

2014
Indiana Republican Party Platform

UNAPPROVED TEXT
Published May 23, 2014

About the Drafting Process

The Indiana Republican Party's 2014 platform was drafted after soliciting input from Hoosier Republicans at listening sessions in Merrillville, Fort Wayne, Indianapolis, Jeffersonville and Evansville. Additionally, an online survey was made available to anyone who was not able to participate in the sessions. Individuals representing 66 counties, different backgrounds, all age groups and unique professional experiences participated in this process for a total of almost 400 participants.

Following the five hearings, the Co-Chairs, State Party Chairman and Executive Secretary of the Platform Committee produced an initial draft of the Platform reflective of the feedback gathered which was then presented to the full Platform Committee. A meeting was conducted on May 13, 2014 for discussion, debate, and further refinement regarding the platform. The Committee met once more on May 19, 2014 to review and amend the document.

This document will be discussed and voted on at the 2014 Indiana Republican State Convention on June 6th and 7th. A final document will be published following the conclusion of the convention.

As Republicans, we strongly believe in:

Protecting and defending our U.S. and Indiana Constitutions.

The First Amendment of our U.S. Constitution and our guaranteed freedom of religion, though not the freedom from religion, and of free political and religious speech.

The Second Amendment of our U.S. Constitution which gives the “people” the right to “keep and bear Arms,” which protects gun ownership by all lawful citizens.

The Sanctity of Human Life, particularly supporting the right to life of the unborn.

Strong Family Structures. We believe that strong families, based on marriage between a man and a woman, are the foundation of society. We also recognize that some families are much more diverse and we support the blended families, grandparents, guardians and loving adults who successfully raise and nurture children to reach their full potential every day.

Individual Liberty and Freedom from intrusive government interference and regulation. The personal liberty and freedom of each individual is paramount.

Personal Responsibility. It is incumbent upon the individual to responsibly lead their lives and to make the decisions that best suit them without interference from government.

Fiscal Responsibility. To live within our means, we support balanced budgets, low taxes and keeping government spending under control.

Limited Government that is responsive to the needs of its citizens and works to enhance the lives of everyone through an emphasis on economic growth, education and opportunity for all.

Federalism. Our federal government was formed by the states and the Tenth Amendment of our U.S. Constitution appropriately provides that those powers not enumerated to the federal government are reserved to the states and to the people.

Jobs and Economic Growth

We are committed to creating an environment where jobs and our economy can grow.

The proper role of government in this equation is to get out of the way and let Hoosier entrepreneurs and job creators build, grow and expand their private enterprises in our state.

Indiana has proven adept at attracting businesses from around the country—and world—with our attractive and nationally recognized business climate that combines low taxes, access to transportation and logistical operations, education reform and worker freedom. The Pence Administration’s overarching goal is more jobs in Indiana than ever before and we are succeeding as Indiana posts some of the nation’s strongest job growth.

Working to continue to improve our place on the lists of the best places to do business requires a continued focus on decreasing regulations, maintaining and improving our transportation infrastructure and enhancing the skills of our workers while keeping taxes low for individuals and Hoosier employers.

Attracting International Business and Promoting Free Trade

Part of Indiana's success has been our work with allies and partners overseas. Frequent trade missions have helped Indiana attract businesses and jobs to our state and expanded our already robust network of exports. As Republicans, we support free and fair international trade and expanded opportunities for Hoosiers to sell their goods and products in foreign markets. Working with other countries means committing ourselves to the principles of free trade to ensure Hoosier companies are treated fairly when they export their products outside the country.

The Importance of Agriculture

Nearly half a million Hoosiers are connected to agriculture. It feeds the nation and is the lifeblood of rural communities. We are committed to ensuring the “climate” for agriculture and agri-business promotes its continued growth in Indiana.

Diversifying Our Economy

Continued growth and diversification remains an economic goal

Indiana's economy has the most manufacturing jobs per capita, but we are also growing the life sciences, medical device, logistics, and tech industries. We aspire to continue drawing top talent to and from our universities and to providing an

attractive and nationally recognized business environment which will entice companies to locate in Indiana.

Small Businesses, Large Impact

Small business owners put their time, money, and sweat into endeavors that enrich our communities and create jobs. We applaud our entrepreneurs and stand opposed to government impediments to their success. Further, we seek to make Indiana a hotbed of entrepreneurship in communities large and small and with entrepreneurs of all ages and diverse backgrounds.

Immigration Reform

Our country was built on and has always welcomed immigrants; legal immigration has been an engine of economic vibrancy and growth. We support immigration reform that defends our borders, simplifies the visa system, encourages legal immigration, addresses the undocumented population issue without amnesty and fosters a healthy environment where foreign nationals can successfully invest and establish themselves in our Hoosier communities.

An Educated Workforce

We believe education is the keystone for the future prosperity of our families and our state. The Indiana Republican Party will continue to focus on providing high quality learning opportunities for all children by improving accountability, setting and supporting high state-based standards and ensuring that post-secondary and technical education opportunities are accessible and affordable.

School Choice

We believe it is vital for parents to play an active role in the education of their children. We support parental choice for their students to attend public, private, parochial and home schools. Further, we believe vouchers help “level the playing field” in education allowing children of lower income families to have school choice.

Affordable and Attainable Post-Secondary Education

Education is the foundation for a successful life and a vibrant economy. Jobs requiring a post-secondary degree are growing at a rapid pace. We must make the option of a post-secondary education feasible to ensure high wage jobs and wide-ranging opportunities for Hoosiers.

With the cost of higher education on the rise, student loan debt has exploded in recent years. We will challenge Indiana's public universities to hold the line on tuition increases and to find innovative ways to deliver degree programs.

Supporting Career and Technical Education

We support the expansion of career and technical education programs. These programs should be aligned to the needs of Indiana employers for higher skill jobs via transferable certifications and associate degrees offered at both the high school and college levels.

We also support additional training for adults who need new skills to qualify for higher paying jobs. Government should maximize existing resources to enhance the skills of our adult workforce.

Retaining and Attracting Young Talent

The future prosperity of Indiana rests on our ability to grow and to attract a talented workforce for areas ranging from computer science and engineering to skilled trades. By 2025, we expect 60% of Hoosier jobs will require a post-secondary degree or certification.

We are committed to policies that ensure our young adults have access to post-secondary training which is aligned with current and emerging job opportunities in Indiana. Further, we believe efforts should be made to help encourage young talented STEM graduates to make Indiana home, further fueling innovation and entrepreneurship.

Young Hoosiers are the next generation of leaders, parents, entrepreneurs and workers. Our elected officials and our post-secondary institutions should make it their priority to not only attract individuals to Indiana, but to retain our wealth of homegrown talent.

Living Within Our Means

We are committed to government at every level living within its means. If we hope to rise to the challenge of creating greater opportunities for the next generations, as the generations before us have done, we cannot saddle them with unsurmountable levels of debt and unsustainable government programs.

We encourage our federal government to address our nation's biggest problems "the Indiana Way," by implementing commonsense solutions that focus on the future.

Balanced Budgets

In accordance with our belief in lean governments, we believe budgets should be balanced with reduced spending rather than increased taxation.

As our national debt is at \$17 trillion and climbing, it is imperative that sensible funding decisions are made to get us back on a path to prosperity. We support our Congressional delegation's efforts to add a balanced budget amendment to our U.S. Constitution while maintaining vital social programs that are necessary for the truly needy and individuals with disabilities.

Focus On the Taxpayer

State government should only request of its citizens the dollars it needs to provide necessary services. No more. Keeping taxes low and focusing on Hoosier taxpayers by promoting policies that encourage growth and investment in our state's economy are among our highest priorities.

We seek transparency, accountability and fairness in all levels of government, including a comprehensive audit of the Federal Reserve.

We oppose any policies that expand the size and scope of the already overreaching Internal Revenue Service (IRS), especially in the wake of multiple corruption scandals. We believe that the complicated federal tax code is a burden to businesses and individuals. We support efforts to make our federal tax code simpler, fairer and flatter for all taxpayers.

We believe the estate tax should be eliminated at the federal level as it has been in Indiana because it places undue burden on Hoosier farmers, small business owners and families.

Energy Independence

As a coal producing state, Indiana has thousands of energy sector workers and over 300 years of coal beneath our soil. Indiana can and should be a leader in coal production. In addition, Indiana is making strides toward the next generation of energy. We support a broad "all of the above" energy portfolio and reject the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) overreach as it relates to carbon based fuels. We believe free markets should be encouraged to find effective energy solutions, not government mandates. The states, not the federal EPA, should have primacy in decisions regarding new coal-fired plants which fuel the growth of their economies.

Energy Independence and National Security

Our dependence on foreign sources of energy poses a grave threat to our national security and economic stability. We believe more fuel and energy sources should be produced in America and the Midwest. We support the prudent development of alternative fuels and energy.

Clean Coal Technology

The Indiana coal industry is a significant asset to Indiana's economy and is targeted for extinction by the federal government. We are committed to working with the energy and coal industry in Indiana to utilize and to develop clean coal technology. We continue to promote the use of Indiana coal as a key ingredient to the future economic success of Indiana.

A Clean Environment

We support a safe, healthy and clean environment. The quality of our Hoosier environment is dependent upon vigilant partnerships by government, business and individuals alike. We support coordinated, science-based, consistent efforts to responsibly reduce, regulate and remediate pollutants to protect human health and the environment as long as it is balanced with our priority goals of growing the economy, increasing jobs and protecting our overall quality of life.

Free Market Solutions

We support free market solutions as a way to address issues facing our state and our nation. One-size-fits-all federally mandated programs are less efficient and effective than solutions implemented locally with the input of our free markets.

Health Care

We believe health care decisions should be made by patients and doctors, not bureaucrats. We support our Congressional delegation's efforts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act while ensuring health care is accessible, affordable and optional.

We strongly support the Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP) as a state-based improvement over traditional Medicaid. The Healthy Indiana Plan is consumer-driven and it allows enrollees to take ownership of health care decisions through health savings accounts (HSA).

Security of Our Fellow Hoosiers

We are committed to one of the primary roles of government: protecting its citizens. Whether through our troops overseas, the men and women who work to prevent terrorist attacks at home or state and local law enforcement, security is one of the most important functions of government.

Protecting Hoosier Veterans and Military

Indiana is fortunate to be home to hundreds of thousands of veterans, members of the military and one of the largest National Guards in the country. Our veterans should be honored and shown appreciation by a grateful citizenry and a government committed to protecting them and thanking them for their service. State government should continue to focus on enhancing career choices and providing effective opportunities in gratitude for the sacrifices each veteran has made for our state and our country. Further, we call for increased accessibility and improved quality of care through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Protecting Hoosiers

Among our most solemn duties is protecting our fellow Hoosiers. Our Police, Firefighters and other first responders are always on the scene in the event of natural disasters such as tornados and floods. In addition, they are always ready to ensure general public safety while putting their own lives in danger. We commend all Hoosiers working to protect their fellow citizens.

Protecting Hoosier Children

We believe that society has a moral responsibility to protect all children, born and unborn. We will work to ensure our laws support the right to life of the unborn.

We support efforts to make Indiana the most pro-adoption state in the nation ensuring more children are raised in loving, secure homes.

Protecting Hoosier Seniors

Senior citizens have been promised the stability of Medicare and Social Security in their retirement. While we remain committed to improving government programs for future sustainability, these solutions should not come at the expense of seniors who have planned for them in their retirement.

Opportunities and the Future

We are blessed to live in America and to call ourselves Hoosiers. If future generations are to feel the same, we must ensure that it is not only our policy positions looking forward, but our political strategies. We cannot let the media define us as a Party; we must tell our own story.

We want to thank and recognize some of the many groups who have expanded our engagement efforts around the state, including the Indiana Federation of Republican Women, the Indiana Federation of Young Republicans, the Indiana Leadership Forum, the Lugar Series and of course our county Republican Parties. Each of these entities fills a different role in attracting new Republicans and involving countless others. Their efforts ensure that we will have a deep bench of qualified candidates, a wealth of volunteers and most importantly the votes it takes to elect strong, conservative leaders.

Millennials

We are enthused about the growing number of Millennials getting involved around the state. It is imperative that we, Republican Party leaders at the local, state and national levels, encourage the involvement of more Millennials to ensure strong, seasoned leadership for the future of our Party.

Women

We believe that the Republican Party provides women the greatest freedom and framework for prosperity for themselves and our families. We commend the strong Republican women who have risen to the call of public service and applaud their efforts to involve more women as candidates and activists. Additionally, we support efforts at the local, state and national level to engage women in Party leadership and in elected office.

Minorities

Our Republican Party recognizes the importance of engagement with groups that have not traditionally identified as Republicans. We respect and honor individuals and families of minority backgrounds and appreciate the diversity of ideas and perspectives brought to our Party. We encourage our county parties to invite more people to take part in local Party structures.