



## Preamble

### **Ideas. Vision. Strength. Leadership.**

Those four words describe Kansas Republicans and their resolve to make Kansas better.

Republicans have led the way in shaping Kansas into what it is today. Our history of leadership within the Republican Party includes great leaders like Dwight D. Eisenhower and Bob Dole. Today's leaders are shaping a new Republican Party committed to the ideals and principles which built the Grand Old Party, but which seeks to transform the party to tackle the challenges of the next generation.

We are proud to present the 2008 Kansas Republican Party Platform, a compilation of the shared values of Republicans across Kansas. This platform seeks to provide solutions to cure Kansas' stagnant and downward spiraling economy, curb violent crime, make government more open and accountable, prepare Kansans to compete in a global economy by making our schools not just good, but great, and maintain the values and beliefs of America's heartland.

Our vision of a better Kansas did not start in the halls of the capitol or with the input of special interest lobbyists and the politically well connected. It started with the people. It began with frank discussions with ordinary Kansans. From town hall meetings to hundreds and hundreds of ideas submitted online, we sought and found practical solutions to many of today's challenges.

Republicans have long believed that the best and most effective government is the government closest to the people. Through this process, we headed back to our roots—back to the people, to listen to their thoughts, discover their dreams, and renew within them a sense of hope and optimism.

Kansas Republicans stand ready for the challenge. History has proven that we are the party of ideas; the party which steps up to the plate and provides the leadership our state needs in times of turmoil. Today is no different. Through this platform, we present to the people of Kansas our remedy for many of the problems our state faces and solutions which we believe are reasonable, necessary and supported by Kansans.

We believe this is a blueprint for success that provides answers to the complex challenges Kansans face every single day. We have created a comprehensive plan straight from the hearts and minds of average Kansans – proving that the residents of the Sunflower State think as big as they dream.

## *Open, Honest & Accountable Government*

*The Kansas Republican Party believes in free enterprise and that encouraging individual initiative has brought this nation opportunity, economic growth and prosperity. We believe government must practice fiscal responsibility and allow individuals to keep more of the money they earn. We believe the proper role of government is to provide for the people only those critical functions that cannot be performed by individuals or private organizations; and that the best government is that which governs least. We believe Americans must retain the principles that have made us strong while developing new and innovative ideas to meet the challenges of changing times.*

### **1. Giving Kansans a voice in judicial selection**

The judicial branch of state government exists as a co-equal branch of state government that, like our executive and legislative branches, should be accountable to the people of Kansas. By requiring new appointments to the State Supreme Court that are subject to Senate confirmation, a necessary safeguard would be instituted which allows for accountability to the public and a voice for the people.

### **2. Analyze new highway projects**

Kansas should require a cost-benefit analysis for any new highway project; following the methods used by the Federal Highway Administration to glean useful knowledge on the benefits or drawbacks of each individual highway project that is proposed.

### **3. Banning the use of earmarks in the state budget**

Earmarks have become synonymous at the federal level with excessive and unnecessary spending and they foster an environment of wasteful, pork barrel spending. Kansas government should ban earmarks in their state budget process to prevent similar waste.

### **4. Curbing or prohibiting taxpayer funded lobbying**

Currently, over 100 lobbyists are registered with the state of Kansas who lobby daily the Kansas Legislature for additional financial appropriations and yet are paid by taxpayer dollars. At a minimum, government entities who use tax dollars to finance the professional assistance of hired guns to lobby on their behalf should disclose in entirety their expenditures. However, it is fundamentally wrong for government to use tax dollars to pay for professional assistance to lobby for increased spending and pet projects.

## *Creating an Environment for Growth in a World Economy*

*The keys to economic success and personal financial security are opportunity and entrepreneurship. State government must recognize that prosperity can only be achieved when the majority of economic resources remain in the hands of the people. Tax policy should be geared toward fostering an environment of economic growth, creation of jobs, and the nurturing of new technologies. Government should always seek first to meet its financial needs through the creation of economic activity. Increasing the tax burden on its citizens should be a last resort, and any effort to do so beyond the rate of economic growth should be submitted to a vote of the citizenry. To promote economic growth, state tax policy should be simple and fair to Kansas businesses.*

### **5. Reduction of property, sales and income taxes**

Property, sales and income taxes affect all Kansans. High taxes discourage business growth and expansion, and pose a difficult burden on senior citizens and others on fixed incomes when they increase on a regular basis. Property owners who have spent their entire life building up equity and resources end up inevitably renting their property from the government.

### **6. Property tax appraisal and reform**

Kansans are caught in a never ending cycle of property valuation and mill levy increases. History has shown us that the lower the tax burden is on our hardworking Kansans, the more prosperous the state. Two popular reforms to consider are: 1) Cap appraisals at the rate of inflation or 2) a 2.5% property tax revenue increase cap per year.

### **7. Implementation of a BRAC style commission to analyze the success of government programs through Legislative Post Audit**

Kansas government spends taxpayer dollars in thousands of ways that are never seriously scrutinized by Legislators. Big-ticket items like education and transportation costs always receive extensive scrutiny, but Kansas government spends resources on a multitude of other lesser known programs. These include such programs as: the Kansas Water Office spending your tax dollars on “weather modification,” paying state employees’ longevity bonus (regardless of performance), and paying for a Board of Hearing Aid Examiners. A program, similar to what the Federal Government uses when deciding which military bases to close and which not, could be used to scrutinize every program and agency, from the greatest to the least and determine where our money is being misappropriated.

#### **8. Reducing our state debt and placing a ceiling on future increases**

Over the past 15 years Kansas government debt has exploded to nearly \$4 billion today. Kansas government must place a higher priority on reducing the ever increasing debt. In 2005 alone, state government paid over \$170 million in interest. Kansas should pass legislation which bans the use of tax supported debt unless an emergency exists.

#### **9. Legislative super majority to raise taxes**

Sixteen other states, including three states which neighbor Kansas, require a legislative super majority to raise taxes. A super-majority to raise taxes has been supported by leading Republicans like Senators Bob Dole and Nancy Kassebaum Baker, and provides an additional and vital means of protection for the wallets of Kansas taxpayers. Kansas citizens are already shouldering an unnecessarily heavy tax burden and any measure which makes tax increases more difficult to enact is welcome news.

#### **10. Self-imposed spending limit**

Common sense dictates not to spend what you don’t have. Kansans know that they must live within their means and believe that the government they fund should too. Fiscal discipline needs to be restored in Kansas Government. Simply put, Kansas lawmakers need to limit the state’s yearly spending to the previous year’s budget total, plus an increase amount equal to inflation and the population increase.

### *Innovations which Reshape Kansas for the Next Century*

*The Kansas Republican Party believes that the fundamental principles of the Republican Party are rooted in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the Bill of Rights. The Party supports the preservation of our Republic, its ideals and institutions for the good of all Americans; and adamantly opposes the erosion of these cherished freedoms. Preserving these freedoms requires our best effort; our willingness to believe in ourselves and to believe in our capacity to accomplish great things; to believe that together, with God’s guidance, we can and will resolve the problems which confront us.*

#### **11. Zero-based budgeting**

Zero-based budgeting would require that each individual state government program justify its existence, defend its necessity and document its success for each fiscal year as opposed to simply basing budget decisions on a last year’s funding level. Every government program should be subjected to this scrutiny and analysis. This would reduce the entitlement mentality with respect to cost increases, and empower Kansas legislators to have more thorough and meaningful budget discussions.

#### **12. Requiring proof of voter identification**

Requiring citizens to prove their identity by showing proper photo identification is a part of every day life. Casting a vote is a pillar of freedom and also a fundamental right given to every Kansas citizen. However, Kansans also have the right to be able to trust that elections are conducted fairly, honestly and without reproach. Therefore, it is not only reasonable, but also vital to protecting the integrity of the ballot box, to require citizens to show photo identification when casting a ballot, either in person or when requesting an advance ballot, in any state election.

#### **13. Initiative and Referendum**

Occasionally politicians are not motivated to respond to certain public interests. It is vital that citizens have a mechanism through which they can influence and ultimately change public policy, both at the state and local level, by allowing ballot initiatives to be petitioned by a reasonable percentage of the electorate.

#### **14. Online accessibility of government records**

In recent years, Kansas has taken giant steps forward in government transparency. However, more can still be done to easily put government records, at all levels of government, in the hand of private citizens.

## Protecting the Rule of Law

*Legal immigration is a blessing to this country, and with the promise and opportunity afforded to all immigrants, a blessing to those who come here. Preserving that promise for future generations mandates that we protect the sovereignty of our country and secure our borders. Legal immigration is not incompatible with this goal. Immigration and citizenship with all of its privileges, when executed pursuant to the law, is historically proven and an inseparable component of that promise. It is, therefore, the duty of all who seek the promise of America to respect the laws of our country.*

### **15. Ensure public benefits/resources only go to documented residents**

Every taxpayer has a moral right to expect that their earnings will not be taken and used in such a way that might encourage law breaking. Therefore, every government entity responsible for expending tax dollars should take every reasonable and responsible step necessary to ensure that such expenditures are made to the benefit of legal and documented residents. Confirmed medical emergency care should be available for all.

### **16. Promoting the use of our official language**

English is the official language of the state of Kansas, and unless contrary to federal law, all published state documents, resources, advertisements, media and online material should be made available in our official language. Employers should have the right hire or terminate employees based on their competency of the state's official language

### **17. Refusal to enact the REAL ID act**

Kansas should join with 18 other states that have passed legislation to refuse implementation of the Real I.D. Act of 2005. This act requires all states to issue a federal standardized driver's license or personal identification cards. Only legal Kansas residents should be permitted to receive state issued driver's licenses or other identification cards which could be used to misrepresent citizenship status to other government entities or prospective employers.

### **18. Employment verification status**

Kansas should require businesses to utilize E-Verify, *the only official U.S. government source that provides employers in the United States with real-time data that takes the subjectivity out of verifying employment eligibility* ([http://www.smartbusinesspractices.com/legal\\_everifyfaq.php](http://www.smartbusinesspractices.com/legal_everifyfaq.php)), as the accepted resource to check the citizenship status of all new workers.

## Reforms to Truly Make Healthcare Affordable & Accessible for Every Family

*The easy accessibility of healthcare to everyone is a valued blessing to our country, and quality healthcare is vital for a healthy Kansas. Preserving this quality for all generations, whether they reside in rural or urban areas, is a pillar of the Kansas Republican Party. The cost of healthcare has become an unacceptable burden, especially for small businesses and the working poor. We believe it is necessary to find creative solutions using private insurance and tax incentives. Single payer systems could lead to uncontrolled costs, doctors opting out of the programs and the threat of rationed care. The Kansas Republican Party is opposed to any plan that is an attempt to socialize medicine.*

### **19. Encourage greater personal responsibility**

Individual responsibility has been a pillar of the Republican Party since its inception. No issue better illustrates individual responsibility than people taking good care of themselves having a direct bearing on their health. Individuals who take good care of their bodies, who don't engage in risky behavior and maintain a healthy and balanced diet are less likely to have health problems. Kansas should encourage its citizens to take more personal responsibility for their health in an effort to trim costs and create a more healthy society.

### **20. Move toward greater transparency in healthcare costs**

In the same way that we support transparency for state and school district budgets, health care providers should provide greater transparency and details for billable costs. Every citizen should be able to analyze each medical bill they receive and easily understand what costs are associated with each procedure they receive.

#### **21. Encourage greater flexibility**

Kansans should be able to experience as much flexibility as possible when purchasing insurance and participating in Health Savings Accounts. One way to facilitate this is to allow small businesses to participate in larger affinity groups to secure the same lower premiums that large businesses enjoy.

#### **22. Drug and alcohol testing**

State government provides an important and necessary public service in financing healthcare for low-income and at-risk individuals. This is an important function of state government. However, those individuals who utilize public dollars to pay for healthcare should be required to pass drug and alcohol screenings to receive those benefits.

#### **23. Medical care should not be rationed**

Kansas government should never restrict its citizens from receiving medical care, either emergency or elective, that they desire. Individuals should be responsible for, and the primary decision maker of their own healthcare.

#### **24. DNA profiling**

DNA profiling should be prohibited when insurance carriers consider underwriting a policy. Insurance providers should not be able to screen individuals based upon a genetic pre-disposition to certain diseases.

#### **25. Maintain high risk insurance pool**

Kansas should continue to maintain an affordable insurance pool for the “uninsurable.” No Kansan should be denied basic healthcare because insurance carriers refuse to cover them or they cannot afford the premiums. Restrictions should be put on carriers that “cherry pick” only the healthy and reject other clients because of a previous or current health problem.

#### **26. Tort Reform**

Kansas should work to reduce liability in the health care field through responsible tort reform as a way to hold down and reduce medical costs for Kansas citizens.

## *Fostering a Society of Hope, Opportunism & Shared Values*

*The Kansas Republican Party believes that the fundamental principles of the Republican Party are rooted in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the Bill of Rights. The Party believes that every life is created with a purpose and that life is a precious gift that should be protected from conception to natural death. Wherever possible state law should facilitate and promote a culture of life and limit the tragedy of abortion both on the unborn child and the affected immediate family.*

#### **27. Enhancing the information provided to women contemplating an abortion**

Women contemplating an abortion must be fully informed about the development of her unborn child and possible long term affects, both physical and emotional, of abortion. She should also be encouraged and be offered the opportunity to view a sonogram before an abortion. State law should allow the right to civil and criminal redress for matters involving malpractice, malfeasance, or ethical violations to post-abortive women.

#### **28. Enhance funding for adult stem cell research**

Stem cell research has shown the exciting potential to cure numerous health problems – to date, all successful therapies have used umbilical cord blood or adult stem cells. Not only has embryonic stem cell research been unsuccessful in providing treatments, it requires the destruction of embryos or the attempt to clone humans. The Kansas Republican Party urges the state to put all its stem cell research dollars into a further study of cord blood and adult stem cells and to prohibit cloning and embryonic stem cell research.

#### **29. Expanded gaming oversight**

With the recent passage of legislation allowing state owned casinos, Kansas should expand the legislative oversight to prevent potential fraud and corruption. The legislature should be allowed, through rules and regulations, to supervise the operations of expanded gaming operations in Kansas. State government should also receive a higher percentage of gaming revenue; and any cash dispensing machine, ATM or otherwise, should be banned from being installed on the premises of a casino or nearby.

### **30. Prohibit municipalities from forming domestic partnership registries**

The Kansas Constitution, which defines marriage as between one man and one woman, should not be circumvented by municipalities attempting to form domestic partnership registries or bestow on domestic partners those rights and benefits reserved for married couples.

### **31. Require tax stamp to combat and eliminate the sale of child pornography**

For years, law enforcement has successfully used a tax stamp law to combat and crack down on the illegal drug trade. Kansas Republicans believe the same tool should be allowed to combat the sale of child pornography.

### **32. Internet filters**

Entities which receive public financing should be required to place internet filters on public computers accessible to minors to block pornography and other sexually explicit material.

## *Equipping the Children of Tomorrow to Succeed*

*The Republican Party believes that the primary focus of education should be on expanding academic knowledge from a core education. In a global economy, our students must be proficient in math and science. In order for our nation to survive and prosper, our students must have a thorough understanding of history and the philosophical concepts upon which our government is based. Public Education is an essential service provided by local government and is key to our children's success. Public schools, while serving the diverse communities of our state, must recognize and be responsive to the input of school children's parents, and to the standards of character and values prevalent in the communities they serve. The role of parents as the primary decision makers in the lives of their children should be embraced and encouraged.*

### **33. Money should follow the child**

Parents should have academic choice through options such as public schools, charter schools and private schools, both accredited and non-accredited, including home schools. Public policy should support parental choice and the base state aid for each pupil should follow the child, regardless of the school the child ultimately attends.

### **34. Accountability for dollars spent**

Just like every other segment of state government, local school districts should be accountable to their local taxpayers for how and where they spend public dollars. School budgets should be held to the same standards of other government entities by providing full disclosure of all public funds. Every public school in Kansas receives funding from the same sources; local taxpayers, the state of Kansas, and the federal government. Yet each school district in the state operates under different budgets which are setup, configured, analyzed and accounted for differently. The state of Kansas should utilize a uniform budget process for every local school district which allows for easy comparison from district to district and is accessible and understandable for every taxpayer.

### **35. No special tuition breaks for illegal aliens**

Illegal immigrants residing in Kansas should not be granted special, discounted tuition breaks when attempting to attend Regents universities in the state. Legislation granting them reduced rates should be repealed.

### **36. Right to read English in 1<sup>st</sup> grade**

By the time students reach the 1<sup>st</sup> grade they should be proficient in and be strongly encouraged to read the official language of the state of Kansas.

### **37. Define local standards for curriculum**

When it comes to education, the best policy is always to have decisions made at the local level, as close as possible to the students who attend that school and their parents. Local school boards should be granted true oversight over the curriculum of minor students thereby allowing accountability to local elected officials by the child's parents. Local school boards should set parameters over curriculum and define the local standards for what is acceptable material.

### **38. Academic freedom**

Kansas students should be allowed and encouraged to fully discuss and critique all matters of education. Schools should teach students to be critical thinkers who analyze and research all material they are presented with. Our schools should not encourage academic censorship and students should be presented with differences of opinion on critical issues.

### **39. Patriotism**

Kansas students are allowed to grow up in the greatest nation on earth. Kansas students are encouraged to learn the great works of our founding fathers, and should have access to our founding documents and encouraged to read and study them in depth.

## *Securing the Safety of Kansans at Home*

*We believe the rights of society and the rights of the individual are both important and must be protected. We support the work of law enforcement across the state, to create safe neighborhoods, protection from sex offenders, and freedom from abuse inside the home. The judicial system must impose swift and fair punishment for all crimes, violent and non-violent. We support the judicious use of capital punishment and we urge the passage of laws that will limit endless appeals in capital cases. We believe that each citizen has the right to bear arms and shall have no unnecessary restrictions.*

### **40. Strong sentencing guidelines**

Kansans need a safe community to work in and raise a family. Kansas government should work to maintain low crime through strong sentencing guidelines for criminals, through proactive law enforcement and monitoring of those on probation. Kansas law should limit downward sentencing from the bench which strays from sentencing guidelines.

### **41. Strong homeland security**

A strong national defense infrastructure requires a modernized, fully-equipped and trained armed force. Their noble mission and the sacrifices they have made, mandate that the men and women of these all-volunteer forces be given the greatest honor and respect.

### **42. Right of local police to detain**

Local police officers who come into contact with lawbreakers should take due care to ascertain if the suspect is present here in violation of immigration law. Police should be given the authority to hold and report violators to federal immigration authorities. Overlooking lawbreaking only encourages it to occur more often and local police can serve as a vital first line of defense for homeland security by identifying those individuals here illegally.

### **43. Child sex predators**

Kansas' most valuable resource is the children of tomorrow. Children deserve and should expect to be protected everywhere, especially at home and school from child sex predators. Pedophiles should be subject to the harshest penalties available under the law, and parents should be granted access and knowledge about registered sex offenders residing in the area. Kansas has made great strides in this area to protect Kansas children but more work can still be done. More severe penalties should be imposed on medical practitioners and abortion providers who shield the acts of child sex predators.

## *Utilizing Alternative Energy to Power the Technology of Tomorrow*

*Strong energy policy allows for a strong state through an increase in jobs and people calling Kansas home. Kansas needs to be a leader on energy policy in the country which should be done through innovation. Strong energy policy is built through the development of energy resources. Kansas government should encourage development of new energy producing business.*

### **44. Stop making energy policy based on faulty science.**

Kansas leaders should not be allowed to arbitrarily deny permits to build new power and energy producing plants based their political ambitions, but only based upon existing Kansas law. Carbon dioxide, one of the most common gases on earth, should not be declared a pollutant nor used as an excuse to deny the construction of new power plants in Kansas.

**45. Encourage conservation and the development of alternative energy supplies.**

Ever increasing prices are creating new avenues for entrepreneurs and existing companies to pursue new ways to develop brand new sources of energy. Every day you hear about new developments in wind, solar, nuclear or geothermal energy. All of these are great ideas that show real promise for providing clean, inexpensive, renewable energy for future generations.

**46. Consumers should be considered first**

Kansas residents, the consumers of energy production, must be the ones who are considered first in regards to mandating new and potentially expensive technology and energy policies and their impact on the economy.

*Restoring Pride in Kansas*

*As Kansas Republicans, we gratefully acknowledge the gift of abundant natural resources in our nation, and especially recognize the importance of these resources in the agriculturally-driven economy of our state. Maintaining the rich heritage of our state in the future depends on the protection and wise usage of all natural resources. We recognize that stewardship requires the wise use and conservation of our God-given natural resources. The balance between the conservation of natural resources and progressive enterprise can be accomplished. We support the protection of water rights and natural mineral resources of private land owners, and encourage the conservation of all natural resources through economic/tax incentives rather than government regulations.*

**47. Utilizing Kansas goods for Kansas government**

Kansans need jobs for economic development to occur and Kansas government should therefore place a priority on using the services of Kansas companies, products and services. Whenever and wherever possible Kansas government should keep Kansas dollars in the Kansas economy, allowing our citizens to profit from these expenditures will facilitate economic growth here at home.

**48. Protection of the family farm**

Kansas has a proud heritage of family farm ownership which is the backbone of Kansas. Policies that encourage families to stay on the land are beneficial to all Kansas. Government policies should not shortcut family farmers in order to consolidate profits into the pockets of a few investors.

**49. Further protection of Kansans from the abuse of eminent domain**

The rights of private property owners should be protected and preserved in the Kansas Constitution. Following the *Kelo* decision, Kansas statute was amended to preserve the rights of property owners from the abuse of eminent domain. However, the citizens of Kansas deserve that this protection be passed as a constitutional amendment.

**50. Expansion of rail service throughout Kansas**

As motor fuel prices continue to rise, Kansas government should look at ways to provide incentives for the expansion of rail service throughout Kansas.