

Covering the 2026 Campaigns (Part 9)

The Republican Party

By

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The Republican Party

I would like to end the Political Party series with the Republican Party. Journalists should know everything they can about the candidates and political campaigns they cover — at the local, state, and federal level. My hope is that sharing the history of each major party, along with its current platforms, will help you as you do your job of covering the news honestly and objectively.

As a reminder, I am now and have always been a political independent. That's the only way news consumers can trust journalists who cover politics. No party affiliation. No party allegiance. Just a desire to find, confirm, and report truth.

“Republican Party, or GOP (Grand Old Party), One of the two major political parties in the U.S.; it is today generally associated with individual economic freedom and conservative social policies. It was formed in 1854 by former members of the Whig, Democratic, and Free Soil parties who chose the party’s name to recall the Jeffersonian Republicans’ concern with the national interest above sectional interests and states’ rights. The new party opposed slavery and its extension into the territories, as provided by the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Its first presidential candidate, John C. Frémont, won 11 states in 1856; its second, Abraham Lincoln, won the 1860 election by carrying 18 states. Its opposition to slavery and association with the Union victory in the American Civil War allowed it a long period of dominance nationally; for these reasons, the party was also uncompetitive in the South for more than a century after the war. Republican candidates won 14 of 18

presidential elections between 1860 and 1932, through support from an alliance of Northern and Midwestern farmers and big-business interests. In 1912 the party split between a progressive wing led by Theodore Roosevelt and a conservative wing led by Pres. William Howard Taft; the rift enabled the Democratic candidate, Woodrow Wilson, to win that year's election.

The Republican Party's inability to counter the impact of the Great Depression led to its ouster from power in 1933. In 1953 the presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower brought a moderate wing of the party to prominence. The party's platform was conservative, emphasizing anticommunism, reduced government regulation of the economy, and lower taxes; many members also opposed civil rights legislation. In the 1950s the GOP gained new support from middle-class suburbanites and white Southerners disturbed by the integrationist policies

of the national Democratic Party. Republican Richard Nixon, who lost the 1960 presidential race to Democrat John F. Kennedy, won narrowly in 1968 and by a landslide in 1972. He resigned in 1974 as a result of the Watergate scandal. Ronald Reagan, who had assumed the leadership of the conservative wing of the Republican Party after Barry Goldwater's defeat in the presidential election of 1964, won the presidency in 1980 and 1984; he introduced tax cuts and launched a buildup of U.S. military forces. Reagan's vice president, George H.W. Bush, was elected in 1988 and enjoyed enormous popularity after success in the Persian Gulf War, but an anemic economy led to his defeat in 1992 by Democrat Bill Clinton. The defeat was offset in 1994, when the Republicans regained control of the House of Representatives for the first time in 40 years. In 2000 George W. Bush narrowly won the presidency over Democrat Al Gore. In 2004 Bush won reelection. In part because of

growing opposition to the Iraq War, Republicans lost control of both the House and the Senate following the 2006 midterm elections, and Republican John McCain was defeated in the 2008 presidential election by Democrat Barack Obama. During Obama's two terms, Republicans gained control of the House (2010) and the Senate (2014). In the 2016 presidential election, Republican Donald Trump defeated Democrat Hillary Clinton, and during his presidency the party split between Republican traditionalists and the pro-Trump MAGA (Make America Great Again) movement. Trump lost to Democrat Joe Biden in the 2020 presidential election, but he solidified his control over the party, becoming its nominee again in 2024 and winning the election. The Republican Party continues to emphasize tax cuts, traditional social values, and a strong national defense." Britannica

The Republican Party Platform

I saved the Republican Party's platform for last because they did something unusual for a political party. They held the first-ever midterm convention. It was held September 9-10 in Dallas, TX. The GOP party's platform prior to the convention was based on its policies for the 2024 election. I was interested to see if the 2026 convention would make any changes to the 2024 platform. I didn't think it would based on comparing the 2024 platform to how the Republican Party has governed since January 2025, but I wanted to watch the process before writing this newsletter.

As I thought, the convention did not make changes to the 2024 Platform. In my opinion, the convention looked more like a political rally rather than an attempt to add new planks to a party platform.

With that introduction, here is the Republican Party Platform from its official website. You'll notice that the platform is the same one the party used for the 2024 Election: (I will add, in the Party's words, an explanation for any topic that needs more information to understand it — you can read the explanations in full at the Republican site.)

- Unleash American Energy
- Rein in Wasteful Federal Spending
- Cut Costly and Burdensome Regulations
- Stop Illegal Immigration
- Restore Peace through Strength
- Secure the Border
- Enforce Immigration Laws
- Begin Largest Deportation Program in American History
- Strict Vetting
- Stop Sanctuary Cities

- Ensure Our Legal Immigration System Puts American Workers First
- Cut Regulations
- Make Trump Tax Cuts Permanent and No Tax on Tips
- Fair and Reciprocal Trade Deals
- Reliable and Abundant Low Cost Energy
- Champion Innovation: Crypto, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Expanding Freedom, Prosperity and Safety in Space
- Housing Affordability
- Accessible Higher Education
- Affordable Healthcare
- Lower Everyday Costs
- Rebalance Trade
- Secure Strategic Independence from China
- Save the American Auto Industry
- Bring Home Critical Supply Chains
- Buy American and Hire American
- Become the Manufacturing Superpower
- Protect Social Security

- Strengthen Medicare
- Support Active and Healthy Living
- Protect Care at Home for the Elderly
- Protect Economic Foundations for Supporting Seniors
- Great Principals and Great Teachers
- Universal School Choice
- Prepare Students for Jobs and Careers
- Safe, Secure, and Drug-Free Schools
- Restore Parental Rights
- Knowledge and Skills, Not CRT and Gender Indoctrination
- Promote Love of Country with Authentic Civics Education
- Freedom to Pray
- Return Education to the States
- Empower American Families
- Rebuild Our Cities and Restore Law and Order
- Make Washington D.C. the Safest and Most Beautiful Capital City

- Take Care of Our Veterans
- Make Colleges and Universities Sane and Affordable
- Combat Antisemitism
- Overcome the Crisis in Liberal Arts Education
- Restore American Beauty
- Honor American History
- Republicans Will Stop Woke and Weaponized Government
- Republicans Will Dismantle Censorship & Protect Free Speech
- Republicans Will Defend Religious Liberty
- Republicans Will Protect and Defend a Vote of the People, from within the States, on the Issue of Life
- Republicans Will End Left-wing Gender Insanity
- Republicans Will Ensure Election Integrity
- Republicans Will Protect Americans in the Territories
- The National Interest (Republicans will promote a Foreign Policy centered on the most essential American Interests, starting with protecting the

American Homeland, our People, our Borders, our Great American Flag, and our Rights under God)

- Modernize the Military
- Strengthen Alliances
- Strengthen Economic, Military, and Diplomatic Capabilities
- Defend America's Borders
- Revive our Industrial Base
- Protect Critical Infrastructure

As you interview Republican candidates for elected office, ask them about these planks in the Party Platform. Know as much about each one as you can so you can ask tough and probing questions that will help voters know where the candidate stands on each plank.

Next Time

The 2026 General Election will soon be history. How should journalists cover the winners and losers in their local communities? Join us next time as our series about *Covering the 2026 Campaigns* continues.



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