



Platform of the Republican Party of Cuyahoga County

Preamble

The Republican Party of Cuyahoga County stands for policies and governance that create a thriving local economy, efficiently manage hardworking taxpayers' dollars, affirm individuals and families, and protect individual liberties.

The Republican Party was founded in 1854 in opposition to the expansion of slavery into western territories, which later led to the election of Abraham Lincoln and the abolition of slavery. Later, Republicans would pass civil rights legislation, protecting the rights of blacks. Today, Republicans are proud of our history and the founding of our party, our continued work on civil rights and the advancement of all peoples.

We, your family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and citizens that form the Republican Party of Cuyahoga County adhere to the simple understandings found in our nation's and state's constitutions and founding documents: the belief in life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, that all men are created equal, that we are grateful to Almighty God for our freedom and those blessings and rights that come with it. We believe that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

We the people who make up the Republican Party of Cuyahoga County come together as one people, inclusive of all, with the same rights granted by nature and nature's God to govern ourselves in a constitutional republic we call The United States of America.

Our platform supports:

- I. Strong families and American values
- II. Respect for individuals – life, faith, community, and diversity
- III. Free markets and a strong economy
- IV. Excellent education and work force development
- V. Second amendment and respect for law enforcement
- VI. Limited government and limited taxation
- VII. Protection for voters
- VIII. Ethical governance and smart regional policies

This platform is designed to address issues over which we have influence, namely state and local government policies, therefore, we may be silent on matters of the Republican National Committee's

platform that lie beyond our jurisdiction. However, insofar as there is no conflict with the statements and provisions herein, it shall be clear that we support, in its entirety, the platform of the national party, of which we are a member. That platform is available for review at <https://www.gop.com/the-2016-republican-party-platform/>. This platform is consistent with President Donald J. Trump’s vision; we encourage unity and action within the Republican Party to implement the agenda that over 60 million American voters want.

Purpose

The purpose of our platform is as follows:

1. To define the core principles of the Republican Party of Cuyahoga County.
2. To create a clarity of purpose and a strong, simple message from which to develop communication, education, and outreach efforts.
3. To inspire interest and involvement in the party and in our candidates, both from within our base and through the development of new relationships.
4. To increase outreach and understanding of the Republican Party of Cuyahoga County for those individuals who may not know us well.
5. To encourage and welcome participation of all who share these values and goals.
6. To attract exemplary Republican candidates, provide positions on which our candidates can run for office, and to expect support for those positions.
7. To establish a basis from which to counter negative and dishonest messaging and to expose corruption.

Platform

I. Strong Families and American Values

“The family unit plays a critical role in our society and in the training of the generations to come.” - President Abraham Lincoln

We recognize this statement to be true and we support strong families and the defense of God-given American values.

American Values: America was founded on the idea that individuals, not government, offer the best promise for success and prosperity. American values, including respect for one another, protection of the unborn, hard work, honesty, caring for neighbors, respect for authority and the law, responsibility for one’s actions, and love of country are the foundation of an American society that has experienced unparalleled advancements in the human condition. Americans value the worth and contribution of every person, and Republican candidates and elected officials should support policies and programs that advance individuals, offering a hand-up in time of need and not a permanent hand-out. Government should be discouraged from intervention that may entrap its citizens under a false promise of hope while restraining advancement otherwise achieved by the unleashed potential of an individual. Society as a whole, and specifically our county, benefits most when we encourage and realize the potential of all of our citizens.

Family as the Center of Society: We, the Republican Party of Cuyahoga County, promote, support, and uphold policies that protect and support the family. A family is the central unit of our society and policy that promotes, supports, and upholds the traditional family ideal offers the most freedom for everyone. The principles and morals that a family adheres to are the foundation of how we teach our children to learn, grow, and function in the world. These principles and morals are the bedrocks of our free society. Individual liberty, so important in America, depends upon each person accepting responsibility for his or her own actions, learned and developed within the family. While American values and principles are at the core of our system of government, they must be passed down within the foundation of strong families. An expanding government weakens the sense of individual responsibility and results in reliance on the government; furthermore, wrong-headed governmental policies often discourage marriage, strong families, and individual responsibility.

Our candidates and elected officials must support proposals and policies in which the institution of the family can be encouraged to flourish and fulfill its role in advancing American principles and values, and subsequently, a better life and prosperity for all families in Cuyahoga County.

II. Respect for Individuals: Life, Faith, Community, and Diversity

“America is never wholly herself unless she is engaged in high moral principle. We as a people have such a purpose today. It is to make kinder the face of the Nation and gentler the face of the world. My friends, we have work to do.” President George H. W. Bush

Respect for individuals: The Republican Party of Cuyahoga County is made up of individuals of different backgrounds that come together on united beliefs:

- “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”
- That we are all Americans, from those who can trace their ancestry back to the founding of this nation to those that have come to these shores, taken the oath of citizenship, and follow the laws of this great nation.
- We believe that everyone has the right to be treated the same under the law.
- We, who call ourselves Americans, have different opinions on life and we have the right to disagree and demonstrate in peaceful manner.

Respect for Life: Life begins at conception and Republican candidates and officials are expected to support this position. Republicans are strongly opposed to late term and partial birth abortions. We believe that the smallest and most indefensible amongst us deserve our strongest support and attention.

Faith and Religion: *“The liberty enjoyed by the people of these States, of worshipping Almighty God agreeable to their consciences, is not only among the choicest of their blessings, but also of their rights.”* - President George Washington

Our county is composed of individuals with various religious beliefs, who have the right to

exercise religious freedoms and follow their beliefs peacefully, underscoring our reverence for religious freedoms as defined by the Constitution and The Bill of Rights. We encourage such individualism. Faith-based organizations provide moral and ethical guidance for individuals and families. These organizations have an important place in society and we support their work. We strongly support efforts to maintain religious liberty without limitation or hindrance to someone's personal convictions. We stand with Article VI of the United States Constitution that there should never be a religious test to hold office.

Community: We believe the best ways to help the community are through supporting faith-based and private organizations, providing safety, encouraging a thriving economy, and offering an excellent education system which allows families to pass community values unto their children.

We believe that the best way to govern a community is not from a distance, but at the local level, giving the people of the community the right to govern themselves. A person who can govern himself within the scope of limited government should be encouraged to take an active role in the community.

We believe that a robust economy is one that has diverse opportunities with limited taxes and regulations. This will lead to stronger families with brighter outlooks for the future. We support the Federal Opportunity Zone legislation and the Second Chance Act as measures taken to assist people in improving their personal and economic prosperity.

Diversity and Outreach: *"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."* -- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

We are all Americans; out of many, one. We understand that everyone has a history, should know their history and should be proud of who they are. We soundly reject efforts to divide and turn one group of Americans against another. We embrace diverse thinking, and we look to engage new demographics, and outreach to groups and organizations that share a common vision for Cuyahoga County. We believe that diversity enhances our efforts to improve our community when it's done properly, based on the individual's qualifications, contributions, and ethical standards aligned with the Constitution. Through broad appeal to non-traditional Republican circles, our goal is to provide a positive alternative to the stagnant, ineffective, and corrupt governance under single-party rule.

While some groups may not be familiar with our principles, they are certainly familiar with the contributions of famous Republicans, such as President Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglas, President Ronald Reagan, Senator George Voinovich, as well as local leaders such as Judge Lillian Burke, Judge Sara Harper, and Commissioner Virgil Brown, Sr. Cuyahoga County embraces a rich and diverse cultural history. We wish to outreach to all people who share core principles with the Republican Party, such as respect for hard work, the desire for a good education, freedom of worship, and traditional family values. Our responsibility within the RPCC is to engage in effective means of outreach to create awareness of our mission and vision for the nation. This includes working with a wide variety of groups, young Republicans in local colleges and universities, and the use of social media.

Immigration: The United States prides itself for being a nation of immigrants. We believe that responsible and legal immigration results in a thriving society regardless of someone's race, faith, or gender. We also believe that the safety and security of the American people should come first under any

circumstances and we stand with federal law against sanctuary cities. We believe that coming to the U.S. is a privilege not a right. In order for any individual to live in the United States and benefit from its God-given prosperity, this individual's allegiance ought to be only for the United States. The individual should be a contributor to society, not a burden.

Throughout the years, the United States has proven to be the most generous nation on earth. We believe in enforcing the laws that have been enacted in Congress. We believe that securing our nation and reforming the immigration system should empower our society. The United States has the right to secure its borders through various methods in order to protect its citizens.

The United States has been a leader in welcoming refugees who have undergone various kinds of persecution and turmoil. We strive to help these individuals as long as it does not compromise the safety and security of our own citizens. We also believe that there should be a proper way of vetting refugees, especially from hot spots defined by our federal intelligence agencies. When necessary, the United States has the right to stop any form of immigration that imposes threat to our national security.

The RPCC reaffirms the necessity of states, cities, and local governments to abide by federal laws by prohibiting any policies that favors illegal aliens over American citizens' rights, including opposition to sanctuary cities. Some Americans have felt the adverse consequences of cheap labor and some have been harmed by criminal illegal aliens who hide in sanctuary cities.

Veterans: Those who have fought and died to keep our county free deserve continued recognition and respect from our nation. We encourage the ongoing support of veterans, those on active duty, those who have been honorably discharged, and the families of our service men and women, all who have sacrificed for the freedoms we enjoy in the United States. We support improved quality of healthcare, including access to private healthcare.

Youth: Our youth are the leaders of tomorrow. We recognize the importance of leading by example in order to bring up a generation of leaders who will impact society in a various ways. In the words of Frederick Douglass, "*it is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men*". They embrace technology and want to take an active role in the work force, our country, and the political process. They share our concern for responsible leadership in government and in commerce. This group will yield fresh thinking, energetic candidates, and we welcome them to our party. We support initiatives that provide mentorships and internships that get them into employment, economic opportunities, and greater potential.

III. Free Markets and Strong Economy

"Jobs, Jobs, Jobs." President Donald J. Trump

We believe that the citizens of Cuyahoga County deserve a dynamic economic future, and we advocate for innovation that promotes a diverse economy. We look particularly to the following areas for economic growth and prosperity:

Free Market: *"Freedom can never yield its fullness of blessings so long as the law or its*

administration places the smallest obstacle in the pathway of any virtuous citizen.” - President James A. Garfield

We believe in a system of competitive capitalism that minimizes government intervention and maximizes the role of the free market, offering the greatest potential for individual prosperity. We believe that the free market is the mother of necessity and must be able to meet the needs of customers. It is driven by entrepreneurship, innovation, and hard work. We believe in the notion that any individual can rise to become a great inventor, a successful business leader or educator, or the next great political leader. The free market advances the best products and services, it creates new products to meet consumer needs, and it encourages education and training of workers. It promotes the natural ambition, creativity, and competitive spirit of individuals.

Trade: We embrace free trade where all parties prosper. All negotiations must center around America and Cuyahoga County first. We advocate full review and renegotiation of all trade agreements and we demand full disclosure and elimination of unethical trade practices by our trading partners.

Healthcare: A healthy society is crucial to the strength of our nation. There are many Americans who still cannot afford health-care insurance due to unspeakable circumstances, others with pre-existing conditions, and others who simply are unable to work. We believe there should be a safety net for these Americans and that no American should be denied healthcare insurance because of a pre-existing condition or should be forced to buy healthcare insurance under threat of penalty. We support legislation that protects the most vulnerable and provides for individuals in catastrophic circumstances. We support protecting Medicare for seniors and others who are entitled to its benefits.

We support free market solutions that help control costs, lower drug prices, and provide greater access through health insurance that is portable and affordable, and the implementation of policies which limit the scope and magnitude of government interference in this sector. We support legislation which provides for fair tort reform which limits frivolous lawsuits that drive up the cost of healthcare. We support a system which allows doctors and hospitals the freedom to practice medicine and provide care without requiring extensive mastery of a vast bureaucracy. We support transparency of medical costs.

We support and advocate for any American to have the ability to purchase healthcare insurance across state lines. We ask that major healthcare insurance companies cover all counties in each state in which they operate. Americans should be able to keep their physicians and choose their healthcare providers.

Government Regulation: We support limited government and less regulation. Excessive regulation from a government seeking to expand its control at the expense of a developing economy is not in our best interest.

Taxes: We believe that taxes should be used to secure our nation and to benefit our citizens without the government hindering the growth and development of our society. We believe in a simple tax code which allows for every taxpayer to file taxes with minimal intrusion from the IRS. We also acknowledge that recent federal tax cuts have spurred economic growth, jobs, and rising wages and we continue to encourage our federal, state, and local governments to be fiscally responsible. .

Manufacturing and Technology: We recognize that the strength of our regional economy has traditionally been dependent upon a strong industrial sector. As our communities evolve, we must also embrace new areas of growth. We believe that the local skill set in this area is world-class, and we support its continued advancement. Our free market ideals must be employed to ensure that all economic sectors have a chance to thrive.

Northeast Ohio and Cuyahoga County are uniquely positioned as having some of the fastest growing and diverse high-tech, medical, aerospace, and aviation industries in the world, and these industries are supported by an exceptional, regional supplier base. We encourage efforts by all levels of government to strengthen and expand these industry segments through particular attention to the various research facilities, universities, labs, and other entities which strive to plant the seeds of innovation and growth.

Workforce: We advocate for the greater use of education and training programs aimed at improving the skill set and versatility of the workforce of Cuyahoga County. Understanding the need for apprentice training, we support both private, (corporate and union-based apprentice training) and public efforts (expanded high school and community college-based vocational training), to address the needs of the marketplace. We support strong high school vocational and technical classes.

Unions: We agree and understand the need for individuals in the workforce to band together to better their environment or dissolve the band at any time. We also understand that even in a union an individual has a right to question the leadership without retaliation. We support the concept of Binding Arbitration to speed up negotiation for both parties and the economy as a whole.

Infrastructure Development: To facilitate success in the ever-increasing competitive global economy, we believe that the citizens of Cuyahoga County deserve much-needed infrastructure improvement, neighborhood development, and upgraded port facilities to provide first class access to our region. Our citizens deserve effective, transparent management of these improvements with minimal bureaucracy, acting in the best interest of the general public in all such projects.

Energy and Environment: Advances in gas and oil extraction have allowed for the identification of large reservoirs of natural gas and oil reserves in our region and the inclusion of cleaner coal burning processes provide the resources to serve our energy needs for decades to come. We support research into ALL emerging energy technologies which can potentially become the next frontier of energy for our future.

We view the Lake Erie watershed as a tremendous economic and environmental resource which should continue to be available to future generations. We have a responsibility to protect and ensure its health and survival. We support research efforts to expand our knowledge and to develop world-class expertise on the effects, processing, and responsible use of freshwater for multiple purposes.

In using all types of natural resources for the benefit of our citizens, we applaud efforts to study and improve technology responsibly, being mindful of adverse effects on the environment. Priority should be given to research efforts that examine the true cause-and-effect relationships of the latest methods used in extraction, processing, filtering, combusting, and other technologies.

IV. Educational Excellence

“Intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education.” Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. According to Dr. King, education is more than gaining wisdom on a wide range of topics; it should also be about developing character. An excellent education should do both, in a safe and inspirational setting. Our children, the American leaders of tomorrow, deserve the best educational system that can be delivered.

Putting Children First: All students deserve the opportunity to seek the American Dream and to reach their full God-given potential. This begins with an excellent education. English should be the first language for teaching all subjects. Schools should provide English language classes to all foreign-speaking students so that they, too, can succeed in America. All children deserve the best available teaching methods that will maximize their individual abilities. Intervention should be available to help students achieve and remain at grade level.

Education decisions are best handled at the local level. Our elected officials should review and revise state laws and regulations that limit the overall success of education at the local level. We oppose any attempt by the federal government to force a curriculum or other burdensome controls upon the populace. We oppose any foreign interference or investment in our education system.

Parents: Parents, having ultimate authority over their children, should be able to select appropriate educational venues, courses of study, and have access to family-based literacy programs. In general, greater parent involvement should be welcomed, and encouraged in all school settings. We also believe that parents should be fully informed about what their children are being taught, and as such, curriculum should be reviewed by parents as part of the local curriculum approval process.

Teachers and Administrators: Great teachers change lives and are the heart of educational excellence. To attract and retain great teachers, we believe that pay structures must be competitive with benefit packages that are fair. We encourage talented individuals to select teaching as a profession. Our platform supports efforts to have more individuals with conservative values become teachers. We place a high value on teacher innovation.

Great principals and administrators are critical to the success of every child’s educational venue. As such, employed administrators and boards of education should be held to the highest standards of strong leadership within the school system and accountability for the hiring, success, and performance of teachers, including motivational plans and professional development. To the degree possible, administrators should provide effective support and instructional materials. They should strive to provide a safe learning environment, free from bullying or other inappropriate behavior. Student safety and health should be paramount.

Curriculum: Curriculum is the foundation of excellent education and should ensure high academic standards. Curriculum should include assessment of fundamentals, be dynamic, be fact-checked, and be upgraded continuously. Curriculum should tie high school college preparatory, technical, and vocational tracts with career and entrepreneurial opportunities by aligning relevant aspects of revised curriculum with existing and emerging industries.

We believe that teaching American exceptionalism and American values, such as the study of free markets, individual responsibility, ethics, discipline, personal competition, personal property rights, financial literacy, and respect for others, is essential to the continuation of our republic. History courses should include a study of our Founders and their documents. Government and civics courses should include the Ohio and U.S. Constitutions.

Educational Venues: We support parents' rights to choose from all venues of education, including home schooling, and we support the position that all venues should be supported by effective legislation and be appropriately funded, including vouchers. We encourage the review of K-12 administrative staffing practices and expenditures to ensure effective use of personnel and budgets. Revenues raised for K-12 education at local levels should remain under the purview of taxpayers with limited involvement from federal and state mandates. We encourage support for colleges and universities with a conservative focus.

We support unique school scheduling that serves non-traditional community needs. We believe that charter school credentialing and accountability standards should be strengthened and that poorly performing schools should be de-certified or closed. All educational venues should be vetted and held accountable for performance and transparency.

The use of school vouchers for all children should be encouraged. Parents should be able to use their voucher to move their child to a system they feel offers the best educational choice. The voucher system should allow the school systems the ability to set minimum standards for enrollment, with their systems' children getting primary positions for enrollment.

V. Bills of Rights and Respect for Law Enforcement

Freedom of Speech: We strongly advocate for first amendment freedom of speech protections and oppose efforts by various public and private interests to silence our voices. We encourage efforts by our government to utilize anti-monopoly statutes to eliminate concentrated and consolidated control over printed media, social media, radio, television, and internet airwaves. We support efforts to introduce fair and balanced news reporting and to challenge malicious and fallacious use of the media through more encompassing libel and slander statutes.

Gun Ownership: We support the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and Article 1 Section 4 of the Ohio Constitution on the right of lawful ownership and use of firearms, the right of citizens to keep and bear arms for their defense and security.

Law Enforcement: The first duty of government is to keep its citizens safe. Supporting law enforcement means supporting our citizens. A well-trained and equipped law enforcement presence will help our local communities thrive. We encourage the collaboration between local leaders and law enforcement for the safety and benefit of all citizens.

We believe the concept of defunding police departments and diverting funds intended for public protection to organizations with no or limited ability, will not keep the public safe. Supporting a well-trained police department will.

Eminent Domain/Asset Forfeiture: In accordance with the 4th Amendment, the use of eminent domain to seize private property for public usage, should be rare and accomplished through legal, fair, and equitable means and should occur after due process of law. Such action should be the absolute last resort of a public entity.

VI. Limited Government and Limited Taxation

"Our differences are policies, our agreements principles." President William McKinley

Local City and County Government Representation: The Republican Party of Cuyahoga County resolves to recruit, develop, and support Republican candidates for public office in every municipality, township, and school board of this county in order to foster effective government. By effective government, we mean government that will provide services to the people in a cost effective, efficient, and honest manner. Our citizens deserve services that strengthen the family which people cannot provide for themselves.

We strongly defend the rights of all local communities to determine their own housing choices, zoning of commercial districts, and generally support local control of community planning vs. an intrusion by federal planners to control the destiny of local communities.

Taxation and Accountability: The Republican Party of Cuyahoga County stands for fiscal responsibility, efficiency, and accountability in government, particularly to safeguard the people against actions that deprive them of the money that they have earned by their own hands. Therefore, we believe that the power to levy taxes should only be exercised when the following questions have been answered:

- Have we negotiated public employee contracts that are in line with the wages and benefits of those whom we serve?
- Is everything that the public entity does absolutely necessary or is it possible for the public entity to scale back or eliminate certain tasks as a cost savings to the governed?
- Does the benefit or purpose of the tax outweigh the harm inflicted upon those who are taxed?
- Have efforts been made to secure optimal pricing for the services rendered?

It is often stated that "wasteful" programs should be evaluated or eliminated. Republicans believe that the efficiency and effectiveness of government programs should be continuously assessed, with an ongoing focus on implementing strong standards and reviewing strategic planning at the first signs of failure. If a program has become "wasteful," then government was not doing its job. At the core of every Republican candidate and elected official's value system must be an over-arching belief that elected officials are there to guard the interests of the people and take pro-active measures to assure value in tax dollars. We seek to offer more take-home pay, greater savings, and the highest value for the taxpayer dollar.

Governance and Policy Review: Republicans encourage elected officials to evaluate each ordinance, policy, and public law proposal through the scope of the impact of the proposal on the family and the community, on the ability of commerce to thrive, and on the cost-benefit relationship of whether or not the policy is beneficial or even needed. We ask that every aspect of local government be continually

examined to ensure that government is providing only what the individual citizen or family cannot reasonably provide, and that the government avoids undertaking tasks which individuals can complete on their own or that the private sector can accomplish in a more effective manner.

Transparency: Government must be fully open and accountable to its business and private individual taxpaying base which pays for these services. We support strong open records laws and thorough open public discussion of issues, versus "executive sessions." We ask our leaders to provide sunlight to the process, allowing hardworking taxpayers the opportunity to be part of the decision making process. Legislative bodies should not pass "emergency" legislation unless an actual emergency exists. Republicans believe in deliberation and citizen participation. We support the incorporation of financial reporting for all public entities, boards, and commissions into Ohio's Online Checkbook in order to assure maximum transparency.

Vendor Selection and Oversight: *"Buy American, hire American."* - President Donald J. Trump

Local Republican candidates support the buying power of local governments to help the community. We support the purchase of products made in Cuyahoga County, Ohio and the United States of America. We support hiring American workers. We want our local purchasing power to help our citizens, and support goods and services made in the U.S., contracting for U.S. and Ohio-made goods and services provides the advantage of reinvesting taxpayer money back into our own communities.

In the selection of vendors for local government, officials must ensure that strong ethics policies are in place, demanding the highest integrity of vendors, and putting assurances into law such that vendors, who have failed the public trust in the past, shall not conduct business with that community. We must always be on guard to prevent corruption from taking hold in the governments of Cuyahoga County.

Boards and Commissions: Republicans oppose unaccountable boards and commissions that possess taxing and spending authority, operate without the direct consent of elected representatives, and do not reflect the accurate financial status and population of the area. All boards and commissions and their corresponding members engaged in county business shall be appointed by the County Executive and approved by the County Council, making them directly accountable to the people through elected representatives, and not special interest groups that benefit from the unelected and unaccountable nature of these entities. Additionally, the boards as constituted should reflect the current and appropriate population of the county and city of Cleveland, and not reflect the population of prior decades. We seek relief from the Ohio General Assembly; our citizens deserve these important entities to become fully accountable to the people, including but not limited to:

- The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority
- North East Ohio Regional Sewer District
- Regional Transit Authority (RTA)
- Regional Income Tax Authority - RITA
- Central Collection Agency Division of Taxation Department of Finance City of Cleveland

Collaboration: This party believes in collaboration between government entities to create efficiencies. Such collaboration should not jeopardize public safety or the delivery of service, but should emphasize high cost items that can be shared with adjacent public entities in some circumstances.

Consortiums of governmental entities that band together to purchase materials in larger quantities to save taxpayers' money are viewed favorably. We believe in the right of communities to merge, based on the desires of their citizens.

Regionalism: The best government is that which is closest to the citizens. Our party encourages discussion about shared services and attracting commerce to Cuyahoga County. However, any discussions of tax sharing should not reward fiscally irresponsible, poorly-run, and already highly-taxed communities at the expense of well-run communities. Decisions to share or collaborate must be made between the elected officials of local communities and their citizens, not outside entities with questionable motives. Regional collaborations should be voluntary and in the best interest of citizens and taxpayers. To be clear, while encouraging such collaborations, Republicans do not endorse any collaboration goals which we believe are in direct conflict with the sovereignty of the United States, and the prerogative of state and local governments.

This party recognizes the freedom and autonomy of local governments to meet the needs of their own communities both individually, and cooperatively and collaboratively, with other communities. At the same time, we realize that entrepreneurial competition throughout is healthy for the successful recovery of our Northeast Ohio region, and that our competition as a region lies more importantly with other parts of the country, and other parts of the world, such as China, India, and Korea. Careful planning, cooperation, and community collaboration among local elected officials can strengthen our county, and our future.

VII. Protecting Voters and the Election Process

“Unfortunately, the United States has a long history of voter fraud that has been documented by historians and journalists.” Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens

Our electoral process is the cornerstone of our democratic republic. We support every effort to ensure the constitutional promise of one person, one vote.

Election Fraud: We believe election fraud is voter suppression and no individual candidate or issue is more important than free and fair elections in Cuyahoga County. Public trust requires potential voter fraud, at both the registration and voting levels, be eliminated. It is essential that our elections be conducted with the highest integrity, which ensures that every eligible voter has one vote that is properly cast and counted.

Prosecution of Voter Fraud: Fraudulent voters are emboldened when voter fraud is not prosecuted. We believe every voter who deliberately commits election fraud of any kind should be prosecuted.

Voter ID: Voter photo identification is the central voter authentication method in nearly every democracy in the developed world. We believe presenting a valid photo ID to vote is a necessary requirement. Anyone who cannot afford a valid photo ID should promptly be provided one free of charge upon request.

Increasing Voter Mobility and Voter Registration: Republicans should engage citizens who

have not actively participated in the electoral process by creating pathways to register new voters. An effort should be made to reach out to minorities and independent voters, as well as community groups and college campuses. Every legal citizen should have the opportunity to exercise their right to vote. As a party, we should increase efforts to help our neighbors that may have trouble getting to the polls on Election Day by assisting with transportation.

Absentee Voting Improvements: Voting is an important civic exercise, and it is essential that all citizens be encouraged to vote. In recent years absentee balloting is gaining in popularity. Absentee voting must be done in a way that insures one person, one vote. To accomplish this, we believe:

- No one must be able to register and vote on the same day. This process makes it impossible for local Boards of Elections to verify the voter's identity. Those who wish to vote via absentee ballot, whether in-person or mail, must have registered to vote 30 days prior to Election Day in accordance with Ohio law.
- In-person, absentee ballot voting at the Board of Elections must be subject to the same voter ID requirements as on Election Day. Voting in-person by absentee ballot should not be treated differently than voting absentee by mail. When a registered voter requests an absentee ballot via the mail, the Board of Election has the opportunity to verify that voter's identity through a mailed post card and their signature. Unless an ID is provided during in-person absentee voting, the Board of Elections has no opportunity to verify identity.
- We oppose mass mailing of ballots to voters other than through the existing absentee voting process. Indiscriminate mailing of ballots does not allow for authentication of voters and proper tracking of those ballots.

Elimination of Invalid Voter Registrations: Massive increases in absentee and early voting increases the importance of having accurate, up-to-date, and non-duplicative voter rolls. We believe that election boards, officials, and the public must take care to eliminate invalid or duplicative voter registrations, whether caused by death, voter mobility, or any other reason. Furthermore, we recommend that all state voter registries share information as people move from state to state.

Electoral College: We support the Electoral College to ensure all states have a voice in the election for the only national office, the presidency.

VIII. Ethics

The Republican Party of Cuyahoga County and its leaders, members, public figures, and elected officials are role models, standing for issues, making decisions, and developing policies for the good of society. We are the party of Presidents Lincoln, Garfield, McKinley, Eisenhower, and Reagan, and as such, have a responsibility to govern beyond expectations.

The Constitution of the United States, our judicial system, and politics in America are based on a practice of high ethical standards. For a self-governing society to thrive, high ethical standards are required equally from its elected officials and its citizenry. Our Founding Fathers knew that a strong code of ethics

was necessary for the survival of the Republic.

In order to uphold and advance the integrity, honor, and dignity of the Republican Party of Cuyahoga County commits itself to applying a code of high ethical standards in action, word, and deed, and encourages all of its members, including elected and public officials, candidates, committee leaders, ward leaders, precinct committee members, and community leaders to apply these standards in obedience to the law of land, and human and natural rights, equality of all citizens, concern for health and safety, personal characteristics of integrity, honesty, morality, civility, conviction, trust, and leadership, doing no harm in word or deed, transparency of actions, and concern for our environment.

Elected and appointed officials, candidates for public office, and party members and leaders must demonstrate the highest commitment to ethics in their political campaigns and their terms of office. This includes:

- A. Abiding by all federal, state, and local laws concerning the conduct of their campaign and policies.
- B. Supporting high ethical standards while campaigning or in office.
- C. Being an ethical role model for staff and constituency alike.
- D. Treating party members, constituents and staff in an ethical manner and with dignity and integrity.
- E. Issuing public statements in an objective and truthful manner while operating and communicating in a transparent, ethical, and upfront manner.
- F. Implementing ethical hiring practices and hiring people of high integrity,
- G. Frequently reviewing and revising governmental ethics policies and setting an example in their professional and personal lives representative of high values and ethics.
- H. Keeping campaign promises and pledges, taking those seriously by those who are fortunate enough to win an elected seat, and expecting those promises and pledges to be kept.
- I. Prohibiting discrimination and harassment with regard to race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin or disability.
- J. Ensuring that RPCC's financial and personnel practices comply with applicable federal and state laws, regulations, guidelines, and policies.
- K. Safeguarding and maintaining the confidentiality and security of proprietary information relating to RPCC, its members, and employees as well as with those who have a business or professional relationship with RPCC.
- L. Avoiding conflicts of interest: RPCC directors, members, employees, and service providers owe a duty of complete loyalty to RPCC and may not use their positions to profit personally at the expense of the organization, financially or otherwise. Committee members and employees agree to disclose potential conflicts of interest to the Executive Director or the Chairperson of the party.
- M. This party pledges to support elected officials and candidates for public office who will ensure that staff and employees are properly trained in ethics law and policy, will hold employees to high ethical standards, and will institute a culture of ethical behavior for staff and employees in their campaigns and in elective offices. Republicans will commit to continuous training and improvement of ethical behavior for themselves and their staff.
- N. Republican elected officials and candidates will choose to conduct commerce with ethical vendors.

- O. With the explosion of social media for personal and political use comes the need for ethical guidelines that should be embraced by our party, our candidates, and our members. It has become easy to act in a mean-spirited manner behind the shroud of a computer or smart phone screen. Social media messages by Republicans should be accurate, fair, and respectful, even when we disagree with each other.

Finally, Republican elected officials and candidates should lead by example and exhibit ethical behavior, over and above standards, and constantly seek to enact policies that uplift their communities to the high ethical standards for the good of their constituents.

Recommendations

Republican candidates and officeholders seeking endorsement from our county party for local office shall be provided copies of this platform, asked to support these principles, and encouraged to fashion their campaigns and governance around the principles set herein. We ask for reasonable fidelity to this platform by qualified, Republican elected officials. Candidates should disclose any material variations between their beliefs and this platform. It should be so noted that this platform seeks to demonstrate the major differences between the two major parties' governing philosophies.

Transparency engenders accountability, and Republican principles represent affirmation of individuals and families, support for commerce which fuels our economy, and good government with the highest standards of integrity. We value the needs and rights of the people of Cuyahoga County, and we ask for their votes based on the objectives outlined in this platform, and the common sense belief that government is best when it governs least, allowing the private sector to flourish and its citizens to control their own lives. The citizens of Cuyahoga County deserve no less.

Revisions: We do not claim perfection or infallibility, or that future situations will not change priorities or needs. Just as the RNC platform is subject to improvement every four years at the Republican National Convention, we recognize the value of continuous examination of specific provisions, and invite search into potential improvements of this platform – whether following the 2020 Republican National Convention or prior thereto. We welcome sincere comments from fellow Republicans in this regard.