

Our Platform

Since the election of 1860, the Republican Party has had a special calling - to advance the founding principles of freedom, opportunity, and limited government and the dignity and worth of every individual. Illinois Republicans have provided critical leadership, to this Country and those causes, from Abraham Lincoln, to Ronald Reagan to J. Dennis Hastart.

These Principles form the foundation of both an agenda for America in the year 2006 and this Platform for our party. They point us toward reforms in government, a restoration of timeless values, and a renewal of our national purpose.

We commit ourselves to the values that strengthen our culture and sustain our nation: family, faith, personal responsibility, and a belief in the dignity of every human life.

We offer not only a new agenda, but also a new approach - a vision of a welcoming society in which all have a place. To all Americans, particularly immigrants and minorities, we send a clear message: this is the party of freedom and progress, and it is your home.

The diversity of our State is reflected in this Platform. We ask for the support and participation of all who substantially share our agenda. In one way or another, every Republican is a dissenter. At the same time, we are not morally indifferent. In this, as in many things, Lincoln is our model. He spoke words of healing and words of conviction. We do likewise, for we are bound together in a great enterprise for our children's future.

We are the party of the open door, determined to strengthen the social, cultural, and political ties that bind us together and make our country the greatest force for good in the world. Steadfast in our commitment to our ideals, we recognize, as did Ronald Reagan, that members of our party can have deeply held and sometimes differing views. This diversity is a source of strength, not a sign of weakness, and so we welcome into our ranks all who may hold differing positions. We commit to resolve our differences with civility, trust, and mutual respect.

We seek to be faithful to the best traditions of our party. We are the party that ended slavery, granted homesteads, built land grant colleges, and moved control of government out of Washington, back into the hands of the people. We believe in service to the common good - and that good is not common until it is shared.

Our vision is one of clear direction, new ideas, civility in public life, and leadership with honor and distinction._

To the citizens of Illinois, we commit ourselves to the following:

- To do all in our power to strengthen the families of Illinois;
- To ensure that high quality healthcare is available throughout our State in both rural and urban areas;

- To reduce the size of government and the number of citizens dependent upon government;
- To make our communities safer through reducing crime and drug use;
- To provide a foundation for job creation and business expansion across the State and reduce regulations and taxes that smother the free market;
- To restore fairness and balance to a legal system that has become unfair and unbalanced;
- To commit necessary resources to combat terrorist attacks and to fight and win the war on terror;
- To make our public schools among the best in the nation; and
- To protect the fundamental right to life and dignity of every human life including the lives of unborn children.

ARTICLE I OUR PARTY'S PHILOSOPHY

The cornerstone of our democracy is: Equality, Freedom, Opportunity, Less Government, Low Taxes and Strong National Security. The Republican Party is unwavering in its commitment to these principles. We honor the Constitution and believe that neither the Executive, Legislative nor Judicial branches of government should detract from the rights enumerated therein.

The Founding Fathers then, and our Republican Party today, recognize that Democracy was the best tool for governing a society that had a deep respect for each individual, the family and community.

THE INDIVIDUAL

Our government is of limited power subject to the inalienable rights of each individual. The paramount right of an individual is the right to life. From the first beat of a heart to the last breath drawn, we recognize each individual's dignity and worth. Government is obligated by law and by deed, to protect and defend each individual's right to life, not only from government action, but also against a threat from another. The right to life is of such primacy that no government entity nor any person shall be allowed to take another's life without due process of law and only under the most compelling and grave circumstances.

Government must defend and protect those who by age, disability or other affliction cannot protect themselves. This includes the protection of the unborn child.

Government should to the fullest extent as proper, recognize the right of each individual to live life, enjoy liberty and pursue happiness as he or she sees fit. Conversely, each individual must accept responsibility for the choices he or she makes and honor their duties to family and community.

Government shall not pick winners or losers, only assure everyone the same and equal rights. We believe fundamental rights are inherent to the individual, not to groups.

Individual rights – and the responsibilities that go with them – are the foundation of a free society. In protecting those rights, and in asserting those responsibilities, we affirm the common good, and common goals, that should unite all Americans.

Equality of individuals before the law has always been a cornerstone of our party. We therefore oppose discrimination based on sex, race, age, religion, creed, disability, or national origin and will vigorously enforce anti-discrimination statutes. As we strive to forge a consensus on the crucial issues of our time, we call on all to reject the forces of hatred and bigotry. Accordingly, we denounce all who practice or promote racism, anti-Semitism, ethnic prejudice, and religious intolerance.

THE FAMILY **PROTECT AND NURTURE OUR CHILDREN**

The family is society's central building block. Thus, efforts to strengthen family life are efforts to improve life for everyone.

We are committed to serving our children and the families raising them.

Our children need secure and nurturing environments. No law should be considered without fully contemplating the effect it would have on families and children.

Our laws should make it easier for families to provide a secure and nurturing environment for their children, not more difficult and more expensive.

The most secure and nurturing environment for a child is provided by two parents committed to each other and to the child. Our laws need to recognize this fundamental truth and not ignore it. Legislation designed to help parents provide for their children is not discriminatory toward non-married individuals, but it is necessary for maintaining a healthy and peaceful society.

FAMILIES AND MARRIAGE

Our laws should strongly support and celebrate the loving commitment a man and a woman make to each other in marriage. Our laws should strongly support and celebrate a loving, married couple bringing new life into the world and raising their children in a secure and nurturing environment from conception through adulthood.

No law should undermine the importance of that union, divide that union, nor unduly burden the efforts of parents to raise a family in a safe and nurturing environment.

No device, whether by judicial fiat or by the exercise of the powers of office, should be allowed to infringe upon the sanctity of marriage.

Working in support of traditional ethical and moral family values, including extended families, where persons support one another, and against governmental policies that undercut the health and safety of the family.

We support all efforts to honor marriage and recognize the fundamental importance of this noble institution. By this we do not denigrate nor disparage the loving commitment that adults make to each other that does not fall within the traditional construct of marriage. Everyone is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. We respect the freedom and liberty of individuals to live life and pursue happiness in their own lawful way.

COMMUNITY – FROM MANY - ONE

Each of us have certain rights that are inalienable and certain duties that are sacrosanct. Each of us owe a duty to family and to community. America's strength is its diversity. The full richness of diversity can only be appreciated when each is free and equal regardless of his or her racial, ethnic, or religious background. Our laws must strike that delicate balance between diversity and unity. It is for that reason, that we Republicans champion policies designed to unite and not divide. We champion a Rule of Law that treats everyone equally while respecting diverse interests, talents and backgrounds.

As we respect our fellow citizens, we choose to settle our differences at the ballot box. No community thrives nor respects Democracy that does not also respect the importance of each vote cast by our citizens by failing to vigorously combat fraudulent voting activity or criminal conduct aimed at subverting the vote of the people.

We also need to have laws that allow for all of us to live in a safe, healthy and peaceful environment. Our communities must allow for a vibrant economic environment where individuals and groups acting together may use their knowledge, talents and industry to work and prosper.

ARTICLE II **PLATFORM OF THE ILLINOIS REPUBLICAN PARTY**

Having thus stated our general philosophy, we Republicans do wish to address certain, specific issues important to Illinoisans as we approach a very important election.

PROTECTING ILLINOIS AGRICULTURE

Agriculture remains Illinois' core industry. Agriculture built the state and the state's growth and success continues to depend upon farm families. Illinois Republicans are standing up to protect Illinois' Agriculture Industry from the oppressive designs of our opponents.

Presently, the Democrat Administration announced its intent to impose new sales taxes on farm chemicals as well as taxing feed, seed and fertilizer. In addition,

the hundreds of new fee increases proposed by the Democrats will have a major impact throughout the state economy, including agriculture. Each day, Republicans are hearing from businesses and consumers that will be hurt by these fee increases.

Illinois Republicans know that Illinois farmers feed the nation, create thousands of jobs and drive hundreds of local economies. Illinois Republicans are pledged to provide the agriculture industry with the leadership needed to support those efforts. The Republican Party opposes the unnecessary and devastating tax increase proposed by the Democrat Party Leaders.

Illinois enjoys a long tradition as a world leader in agriculture. In fact, the family farm may represent the first and purest form of entrepreneurship. The Illinois farmer is critical to the economic health of our state. The Republican Party believes that the state government should continue to assist the Illinois farmer. We offer the following proposals for a pro-growth farm policy:

Protect ethanol production. Corn grown in Illinois is used to produce 40% of the ethanol consumed in the United States. Investment by the ethanol industry in Illinois exceeds \$1 billion, and generates 800 jobs in ethanol plants, and 4,000 jobs in related industries. Ethanol also helps provide another American-grown source of fuel, and works to reduce our dependence on foreign oil (more than 95% of the gasoline sold in the Chicago area contains 10% ethanol.) It also provides a pro-growth solution to air-quality improvement.

Eliminate the estate tax, or “death” tax. Eliminating the estate tax will help to resurrect the Illinois family farm, and ensure that farmers can transfer their life’s work to their next generation.

Expand foreign markets. We believe in free – and fair – trade. Such practices contribute to worldwide economic growth – and provide new markets for Illinois farmers. According to the Illinois Farm Bureau, more than 40% of Illinois agricultural products are sold to overseas markets, generating more than \$3 billion in sales of grain, livestock and other agricultural products in 1999.

Cut or eliminate the capital gains tax. The capital gains tax penalizes that transfer of assets. This tax discourages investment by Illinois farmers. As with any other business, when Illinois farmers invest, jobs are created and economic growth occurs. Furthermore, most farmers derive retirement income from the selling of land.

PROTECTING THE ECONOMY

President Bush and the Republican Congress are leading the nation toward renewed economic prosperity. Unfortunately, the pro-tax policies of the Blagojevich Administration and the Democrat-controlled Illinois General Assembly has insulated Illinois from many of the benefits of the economic incentives enacted by Congress and the President.

Illinois businesses are reeling from the effects of millions of dollars in tax increases imposed last year. Business and units of local government are suffering as a result of unfair water taxes. Unemployment in Illinois remains higher than surrounding states and Illinois has not fully shared in the benefits of the recovery that other states are experiencing. The trucking industry is being driven out of state by new and higher taxes and fees. The printing industry has been discouraged from making new investment because of higher taxes on equipment purchases and many are considering leaving Illinois or canceling expansion projects.

The Blagojevich administration wants to further isolate Illinois by avoiding new depreciation rules that would encourage small business to invest in new equipment and help keep Illinois workers employed. Industry after industry is being hit with targeted tax increases that stifle job growth and drive resources out of state.

Illinois Republicans understand that taxing businesses translates into fewer jobs, less investment and higher consumer prices. Therefore Republicans not only oppose higher general taxes, but will consistently fight the multitude of targeted tax increases which are bleeding Illinois employers and destroying jobs.

PROTECTING FUTURE GENERATIONS

Republicans are fighting to protect future generations from being crushed under a burden of debt created by the Blagojevich Administration and his allies in the Democrat-controlled General Assembly. Abandoning decades of policies designed to assure that the state can meet its debt obligations now and into the future, the current administration has embarked on risky strategies that will force future generations to pay the bulk of today's debt, while the current Governor escapes responsibility for repaying the debt he has incurred.

In a single year, the Blagojevich Administration more than doubled state debt. The Administration prefers to borrow beyond the life of the assets it purchases, extend payments to record-breaking lengths, give itself repayment "holidays" and borrow to pay interest on interest. Government debt should always be incurred cautiously. Our children and grandchildren should not be crushed under a burden of debt because leaders today are unwilling to make difficult and responsible choices. Yet, that is exactly what the Blagojevich administration seeks to do to future generations.

While claiming to oppose higher taxes, the Governor's out-of-control spending habits are guaranteeing that Illinoisans will pay higher taxes in the future, just to meet the obligations of the current administration. The answer to Illinois' fiscal crisis is not arbitrary fee increases, hidden taxes on business and entrepreneurs, or smoke and mirrors accounting.

Illinois Republicans support responsible debt legislation that will restore the traditional borrowing practices to protect future generations from being forced to carry the burden of today's excessive spending.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

As the party of Theodore Roosevelt, the Republican Party has a long tradition of respecting the environment, allowing for the responsible use of natural resources to benefit the present generation, while preserving our natural resources and heritage for future generations.

Today, Illinois is faced with a serious threat from the Blagojevich Administration. Despite campaign promises to the contrary, Rod Blagojevich now plans to divert millions of dollars in dedicated funds away from their intended environmental purpose. Among nearly 40 environmental programs under attack by the Blagojevich Administration are the Open Space Lands Acquisition Program, the Leaking Underground Storage Tank Program and the Natural Areas Acquisition program. Although these programs are funded by user fees specifically designated for the programs, the Administration is stealing those funds for other purposes.

The wholesale diversion of special fees violates a public trust. When citizens agree to pay higher fees to fund special programs, they have a right to assume that the funds will actually be used for the promised purposes.

Illinois Republicans believe that special purpose funds which are collected on the promise of providing stable and predictable resources for conservation and anti-pollution programs should not be diverted.

Too often we engage in a simplistic debate over who cares more about the environment. We are also drawn into a false choice between economic development and a clean environment. The fact is that we can have both. Too often the facts about the environment get lost in the emotional aspects of the debate. The fact is that our system of democracy has always been, by its very nature, the best steward of the environment. When people own the land, they have a great stake in keeping it clean to pass on to their descendants.

The best way to ensure a clean environment is to emphasize responsible property ownership and to use sound scientific evidence when making environmental policy.

We further believe that the best answer for our current and future energy needs is to continue our investment in the technology necessary to discover new sources as well as ways to better utilize the energy sources we now have. There are millions of tons of coal in our state that could go a long way to making Illinois and the United States less dependent on foreign energy sources. Clean coal technology would have the effect of revitalizing an industry so important to Illinois. In an age when dependence on foreign energy is not only foolish, but dangerous, we must find ways to reinvigorate our coal industry and make Illinois the energy capital of America.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Illinois citizens adopted motor-fuel taxes with the understanding that those funds would be used to maintain and improve our roads and highways. These user fees were implemented because those who benefit from the transportation network were willing to pay their fair share.

Unfortunately, this system of user fees has now been rejected by the Blagojevich administration, which has elected to divert hundreds of millions of dollars in road funds away from their intended purpose. Such policies will threaten to destroy Illinois' transportation network because funds sorely needed for construction, maintenance and improvements are not being used for their promised purposes. We strongly oppose these diversions.

Now the Governor proposes to divert even more transportation dollars and would further mortgage the future of our road system by borrowing for new projects, without identifying any means to repay the borrowing. The net result would be a highway system that is not only in worse shape than when he took office, but which is deeply in debt, with millions of dollars in much-needed transit funds squandered on feeding the day-to-day operations of government.

Illinois Republicans believe the state must restore the trust of its citizens by using motor fuel taxes for their intended purpose: to maintain and improve the state's highway network. We believe promises made to taxpayers should be promises kept.

MASS TRANSIT – NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS

The Republican Party supports a comprehensive approach to regional transportation planning in Northeastern Illinois. We believe public transportation is an important component of regional planning that helps reduce gridlock and boosts our economy and protects our environment.

We commend the Republican Senators and Representatives of the State Legislature for defending the interests of suburban commuters. We also commend the efforts of Republican County Board Chairmen in fighting to maintain fair and balanced representation for suburban citizens. We note that while traditional suburb-to-city commuting is up nine percent over the last ten years, suburb-to-suburb commuting is up 56%. Most of the new, high-paying jobs of the 21st century will be created in Chicagoland's suburbs. Our transportation infrastructure should support this trend to ensure Illinois retains its central role in the nation's economy.

Recent proposals by Chicago Democrats would end the current partnership between city and suburbs. These proposals threaten the bipartisan leadership of Speaker Dennis Hastert just as he is completing work on a new federal transportation bill for Illinois. We believe that all of the nine million citizens that live in Chicagoland, including the six million people of the suburbs deserve full representation and accountability for their transportation needs.

We believe Illinois transit agencies can be improved through increased interagency cooperation, elimination of duplicative efforts and a universal fare card. Priorities must include financial savings efforts between agencies, improving availability of capital resources from all sources without increasing the burden on taxpayers, and the development of specific, long-range plans to address reverse and suburb-to-suburb commuting needs.

None of these goals are met by the current proposals designed to disenfranchise suburban voters and their transportation needs. As proposed, a central, top-down planning agency will override the wishes of suburban voters under a partisan leadership dominated by Chicago Democrats. We strongly oppose the elimination of or Amendment to the Regional Transit Authority Act that would lead to a Chicago controlled transit agency.

We believe the current state law preserves the right of local governments to make their own decisions regarding planning and land use. It ensures a bipartisan team work to build transit agencies with a good credit rating and unbroken record of service.

EDUCATION

Illinois must continuously strive to do better in educating our children.

Children of all socio-economic circumstances should have access to a quality education that puts the interests of the children first. No child should be forced to attend schools that do not educate. No child should be left behind in our education system.

No adult should be allowed to make excuses for schools that chronically fail to teach the children in their care. Failed Administrators should be removed from failing schools. Our children deserve no less.

Our laws should empower parents to make choices for their children's education. Parents should be empowered to remove their children from substandard schools and enroll them in good schools. This right and power is most acutely needed by lower income families and families living within poorly run school districts where the stakes are highest and presently options are most limited.

Unfortunately, instead of a fair and impartial review, the Blagojevich administration has proposed a centralized education bureaucracy that consolidates critical decisions within a politicized agency accountable only to a single individual. The Republican Party opposes this ill-advised scheme that has only resulted in politicization of education, corruption and abysmal service to our children everywhere it has been tried.

A basic foundation of our education system for more than a century has been that local officials are in the best position to make decisions regarding local school districts. The Blagojevich administration proposals threaten that basic

tenet by stripping locally-elected school boards of important decision-making powers.

By creating a politicized state Education Department, Illinois risks calling into question the objectivity and honesty of state achievement tests by creating a powerful incentive for the Governor's bureaucracy to manipulate or distort results for political gain. The fair distribution of grants is threatened by introducing partisan politics into the process.

As Republicans, we strongly support the rights of parents to do what is in the best interests of their children.

We should protect our parents and children from being coerced to place their child on medication in order to receive educational services. We should protect that fundamental right of the parent to have the final say in what is best for their child's well-being. We believe parents should receive advanced notice of any medicine or medical procedure or treatment their child may be offered or may seek.

CHIEF ILLINIWEK

The Republican Party of Illinois is proud of the Native-American Heritage of this State, which gives our State its name and many of its rich traditions.

Recently, Democrat Leaders have threatened to cut funding to one of the nation's finest schools, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, unless it disavows and eliminates a proud symbol of the school, Chief Illiniwek. This shameless effort to foment racial dissension by the Democrat Leadership is deplorable. Threatening school funding unless the University, its proud students and Alumni, sacrifice Chief Illiniwek upon the alter of political correctness, is unconscionable.

The University is to be commended for its sincere efforts to assure that the Chief Illiniwek figure not only demonstrate the dignity and respect for the school he symbolizes, but also for the Native-Americans he portrays.

The proud and dignified symbol of an excellent Institution of Higher Learning should not be denigrated. We trust the University, its students and Alumni to continue to present Chief Illiniwek as a proud and dignified symbol of the University.

HEALTH CARE

Illinois residents enjoy some of the best health care in the country. However, an increasing number of our best and brightest physicians are leaving the state due to mounting insurance costs. This rapid rise in costs for insurance is largely due to an unbalanced and unfair legal system. Illinois residents now feel the effect of a decline in health care services. Steps have to be taken immediately to stop the health care exodus and restore fairness and balance to our legal system.

For example, Illinois is one of nine states where obstetricians/gynecologists spend more than \$100,000 per year in medical liability insurance. With Illinois OBGYNs paying nearly \$150,000 per year in insurance premiums, it is not surprising that many are leaving the state or simply abandoning their practices. Overworked OBGYNs will become even more overworked, leading to a decline in the quality of women's health.

Other medical specialists are facing the same difficulty of increasing insurance premiums. The result is not only the exodus of physicians from the state, but it also results in a substantial rise in health care costs. These costs are then passed to the patient.

We also recognize that thousands of Illinoisans lack medical insurance and that prescription drug costs are skyrocketing. These are problems that can no longer be ignored. Individuals must be given greater incentives to seek out catastrophic care insurance. Prescription drug costs can be controlled by reducing regulation in distribution of the drugs and lobbying at the federal level to make new drug approval more streamlined as well as limiting the ability of foreign governments to enact price controls. Positive change can take place in Illinois health care. The Republican Party stands for positive change in Illinois health care.

**PROMOTE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY
AND HELPING THOSE IN NEED**

Helping those who have fallen on hard times through no fault of their own is the right thing to do. Yet when we help people who are able, and yet make no effort to help themselves, we destroy the individual and undermine society. Restoring welfare to its original intent of giving needy Americans a helping hand must be our ultimate goal, but the road will not be without sacrifice. We believe that temporary hardship of getting able-bodied men and women off welfare is a better alternative than trapping them in a lifelong cycle of poverty. This is the essence of compassionate conservatism.

We must allow people the opportunity to lead more productive, happier lives. With the nation's public assistance caseloads down 30%, Welfare Reform, passed by a Republican Congress, has proven to be the greatest social change in modern American history. It literally has moved people from government aid rolls into the American workforce. Work among former welfare recipients has tripled and employment of single mothers is over 70% -- an all-time high.

Republicans have made good on their promise in the mid-1990's to move people from welfare to work. Nothing is more impressive to those formerly on welfare or for all other American taxpayers than putting people to work, and Republicans made it happen. But welfare Reform isn't just about helping able-bodied citizens get a job, it's about fundamentally changing people's lives for the better. Since 1996:

-Over 3.6-million fewer Americans live in poverty today, including 2.7-million fewer children;

-Funding for child care has more than tripled – from \$3 billion to \$9.7 billion in 2001; and lastly,

-Welfare caseloads have fallen by 60%, leaving less than 2% of the entire U.S. population on such public assistance programs.

Republicans realized that dollars alone wouldn't break the cycle of dependency. We needed people to be involved in meeting the challenge of moving the hopeless to a position of hope. We needed to move the dependent into a position of work and productivity. We needed to create incentives for individuals to get involved on a personal level, to make the kinds of changes that will lift up people, not hold them down.

Republicans are proud that no longer do people get up in the morning and head down to the local post office for a welfare check. Instead, they go to work and earn a paycheck. This is truly a success story that shows what a difference we can make, and that it's possible to improve the lives of citizens who were once abused by a welfare state that had grown out of control. We've changed the welfare state into an opportunity society that makes America stronger and Americans freer.

PROVIDE TAX RELIEF FOR WORKING AMERICANS

America is an over-taxed nation. In fact, most people spend more money on taxes than they spend on food, clothing and shelter combined. Worse yet, in too many working families, one parent works to put food on the table and shelter overhead, while the other has a job simply to pay for the government bureaucracy. This has to stop.

President Bush and the Republican Congress have made inroads to help working Americans keep more of what they earn so they can spend it on their own individual needs. The historic Economic Growth and Tax Recovery Act of 2001 came at a time when our nation needed it most to create jobs and give our economy a lift. The 10-year, \$1.35 billion tax relief measure helped every American taxpayer by reducing marginal rates across the board, eliminating the marriage penalty, spurring savings and investment, phasing out the death tax, and lowering the lowest tax bracket to 10-percent. But Republicans' work on keeping this important tax relief measure in place is far from over. Congress must act to keep these individual tax reductions on the books; otherwise, they will expire and taxpayers will be hit with a massive tax increase.

Now is not the time to add more taxing burdens on America's job creators. The bottom line is that tax relief works for America and working families. In the last 8 months, American businesses have created 1.1-million new jobs – 21,000 in the manufacturing sector alone, just as our economy is beginning to surge ahead.

We support a taxpayer's Bill of Rights.

Republicans want to give back to working Americans what is rightfully theirs in the first place – their own hard-earned money through tax relief. The government shouldn't seize your money before you even touch it. Working Americans earned it, not the government's bloated bureaucracy. Working Americans deserve it, not government bureaucrats. Republicans believe government should learn to live with less, so the rest of America can have more. The surest way to keep government from becoming permanently much larger – with more taxes, more regulations, more spending, and greater interference in citizens' daily lives – is to hold down taxes now. By controlling the government budget, working Americans can grow their family budget.

ETHICS – GOVERNMENT FOR THE PEOPLE

Trust, pride and respect: we pledge to restore these qualities to the way Illinoisans view their government and their leaders.

The Republican Party recognizes that without integrity, promises and solutions have no value. Therefore, our Party will not stand for the slightest compromise in the ethics of our political leaders, regardless of party affiliation. We recognize that a compromise in the ethics of our Party officials or politicians can and will cause damage to the overall Party. Ours will be a Party of ethics and integrity regardless of the cost. In order to avoid any hint of ethical compromise, we shall adhere to the following principles, without exception:

Party officials and politicians must act in such a way as to avoid even the appearance of impropriety.

- Party officials and politicians shall place public service ahead of personal gain.
- Government contracts and licenses shall be awarded based entirely upon merit pursuant to an open process.
- Government employees shall not engage in political work on government time nor use government resources for campaign purposes.
- No campaign contribution shall be solicited from government employees.
- Former government officials shall not engage in lobbying for two years after leaving employment of the government agency they plan to lobby.

We salute President Bush and United States Department of Justice in their efforts to aggressively combat political corruption in Illinois. No previous Administration on the Federal, State or County level has done more to confront political corruption and prosecute it in Illinois than the Bush Administration.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

The first responsibility of our government is to defend American citizens. Nothing

is more important than the defense of our borders, our cities and our rural areas. The world remains a dangerous place, and our government's top priority must be national security. Every action taken by the U.S. Government overseas, whether diplomatic, economic, or militarily, should be judged in part by whether it improves the safety, security and well-being of Americans at home and abroad.

Republicans agree with President Bush that the War on Terror is a new kind of battle our country has not faced before. In centuries past, America's isolation – thanks to two broad oceans – helped protect us from territorial wars and foreign invasion. But as September 11th, 2001, made us too painfully aware, the United States will be increasingly susceptible to new threats: biological, chemical and nuclear weapons, electronic warfare, and sabotage.

President Bush and the Republican Congress are implementing a comprehensive strategy to defend Americans against terror. Today, in the early stages of what is likely to be a long War against Terrorism, we must invest in and strengthen our national security infrastructure. The only area in the federal budget realizing a significant spending increase is in the area of national security – for the Pentagon, for the intelligence community, and for homeland initiatives. And immediately following 9/11, the Congress passed and the President signed into law the PATRIOT Act to help break down information barriers between law enforcement and intelligence agencies seeking to track down and lock up terrorists.

America must have the most effective and well-trained fighting force in the world. Our Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines are only as strong as our weakest soldier, sailor, or airman. All the technological advances won't save us if we fail to ensure that our armed forces are the most highly skilled, best-trained force in the world. We need to treat our troops with respect and pay them what they deserve. With a renewed emphasis on innovative technologies being used in Afghanistan and Iraq, we will be more prepared for tomorrow's battles thanks to superior equipment and superior troops trained to use it. And so far, our investment in the global War on Terror is yielding significant results. The Taliban has driven from power; two-thirds of Al Qaeda's Leadership has been captured or killed; and, Iraq's evil dictator Saddam Hussein is out of power and behind bars.

The Bush Doctrine emphasizes we must root out terrorists where they plan, train and hide. No longer can we sit idly by before taking action to protect American security in all places – from local airports and shopping malls to nuclear power plants and military installations. The War on Terror is not a simple police action. Republicans believe our government must use its full force at home and abroad to stop terrorists in Baghdad and Kabul, so that they cannot wreak havoc and catastrophe in Springfield and Chicago.

Now is a time for vigilance as we fight the War on Terrorism. Illinois Military facilities are important assets in our battle against terrorists. Therefore, we strongly support keeping open and fully operational:

Scott Air Force Base;
Rock Island Arsenal;
Great Lakes Naval Base;
Springfield Air National Guard; and
Peoria Air National Guard.

While the threat of terrorism is certainly a significant aspect of safety for Illinois citizens, day-to-day safety and security of our local communities is also critical. A majority of the crime committed in Illinois is by repeat offenders. We need to ensure that crime is aggressively prosecuted and prison sentences are carried out.

We will work to make sure that every community in Illinois, regardless of size, has proper police protection and that these brave men and women have the full support of our government. The Republican Party will diligently work to make sure that our neighborhoods, communities, and state are safe.

The Republican Party recognizes the right of self-defense and the need of citizens to be able to defend themselves and their family within their homes. No law should infringe upon that important right nor compromise a person's ability to defend self and loved ones within the home.

TORT REFORM

Our Courts must be a place where individuals can get justice. All must be equal under the law and each accountable for transgressions and the consequences visited upon others. Yet, Illinois is facing a crisis in our judicial system which is imposing unfair and unjust burdens upon our fellow citizens, business and industry, and most acutely, upon our health care providers.

Courts that are unbalanced and unjust are chasing doctors out of the State and even out of the practice of medicine. Hospitals are finding it too expensive or impossible to provide critical care to our citizens. Tragically, the judicial system has made the desire of trained doctors and other health care providers to help pregnant women deliver a healthy baby and enjoy a healthy pregnancy, too costly. These health care providers are leaving the State or retiring. And it is not just obstetrics, physicians in all fields are fleeing this State in record number.

Our goal is to reduce the rate of medical errors, especially those that result in serious injury or death. We believe the primary and preferred method of achieving that goal is through scientific research not litigation. Injuries, wrongfully inflicted, must be properly and fairly addressed. However, a tort system that is punitive and random is in need of serious reform. A legal system that induces doctors to retire or flee is broken. A legal system that mandates the costly and unnecessary practice of defensive medicine serves neither the citizens nor the cause of justice.

It is not just health care providers and their patients that are being punished.

Industry and the families that depend upon it for good jobs are punished by an unfair and unbalanced judicial system. Industry is leaving the State. Other businesses, looking to expand and grow are deciding to locate in other states out of fear that an unbalanced and unfair legal system in Illinois will prove too costly and creates an environment that is hostile to business and jobs.

Abusive class action lawsuits filed in Illinois are further discrediting our legal system. Courts in the Metro East and Cook County have become a national hub for highly questionable and spurious class action lawsuits. This trend needs to be reversed.

Illinois Republicans are committed to justice that is fair and balanced. We are committed to a civil litigation system that allows for a reasonable and uniform method of calculating damages and compensating those aggrieved. We support reforming the tort system so that judges and juries are empowered to extend reasonable, predictable compensation to the injured and aggrieved, but prevented from allowing prejudice, passion or unguided whim to impose verdicts that are neither reasonable nor predictable, as is now too often the case.

Tort reform is needed now.

CONCLUSION AND CALL TO ACTION

There are promising signs for the Republican Party in Illinois. Democrat support in minority communities was given a serious blow in states such as Maryland, where campaigning strongly in minority areas thought to be untouchable by our party elected a conservative Republican governor. South Carolina and Georgia are other examples of entrenched Democrat leadership falling to Republican candidates who carried a positive and inclusive message to all communities and didn't shy away from the traditional Democrat sectors of the voting public. In each instance of victory, candidates stood up for principles and action and differentiated themselves from their competition. Winning elections is about motivating voters to choose a better alternative, not blurring the distinctions between candidates in the mushy middle.

What is necessary to achieve these successes is Leadership. It must be enlightened and inclusive leadership; leadership that is not afraid of bold ideas that appeal to progress in solving problems. Organization is also key, as well as money; but we must not lose sight of the fact that organization and money won't just come by asking they will come to us when we demonstrate the effective kind of principled leadership and action that makes people want to join our cause. A cause it must be; a battle to address our problems to rally a public that is cynical and tired of politics as usual. It must be bold and forward thinking to awaken a public that is busy managing their hectic lives; mere tired platitudes won't generate the interest or excitement necessary to bring that awakening. Let's set about getting that job done now.