

- [American Values](#)
- [Marriage, Family, and Society](#)
- [A Culture of Hope](#)
- [Education: A Chance for Every Child](#)
- [Academic Excellence for All](#)
- [Choice in Education](#)
- [Title IX](#)
- [Improving Higher Education](#)
- [College Costs](#)
- [Restoring Patient Control and Preserving Quality in Healthcare](#)
- [Protecting Individual Conscience in Healthcare](#)
- [Better Care and Lower Costs: Tort Reform](#)
- [Advancing Research and Development in Healthcare](#)
- [Putting Patients First: Reforming the FDA](#)
- [Advancing Americans with Disabilities](#)
- [Ensuring Safe Neighborhoods: Criminal Justice and Prison Reform](#)
- [Combatting Drug Abuse](#)

## **American Values (Top)**

We are the party of independent individuals and the institutions they create together — families, schools, congregations, neighborhoods — to advance their ideals and make real their dreams. Those institutions, standing between the citizen and the power of government, are the pillars of a free society. They create spaces where the power of government should not intrude. They allow Americans to work together to solve most of the problems facing their communities. They thus reduce the need for intervention by government in the form of more and bigger programs or a larger public workforce. They minimize decision-making by those who hold or are appointed to office. That is precisely why today's progressives distrust and seek to control them — because this is more than a conflict of ideas. It is a struggle for power.

Our society is at a crossroads. For several generations, an expansive federal regime has marginalized and supplanted the institutions holding our society together. No wonder, then, that so much seems to be coming apart now. The question is whether we are going to reinvigorate the private-sector institutions under citizen control or allow their continued erosion by the forces of centralized social planning. In that divide, the Republican Party stands with the people.

## **Marriage, Family, and Society (Top)**

Foremost among those institutions is the American family. It is the foundation of civil society, and the cornerstone of the family is natural marriage, the union of one man and one woman. Its daily lessons — cooperation, patience, mutual respect, responsibility, self-reliance — are fundamental to the order and progress of our Republic. Strong families, depending upon God and one another, advance the cause of liberty by lessening the need for government in their daily lives. Conversely, as we have learned over the last five decades, the loss of faith and family life leads to greater dependence upon government. That is why Republicans formulate public policy, from taxation to education, from healthcare to welfare, with attention to the needs and strengths of the family.

It is also why everyone should be concerned about the state of the American family today, not because of ideology or doctrine, but because of the overwhelming evidence of experience, social science, and common sense. All of which give us these truths about traditional marriage: Children raised in a two-parent household tend to be physically and emotionally healthier, more likely to do well in school, less likely to use drugs and alcohol, engage in crime or become pregnant outside of marriage. We oppose policies and laws that create a financial incentive for or encourage cohabitation. Moreover, marriage remains the greatest antidote to child poverty. The 40 percent of children who now are born outside of marriage are five times more likely to live in poverty than youngsters born and raised by a mother and father in the home. Nearly three-quarters of the \$450 billion government annually spends on welfare goes to single-parent households. This is what it takes for a governmental village to raise a child, and the village is doing a tragically poor job of it.

The data and the facts lead to an inescapable conclusion: Every child deserves a married mom and dad. The reality remains that millions of American families do not have the advantages that come with that structure. We honor the courageous efforts of those who bear the burdens of parenting alone and embrace the principle that all Americans should be treated with dignity and respect. But respect is not enough. Our laws and our government's regulations should recognize marriage as the union of one man and one woman and actively promote married family life as the basis of a stable and prosperous society. For that reason, as explained elsewhere in this platform, we do not accept the Supreme Court's redefinition of marriage and we urge its reversal, whether through judicial reconsideration or a constitutional amendment returning control over marriage to the states. We oppose government discrimination against businesses or entities which decline to sell items or services to individuals for activities that go against their religious views about such activities.

Families formed or enlarged by adoption strengthen our communities and ennoble our nation. Private entities which facilitate adoptions enrich our communities. We support measures such as the First Amendment Defense Act to ensure these entities do not face government discrimination because of their views on marriage and family. We applaud the Republican initiatives which have led to an increase in adoptions, an achievement which should be recognized in any restructuring of the federal tax code. While the number of children in foster care has stabilized, teens who age out of that setting often are abruptly left to face the world on their own. We urge states and community groups to help these young adults become independent.

Thirty years ago, President Reagan commissioned a Special Working Group on the Family to study how government at all levels could be more supportive of family life. We urge marriage penalties to be removed from the tax code and public assistance programs. We invite all who care about children to join us in this proposal to ensure that all federal programs, in the words of President Kennedy, “stress the integrity and preservation of the family unit.”

### **A Culture of Hope (Top)**

We have been fighting the War on Poverty for 50 years and poverty is winning. Our social safety net — about 80 separate means-tested programs costing over \$1 trillion every year — is designed to help people born into or falling into poverty. It rarely lifts them out. Its apologists judge success by the amount of money spent to keep people in the system. That is a cruel measurement. Republicans propose to evaluate a poverty program by whether it actually reduces poverty and increases the personal independence of its participants. The results are damning: intergenerational poverty has persisted and worsened since 1966.

This year marks another important anniversary; it has been 20 years since the landmark Republican welfare reform of 1996 broke away from the discredited Great Society model. By making welfare a benefit instead of an entitlement, it put millions of recipients on a transition from dependence to independence. Welfare rolls declined by half as recipients and prospective recipients discovered a better way to reach their goals. Best of all, about 3 million children moved out of poverty. Today that progress has been lost. Defying the law as it was plainly written, the current Administration has nullified any meaningful work requirement and made TANF a mockery of the name we gave it: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. This decision ensures that those families will remain needy and cut off from the economic mainstream of American society.

This is the progressive pathology: Keeping people dependent so that government can redistribute income. The result is 45.8 million people on food stamps and 77 million on Medicaid, plus another 5.7 million in the Children's Health Insurance Program. This is the false compassion of the status quo. We propose instead the dynamic compassion of work requirements in a growing economy, where opportunity takes the place of a hand-out, where true self-esteem can grow from the satisfaction of a job well done.

We call for removal of structural impediments which progressives throw in the path of poor people: Over-regulation of start-up enterprises, excessive licensing requirements, needless restrictions on formation of schools and day-care centers serving neighborhood families, and restrictions on providing public services in fields like transport and sanitation that close the opportunity door to all but a favored few. We will continue our fight for school choice until all parents can find good, safe schools for their children. To protect religious liberty we will ensure that faith-based institutions, especially those that are vital parts of underserved neighborhoods, do not face discrimination by government. We propose new partnerships between those who manage federal programs and those who are on the front lines of fighting poverty on the ground. We must encourage their efforts to reclaim their communities from the culture of poverty. To advance this process, we urge greater state and local responsibility for, and control over, public assistance programs.

### **Education: A Chance for Every Child (Top)**

Education is much more than schooling. It is the whole range of activities by which families and communities transmit to a younger generation, not just knowledge and skills, but ethical and behavioral norms and traditions. It is the handing over of a cultural identity. That is why American education has, for the last several decades, been the focus of constant controversy, as centralizing forces from outside the family and community have sought to remake education in order to remake America. They have done immense damage. The federal government should not be a partner in that effort, as the Constitution gives it no role in education. At the heart of the American Experiment lies the greatest political expression of human dignity: The self-evident truth that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness." That truth rejects the dark view of the individual as human capital — a possession for the creation of another's wealth.

Parents are a child's first and foremost educators, and have primary responsibility for the education of their children. Parents have a right to direct their children's education, care, and upbringing. We support a constitutional amendment to protect that right from interference by states, the federal government, or international bodies such as the United Nations. We reject a one-size-fits-all approach to education and support a broad range of choices for parents and children at the state and local level. We likewise repeat our long-standing opposition to the imposition of national standards and assessments, encourage the parents and educators who are implementing alternatives to Common Core, and congratulate the states which have successfully repealed it. Their education reform movement calls for choice-based, parent-driven accountability at every stage of schooling. It affirms higher expectations for all students and rejects the crippling bigotry of low expectations. It recognizes the wisdom of local control of our schools and it wisely sees consumer rights in education — choice — as the most important driving force for renewing education. It rejects excessive testing and “teaching to the test” and supports the need for strong assessments to serve as a tool so teachers can tailor teaching to meet student needs.

We applaud America's great teachers, who should be protected against frivolous lawsuits and should be able to take reasonable actions to maintain discipline and order in the classroom. Administrators need flexibility to innovate and to hold accountable all those responsible for student performance. A good understanding of the Bible being indispensable for the development of an educated citizenry, we encourage state legislatures to offer the Bible in a literature curriculum as an elective in America's high schools. We urge school districts to make use of teaching talent in the business community, STEM fields, and the military, especially among our returning veterans. Rigid tenure systems should be replaced with a merit-based approach in order to attract the best talent to the classroom. All personnel who interact with school children should pass background checks and be held to the highest standards of personal conduct.

### **Academic Excellence for All (Top)**

Maintaining American preeminence requires a world-class system of education in which all students can reach their potential. Republicans are leading the effort to create it. Since 1965, the federal government, through more than 100 programs in the Department of Education, has spent \$2 trillion on elementary and secondary education with little substantial improvement in academic achievement or high school graduation rates. The United States spends an

average of more than \$12,000 per pupil per year in public schools, for a total of more than \$620 billion. That represents more than 4 percent of GDP devoted to K-12 education in 2011-2012. Of that amount, federal spending amounted to more than \$57 billion. Clearly, if money were the solution, our schools would be problem-free.

More money alone does not necessarily equal better performance. After years of trial and error, we know the policies and methods that have actually made a difference in student advancement: Choice in education; building on the basics; STEM subjects and phonics; career and technical education; ending social promotions; merit pay for good teachers; classroom discipline; parental involvement; and strong leadership by principals, superintendents, and locally elected school boards. Because technology has become an essential tool of learning, it must be a key element in our efforts to provide every child equal access and opportunity. We strongly encourage instruction in American history and civics by using the original documents of our founding fathers.

### **Choice in Education (Top)**

We support options for learning, including home-schooling, career and technical education, private or parochial schools, magnet schools, charter schools, online learning, and early-college high schools. We especially support the innovative financing mechanisms that make options available to all children: education savings accounts (ESAs), vouchers, and tuition tax credits. Empowering families to access the learning environments that will best help their children to realize their full potential is one of the greatest civil rights challenges of our time. A young person's ability to succeed in school must be based on his or her God-given talent and motivation, not an address, ZIP code, or economic status. We propose that the bulk of federal money through Title I for low-income children and through IDEA for children with special needs should follow the child to whatever school the family thinks will work best for them.

In sum, on the one hand enormous amounts of money are being spent for K-12 public education with overall results that do not justify that spending level. On the other hand, the common experience of families, teachers, and administrators forms the basis of what does work in education. In Congress and in the states, Republicans are bridging the gap between those two realities. Congressional Republicans are leading the way forward with major reform legislation advancing the concept of block grants and repealing numerous federal regulations which have interfered with state and local control of public schools. Their Workplace Innovation and Opportunity Act — modernizing workforce

programs, repealing mandates, and advancing employment for persons with disabilities — is now law. Their legislation to require transparency in unfunded mandates imposed upon our schools is advancing. Their D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program should be expanded as a model for the rest of the country. We deplore the efforts of Congressional Democrats and the current President to eliminate this successful program for disadvantaged students in order to placate the leaders of the teachers' unions.

To ensure that all students have access to the mainstream of American life, we support the English First approach and oppose divisive programs that limit students' ability to advance in American society. We renew our call for replacing "family planning" programs for teens with sexual risk avoidance education that sets abstinence until marriage as the responsible and respected standard of behavior. That approach — the only one always effective against premarital pregnancy and sexually-transmitted disease — empowers teens to achieve optimal health outcomes. We oppose school-based clinics that provide referral or counseling for abortion and contraception and believe that federal funds should not be used in mandatory or universal mental health, psychiatric, or socio-emotional screening programs. The federal government has pushed states to collect and share vast amounts of personal student and family data, including the collection of social and emotional data. Much of this data is collected without parental consent or notice. This is wholly incompatible with the American Experiment and our inalienable rights.

### **Title IX (Top)**

We emphatically support the original, authentic meaning of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. It affirmed that "no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." That language opened up for girls and women a world of opportunities that had too often been denied to them. That same provision of law is now being used by bureaucrats — and by the current President of the United States — to impose a social and cultural revolution upon the American people by wrongly redefining sex discrimination to include sexual orientation or other categories. Their agenda has nothing to do with individual rights; it has everything to do with power. They are determined to reshape our schools — and our entire society — to fit the mold of an ideology alien to America's history and traditions. Their edict to the states concerning restrooms, locker rooms, and other facilities is at once illegal, dangerous, and

ignores privacy issues. We salute the several states which have filed suit against it.

Sexual assault is a terrible crime. We commend the good-faith efforts by law enforcement, educational institutions, and their partners to address that crime responsibly. Whenever reported, it must be promptly investigated by civil authorities and prosecuted in a courtroom, not a faculty lounge. Questions of guilt or innocence must be decided by a judge and jury, with guilt determined beyond a reasonable doubt. Those convicted of sexual assault should be punished to the full extent of the law. The Administration's distortion of Title IX to micromanage the way colleges and universities deal with allegations of abuse contravenes our country's legal traditions and must be halted before it further muddles this complex issue and prevents the proper authorities from investigating and prosecuting sexual assault effectively with due process.

### **Improving Higher Education (Top)**

Our colleges, universities, and trade schools, large and small, public and private, form the world's greatest assemblage of learning. They drive much of the research that keeps America competitive and, by admitting large numbers of foreign students, convey our values and culture to the world. Their excellence is undermined by an ideological bias deeply entrenched within the current university system. Whatever the solution may be in private institutions, in state schools the trustees have a responsibility to the taxpayers to ensure that their enormous investment is not abused for political indoctrination. We call on state officials to preserve our public colleges, universities, and trade schools as places of learning and the exchange of ideas, not zones of intellectual intolerance or "safe zones," as if college students need protection from the free exchange of ideas. A student's First Amendment rights do not end at the schoolhouse gates. Colleges, universities, and trade schools must not infringe on their freedom of speech and association in the name of political correctness. We condemn the campus-based BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) campaign against Israel. It is anti-Semitism and should be denounced by advocates of academic freedom.

### **College Costs (Top)**

The cost of a college education has long been on an unsustainable trajectory, rising year by year far ahead of inflation. Nationwide, student debt now exceeds credit card debt with average debt levels per student totaling roughly \$27,000. Delinquency rates on student loans are now as high as they were on subprime mortgages during the housing crisis. Over half of recent college grads are unemployed or underemployed, working at jobs for which their expensive

educations gave them no preparation. We need new systems of learning to compete with traditional four-year schools: Technical institutions, online universities, life-long learning, and work-based learning in the private sector. Public policy should advance their affordability, innovation, and transparency and should recognize that a four-year degree from a brick-and-mortar institution is not the only path toward a prosperous and fulfilling career.

The federal government should not be in the business of originating student loans. In order to bring down college costs and give students access to a multitude of financing options, private sector participation in student financing should be restored. Any regulation that increases college costs must be challenged to balance its worth against its negative economic impact on students and their families.

In order to encourage new modes of higher education delivery to enter the market, accreditation should be decoupled from federal financing, and states should be empowered to allow a wide array of accrediting and credentialing bodies to operate. This model would foster innovation, bring private industry into the credentialing market, and give students the ability to customize their college experience.

### **Restoring Patient Control and Preserving Quality in Healthcare (Top)**

Any honest agenda for improving healthcare must start with repeal of the dishonestly named Affordable Care Act of 2010: Obamacare. It weighs like the dead hand of the past upon American medicine. It imposed a Euro-style bureaucracy to manage its unworkable, budget-busting, conflicting provisions. It has driven up prices for all consumers. Their insurance premiums have dramatically increased while their deductibles have risen about eight times faster than wages in the last ten years. It drove up drug prices by levying a \$27 billion tax on manufacturers and importers and, through mandated price cuts for drugs under Medicare and Medicaid, forced pharmaceutical companies to raise prices for everyone else. Its “silver plans,” the most common option on the government insurance exchanges, limit people’s access to their own doctor through narrow networks and restrict drug coverage, forcing many patients to pay for extremely costly medicines for their chronic diseases.

We agree with the four dissenting judges of the Supreme Court: “In our view, the entire Act before us is invalid in its entirety.” It must be removed and replaced with an approach based on genuine competition, patient choice, excellent care, wellness, and timely access to treatment. To that end, a Republican president, on the first day in office, will use legitimate waiver authority under the law to halt

its advance and then, with the unanimous support of Congressional Republicans, will sign its repeal. The Supreme Court upheld Obamacare based on Congress' power to tax. It is time to repeal Obamacare and give America a much-needed tax cut.

In its place we must combine what worked best in the past with changes needed for the future. We must recover the traditional patient-physician relationship based on mutual trust, informed consent, and confidentiality. To simplify the system for both patients and providers, we will reduce mandates and enable insurers and providers of care to increase healthcare options and contain costs. Our goal is to ensure that all Americans have improved access to affordable, high-quality healthcare, including those struggling with mental illness.

We will return to the states their historic role of regulating local insurance markets, limit federal requirements on both private insurance and Medicaid, and call on state officials to reconsider the costly medical mandates, imposed under their own laws, that price millions of low-income families out of the insurance market. To guarantee first-rate care for the needy, we propose to block grant Medicaid and other payments and to assist all patients, including those with pre-existing conditions, to obtain coverage in a robust consumer market. Through Obamacare, the current Administration has promoted the notion of abortion as healthcare. We, however, affirm the dignity of women by protecting the sanctity of human life. Numerous studies have shown that abortion endangers the health and well-being of women, and we stand firmly against it.

To ensure vigorous competition in healthcare, and because cost-awareness is the best guard against over-utilization, we will promote price transparency so consumers can know the cost of treatments before they agree to them. We will empower individuals and small businesses to form purchasing pools in order to expand coverage to the uninsured. We believe that individuals with preexisting conditions who maintain continuous coverage should be protected from discrimination. We applaud the advance of technology in electronic medical records while affirming patient privacy and ownership of personal health information.

Consumer choice is the most powerful factor in healthcare reform. Today's highly mobile workforce needs portability of insurance coverage that can go with them from job to job. The need to maintain coverage should not dictate where families have to live and work. We propose to end tax discrimination against the individual purchase of insurance and allow consumers to buy insurance across state lines. In light of that, we propose repealing the 1945 McCarran-Ferguson

Act which protects insurance companies from anti-trust litigation. We look to the growth of Health Savings Accounts and Health Reimbursement Accounts that empower patients and advance choice in healthcare.

Our aging population must have access to safe and affordable care. Because most seniors desire to age at home, we will make homecare a priority in public policy and will implement programs to protect against elder abuse.

### **Protecting Individual Conscience in Healthcare (Top)**

America's healthcare professionals should not be forced to choose between following their faith and practicing their profession. We respect the rights of conscience of healthcare professionals, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and organizations, especially the faith-based groups which provide a major portion of care for the nation and the needy. We support the ability of all organizations to provide, purchase, or enroll in healthcare coverage consistent with their religious, moral, or ethical convictions without discrimination or penalty. We support the right of parents to determine the proper medical treatment and therapy for their minor children. We support the right of parents to consent to medical treatment for their minor children and urge enactment of legislation that would require parental consent for their daughter to be transported across state lines for abortion. Providers should not be permitted to unilaterally withhold services because a patient's life is deemed not worth living. American taxpayers should not be forced to fund abortion. As Democrats abandon this four decade-old bipartisan consensus, we call for codification of the Hyde Amendment and its application across the government, including Obamacare. We call for a permanent ban on federal funding and subsidies for abortion and healthcare plans that include abortion coverage.

### **Better Care and Lower Costs: Tort Reform (Top)**

Medical malpractice lawsuits have ballooned the cost of healthcare for everyone by forcing physicians to practice defensive medicine through tests and treatments which otherwise might be optional. Rural America is especially affected as obstetricians, surgeons, and other providers move to urban settings or retire in the face of escalating insurance premiums. Many Republican Governors have advanced the legal reforms necessary to reverse that trend. We support state and federal legislation to cap non-economic damages in medical malpractice lawsuits, thereby relieving conscientious providers of burdens that are not rightly theirs and addressing a serious cause of higher medical bills.

### **Advancing Research and Development in Healthcare (Top)**

American medicine is poised to enter a new era of technological advance. Federal and private investment in basic and applied biomedical research holds enormous promise, especially with diseases and disorders like autism, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's. Just as we today take for granted wonders that seemed impossible a few decades ago — MRIs and CAT scans, robotic surgery, and in utero treatment — patients a decade hence will have care and treatment that will make much of today's medicine look primitive. Modern miracles involving genetics, the immune system, cures for deadly diseases, and more are in the research pipeline. This is the consequence of marrying significant investment, both public and private, with the world's best talent, a formula that has for a century given the American people the world's best healthcare. We are determined that it should continue to do so, especially as we confront new dangers like Ebola, Zika, Chikungunya, and antibiotic-resistant pathogens.

To continue our headway against breast and prostate cancer, diabetes, and other killers, research must consider the needs of formerly neglected demographic groups. We call for expanded support for the stem cell research that now offers the greatest hope for many afflictions — through adult stem cells, umbilical cord blood, and cells reprogrammed into pluripotent stem cells — without the destruction of embryonic human life. We urge a ban on human cloning for research or reproduction, and a ban on the creation of, or experimentation on, human embryos for research. We applaud Congress' ban on the FDA approval of research involving three-parent embryos. We believe the FDA's approval of Mifeprex, a dangerous abortifacient formerly known as RU-486, threatens women's health, as does the agency's endorsement of over-the-counter sales of powerful contraceptives without a physician's recommendation. We support cutting federal and state funding for entities that endanger women's health by performing abortions in a manner inconsistent with federal or state law.

### **Putting Patients First: Reforming the FDA (Top)**

The United States has led life sciences and medical innovation for decades, bringing millions of high-paying jobs to our country and helping Americans and people around the world live longer, healthier lives. Unfortunately, the continuously increasing burden of governmental regulation and red tape is taking its toll on our innovative companies, and their pipeline of new life-saving devices and drugs to our nation's patients is slowing and diminishing. The FDA has slowly but relentlessly changed into an agency that more and more puts the public health at risk by delaying, chilling, and killing the development of new devices, drugs and biologics that can promote our lives and our health. The FDA needs leadership that can reform the agency for our century and fix the lack of

predictability, consistency, transparency and efficiency at the agency. The FDA needs to return to its traditional emphasis on hard science and approving new breakthrough medicines, rather than divert its attention and consume its resources trying to overregulate electronic health records or vaping. We pledge to restore the FDA to its position as the premier scientific health agency, focused on both promoting and protecting the public health in equal measure, so we can ensure that Americans live longer, healthier lives, that the United States remains the world leader in life sciences and medical innovation, that millions of high-paying, cutting-edge device and drug jobs stay in the United States, that U.S. patients benefit first and most from new devices and drugs, and that the FDA no longer wastes U.S. taxpayer and innovators' resources through bureaucratic red tape and legal uncertainty. We commend those states that have passed Right to Try legislation, allowing terminally ill patients the right to try investigational medicines not yet approved by the FDA. We urge Congress to pass federal legislation to give all Americans with terminal illnesses the right to try.

### **Advancing Americans with Disabilities (Top)**

Under the last two Republican presidents, landmark civil rights legislation affirmed the inherent rights of persons with disabilities. Republicans want to support those rights by guaranteeing access to education and the tools necessary to compete in the mainstream of society. This is not just a moral obligation to our fellow Americans with disabilities. It is our duty to our country's future to tap this vast pool of talented individuals who want to work and contribute to the common good. For that reason, Republican leadership led to enactment of the ABLE Act (Achieving a Better Life Experience) and the Steve Gleason Act. The former, for the first time, lets people with disabilities maintain access to services while saving to develop assets. The latter, bearing the name of the former NFL player with ALS, provides access to speech-generating devices. In addition, our Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act will make it easier for students with disabilities to pursue competitive employment.

Persons with disabilities are nearly twice as likely to be self-employed as the general population. To encourage their entrepreneurship, it makes sense to include them in the Small Business Administration's 8(a) certification program, which opens up federal contracting for emerging businesses. Any restructuring of the tax code should consider ways in which companies can benefit from the talent and energy of their disabled employees.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has opened up unprecedented opportunities for many students. Congressional Republicans will

lead in its reauthorization, as well as renewal of the Higher Education Act, which can offer students with disabilities increased access to the general curriculum. Our TIME Act (Transition to Integrated and Meaningful Employment) will modernize the Fair Labor Standards Act to encourage competitive employment for persons with disabilities. We affirm our support for its goal of minimizing the separation of children with disabilities from their peers. We endorse efforts like Employment First that replace dependency with jobs in the mainstream of the American workforce.

We oppose the non-consensual withholding of care or treatment from people with disabilities, including newborns, the elderly, and infirm, just as we oppose euthanasia and assisted suicide, which endanger especially those on the margins of society. We urge the Drug Enforcement Administration to restore its ban on the use of controlled substances for physician-assisted suicide.

### **Ensuring Safe Neighborhoods: Criminal Justice and Prison Reform (Top)**

The men and women of law enforcement — whether patrolling our neighborhoods or our borders, fighting organized crime or guarding against domestic terror — deserve our gratitude and support. Their jobs are never easy, especially in crisis situations, and should not be made more difficult by politicized second-guessing from federal officials. The current Administration's lack of respect for them, from White House intervention in local arrests to the Attorney General's present campaign of harassment against police forces around the country, has been unprecedented. With all Americans, we mourn those whom we have lost to violence and hatred. To honor their sacrifice, we recommit ourselves, as individuals and as a party, to the rule of law and the pursuit of justice.

The conduct of the Department of Justice has included refusal to enforce laws, stonewalling congressional committees, destroying evidence, reckless dealing with firearms that led to several deaths on both sides of our border, and defying a citation for contempt. It has urged leniency for rioters while turning a blind eye to mob attacks on peaceful citizens exercising their political rights. A new administration must ensure the immediate dismissal and, where appropriate, prosecution of any Department officials who have violated their oath of office.

The next president must restore the public's trust in law enforcement and civil order by first adhering to the rule of law himself. Additionally, the next president must not sow seeds of division and distrust between the police and the people they have sworn to serve and protect. The Republican Party, a party of law and order, must make clear in words and action that every human life matters.

Two grave problems undermine the rule of law on the federal level: Over-criminalization and over-federalization. In the first case, Congress and federal agencies have increased the number of criminal offenses in the U.S. Code from 3,000 in the early 1980s to more than 4,500 today. That does not include an estimated 300,000 regulations containing criminal penalties. No one, including the Department of Justice, can come up with accurate numbers. That recklessness is bad enough when committed by Congress, but when it comes from the unelected bureaucrats of the federal agencies, it is intolerable. The power of career civil servants and political appointees to criminalize behavior is one of the worst violations of constitutional order perpetrated by the administrative state.

To deal with this morass, we urge caution in the creation of new “crimes” and a bipartisan presidential commission to purge the Code and the body of regulations of old “crimes.” We call for mens rea elements in the definition of any new crimes to protect Americans who, in violating a law, act unknowingly or without criminal intent. We urge Congress to codify the Common Law’s Rule of Lenity, which requires courts to interpret unclear statutes in favor of a defendant.

The over-federalization of criminal justice is one of many ways in which the government in Washington has intruded beyond its proper jurisdiction. The essential role of federal law enforcement personnel in protecting federal property and combating interstate crime should not be compromised by diversion to matters properly handled by state and local authorities.

We applaud the Republican Governors and legislators who have been implementing criminal justice reforms like those proposed by our 2012 platform. Along with diversion of first-time, nonviolent offenders to community sentencing, accountability courts, drug courts, veterans treatment courts, and guidance by faith-based institutions with proven track records of rehabilitation, our platform emphasized restorative justice to make the victim whole and put the offender on the right path. As variants of these reforms are undertaken in many states, we urge the Congress to learn from what works. In the past, judicial discretion about sentences led to serious mistakes concerning dangerous criminals. Mandatory minimum sentencing became an important tool for keeping them off the streets. Modifications to it should be targeted toward particular categories, especially nonviolent offenders and persons with drug, alcohol, or mental health issues, and should require disclosure by the courts of any judicial departure from the state’s sentencing requirements.

The constitutionality of the death penalty is firmly settled by its explicit mention in the Fifth Amendment. With the murder rate soaring in our great cities, we condemn the Supreme Court's erosion of the right of the people to enact capital punishment in their states. In solidarity with those who protect us, we call for mandatory prison time for all assaults involving serious injury to law enforcement officers.

We call on the Congress to make the federal courts a model for the rest of the country in protecting the rights of victims and their families. They should be told all relevant information about their case, allowed to be present for its trial, assured a voice in sentencing and parole hearings, given access to social and legal services, and benefit from the Crime Victims Fund established under President Reagan for that sole purpose.

Public officials must regain control of their correctional institutions, some of which have become ethnic and racial battlegrounds. Persons jailed for whatever cause should be protected against cruel or degrading treatment by other inmates. Courts should not tie the hands of prison officials in dealing with these problems. We encourage states to offer opportunities for literacy and vocational education to prepare prisoners for release to the community. Breaking the cycle of crime begins with the children of those who are prisoners. Deprived of a parent through no fault of their own, youngsters from these families should be a special concern of our schools, social services, and religious institutions.

The internet must not become a safe haven for predators. Pornography, with its harmful effects, especially on children, has become a public health crisis that is destroying the lives of millions. We encourage states to continue to fight this public menace and pledge our commitment to children's safety and well-being. We applaud the social networking sites that bar sex offenders from participation. We urge energetic prosecution of child pornography, which is closely linked to human trafficking.

### **Combatting Drug Abuse (Top)**

The progress made over the last three decades against drug abuse is eroding, whether for cultural reasons or for lack of national leadership. In many jurisdictions, marijuana is virtually legalized despite its illegality under federal law. At the other end of the drug spectrum, heroin use nearly doubled from 2003 to 2013, while deaths from heroin have quadrupled. All this highlights the continuing conflicts and contradictions in public attitudes and public policy toward illegal substances. Congress and a new administration should consider

the long-range implications of these trends for public health and safety and prepare to deal with the problematic consequences.

The misuse of prescription painkillers — opioids — is a related problem. Heroin and opioid abuse touches our communities, our homes, and our families in ways that have grave effects on Americans in every community. With a quadrupling of both their sales and their overdose deaths, the opioid crisis is ravaging communities all over the country, often hitting rural areas harder than urban. Because over-prescription of drugs is such a large part of the problem, Republican legislation now allows Medicare Part D and Medicare Advantage plans to limit patients to a single pharmacy. Congressional Republicans have also called upon the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to ensure that no physician will be penalized for limiting opioid prescriptions. We look for expeditious agreement between the House and Senate on the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, which addresses the opioid epidemic from both the demand and supply sides of the problem.