof over our heads, clothes on our backs, and food on our tables, Arkansas Republicans strongly believe in our **right to work** in any job free from compulsory group membership with associated mandatory or suggested fees.

We support Arkansas workers in their right to collectively bargain if they so choose. Furthermore, we believe every Arkansas worker has the right to be fully informed by both sides in any organizing effort. We strongly believe a worker's right to a secure ballot to be guaranteed.

Education Reform

We strongly salute the efforts of educators across the state.

The education of Arkansans goes hand-in-hand with our desire to grow the state economically.

To become greater players on the global stage, our children must be given the tools to succeed in their chosen fields through education.

With a focus on the future, Arkansas Republicans proudly offer this simple statement to be the heart of our vision:

EVERY EDUCATION DECISION WE MAKE IS WITH THE STUDENTS AND PARENTS FIRST IN OUR MINDS!

Arkansas's children deserve a world-class education, developed by parents, educators, and leaders accountable to our citizens, regardless of their ZIP code. This requires openness to every type of educational system available: homeschooling, distance learning, public school, private school, charter school, and vocational or technical school.

Every tool should be given equal consideration and be utilized in a manner that puts the student's needs above all **"to secure to the people the advantages and opportunities of education."**

Because students should be the first consideration, **parents also have an important responsibility** in the education of their children.

Every opportunity for every family to enroll each child in the **school of its choice** should be secured by government and offered to Arkansas families. Parents must have the ability to make informed choices regarding the education of their children and should not be restricted by lines on a map or the cost of tuition.

We believe **all students should have access** to courses in the arts, civics, financial literacy, life skills, vocational or technical training, and computer science.

We support continued emphasis on investment in computer coding and rural broadband in order that Arkansas can remain at the forefront of the learn-to-code movement and make our state a national leader in computer science and STEM education.

Additionally, as healthy minds reside in healthy bodies, we support increased opportunities for physical exercise—from personal fitness to interscholastic athletics—in every grade level.

Discipline must be enforced in our schools and the physical security of students, staff, and school buildings should never be in doubt.

Government Reform

Reform of government begins with the election of **trustworthy and qualified Arkansas Republicans** to office at every level of government. This will ensure responsible and effective management of our state's fiscal and natural resources and honor the hardworking taxpayers.

Honest elections are the foundation of our republican form of limited government, and we strongly applaud every effort Arkansas Republicans have previously taken to ensure our ballot is protected and that access is guaranteed for all authorized voters, including the elderly, the military, and young voters.

**EVERY TIME THAT A FRAUDULENT VOTE IS CAST,
IT EFFECTIVELY CANCELS OUT THE VOTE OF A LEGITIMATE VOTER!**

As Republicans, we believe **providing photo identification** to vote protects the sanctity and security of the ballot box, and we support requiring proof of citizenship at the time of voter registration. We also **strongly encourage all members of our party to participate in the election process through working at polling sites**.

We support the efforts of county election commissioners to modernize the voting equipment used in our elections in order to protect against voter fraud of any kind.

In order to guarantee that our state's election laws are followed, we call for their vigorous enforcement as well as the aggressive prosecution of violations.

By the will of Arkansas's citizens, the Republican Party of Arkansas is the **majority party in our state** for the first time since Reconstruction and has therefore been given the responsibility to set policies that reflect this will.

We are opposed to any effort by special interests who would thwart the will of the people and steal away the mandate that Republican elected officials set fair and equitable legislative district lines in the next apportionment process.

We support the Electoral College process and **oppose any effort to alter Arkansas's role** in electing the President of the United States.

We firmly support **transparency and openness at every level of government**. Those elected, appointed, and employed in government work for the taxpayers of this state and must provide public information when requested, in line with Arkansas's Freedom of Information Act.

We support requiring that notice of public meetings be given not only to the press but also directly to the people by **posting notices on government websites and social media accounts** and sending them by e-mail to interested parties.

We support continuing efforts to make clear to local governments that officials are not to conduct public business outside the parameters of duly noticed public meetings so that the public has the opportunity to see the entire decision-making process and to participate if they so choose.

As supporters of increased transparency, Arkansas Republicans applaud the work of the General Assembly to require electronic filing of fundraising and expenditure reports for state-level elected officials, candidates for office, and political organizations. We support continued government investment in technology to allow the efficient filing of reports so that the public may **quickly and efficiently search and compile this information**.

Arkansas Republicans believe **the right of free speech includes the ability of our citizens to devote their resources to whatever cause or candidate they support**. We are opposed to any restrictions that would discourage Arkansans from fully exercising their First Amendment rights, or limit their commitment to their beliefs. We further oppose any state or federal efforts to impair Arkansans' free speech rights guaranteed in the Constitution and upheld by the Supreme Court.

State government must continue to **live within its means** and we applaud the hard work of the legislative and executive branches to follow our state's revenue stabilization law. We strongly believe Arkansans' are best able to spend the money they earn and deserve to be free from the hassle of burdensome taxes and fees. We applaud the ongoing efforts of Arkansas's Republican majority to lower taxes and govern efficiently.

Arkansas Republicans continue to support the absence of death taxes in our state and strongly support the repeal of the federal death tax. We also support the elimination of the state tax on capital gains. We applaud income tax cuts made into law by Arkansas Republicans in recent years and strongly support the further expansion of income and other tax relief for **all of our citizens**.

In order to bolster the ability of Arkansas Republicans to carry out this charge from our citizens, we continue to support the **rules governing both chambers of our legislature that reflect our party's majorities in both chambers**.

We believe that the Republican nominee for the Senate President Pro Tempore and Speaker of the House of Representatives must be selected by the majority of the Republican Caucus of its respective chamber and call on each Republican member of the General Assembly to support their chamber's nominee.

We further support allowing each party's legislative caucus determine among themselves which of them are to serve on legislative committees, as we believe the best legislators should serve on the committee that best suits their talents.

We believe in strong legislative oversight of state government spending and support continued openness and transparency in the spending of appropriated money. Arkansas Republicans recognize the importance of such funding for local projects but believe that all those seeking state funds for special projects should be subject to examination and oversight of the people's elected representatives through the appropriations process.

Justice Reform

We strongly believe that all legal proceedings should be conducted and adjudicated based **solely on the United States Constitution, the Arkansas Constitution and the statutory and case law framework of federal and state law, without reference to or influence by any foreign law.**

Both federal and Arkansas law require juveniles and adult offenders be held separately. We support age-appropriate juvenile programs that are coupled with crime-appropriate terms of confinement. These programs and this confinement must be carried out in a humane manner.

Arkansas Republicans believe that **crime victims must have a voice throughout the criminal justice process.** We support efforts to incorporate crime victims' rights into our justice system and that they be honored by law enforcement and the judiciary.

Significant changes to parole and probation systems still need to continue to support the mission of public safety. We support the **ending of furloughs for those who have been convicted of and incarcerated for violent crimes.** Our prisons should place an emphasis on both incarceration for punishment and rehabilitation efforts during that incarceration. We support the expansion of private sector efforts and community support for the employment of offenders who have fulfilled their sentences as tools to help with the reintegration of offenders into society and to avoid recidivism.

Capital punishment, when properly applied, is a punishment for a particular crime and a deterrent to others and should be used swiftly following an inmate's last appeal. We support **consideration of alternative methods** consistent with constitutional protections in the event the state's current method becomes untenable.

Substance abuse continues to tear apart our way of life across all socioeconomic levels. We **support a balanced approach to fighting illegal drug abuse** including tough law enforcement, effective drug education efforts, and the continued expansion of drug treatment with accountability and effective drug court programs. We oppose decriminalization of

dangerous drugs including marijuana. We applaud and support the efforts of government leaders to **combat the scourge of opioid abuse**.

We believe **health care costs can be reduced by tort reform**. Medical liability regulations and statutes should be revised by limiting the circumstances under which such cases may be properly pursued and the extent of damage claims involving pain and suffering. As such, we strongly support medical tort liability reform through an amendment to the state constitution. We further support the creation of a legal environment for pharmaceutical companies to develop new drugs and lower costs to consumers.

Domestic Security

As citizens of a nation of immigrants, **we recognize the important contributions immigrants have made to the economic and cultural strength** of the United States. We also believe that, as a nation of laws, the integrity of our immigration system is undermined through flagrant disregard of our laws by those who illegally enter our country and those who overstay their visas.

We also recognize that workers from other countries will continue to use every means to come to the United States as long as there are employers who will hire them. For that reason, **we support an employer verification system** that will require the employer to verify legal status prior to hiring or offering employment.

Arkansas Republicans believe that **English is our official language** and oppose the publication of government forms, including ballots, in any other language.

We strongly support legal immigration and proudly welcome legal immigrants into our state. We encourage those who work hard to fulfill their obligations to community and country, and their assimilation into the social fabric of our great state.

We support focusing deportation efforts on criminal aliens while granting renewable residency status, without any path to citizenship, to those who have established roots in our society, meeting criteria such as worthiness, family ties, and payment of a fine. We support a federal and state homeland security policy that recognizes our enemies, stops terrorists before they attack, and treats terrorism as a martial offense rather than a criminal one.

We also support a greater partnership by the State of Arkansas and federal authorities in the area of immigration enforcement. We encourage the **training of the Arkansas State Police and local law enforcement agencies to assist in the enforcement of immigration laws**. We strongly believe that deportation efforts should be focused on those who violate our criminal laws.

We back the increased statutory level of our armed forces and increased support of our veterans with high-quality health care and the full benefits they have earned for themselves and their families through their service and sacrifice to our country.

We continue to believe that Islamic extremism is as menacing as any enemy this country has ever faced. We support the efforts by our armed forces against all terrorists and the nations which enable and support them. Arkansas Republicans strongly support consistent and unequivocal acknowledgment from our leaders **that a terrorist attack on American soil is “a terrorist attack.”**

We strongly support law enforcement officers, firefighters, medical professionals, and other emergency personnel who are on the front line here at home to protect, rescue, and assist us when the need arises.

Individual Freedom

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees the free exercise of religion. Article 2 of the Arkansas Constitution guarantees that “no human authority can, in any case or manner whatsoever, control or interfere with the right of conscience.”

We believe in our **“natural and inalienable right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of our own consciences.”**

We further affirm our **defense of religious freedom** for all peaceful religions and that all citizens have the absolute right to make public references to God in all public functions and venues.

Arkansas Republicans believe that marriage is the foundational unit of a healthy society. We believe in the sanctity of marriage and that the integrity of this institution should be defended, protected, strengthened, and nurtured at all levels of government.

Arkansas Republicans support the traditional definition of marriage as a God-ordained, legal and moral commitment **between one man and one woman.**

We believe that an Arkansas family has the primary responsibility for its own welfare, including the education and moral training of its children.

We are beings created in God’s image; and as such, we believe all Americans should have **equal opportunity to succeed** regardless of race, nationality, origin, gender, or creed and should be granted no special preferences based on these criteria.

Most importantly, we believe **all unborn children have a fundamental right to live** in order to avail themselves of these equal opportunities. We commend all those who provide or promote

alternatives to abortion. We also oppose assisted suicide, euthanasia, genocide, infanticide, cloning, and embryonic/fetal stem cell research.

We applaud all legislation passed by Arkansas Republicans that promotes life and withholds the use of public monies to pay for abortions or finance groups that enable it.

Furthermore, we support the appointment and election of judges who **respect traditional family values, the sanctity of human life, and are committed to overturn *Roe v. Wade*.**

Arkansas Republicans support legislation that **ensures abortion coverage is prohibited** from being mandated in state-sponsored health care exchanges, federal exchanges, federal-state partnerships, and high risk pools created under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

We oppose federal efforts to force doctors and hospitals to **treat patients according to self-perceived gender identity** and federal rules requiring state health programs to offer coverage for that treatment.

Healthcare is not a right; it is a service. As a compassionate society, we will aid those in need; however, a government takeover of healthcare is detrimental to the entire health care system.

Arkansas Republicans support the freedom of every Arkansan to **choose the health insurance plan that best suits his or her needs**, as well as the freedom not to choose without the threat of reprisal from the federal government through taxes or fines.

We strongly support the repeal of the Affordable Care Act and its replacement with laws where Arkansans have multiple patient-centric health choices and states have full flexibility and authority to design a Medicaid program that best fits their needs through federal block grants.

Arkansas Republicans strongly commend our state's efforts to **combat human trafficking**. We salute those in law enforcement who rescue the victims of human trafficking and support all efforts to provide victims comfort and healing from their nightmare.

We also applaud the **bipartisan work of the Arkansas General Assembly to improve our laws** so that we may do our part to defeat this modern-day scourge and call for continued vigilance so that no person shall be held in slavery or servitude.

Equality of individuals before the law has always been a cornerstone of our party. Bigotry has no place in our state. **Arkansas Republicans denounce those persons, organizations, publications, and movements that practice or promote racism, hate actions, or religious intolerance.**

As Republicans, we fully support the **Second Amendment's guarantee of our individual right to keep and bear arms.** We call on governments at all levels to strictly enforce existing gun

laws. We remind all Arkansas law enforcement and prosecutors that Arkansas law recognizes the right of **our citizens to freely carry handguns in the open**. Furthermore, we support efforts to expand reciprocity agreements to allow Arkansans with concealed weapons permits to travel freely on interstate journeys.

Epilogue

Those who consider themselves conservative will find **a home in the Republican Party of Arkansas**. We welcome all who wish to serve their communities, state, and nation by becoming engaged in public matters and helping shape the debates that will set a course toward the future.

Our state's future prosperity is contingent upon **new generations of Arkansans** who are raised with common-sense conservative values and who desire those values to be protected and strengthened in order that they may be passed on to our heirs.

We welcome those who cherish learning and who use the tools of the digital age to educate themselves in order to be citizens **prepared to participate** in our republican form of limited government.

We seek and welcome conservative activists who we hope one day will seek elective and appointed offices so that they may fight for a future where **prosperity, freedom, and liberty** are our citizens' rewards for good work.

In 1960, Winthrop Rockefeller held a "Party for Two Parties" on Petit Jean Mountain. His goal: **to turn Arkansas into a two-party state** after nearly a century of Democratic domination. It took 50 years to realize his dream. Since then, our party has grown significantly.

Along the way, some Arkansans who were conservative made the choice to wear the Republican label. We recognize that not all conservatives in our state are quite ready to make that leap. Rest assured that even if you're not ready to join us quite yet, **we are fighting for you and your family every day**.

When you choose to knock on our door, you will find yourself welcome with open arms.

God bless you, our great state, and our exceptional nation.