

Democrats *&* Republicans

In Their Own Words

National Party Platforms on
Specific Biblical Issues



**Democrats and Republicans
In Their Own Words**

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On Certain Biblical Issues**

What is a Party Platform?

A national party platform is a document produced every four years by the representatives of a political party during its national convention to nominate a presidential candidate. The platform declares to the public that party's vision, beliefs, and values, and its legislative plan and policy positions on important issues of the day. A position set forth in a platform is called a "plank," and platforms today are made of dozens of planks.

Platforms often change from election to election, and decade to decade. Sometimes these changes occur because a party alters its views on a subject. On other occasions, a plank may be added to address a new and compelling issue.

For example, school prayer was not an issue addressed by platforms prior to 1962-1963 – the year in which the Supreme Court first prohibited prayer in schools. Similarly, the Supreme Court did not establish abortion-on-demand until 1973, so neither party addressed the issue before that year. However, the silence of a platform on an issue can also mean that the party agrees with the national policy then in place. Party platforms help voters know the values that a party stands for.

This booklet contains the positions of the two major political parties on four subjects of interest to voters of faith: prayer in schools, abortion, homosexuality, and school choice that includes opportunities for faith-based education. The following excerpts – taken directly from their platforms – can help citizens of faith make informed decisions about their personal involvement in and voting for a political party.

<i>THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM</i>	<i>THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM</i>
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On Prayer in Schools

1972

No mention of prayer in school.

1976

No mention of prayer in school.

1972

We reaffirm our view that voluntary prayer should be freely permitted in public places – particularly by school children while attending public schools – providing that such prayers are not prepared or prescribed by the state or any of its political subdivisions and that no person's participation is coerced, thus preserving the traditional separation of church and state.

1976

Local communities wishing to conduct non-sectarian prayers in their public schools should be able to do so. We

On Prayer in Schools

1980

No mention of prayer in school.

1984

No mention of prayer in school.

1988

No mention of prayer in school.

1992

No mention of prayer in school.

favor a constitutional amendment to achieve this end.

1980

We support Republican initiatives in the Congress to restore the right of individuals to participate in voluntary, non-denominational prayer in schools and other public facilities.

1984

Mindful of our religious diversity, we reaffirm our commitment to the freedoms of religion and speech guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States and firmly support the rights of students to openly practice the same, including the right to engage in voluntary prayer in schools.

1988

Mindful of our religious diversity, we firmly support the right of students to engage in voluntary prayer in schools. We call for full enforcement of the Republican legislation that now guarantees equal access to school facilities by student religious groups.

1992

America must remain neutral toward particular religions, but we must not remain neutral toward religion itself or the values religion supports. Mindful of our country's Judeo-Christian heritage and rich religious pluralism, we support the right of students to engage in voluntary prayer in schools and the right of the community to do so at commencements or other occasions.

THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM

THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM

On Prayer in Schools

1996

No mention of prayer in school.

2000

No mention of prayer in school.

1996

We will continue to work for the return of voluntary prayer to our schools and will strongly enforce the Republican legislation that guarantees equal access to school facilities by student religious groups. We encourage state legislatures to pass statutes which prohibit local school boards from adopting policies of denial regarding voluntary school prayer.

2000

We will continue to work for the return of voluntary school prayer to our schools and will strongly enforce the Republican legislation that guarantees equal access to school facilities by student religious groups. We strongly support voluntary student-initiated prayer in school without governmental interference. We strongly disagree with the Supreme Court's recent ruling [*Jane Doe v. Santa Fe*, prohibiting prayers at football games, athletic events and school graduations], backed by the current administration [President Clinton], against student-initiated prayer.

On Abortion

1976

We fully recognize the religious and ethical nature of the concerns which many Americans have on the subject of abortion. We feel, however, that it is undesirable to attempt to amend the U. S. Constitution to overturn the Supreme Court decision [*Roe v. Wade*] in this area.

1976

We protest the Supreme Court's intrusion [through *Roe v. Wade*] into the family structure through its denial of the parents' obligation and right to guide their minor children. The Republican Party favors a continuance of the public dialogue on abortion and sup-

On Abortion

1980

We fully recognize the religious and ethical concerns which many Americans have about abortion. We also recognize the belief of many Americans that a woman has a right to choose whether, and when, to have a child. The Democratic Party supports the 1973 Supreme Court decision [*Roe v. Wade*] on abortion rights as the law of the land and opposes any constitutional amendment to restrict or overturn that decision.

1984

Today, the fundamental right of a woman to reproductive freedom [abortion] rests on the votes of six members of the Supreme Court – five of whom are over 75. That right could easily disappear during a second Reagan term.

ports the efforts of those who seek enactment of a constitutional amendment to restore protection of the right to life for unborn children.

1980

There can be no doubt that the question of abortion, despite the complex nature of its various issues, is ultimately concerned with equality of rights under the law. While we recognize differing views on this question among Americans in general – and in our own Party – we affirm our support of a constitutional amendment to restore protection of the right to life for unborn children. We also support the congressional efforts to restrict the use of taxpayers' dollars for abortion. We protest the Supreme Court's intrusion into the family structure through its denial of the parent's obligation and right to guide their minor children.

1984

We oppose the use of public revenues for abortion and will eliminate funding for organizations which advocate or support abortion. We commend the efforts of those individuals and religious and private organizations that are providing positive alternatives to abortion by meeting the physical, emotional, and financial needs of pregnant women and offering adoption services where needed. . . .

The unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We therefore reaffirm our support for a human life amendment to the Constitution, and we en-

On Abortion

1988

We believe that the fundamental right of reproductive choice [abortion] should be guaranteed, regardless of ability to pay.

1992

Democrats stand behind the right of every woman to choose [abortion], consistent with *Roe v. Wade*, regardless of

dorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children.

1988

Since its inception, the Republican Party has stood for the worth of every person. On that ground, we support the pluralism and diversity that have been part of our country's greatness. "Deep in our hearts, we do believe": That the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life, which cannot be infringed. We therefore reaffirm our support for a human life amendment to the Constitution, and we endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children. We oppose the use of public revenues for abortion and will eliminate funding for organizations which advocate or support abortion. We commend the efforts of those individuals and religious and private organizations that are providing positive alternatives to abortion by meeting the physical, emotional, and financial needs of pregnant women and offering adoption services where needed. . . .

As part of our commitment to the family as the building block of economic progress, we believe decisions on family size should be made freely by each family, and we remain opposed to U.S. funding for organizations involved in abortion. . . .

1992

We believe the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We there-

On Abortion

ability to pay, and support a national law to protect that right. It is a fundamental constitutional liberty that individual Americans – not government – can best take responsibility for making the most difficult and intensely personal decisions regarding reproduction. The goal of our nation must be to make abortion less necessary, not more difficult or more dangerous.

1996

The Democratic Party stands behind the right of every woman to choose [abortion], consistent with *Roe v. Wade*, and regardless of ability to pay. President Clinton took executive action to make sure that the right to make such decisions is protected for all Americans. Over the last four years, we have taken action to end the gag rule † and ensure

† The “gag rule” refers to the general policy that denies U. S. government appropriated money to family planning organizations that provide, refer, counsel, or advocate for abortion. The history of the policy spans more than three decades. The first such policy was introduced in 1973 following the *Roe v. Wade* decision. At that time, Congress first prohibited the use of foreign-aid funds for abortions. In 1984 under President Reagan, the U. S. announced at a population conference in Mexico City that it would no longer fund foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide, refer, counsel, or advocate for abortion. This policy is called the “Mexico City Policy.” In 1993, President Clinton repealed the Mexico City Policy as one of his first presidential acts. In 2001, President Bush reinstated the policy as one of his first actions.

fore reaffirm our support for a human life amendment to the Constitution, and we endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment’s protections apply to unborn children. We oppose using public revenues for abortion and will not fund organizations which advocate it. We commend those who provide alternatives to abortion by meeting the needs of mothers and offering adoption services. We reaffirm our support for appointment of judges who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life.

1996

The unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We support a human life amendment to the Constitution and we endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment’s protections apply to unborn children. Our purpose is to have legislative and judicial protection of that right against those who perform abortions. We oppose using public revenues for abortion and will not fund organizations which advocate it. We support the appointment of judges who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life. . . .

Our goal is to ensure that women with problem pregnancies have the kind of support, material and otherwise, they need for themselves and for their babies, not to be punitive towards those for whose difficult situation we have only compassion. We oppose abortion, but our pro-life agenda does not include punitive action against women who

On Abortion

safety at family planning and women's health clinics. We believe it is a fundamental constitutional liberty that individual Americans – not government – can best take responsibility for making the most difficult and intensely personal decisions regarding reproduction. . . . Our goal is to make abortion less necessary and more rare, not more difficult and more dangerous.

2000

The Democratic Party stands behind the right of every woman to choose, consistent with *Roe v. Wade*, and regardless of ability to pay. We believe it is a fundamental constitutional liberty that individual Americans – not government – can best take responsibility for making the most difficult and intensely personal decisions regarding reproduction. This year's Supreme Court rulings show to us all that eliminating a woman's right to choose is only one Justice away. † That's why the stakes in this election are as high as ever. Our goal is to make abortion less necessary and more rare, not more difficult and more dangerous.

† The Supreme Court in that year recorded the most 5-4 decisions in its history, meaning that most decisions – on either side – might have been reversed if only one Justice had changed his or her mind. In this particular instance, in *Stenberg v. Carhart* (2000), the Supreme Court, by a 5-4 margin, overturned the ban that existed in thirty states against partial-birth abortions, thus permitting that procedure to continue. This plank warns that if Republicans win and add one Justice to the Court, the previous decision could be reversed and the ban on partial-birth abortions – and against abortions in general – would instead be upheld.

have an abortion. We salute those who provide alternatives to abortion and offer adoption services.

2000

We support a human life amendment to the Constitution and we endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children. Our purpose is to have legislative and judicial protection of that right against those who perform abortions. We oppose using public revenues for abortion and will not fund organizations which advocate it. We support the appointment of judges who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life. . . .

The Supreme Court's recent decision [*Stenberg v. Carhart* in 2000], prohibiting states from banning partial-birth abortions – a procedure denounced by a committee of the American Medical Association and rightly branded as fourth-fifths infanticide † – shocks the conscience of the nation. As a country, we must keep our pledge to the first guarantee of the Declaration of Independence

† "Infanticide" is the killing of a newly-born infant.

THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM

THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM

On Abortion

dence. † That is why we say the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed.

† The portion of the Declaration of Independence to which this clause refers, declares: "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, that among these are *life*, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men . . ." Thus, the "first guarantee of the Declaration of Independence" is that of the unalienable right to life.

On Homosexuality

1980

We must affirm the dignity of all people and the right of each individual to have equal access to and participation in the institutions and services of our society. All groups must be protected from discrimination based on . . . sexual orientation.

1984

Government has a special responsibility to those whom society has historically prevented from enjoying the benefits of full citizenship for reasons of . . . sexual orientation.

1988

We believe that we honor our multicultural heritage by assuring equal access to government services, employment, housing, business enterprise, and education to every citizen regardless of . . . sexual orientation.

1980

No mention of homosexuality.

1984

No mention of homosexuality.

1988

No mention of homosexuality.

THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM

THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM

On Homosexuality

1992

Democrats will continue to lead the fight to ensure that no Americans suffer discrimination or deprivation of rights on the basis of. . . . sexual orientation. . . . Provide civil rights protection for gay men and lesbians and an end to Defense Department discrimination. †

1996

We continue to lead the fight to end discrimination on the basis of. . . . sexual orientation. . . . We support continued efforts, like the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, to end discrimination against gay men and lesbians and further their full inclusion in the life of the nation.

1992

Moreover, we oppose efforts by the Democrat Party to include sexual preference as a protected minority receiving preferential status under civil rights statutes at the federal, state, and local level. . . .

Unlike the Democrat Party and its candidate, we support the continued exclusion of homosexuals from the military as a matter of good order and discipline.

1996

We oppose Bill Clinton's assault on the culture and traditions of the Armed Forces, especially his attempt to lift the ban on homosexuals in the military. We affirm that homosexuality is incompatible with military service. . . .

The sole source of equal opportunity for all is equality before the law. Therefore, we oppose discrimination based on sex, race, age, creed, or national origin and will vigorously enforce anti-discrimination statutes. We reject the distortion of those laws to cover sexual preference, and we endorse the Defense of Marriage Act to prevent states from being forced to recognize same-sex unions.

† This refers to the prohibition against homosexuals serving in the military. Following President Clinton's election, in July 1993 he lifted the ban on homosexuals in the military, but Congress reinstated the ban. However, in 1993, the DC Federal Court of Appeals overturned the long-standing ban. In September 1994, President Clinton then proposed a compromise policy, "Don't ask, don't tell," allowing homosexuals in the military as long as they do not openly engage in homosexual conduct. That policy was upheld by federal courts in 1994.

On Homosexuality

2000

We continue to lead the fight to end discrimination on the basis of. . . sexual orientation. . . We support continued efforts, like the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, to end workplace discrimination against gay men and lesbians. We support the full inclusion of gay and lesbian families in the life of the nation. This would include an equitable alignment of benefits.

2000

We affirm that homosexuality is incompatible with military service. . . . We support the traditional definition of “marriage” as the legal union of one man and one woman, and we believe that federal judges and bureaucrats should not force states to recognize other living arrangements as marriages. We rely on the home, as did the founders of the American Republic, to instill the virtues that sustain democracy itself. That belief led Congress to enact the Defense of Marriage Act,[†] which a Republican Department of Justice will energetically defend in the courts. For the same reason, we do not believe sexual preference should be given special legal protection or standing in law.

[†] The “Defense of Marriage Act” (commonly called DOMA) was passed by the federal Congress in September 1996. The law was passed as a reaction to a 1993 decision by the Hawaii Supreme Court that the state must recognize homosexual and same-sex marriages. Under the “full faith and credit clause” of the U. S. Constitution, one state must recognize the legal contracts formed in any other state; therefore, in order to prevent all states from being forced to honor in their state homosexual marriages performed in another state, Congress passed the federal DOMA. (Additionally, thirty-eight states have passed DOMAs stating that homosexual marriages performed in other states will not be recognized in their state.) The federal law also defined marriage for the purposes of all federal laws and programs; that law established: “the word ‘marriage’ means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word ‘spouse’ refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife.” Congress thus preserved the traditional Biblical definition of marriage.

THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM

THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM

On School Choice & Faith-Based Education

1972

No mention of school choice.

1976

The Party also renews its commitment to the support of a constitutionally acceptable method [†] of providing tax aid for the education of all pupils in non-segregated schools in order to insure parental freedom in choosing the best education for their children.

1980

The Party accepts its commitment to the support of a constitutionally acceptable method [†] of providing tax aid for the education of all pupils in schools, which do not racially discriminate, and excluding so-called segregation academies. ^{††}

[†] Throughout the 1940s, 50s, 60s, and 70s, the Supreme Court reversed a number of long-standing state and national policies and began expunging religious activities from public schools (e.g., the prohibition of voluntary prayer, Bible reading or Bible classes, displays of the Ten Commandments, etc.). During that time, the Court also reversed its previous positions on funding and began prohibiting public funds from being used within faith-based schools, even if the funds were used only for the secular educational aspects of those schools (e.g., transportation, textbooks, record-keeping, etc.). This plank reaffirms Democratic support for the Court's new policy, declaring support for what the Court had at that time determined to be "constitu-

1972

We believe that means which are consistent with the Constitution can be devised for channeling public financial aid to support the education of all children in schools of their parents' choice, non-public as well as public. One way to provide such aid appears to be through the granting of income tax credits.

1976

We favor consideration of tax credits for parents making elementary and secondary school tuition payments.

1980

Federal education policy must be based on the primacy of parental rights and responsibility. Toward that end, we reaffirm our support for a system of educational assistance based on tax credits that will in part compensate parents for their financial sacrifices in paying tuition at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary level. This is a matter of fairness, especially for low-income families, most of whom would be free for the first time to choose for their children those schools which best correspond to their own cultural and moral values. In this way, the schools will be strengthened by the families' involvement, and the families' strengths will be reinforced by supportive cultural institutions.

On School Choice & Faith-Based Education

1984

Private schools, particularly parochial schools, are also an important part of our diverse educational system. Consistent with our tradition, the Democratic Party accepts its commitment to constitutionally acceptable methods[†] of supporting the education of all pupils in schools which do not racially discriminate, and excluding so-called segregation academies.[†]

tionally acceptable methods” of supporting education, and therefore opposing public funding from being made available for use in school choice programs or faith-based schools.

†† “Segregation academies” refer to racist schools that arose in the Democratic South following the Supreme Court’s 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to end segregation in public schools. Opposing that decision, the Democratic governors of Arkansas (Orval Faubus) and Texas (Allan Shivers) called out the National Guard to prevent black students from entering public schools, and the Democratic governors of Virginia (James Almond) and other states closed public schools rather than allow blacks to attend. Unable to continue segregation in public schools, states such as Georgia (under Democratic Gov. Marvin Griffin) drafted a legislative plan to establish state private schools (known as “segregation academies”) from which blacks could be excluded. It was to these type of private schools that many racist Southern whites fled when public schools became integrated. In fact, when 6-year-old African American Ruby Bridges attended a public elementary school in New Orleans, every white parent in that school withdrew their children, leaving only Ruby and her Boston teacher in that building for the entire school year. By 1975, “segregation academies” had become a large educational entity in the South. Ironically, many Democrats wrongly came to view any private religious school as a “segregation academy,” rather than just the racist academies.

† See note on p. 12.

1984

In education, as in other activities, competition fosters excellence. We therefore support the President’s proposal for tuition tax credits.[†] We will convert the Chapter One Grants^{††} to vouchers,^{†††} thereby giving poor parents the ability to choose the best schooling available.

† Tuition tax credits allow parents to receive a tax credit or deduction for approved educational expenses such as tutoring, textbooks, computers, transportation, or tuition.

†† Chapter One Grants refer to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 that provided federal financial aid to schools with a large population of children from low-income families. Republicans here propose updating that program to allow greater educational flexibility, allowing parents of low-income children to place their child in the school – whether public or private – that the parents believe would provide their child the best possible education.

††† Vouchers are the most open form of educational choice, providing parents with a financial certificate (“voucher”) that may be redeemed at the public or private school of their choice. (In Washington, D.C., where almost \$13,000 per year is spent on each student, in 2004 Congress enacted a program providing \$6,500 vouchers to parents of students in the worst-performing schools to redeem at the school of their choice.) School vouchers operate on the principle seen in other state and federal programs: a military veteran may utilize his educational benefits to attend any college or university (e.g., the University of Texas or Texas Christian University; Oklahoma State University or Oklahoma Baptist University; etc.). Similarly, a patient can redeem government medical benefits at a community or city hospital – or a Presbyterian, Baptist, or Catholic hospital. Educational vouchers apply the same principle.

THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM

THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM

On School Choice & Faith-Based Education

1988

No mention of school choice.

1992

We oppose the Bush Administration's efforts to bankrupt the public school system – the bedrock of democracy – through private school vouchers. †

1988

We can enhance this record of accomplishment by committing ourselves to these principles: choice and competition in education foster quality and protect consumers' rights. . . .

Choice in education, especially for poor families, fosters the parental involvement that is essential for student success, and states should consider enacting voucher systems or other means of encouraging competition among public schools. . . .

We will continue to support tuition tax credits for parents who choose to educate their children in private educational institutions.

1992

Parents have the right to choose the best school for their children. . . . They should have the right not only to participate in their child's education but to choose for their children among the broadest array of educational choices, without regard to their income. We also support the right of parents to provide quality education through home-based schools [home-schooling]. . . .

American families must be given choice in education. We value the important role played by our private, independent, and parochial schools, colleges, and universities. We believe that their quality is best encouraged by minimizing government regulation.

† See third note on p. 13.

On School Choice & Faith-Based Education

1996

We should expand public school choice, but we should not take American tax dollars from public schools and give them to private schools.

1996

Our goal is nothing less than a renaissance in American education, begun by returning its control to parents, teachers, local school boards, and, through them, to communities and local taxpayers. . . . That is why we will abolish the Department of Education, end federal meddling in our schools, and promote family choice at all levels of learning. . . .

We encourage a reform agenda on the local level and urge state legislators to ensure quality education for all through programs of parental choice among public, private, and religious schools. That includes the option of home schooling, and Republicans will defend the right of families to make that choice. We support and vigorously work for mechanisms, such as opportunity scholarships, [†] block grants, ^{††} school rebates, ^{†††} charter schools, [§] and

[†] Opportunity scholarships refer to programs that provide *scholarships* to low-income students “trapped in failing public schools” so that they might have an *opportunity* to attend a school – either private or public – that they believe will provide a better education; hence the term “opportunity scholarships.”

^{††} Block grants refer to federal education funding for poor students that is made available for states and local communities, with less federal requirements on how specifically to apply the money. This allows greater flexibility on how states and communities may utilize the monies in educational programs.

^{†††} School rebates refer to offering tax credits (rebates) for parents who choose to educate their children in a private or home school. Such families not only receive no benefit from the public education taxes they pay but they even pay twice for their children’s education – once in public school taxes, and once in private school tuition. School rebates enable more parents to have the finances necessary to choose the form of education they believe best for their children.

[§] Charter schools are independent public schools chartered by educators, parents, universities, community leaders, etc., under the authority of local public school districts or state educational agencies. These schools are allowed to operate without the standard red-tape and bureaucracy of the ordinary public school system as well as to create innovative educational programs. Charter schools, unlike traditional public schools, are held accountable for student performance; if they fail to deliver, they are closed.

[†] See third note on p. 13.

THE DEMOCRATS' PLATFORM

THE REPUBLICANS' PLATFORM

On School Choice & Faith-Based Education

2000

Their [the Republicans'] version of accountability relies on private school vouchers that would offer too few dollars to too few children to escape their failing schools. These vouchers would pass the buck on accountability while pulling bucks out of the schools that need them most. . . . Let there be no mistake: what America needs are public schools that compete with one another and are held accountable for results, not private school vouchers that drain resources from public schools and hand over the public's hard-earned tax dollars to private schools with no accountability.

2000

vouchers,[†] to make parental choice in education a reality for all parents.

Republicans desire a better result. We believe that every child in this land should have access to a high quality, indeed, a world-class education, and we're determined to meet that goal. . . .

We endorse the principles . . . which will . . . assist states in closing the achievement gap and empower needy families to escape persistently failing schools by allowing federal dollars to follow their children to the school of their choice. Expand parental choice and encourage competition by providing parents with information on their child's school, increasing the number of charter schools, and expanding education savings accounts^{††} for use from kindergarten through college.

†† An educational savings account allows parents (or friends, grandparents, businesses, etc.) to place up to \$2000 per year into an educational savings account that is free from taxation. The account may be used for K-16 educational expenses such as tuition, textbooks, supplies, after-school programs, tutoring, and even home computers. The first such federal plan was signed into law in 2001.

The process of creating a party platform begins at the precinct level through those who voted in their state's Primary Election. The Primary Election is the only time a voter must choose a political party before voting. In the November General Election, a voter may split the ticket by voting for a Democrat in one race and a Republican in another. Contact the political party of your choice to find out the process and the dates of your state's Primary Election. If you are not currently registered to vote, you may register to vote at www.operationvote.com.

Justice at the Gate

Building strategic partnerships
to mobilize Christians to pray effectively
and to vote righteously

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