

The Texas Democrats say:

# ABOUT TODAY'S ISSUES

The Texas Republicans say:

Quotes are from the Texas Democratic Platform at [txdemocrats.bytrilogy.com/pdf/2014-Platform.pdf](http://txdemocrats.bytrilogy.com/pdf/2014-Platform.pdf) and the Republican Party of Texas Platform at [texasgop.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/2014-Platform-Final.pdf](http://texasgop.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/2014-Platform-Final.pdf).

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## LIFE

**The Democratic Platform says:** “Texas Democrats...Trust the women of Texas to make personal and responsible decisions about when and whether to bear children, in consultation with their family, their physician, personal conscience and/or their God, rather than having these personal decisions made by politicians...Recognize that the product of a joined egg and sperm has no independent status, standing, entitlements or rights that would usurp or supersede in any way the rights, status, standing and decisions of the mother or woman which are paramount.” (Page 24)

**The Republican Platform says:** “All innocent human life must be respected and safeguarded from fertilization to natural death; therefore, the unborn child, the aged, and the physically or mentally challenged have a fundamental individual right to life, which cannot be infringed.” (Page 14)

## STEMCELL

**The Democratic Platform says:** “Stem cell research should not be held hostage to politics that limit the potential for conquering many debilitating and deadly illnesses...strongly and unconditionally support research...and state funding for research into stem cell therapies at our state’s public universities...Stem cell therapies should be expanded.” (Page 25)

**The Republican Platform says:** “We support legislation prohibiting experimentation or commercial use of human fetal tissue, which requires or is dependent upon the destruction of human life. We encourage adult stem cell research using cells from umbilical cords, from adults, and from any other means that does not kill human embryos.” (Page 15)

## ADOPTION

**The Democratic Platform says:** “We support adoption of children by loving qualified parents regardless of marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, and the rights of families created by those adoptions.” (Page 27)

**The Republican Platform says:** “We support reducing the time, bureaucracy, and cost of adoption. We oppose mandates that deny mothers a choice in selecting a traditional home for their children...oppose mandatory open adoption...oppose any government agency from forcing faith-based adoption or foster care organizations to place children with same-sex couples.” (Page 16)

## FAMILY

**The Democratic Platform says:** “Democrats support initiatives to ensure the security of our families...Every parent should be able to provide housing, nutrition, clothing, and health care for his or her family...We believe government

should make sure appropriate supports are in place and accessible to families in need.” (Page 26) “We support a Children’s Bill of Rights.” (Page 27)

**The Republican Platform says:** “We support the definition of marriage as a God-ordained, legal and moral commitment only between a natural man and a natural woman.” (Page 13) “We believe that parental rights, authority, and responsibilities are inherent and protected by the United States Constitution. Local, state, or federal laws, regulations, or policies shall not be enacted that limit parental rights in the rearing of both biological and adopted children. Parents have the right and responsibility to direct and guide their children’s moral education” (Page 16)

## MARRIAGE

**The Democratic Platform says:** “Democrats believe our Constitution is intended to prohibit discrimination in all forms...Support the full inclusion of all families in the life of our state, with equal respect, responsibility, and protection under law, including the freedom to marry and the Respect for Marriage Act.” (Page 50)

**The Republican Platform says:** “We support the definition of marriage as a God-ordained, legal and moral commitment only between a natural man and a natural woman...we oppose the assault on marriage by judicial activists.” (Page 13) “Homosexuality must not be presented as an acceptable alternative lifestyle, in public policy, nor should family be redefined to include homosexual couples.” (Page 14)

## REPARATIVE THERAPY

**The Democratic Platform says:** “For decades it has been beyond dispute by health professionals that homosexuality is a normal, natural and positive variation of human sexual orientation...is clear that a person’s gender identity...is deep-seated and cannot be changed...the Republican Party of Texas continues to encourage violence against the very souls of LGBTQ people through the quackery known as “reparative therapy”...We...call on the Texas Medical Board, the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists, and the Texas Department of State Health Services to fully investigate and to sanction any practitioner who engages in reparative therapy.” (Page 51)

**The Republican Platform says:** “We recognize the legitimacy and efficacy of counseling, which offers reparative therapy and treatment for those patients seeking healing and wholeness from their homosexual lifestyle. No laws or executive orders shall be imposed to limit or restrict access to this type of therapy.” (Page 14)

## DISCRIMINATION

**The Democratic Platform says:** “We strongly oppose discrimination or harassment in any Texas institution of higher education against any person on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression or military status.” (Page 12)

**The Republican Platform says:** “We oppose government regulations [the Employment Non-Discrimination Act] which would coerce business owners and employees to violate their own consciences, beliefs and principles.” (Page 9)

## PORNOGRAPHY

**The Democratic Platform says:** “We believe in and support:...Full protection of civil and human rights; freedom from government interference in our private lives and personal decisions; and freedom of religion and individual conscience”(Page 50)... “Democrats support...rejection of ideological censorship of public libraries and textbooks.” (Page 51)

**The Republican Platform says:** “We encourage the enforcement of laws regarding all forms of pornography, because pornography is detrimental to the fabric of society.” (Page 14) “We encourage state and federal governments to severely prosecute illegal dealers and manufacturers of addictive substances, including pornography, and/or pedophilia.” (Page 26)

## RELIGION

**The Democratic Platform says:** “No political party and no extremist group hold a lock on religious or ethical beliefs and values. We recognize the importance of religion and prayer in the lives of Texans and support our Constitution’s guarantee of every individual’s right to practice his or her own beliefs without imposing them on others. We also recognize that no Texan should be forced to live under religious doctrines to which he or she does not subscribe. We support the U.S. Constitutional provision that no religious test shall be required as a qualification for public office. (Page 54)

**The Republican Platform says:** “As America is a nation under God, founded on Judeo-Christian principles, we affirm the constitutional right of all individuals to worship as they choose.” (Page 23) “We affirm that the public acknowledgement of God is undeniable in our history and is vital to our freedom, prosperity and strength. We pledge our influence toward a return to the original intent of the First Amendment and toward dispelling the myth of separation of church and state.” (Page 24)

## EDUCATION

**The Democratic Platform says:** “The Republican extremists steering the State Board of Education have made a laughingstock of our state’s process for approving curriculum standards and textbooks that guide what our public school students learn.” (Page 8) “Texas Democrats put the interests of our schoolchildren ahead of politics and ideology. We will realign curriculum...with objective reality and the facts of history and science...Texas Democrats believe the State Board of education should listen to subject matter experts, not partisan extremists, in developing curriculum and requirements for textbook content.” (Page 9) “Texas should:...strengthen state oversight of home schooling.” (Page 7)

**The Republican Platform says:** “The State of Texas must acknowledge that the education of children is primarily the responsibility of the parent or the guardian. The role of the state is to help facilitate that responsibility.” (Page 23) “Parents have the right to withdraw their child from any specialized program. We urge the legislature to enact penalties for violation of parental rights...Parents and legal guardians may choose to educate their children in private schools to include, but not limited to, home schools, and parochial schools without government interference, through definition, regulation, accreditation, licensing, or testing.” (Page 21) We recognize parental responsibility and authority regarding sex education...parents must be given an opportunity to review the material prior to giving their consent.” (Page 22)

## HEALTH CARE

**The Democratic Platform says:** “Texas Democrats believe health care is a right, not a privilege reserved for those able to pay for it...Every family deserves health care they can count on and a system that ensures stability, security, and access to care.” (Page 19) “Texas Democrats...support the right of a woman to acquire contraception or other reproductive services through her health insurance provider; this may not be impinged or abridged by an employer for any reason nor can it be terminated or subjected to any form of harassment or retaliation by her employer related to any health care choices;...support family planning funding for pregnancy prevention and preventive health care by all qualified providers in regulated, licensed medical facilities, rather than biased and non-medical activities in centers which are deceptive and unregulated” (Page 25) “We support the inclusion of gender reassignment surgery in Medicaid.” (Page 23)

**The Republican Platform says:** “Health care decisions should be between a patient and health care professional and should be protected from government intrusion...We urge the passage of health care reform, which results in more affordable healthcare through a market-based, competitive, and transparent health care system, including tort reform, interstate competition, genuine accountability and oversight.” (Page 18)

## DRUGS

**The Democratic Platform says:** “Texas Democrats believe in the efficient, fiscally responsible and moral administration of justice through regulations that promote: revising sentencing guidelines for non-violent offenders,

redirecting the ‘War on Drugs’ to treatment, and reclassifying some offenses considered felonies.” (Page 42)  
“Marijuana is no more dangerous than tobacco or alcohol...There is no evidence that marijuana is a ‘gateway’ drug leading to use of other more lethal drugs...urges the President, the Attorney General, Congress as well as the Texas Legislature, to support the passage of legislation to decriminalize the possession of marijuana and regulate its use, production, and sale as is done with tobacco and alcohol.” (Page 43)

**The Republican Platform says:** “We oppose legalization of illicit and synthetic drugs. We support an effective abstinence-based educational program for children. We oppose any ‘needle exchange’ program. We urge vigorous enforcement of our DUI laws.” (Page 26)

## GOVERNMENT

**The Democratic Platform says:** “Texas Democrats believe democratic government exists to achieve as a community, state, and nation what we cannot achieve as individuals; and that it must serve all its citizens.” (Page 2)

**The Republican Platform says:** “We strive to preserve the freedom given to us by God, implemented by our Founding Fathers, and embodied in the Constitution. We recognize that the traditional family is the strength of our nation. It is our solemn duty to protect life and develop responsible citizens. We understand that our economic success depends upon free market principles. If we fail to maintain our sovereignty, we risk losing the freedom to live these ideals.” Page 3

## JUDICIARY

**The Democratic Platform says:** “We support: the nomination and appointment of qualified, competent persons to serve as Judges, and as members of State Boards and Commissions responsible for carrying out civil and criminal Justice in this state;...full access to an open, full and independent Executive Branch review process of a court decision, as opposed to a ‘rubber stamp’ of a prior decision.” (Page 46)

**The Republican Platform says:** “We urge Congress to adopt the Constitutional Restoration Act and support the principle of judicial restraint, which requires judges to interpret and apply rather than make the law. We support judges who strictly interpret the law based on its original intent. We oppose judges who assume for themselves legislative powers...We call Congress and the President to use their constitutional powers to restrain activist judges.” (Page 10)

## ELECTIONS

**The Democratic Platform says:** Voting is a right, guaranteed by the sacrifices of many who died to protect it ...the legislature must fund voter database modernization, including automatic registration when qualified citizens turn 18. Voter registration should be a lifetime status for all qualified, non-felon Texas citizens, requiring only change of address documentation in person or on line—once registered.” (Page 48-49)

**The Republican Platform says:** “We support modification and strengthening of election laws to ensure ballot integrity and fair elections.” (Page 6) “We support repeal of all Motor Voter laws; re-registering voters every four years; requiring photo ID of all registrants; proof of residency and citizenship...retention of the 30-day registration deadline; and requiring that a list of certified deaths be provided to the Secretary of State in order that the names of deceased voters be removed from the list of registered voters.” (Page 11)

## DEFENSE

**The Democratic Platform says:** “Texas Democrats believe peace, prosperity and national security are assured by maintaining a strong national defense, promoting democracy, and advancing development abroad. We further believe that military action should be used as an instrument of foreign policy only as a last resort...to this end we support the use of consistent diplomacy and development efforts abroad in coordination with our allies around the world.” (Page 60)

**The Republican Platform says:** “We believe terrorism is a major threat to international peace and to our own safety. We urge our national leadership to: Protect and defend our natural and constitutional rights and swiftly wage

successful war on terrorists; Eliminate aid and cease commerce with any nation threatening us or aiding terrorists or hostile nations; support other nations fighting terrorists.” (Page 5)

## ISRAEL

**The Democratic Platform says:** “Texas Democrats believe... America must...maintain our long-standing policy that a true, mutually respectful peace with safe and secure borders for two states dedicated to peace and democracy—a Jewish homeland in Israel and a Palestinian homeland—can only result from direct negotiations between willing and responsible partners.” (Page 61)

**The Republican Platform says:** “We believe that the United States and Israel share a special long-standing relationship based on shared values, a mutual commitment to a republican form of government, and a strategic alliance that benefits both nations. Our foreign policy with Israel should reflect the right of sovereign nations to govern themselves and have self-determination...Our policy is inspired by God’s biblical promise to bless those who bless Israel and curse those who curse Israel and we further invite other nations and organizations to enjoy the benefits of that promise.” (Page 37)

## FIREARMS

**The Democratic Platform says:** “Texas Democrats support just and smart policies, including...strengthen the national Brady background check system to incorporate all necessary records including criminal, domestic violence, mental health records, and terror watch lists; instituting a universal background check system to ensure that all firearm sales are subject to a Brady background check;...strengthening programs designed to trace crime gun purchases to shut down unscrupulous firearms dealers;...sensible gun control laws to curtail the availability of automatic weapons and extended magazines such as those purchased by the shooter of U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords which allowed the shooter to hold 30 rounds of ammunition. (Page 41)

**The Republican Platform says:** “America’s founding fathers wrote the 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment with clear intent—no level of government shall regulate either the ownership or possession of firearms. Therefore we strongly oppose all laws that infringe on the right to bear arms. We oppose the monitoring of gun ownership, and the taxation and regulation of guns, ammunition, and gun magazines. We collectively urge the legislature to pass ‘constitutional carry’ legislation whereby law-abiding citizens that possess firearms can legally exercise their God-given right to carry that firearm as well. Until such time, we urge the state to re-introduce and pass legislation easing current restrictions on firearms such as open carry and campus carry.” (Page 23)

## CLIMATE CHANGE

**The Democratic Platform says:** “We support:...the President’s Climate Action Plan and the EPA’s historic carbon pollution reduction initiative, the Clean Power Plan, and the proposed rules to cut carbon dioxide emissions from existing power plants by 30 % (below 2005 levels) by 2030.” (Page 32) “Creating a state panel to include all stakeholders to develop policies to implement the President’s rules...We recognize that climate change is a real and serious threat that is causing drought, crop failures, heat waves, more torrential storms, and extreme climate events.” (Page 33)

**The Republican Platform says:** “We believe we are to be good stewards of our planet and thus manage the resources it provides. We believe current evidence is not conclusive on the cause of climate change; we reject the use of this natural process to promote more government regulation of the private economy. Furthermore, we reject the idea of “climate justice” and the accompanying redistribution of wealth that comes with accepting it.” (Page 33-34)