



CIVICS IN REAL LIFE

Political Party Platforms

Civics is all around us. There is a lot to know about the government and how “We the People” interact with the government and each other. Let’s help each other expand our civic literacy.

Today’s two main parties, the **Democrats** and the **Republicans**, emerged over the course of many years. The values and beliefs of political parties can change over time; what a party once supported in the past might be quite different from what they support today. **This may lead** to parties gaining new supporters and losing existing ones. How do we know the values and beliefs of political parties? We find them in their platforms.

A party’s political platform provides an overview of its agenda for the nation, its core values, and the reasons why it should be the party with majority control of the government. It is generally drafted at the party’s presidential nominating convention. “Party platforms were first adopted at the parties’ nominating conventions in 1832. With little exception, both major parties, and several minor parties, continue adopting platforms at their party’s nominating convention every four years.” The Democrats drafted a **new platform for 2024**, and the Republican Party is adhering to its **2024 platform** for the current presidential campaign.

The table below provides a comparison of the views of the two largest political parties across several issues. **It is important to remember that individual members of a political party may not necessarily support all aspects of their party’s platform.**



The Fishin' Season; 7/7/1919; Berryman Political Cartoon Collection, 1896 - 1949; Records of the U.S. Senate, Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC. National Archives Identifier: 1693475.

ISSUES	REPUBLICAN PARTY	DEMOCRATIC PARTY
Economic Ideas	Wages should be set by the free market and not the government; taxation for everyone should be as minimal as possible	Higher federal and state minimum wage; progressive taxation (the wealthy are taxed more than lower earners)
The Military	Supports a strong military and higher military budget (generally)	Supports a strong military but a lower military budget (generally)
Government Regulation	There are too many regulations, and regulations impact job growth and the expansion of the economy	Regulations are intended to help the citizen and the consumer and protect companies, communities, and the environment
Healthcare Policy	Supports a market-based approach to healthcare, including protection for pre-existing conditions; generally opposes the Affordable Care Act	Supports some form of government-run universal healthcare and protection for pre-existing conditions; generally supports preserving the Affordable Care Act
Immigration	Generally supports the deportation of all undocumented immigrants	Generally supports a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants

Whatever your position on the issues, it is important to understand where the major political parties stand so that you have some sense of who and what you will be voting for when candidates run for local, state, or national office.

To Think and To Do: Complete the quiz from the non-partisan election education resource ‘**I Side With**’. How do your own positions on issues compare with those of the two main political parties or the minor parties? Is there anything that surprised you about your results?

Learn MORE about political parties and platforms.

- [U.S. Political Parties & Organizations](#), from The Democracy Commitment, AASCU
- [List of Political Parties in the United States](#), from Ballotpedia
- [Political Parties](#), from Civics360
- [Democrats.org](#), Democratic Party Homepage
- [GOP.com](#), Republican Party Homepage



Lou Frey Institute



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If you are in **Florida**, join us with [KidsVotingFlorida!](#)

Somewhere else? Check out [DoubleClick Democracy](#)