

Political Parties

Wisconsin political parties: state organizations and current party platforms

Moon Crater



(NASA)

POLITICAL PARTY ORGANIZATION IN WISCONSIN

What Is a Political Party?

A political party is a private, voluntary organization of people with similar political beliefs that vies with other parties for control of government. Political parties help voters select their government officials and create a consensus on the basic principles that direct governmental activities and processes.

Political parties in the United States have traditionally provided an organized framework for the orderly performance of several basic political tasks necessary to representative democracy. Parties act to:

- Provide a stable institution for building coalitions based on shared principles and priorities.
- Recruit and nominate candidates for elective and appointive offices in government.
- Promote the election of the party's slate of candidates.
- Guard the integrity of election procedures and vote canvassing.
- Educate the voters by defining issues, taking policy positions, and formulating programs.

U.S. parties offer a marked contrast to the party apparatus in other nations. In many parts of the world, political parties begin with defined ideologies and programs. Their members are recruited on the basis of these ideas, and there is not much room for disagreement within the ranks. In other cases, parties represent regional interests or ethnic groups. By contrast, parties in the United States are loosely organized groups reflecting a broad spectrum of interests. They are truly populist parties in the sense that they accommodate diversity and are instruments of party activists at the grass roots level. Political ideology, as stated in a party's national platform, is formulated first at the local level and then refined through debate and compromise at meetings representing successively larger geographic areas.

Depending on the time, place, and circumstances, political party labels in the United States may have widely different meanings, and within a single party there may be room for members whose ideologies span a wide political spectrum. Individual Republicans or Democrats, for instance, are often further identified as "liberal", "conservative", "right-wing", "left-wing", or "moderate".

Despite the diversity within a party, specific philosophies are generally associated with the various political parties. In the public's perception, the name of a particular party conjures up a surprisingly distinct set of economic, social, and political principles.

Political Parties in Wisconsin

Throughout its history, the United States has operated with a two-party political structure, rather than single-party or multiparty systems found elsewhere. Although minor parties have always been a part of American politics, few have gained the support necessary to challenge the two dominant parties at the national level. Those that did lasted only briefly, with the predominant exception of the Republican Party, which replaced the Whig Party in the 1850s. The same cannot be said of politics on the state level. In Wisconsin, for example, the Socialist Party regularly sent one or more representatives to the legislature between 1911 and 1937, and the Progressive Party was influential between 1933 and 1947, capturing a plurality of both houses of the 1937 Legislature. Third parties were relatively quiet in Wisconsin in the 1950s, but the last 30 years have seen more activity with more parties officially recognized on the ballot.

Under Wisconsin law, a "recognized political party" is a political party that qualifies for a separate ballot or column on the ballot, based on receiving at least 1% of the votes for a state-wide office at the previous November election or through acquiring the required number of petition signatures (10,000 electors, including at least 1,000 electors residing in each of at least three separate congressional districts). At the beginning of 2009, Wisconsin had four recognized political parties: Democratic, Libertarian, Republican, and Wisconsin Green.

The Wisconsin Statutes define a political party in Section 5.02 (13) as a state committee that is legally registered with the Government Accountability Board and "all county, congressional, legislative, local and other affiliated committees authorized to operate under the same name". It must be a body "organized exclusively for political purposes under whose name candidates appear on a ballot at any election".

The delegates from the political party's local units meet in an annual state convention to draft or amend the party's state platform (a statement of its principles and objectives), select national committee members, elect state officers, consider resolutions, and conduct other party business. Every four years, party delegates from throughout the United States meet in a national convention to nominate their candidates for president and vice president and to adopt a national platform for the next four years. In Wisconsin, the slates of national convention delegates are usually based on the April presidential preference primary vote.

Statutory and Voluntary Organizations

Wisconsin law provides that each major political party must have certain local officers and committees, but over the years, these statutory organizations have been merged within the voluntary party organizations that are governed by their own constitutions and bylaws. The actual power is found in the voluntary structures.

In the case of the majority parties, voluntary organizations are composed of dues-paying members, who are affiliated with Wisconsin chapters of the national political parties. Third parties vary in the amount of regional autonomy and/or national control allowed. Given minor organizational differences, voluntary parties operate to tend to their party's interests, collect money to finance campaigns, maintain cooperation between the various county and congressional district organizations, and act as liaison with national parties. (Currently recognized parties and their voluntary organizations are discussed in the party descriptions that follow this introduction.)

The History of Wisconsin's Political Parties

In *How Wisconsin Voted*, Professor James R. Donoghue divided Wisconsin's political history into four eras. From statehood in 1848 until 1855, the Democratic Party was the dominant political party, and the Whig Party provided major opposition. This was a continuation of the party alignment that had prevailed during the state's territorial period.

The second era was one of Republican domination from 1856 to 1900. The birth of the national Republican Party is attributed to a meeting in Ripon, Wisconsin, in 1854. Its founding was based on the conditions and events that eventually led to the Civil War, and within Wisconsin these same circumstances contributed to the rapid growth of the Republican Party and the demise of the Whigs.

The second era ended at the turn of the century with the election of Governor Robert M. La Follette. The third era, from 1900 to 1945, was a time of great stress and change, encompassing the Great Depression and World Wars I and II. Until 1932, the major political battles usually occurred not between two parties, but between two factions of the Republican Party – the conservative “stalwart” Republicans and the “progressive” (La Follette) Republicans. The Democratic Party was in eclipse, and election contests tended to be decided in Republican primary elections.

The third era also saw the high point of third party influence in Wisconsin. The progressive faction formally split from the Republicans to form its own party in 1934. The new Progressive Party won gubernatorial elections in 1936 and 1942 and a plurality in both houses of the legislature in 1936. Declining popularity, however, led to its dissolution in 1946, and Progressive Party leadership urged its members and supporting voters to return to the Republican Party. The period from 1900 to 1937 was also the time of greatest strength for the Socialists.

The fourth era, from 1945 to the present, witnessed a realignment of the major parties. A resurgence of the Democratic Party ended the long Republican domination, turning the state to a more balanced, two-party, competitive system. In the late 1940s, some former Progressives, Socialists, and others began moving into a moribund Democratic Party. This influx both revitalized the party and made it more liberal. In the following decade, the Democrats worked at uniting their party and building their strength at the polls. Meanwhile, the conservative faction solidified its control of the Republican Party with the departure of more liberal-minded Progressives and addition of conservative Democrats fleeing their former party as it became more liberal.

In the years following World War II, the resurgent Democratic Party began seriously challenging the majority Republicans. Steady Democratic growth culminated in the 1957 election of William Proxmire to the U.S. Senate, the first “new” Democrat to win a major statewide elec-

tion, followed by the election of Gaylord Nelson as governor in 1958. These elections marked the emergence on Wisconsin's political scene of a Democratic Party fully capable of competing successfully with the long dominant Republicans for public office. During this period, third party and independent candidates usually failed to garner any significant support on a statewide level.

The hallmark of contemporary Wisconsin politics is a highly competitive, two-party, issue-oriented system. At the beginning of the 1995 session, Republicans gained control of both houses for the first time since 1969. In 1993, 1995, and 1997, the majority party in the senate shifted during the session. Democrats controlled the senate in 1999 and 2001, while Republicans retained the control of the assembly they had won in the 1994 elections. For the first time since 1982, a Democrat was elected governor in November 2002.

Republicans controlled both the senate and assembly under a Democratic governor from 2003 to 2006. In 2006, Democrats won a majority in the senate. In 2008, they took control of the assembly for the first time since 1994. At the beginning of the 2009 session, Democrats controlled the governor's office, senate, and assembly for the first time since 1986.

Of the state's major elected partisan officers in January 2009, the Democrats held the positions of governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, and state treasurer, as well as both U.S. Senate seats, five of the eight congressional seats, and majorities in the state senate and assembly. Republicans filled the position of attorney general and held three congressional seats.

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF WISCONSIN June 2009

Headquarters

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Executive Director: JASON STEPHANY.

Compliance Director: MEGAN BRENGARTH.

Membership Director: JAMIE GUTKOWSKI.

Finance Director: MARY LANG SOLLINGER.

Organizing Director: JACOB HAJDU.

Internet Address: <http://www.wisdems.org>

State Administrative Committee

Chair: MIKE TATE, Madison.

First Vice Chair: MELISSA SCHROEDER, Merrill.

Second Vice Chair: JEF HALL, Oshkosh.

Secretary: ANGELA SUTKIEWICZ, Sheboygan.

Treasurer: MICHAEL CHILDERS.

National Committee Members: ROLLIE HICKS, Eau Claire; JASON RAE, Rice Lake; TIM SULLIVAN, Verona; PAULA ZELLNER, Porterfield.

Legislative Representatives: SENATOR JUDY ROBSON, Beloit; REPRESENTATIVE GARY SHERMAN, Port Wing.

College Democrats Representative: ANALIESE EICHER, Madison.

County Chairs Association Chair: RICH MANTZ, Fond du Lac.

Milwaukee County Chair: MARTHA LOVE, Milwaukee.

At-Large Members: GWEN CARR, Madison; SPENCER COGGS, Madison; LINDA HONOLD, Milwaukee; DIAN PALMER, Brookfield.

Congressional District Representatives:

1st District

Ray Rivera, chair

Mike Nemeth, Racine

2nd District

Peter Rickman, chair, Fitchburg

Heather Colburn, Madison

3rd District

Melanie Franklin, chair

Bob Johnson, La Crosse

4th District

Stephanie Findley, chair, Milwaukee

Demond Means

5th District

Les Nakamoto, chair, Jackson

Chris Marshall, Mequon

6th District

Gordon Hintz, chair, Oshkosh

Jan Banicki, Montello

7th District

Jan Kelton-Wolden, chair, Frederic

Gary Hawley, Stevens Point

8th District

Sid Vineburg, chair, Green Bay

Dottie Leclair, Appleton

Source: Democratic Party of Wisconsin.

County Organization. The county organization is the basic unit of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin. In each county, the membership elects the county officers. They include a chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, and treasurer (or secretary/treasurer). Their terms of office are usually one year, but some county organizations may provide for 2-year terms.

Congressional District Organization. Congressional district organizations function mainly as a base of support for Democratic congressional candidates. They also select representatives to the state administrative committee. An executive committee directs each congressional district organization.

State Convention. The party holds its annual state convention in June. Each year, the convention considers amendments to the state party constitution and other resolutions and party business.

State party officers are elected in odd-numbered years, and state party platforms are adopted in even-numbered years. State convention delegates elect Democratic National Committee members every four years.

Each county unit elects delegates to the state convention, and all party members are eligible.

The state administrative committee determines the number of delegates that represent each county by using a formula based on the number of party members and the percentage of the vote cast for the Democratic candidate in the most recent U.S. Senate election. In addition to the regular quota, certain Democratic officeholders are automatically delegates to the state convention.

State Officers and Administrative Committee. The Democratic Party of Wisconsin is headed by a state administrative committee, composed of 32 party officials chosen in a variety of ways. Delegates to the state convention elect the 5 party officers and the 4 Democratic National Committee members. The 8 congressional district conventions each select 2 representatives to serve on the state administrative committee in the spring of each odd-numbered year: the district chairperson and an additional representative of the opposite sex. The remaining voting committee members include the County Chairs Association chairperson; the Milwaukee County chairperson; a representative of the College Democrats; 2 state legislative representatives, elected by their house caucuses prior to the beginning of the new legislative term; the immediate past state chairperson; and an at-large administrative committee member.

The party officers are the state chairperson, first vice chairperson, second vice chairperson, treasurer, and secretary. The chairperson and first vice chairperson must be of the opposite sex.

Party officers are elected in the odd-numbered year for 2-year terms. Democratic National Committee members are elected each presidential election year and serve 4-year terms. The state chairperson and the first vice chairperson are also *ex officio* members of the Democratic National Committee.

Whenever a vacancy occurs, the chairperson, with the concurrence of the entire state administrative committee, appoints a successor to serve until the next annual convention, where the delegates elect an individual to fill the position for the remainder of the unexpired term.

National Committee. The Democratic National Committee is composed of the chairperson and the highest ranking officer of the opposite sex in each recognized state Democratic Party. In Wisconsin, these are the chairperson and the first vice chairperson of the state administrative committee.

An additional 200 committee memberships are apportioned to the states on the same basis as delegates to the national convention, and other specified members are appointed. Wisconsin's Democratic National Committee members are selected every 4 years at the annual state conventions held in presidential election years.

WISCONSIN DEMOCRATIC PARTY PLATFORM
As Adopted at State Convention, Stevens Point, June 14, 2008

Preamble

The Democratic Party of Wisconsin strives to build an open, just and strong society where all citizens have equal opportunities to live meaningful, secure lives. We work actively for open, honest and responsive government that is accountable to the needs and the will of the people.

Justice, Human Concerns, and Democracy

Our government must support values common to all people, including freedom, fairness, family, responsibility and community.

One of the primary jobs of government is to ensure that everyone can lead dignified, healthy and fulfilling lives. We value love, commitment, stability and nurturing of all family members. Our Constitution guarantees that we are all equal regardless of race, color, class, religion, actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, age, occupation, national origin, physical disabilities or appearance, or political beliefs. We support equal legal rights for all individuals in committed, loving relationships. We will work to ensure that basic civil liberties are forever preserved.

It is vital that government respect, support and protect freedom of expression. When government attempts to limit the rights of its citizens, the fundamental philosophy on which our nation was established is destroyed. We hold sacrosanct our civil liberties, including but hardly limited to freedom of speech, the right to privacy, the presumption of innocence and the principle of *habeus corpus*. Nothing less than the humane treatment of our fellow human beings is acceptable. Our government, checked and balanced among its three branches, serves us, and should it fail to protect our civil rights or one branch usurp another, has itself failed.

Our government serves us and protects our constitutional rights. We must fully fund our law enforcement activities and the defense of our nation. The men and women who serve us are our first line of defense, and we must provide for them. Security of our society must be our concern, it cannot be given over to foreign interests nor can it be achieved if the resources of our first responders and military are unavailable here at home when we are in our greatest need.

We will work to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed, an equal voice in government and fair and equal treatment under the law. We recognize that minorities, senior citizens, and the poor often face formidable challenges, including obstacles to voting. We will work to eliminate those obstacles. We pursue legislation and cultural change that end racial and ethnic profiling, respect the sovereignty of our indigenous Native American host nations and ensure equality between men and women. We shall work for gender-balanced, qualified representation at all levels of government. Our goal is a government and an electoral process free of the corrupting influences of money and power wielded by some who lobby our representatives.

Empowerment of citizens in all civic affairs strengthens our nation. Government must be an open institution that people trust, complying with open meeting and public record laws and elected through publicly funded state and national elections. Every citizen is guaranteed the right to vote and equal access thereto, including ex-offenders immediately upon release into their communities. We oppose voter ID requirements as discriminatory, equivalent to a poll tax, a voter suppression tactic, and a fraudulent solution to exaggerated voter fraud. We have the right and duty to inspect and count all votes and to have a voter-verified paper ballot that guarantees accurate vote counting.

We expect the swift impeachment and removal from office of officials who commit high crimes and misdemeanors.

Access to accurate information and a diversity of viewpoints are essential to citizen empowerment. The broadcast spectrum belongs to all citizens. Therefore we will work to ensure diverse local ownership of media outlets. We will provide strong support for public broadcasting and other community-owned media outlets. We support free and equal access to news media for all candidates for public office.

We respect the religious liberties of all people and welcome them into the Democratic Party. It is vital that we observe a strict separation between government and religion. It is imperative to the survival of our Democratic Republic that the rights of citizens to choose their own religious and philosophical beliefs remain whole.

We require a fair immigration policy providing a reasonable legal path to residency and citizenship. The policy must include a fair opportunity for current undocumented residents to achieve legal status. All people should be afforded the same basic principles of life, liberty, justice, and fair access to economic security.

It is important to care for all generations. We need affordable, quality, licensed daycare centers and government support to pay for childcare. We cannot neglect our nation's future. We need health education and disease prevention programs concerning smoking, alcohol, and sexually transmitted infections.

Rather than abandoning our elderly and disabled, it is essential that we preserve Social Security programs. Privatizing Social Security threatens the financial security of the most vulnerable. We must enhance programs for the aging and disabled, including subsidized long-term in-home or nursing home care.

We believe access to affordable health care is a right and that the best solution to our national health care crisis is a single-payer system. Such a system must provide universal access for individuals of all ages, promote preventive measures, provide medications and therapy and cover all physical and mental illnesses equally. Until that system is available, we support broader coverage and increased funding for the current health care programs on local, state and national levels, including BadgerCare, Medicaid and Healthy Wisconsin.

Personal moral, religious and medical decisions should be left up to the individual. We believe in complete freedom of reproductive choice, as well as the individual's right to choose death with dignity. Everyone has the right to timely obtain medications, properly and legally prescribed by their physician, from any licensed pharmacy. It is neither the role of the pharmacist nor the government to interfere in private medical decisions. Funding for stem-cell research should not be influenced by religious beliefs. This research, which would benefit all people, should be supported on its scientific merits.

Considering the rising cost of corrections and long-lasting effects of incarceration, we support alternatives to prison.

We oppose the death penalty as an inhumane and ineffective means of punishment. We believe in equitable sentencing standards and increasing the authority of judges to modify sentences. The war on drugs is a colossal failure. We must discourage dangerous drug use without criminalizing the user and provide rehabilitative treatment to addicted persons. Furthermore, the law should be changed immediately to process minor drug offenses as local ordinance violations.

We support reasonable firearms regulations to ensure the safety of citizens and law enforcement officials. We support the right to hunt and bear arms. We support Wisconsin's concealed carry ban.

Education, Labor, and Economics

Quality public education for all is critical to a healthy democracy and economy. Public funding for private schools diverts resources from and adversely impacts public schools. Increased governmental funding and financial aid is essential for all levels of public education. Nobody should be denied a quality education because of a personal lack of financial resources. The benefits of a quality education always outweigh the costs.

We believe that students have the right to receive their education in a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment, free from harassment or discrimination by teachers, staff, parents, or other students. We support fair and equitable funding for all elements of the curriculum, including art, music and physical education. A strong Wisconsin public education system builds a strong Wisconsin.

Wisconsin's current educational funding system has failed. The law allowing a limited qualified economic offer has caused diminishing compensation for teachers. Teacher compensation must keep pace with costs of benefits and inflation. Public school teachers must not be taken for granted. They deserve tremendous respect for their work educating our youth under challenging circumstances.

Revenue caps on school districts and other local governments must be eliminated. State or federal governments must fully fund their mandates.

Public investment in arts and humanities promotes healthy communities and a healthy economy. We support increased local, state, and federal funding of arts and humanities.

A strong and secure nation depends on sound economic policy that promotes and sustains full, meaningful employment. Business, labor and the public must work together to re-establish American jobs on American soil. We must resist outsourcing, thus reinvigorating domestic industries.

Workers have rights to safe and equitable workplaces, living wages including pay equity for women, and secure benefits. Workers' rights to organize, bargain collectively and strike without fear of reprisal must continue and be strengthened. We support public employees' rights to speedy mediation and binding arbitration of labor disputes. Businesses must be held accountable for contracts with their employees. Right-to-work legislation and the hiring of strikebreakers are anathema to a strong, justly-compensated workforce. Pension and other retirement funds must be strictly safeguarded and responsibly managed through regulation. In the event of bankruptcy, workers' unpaid wages must be the first claim on remaining assets.

We support a tax system that is based on ability to pay. It is immoral to increase the tax burden on those less able to pay while reducing it for the wealthy. Doing so fails to spur economic and job development and hurts those with the least income. The Federal budget must be balanced through responsible spending and fair taxation. We call on the State Legislature to make corporate taxes on par with the national average.

State and Federal governments must quickly take measures to protect victims of all forms of fraudulent, unscrupulous, or usurious lending.

America must invest in an healthy economy by supporting worker training, affordable tuition at our state-supported universities and technical colleges and ample funding for research.

American companies have an obligation to our nation to be established here at home, follow our labor and environmental laws and pay taxes for the good of the commons. Furthermore, we must protect our industries from competition by enforcing tariffs against nations that tolerate unfair worker conditions and environmental degradation.

All products sold by vendors at Democratic Party functions must be marked made in America or union made.

Our wealth should be measured not only by the GDP but also by broad measures of well-being, such as the United Nations Human Development Index, that incorporate factors like health, education, literacy, employment and wages and environmental quality.

Agriculture and Environment

We must preserve family farming by creating market systems that assure a fair return to both farmers and processors. True Cooperatives and family farm subsidies are essential to the economic viability and quality of life in rural areas. In addition we support value-added agriculture which includes farming endeavors outside traditional forms of agriculture. Price supports for non-owner operated farms should be eliminated.

We encourage legislators and Democratic Party leaders to support farming systems that are humane to animals, preserve our soil, water and forest resources, and produce wholesome, safe food for consumers. We support agricultural sustainability through growth in "buy fresh buy local" practices which insure markets for local farmers and save fuel by eliminating costly transport. We also support truth in labeling of conventional, organic, and genetically modified food.

Protecting the ecological systems of our planet is essential to the economic and social welfare of our state and nation and to the future of humanity. Our legislators and leaders must pay heed to soil, water, and atmospheric pollution; scientific evidence of global warming; invasive species; and decreasing biodiversity while enacting appropriate legislation to safeguard our environment. We must maintain the integrity of the vast fresh water supply in the Great Lakes.

We must reduce greenhouse gases by developing alternative and sustainable fuels and energy sources; increase production of fuel-efficient vehicles; reduce urban sprawl onto prime agricultural soils; improve and expand local, regional and national mass transportation systems; and increase recycling and waste management, all while maintaining biodiversity. We will restore responsible environmental regulations affecting open space, wilderness areas, soil conservation, forest management, toxic and hazardous waste disposal and cleanup and watershed protection. We call for the use of advanced technology and environmentally-friendly practices to be implemented in industrial settings and mining natural resources and the enforcement and strengthening of safety regulations. To ensure the protection of our state's valuable natural resources, we support the re-establishment of a Public Intervener's Office and an independent Department of Natural Resources.

Foreign Affairs

We stand for human rights, social and economic justice, the rule of law, and popularly adopted democratic government worldwide. Our leaders must honor international law and honor and promote international agreements that provide groundwork for a just, prosperous, environmentally healthy, and peaceful world. Our United Nations dues must be fully paid.

We call on our government to be a cooperative and effective leader, a partner in the pursuit of global accords to improve the human condition and protect the environment. We encourage international efforts to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, discrimination, genocide, torture, genital mutilation, human slavery and trafficking, capital punishment, pollution, and global warming. We support expansion of the Peace Corps.

We oppose unfair trade and immigration policies that undermine our economy, harm working people in our country and elsewhere, and harm the environment.

We oppose unfettered international arms trade, nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, land mines, radioactive materials in conventional munitions, ballistic missile defense systems, cluster bombs, militarization of space, American-run internment camps and torture.

We support a strong military as essential to our security and providing amply for the health and well-being of members of the military after their service.

War must always be a last resort. We must address the grievances that foster terrorism rather than fight wars that perpetuate them. All in our Government and military must abide by the Geneva Conventions.

Preemptive war without direct threat to our country and the continued occupation of Iraq are fraudulent, illegal, and disastrous. The occupation diverts our attention from defeating terrorists in Afghanistan and is killing or maiming tens of thousands of our military and millions of innocent Iraqis, contributing to devastation of our economy, encouraging terrorism, and undermining our credibility and standing in the world. We must end our occupation of Iraq. Congressional action to stop funding it is long overdue.

The bulk of today's dangerous misdirection in our foreign affairs and turmoil undermining our military strength is due to individuals at the highest levels of our government who disdain our Constitution and the rule of law. Therefore we call upon Congress to begin impeachment proceedings immediately against President Bush, Vice President Cheney, and former Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and that they investigate and prosecute all members of the Bush Administration who have exceeded their office.

We support leaders with vision and values who will uphold our Constitution, reverse the failures and illegalities of Bush's administrations, and regain the global community's admiration for our country.

Conclusion

The membership of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin has crafted and adopted this platform. Our state and our country will become stronger and better by following the principles outlined herein. We expect all candidates supported by the Democratic Party to support this Platform and, when elected, to work to implement it.

WISCONSIN GREEN PARTY June 2009

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Coordinating Council

Co-Chairs: BRUCE HINKFORTH, Oconomowoc; CYNTHIA STIMMLER, Dresser.

Corresponding Secretary: JEFF SCHIFFMAN, Madison.

Recording Secretary: CLAUDE VANDERVEEN, Cudahy.

Elections Treasurer: ROBIN LUTZ, Oshkosh.

Operations Treasurer: RON HARDY, Oshkosh.

Diversity Caucus Chair: DEAN KATAHIRA, Ripon.

Lavender Caucus Chair: DENNIS BERGREN, Madison.

Women's Caucus Chair: vacancy.

Youth Caucus Chair: vacancy.

Disability Caucus Chair: vacancy.

Council Members:

1st District:

Pete Karas, Racine

vacancy

2nd District:

Larry Dooley, Madison

vacancy

3rd District:

Monte LeTourneau, Necedah

Dennis Boyer, Dodgeville

4th District:

Tommy King, Milwaukee

Leon Todd, Milwaukee

5th District:

vacancy

vacancy

6th District:

Michael Slattery, Maribel

Fred Depies, Oshkosh

7th District:

Nadine Holder, Osceola

vacancy

8th District:

Jill Bussiere, Kewaunee

vacancy

Source: Wisconsin Green Party at wisconsinsegreenparty.org, June 8, 2009.

Officers. Officers include two co-chairs, a recording secretary, a corresponding secretary, an elections treasurer, and an operations treasurer. The co-chairs serve staggered 2-year terms and may not be reelected for successive terms. The other officers serve one-year terms and may be reelected. Elections are held at the fall convention.

Coordinating Council. The Wisconsin Green Party Coordinating Council includes all of the officers plus two members from each of the eight congressional districts in Wisconsin, as well as a representative from each statewide caucus. The officers and members are elected each year at the fall convention.

State Membership Meetings. Membership meetings are held in the spring and fall of each year. A five state regional membership meeting is held during the summer. Officers are elected at the fall convention.

STATE PLATFORM OF THE WISCONSIN GREEN PARTY (Amended May 23, 2007)

Preamble

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that we must treat each other with love, respect and fairness, and that we must protect the earth for future generations.

The crises of our times demand a fundamental shift in human values and culture, and in our social, economic and political institutions. The way we live today is based on using things up: our air, our water, our natural resources, and our people. We need a new way of doing things that is sustainable, that will allow our people and our environment to flourish now and in the future. We can't keep spending today what we – and our children and their children – will need tomorrow.

The Wisconsin Greens offer a new vision for change, for a sustainable future. We recognize that one of great obstacles to that change is the fact that government no longer responds to the needs of citizens. Only by building grassroots democracy can we be sure that changes will be real, not just appearances or promises. Since neither the Democratic Party nor the Republican Party has shown a real commitment to running government in the public interest, The Wisconsin Greens believe another political party is needed: one that people can believe in; one that they can trust.

Our vision is of a sustainable society in harmony with the environment, one that meets all people's needs for security, self-respect, freedom, creativity, and community. We recognize that personal, cultural, social, economic, political, and ecological problems are interconnected. We reject the current simplistic solutions to these problems. New, creative solutions are needed which allow us to live well and happily without destroying our environment or our society. We are confronted with the challenge of letting go of old ways and creating a new vision and a new way of life.

Ecological Wisdom

The Wisconsin Green Party believes that Ecological Wisdom has a direct effect on quality of life. Only by practicing sound stewardship and ecological responsibility can we stop the degradation of the life-giving relationships that exist between humankind and the earth. The "public trust doctrine," which holds that public land, water, minerals, forests, and other natural resources are held in trust for the public and used for the common good, must be enforced. The precautionary principle must be applied to public policy decisions, especially those concerning the approval of drugs, pesticides, and genetically modified organisms to protect the public from practices of uncertain consequence.

Agriculture

1. The state government should provide subsidies to make the change from petrochemical-based to organic farming methods economically feasible for small-scale farmers.
2. The state should develop the necessary infrastructure to support the regionalization of food production and distribution systems, such as urban farms, farmers markets, community supported agriculture, and regional food processing facilities.
3. Wisconsin should establish a system of subsidies and tax incentives to protect family farms as an indispensable component of a healthy and sustainable agricultural economy.
4. A state land banking system of prime farmland to prevent diversion to non-farm use through first-option state acquisition of the land should be created.

Chemical use

5. The state will create and maintain a citizen accessible central database of the products used, concentration applied, chemical contents, health effects, and company responsible, for any private or commercial pesticide application.
6. Pesticides will not be used on or in public property, except as a last resort, after the failure of organic alternatives has been demonstrated. Tax incentives will reward the use of organic pest control methods.
7. Communities in the state will have the right to pass stronger controls on pesticides than those specified in state and federal regulations.

Forest, Wetlands, and Water

8. The Department of Natural Resources will maintain forests, wetlands, and all other ecological communities in a manner which will protect biodiversity and will allow future generations to benefit.
9. We support a general moratorium on the draining of wetlands, on road building in public forests.
10. DNR water quality rules will be stiffened to require absolute non-degradation of existing water bodies.

Energy

11. The Public Service Commission should not grant licenses to new nuclear facilities or the renewal of licenses for existing facilities.
12. We support higher average miles per gallon requirements and stricter emission control requirements on new vehicles, as well as "gas guzzler" taxes and renewable fuel and "gas sipper" rebates on new car purchases.
13. As a response to oil production having reached its peak, we support building and promoting mass transit infrastructure for light rail, high-speed rail, commuter rail, as well as intra and intercommunity bicycling and walking trails.
14. Community owned utilities and decentralized, neighborhood networks will receive financial aid for the purchase and installation of renewable energy technology such as wind, solar and biomass. The Public Service

Commission will require that the electric grid be reconfigured to accept power from widely distributed, diverse sources.

15. We will work towards statewide energy independence, and will promote, encourage, and fund energy research that brings Wisconsin closer to a self-sustaining energy system.

16. Under Green Party leadership, the state of Wisconsin will independently implement the terms of the Kyoto Protocol on global warming.

17. Green Party leaders will enact policies that significantly reduce the release of gases that deplete the ozone layer, contribute to global warming and cause acid rain.

Waste

18. The Greens will apply the principles of reduce, reuse and recycle to policies in order to reduce waste streams, reduce demands on natural resources and reduce the generation of pollutants.

19. Regional high level nuclear waste dumps will not be located in Wisconsin.

20. Tipping fees at Wisconsin landfills will be increase for commercial haulers. Commercial haulers will be required to bill their commercial customers on a per weight basis.

21. High-level radioactive and highly toxic waste storage will be only for waste generated in Wisconsin.

22. The history and environmental record of recycling or waste disposal firms will be used as major criteria in considering awarding contracts for municipal services.

23. We will require the DNR and State Attorney General to be more vigorous in prosecuting corporate offenses and will hold individuals accountable when appropriate. Corporations that engage in gross violations will have their corporate charter revoked.

Social and Economic Justice

While the Wisconsin Green party understands and applauds the initiative and ambition shown by people who seek financial security or self-improvement, we believe that it is the role of government to ensure that the financial security and social status of one group does not come via the exploitation and marginalization of another group. Additionally, common methods of measuring the economy view production for its own sake as a positive and low unemployment, a condition that favors the majority, is viewed as a threat to economic health. Clearly, new economic paradigms are needed that regard measurements for quality of life and the environment and the full employment of the population as a positive. Lastly, the Wisconsin Green Party asserts that it is the duty of government to earn the allegiance of its citizens by protecting the public from threats “economic and physical,” as well as “foreign and domestic”.

Economic Justice

24. Laws regarding Articles of Incorporation will be revised to make executives and board members more accountable for the effects of their decision-making.

25. Under a Green Party government the right of people to form unions, bargain collectively, and strike will be upheld. We oppose “union-busting” tactics. The State should assist management in working more closely and cooperatively with unions.

26. Green Party plans for economic development will focus on jobs that are based in the community and that have a vested interest in the community where their employees live – especially small businesses.

27. The Wisconsin Greens support family leave legislation, paid vacation time, job sharing, and the involvement of workers in decision-making, management, and scheduling.

28. Green elected officials will emphasize and promote regional trade emphasizing stronger ties with our Canadian neighbors who share the Great Lakes basin. State trade missions should promote “fair trade” over “free trade” with specific countries that are moving toward more equitable, sustainable economies.

Education

29. The Green Party will repeal laws that prevent teachers from striking or laws that interfere with collective bargaining such as a Qualified Economic Offer or QEO.

30. The Wisconsin Greens oppose the use of ‘high stakes’ standardized tests as the primary determinant for grade advancement, graduation or teacher pay.

31. The state should redraw district boundaries to promote decentralization of schools and an appropriate scale for school districts. The transportation of students over great distances is already a burden on the budgets in many rural districts.

32. For parents to have a meaningful impact on school board policies, district boundaries should be redrawn taking into account the ratio of electors to school board and reduced to defined, equitable limits.

33. Green Party education policy will foster an understanding of the history of our conflicts and treaties with Wisconsin’s tribes and a respect for native cultures.

Health Care System

34. The Green Party will implement a universal, single-payer system that will be funded through state taxes. The system will be designed to allow citizens to select health care providers and treatment.

35. The state shall promote the revitalization of public health care clinics and school nurses to provide necessary health services and counseling, preventative care, and instruction in hygiene, nutrition, contraception and wellness.

36. The state shall promote the chartering of non-profit and not-for-profit hospitals.

37. The state shall establish work rules that abolish mandatory overtime for nurses and other paraprofessionals in hospitals.

38. We will fund the University of Wisconsin system to develop new programs to provide paraprofessionals required to expand the public health service.

39. Drug abuse of all kinds should be treated as a disease, rather than a criminal offense.

40. We defend a woman's right to make reproduction choices affecting their own body. Birth control prescriptions should be covered by all health care plans and/or subsidized by the state.

Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Individuals

41. Wisconsin Greens will defend the rights of all individuals to freely choose intimate partners, regardless of their sex, gender or sexual orientation.

42. Wisconsin Greens support the right of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people to be treated equally with all other people, in all areas of life, including in housing, employment, civil marriage, benefits, and child custody.

Grassroots Democracy

Democracy and self-governance are dependent on the public being fully informed and all political parties having access to the ballot and public debate and discourse. Additionally, since the voter is consenting to being governed, the full will of the voter must be expressed and reflected in election results. To this end the Wisconsin Green Party will work to implement policies that result in the public being fully informed about issues and policies that tear down the barriers between the voters and the government that represents them.

Taxation

43. Wisconsin Greens will institute a progressive method of taxation that shifts the tax burden away from those that can least afford it. We will eliminate the income tax for households making less than \$20,000.00 a year and reduce the income tax for households making between \$20,000.00 and \$30,000.00 a year.

44. A portion of funds from an increase in the motor fuel tax will go for development of alternative transportation such as mass transit and bicycle trails.

45. We will eliminate tax loopholes for corporations and the wealthy, including the state capital gains deduction and the exemption of manufacturing machinery and equipment from property tax.

46. Independent businesses that are locally owned and not affiliated with any out-of-state entity will be taxed at a lower rate than franchises that export local dollars out of the community.

47. The Greens oppose state caps on local property tax levies.

Electoral Reforms

48. We support the adoption of Instant Runoff Voting as the ballot counting procedure to ensure the full expression of voter will and to eliminate the cost of primaries in non-partisan local elections.

49. We support the gradual transition to a system of Proportional Representation for legislative offices.

50. Ballot access laws will assure access thresholds that are set low enough to reflect emerging shifts in local voter will.

51. Voters will not be denied access to the views of any political party or candidates. We will insist on the full inclusion of all political parties in all public debates regardless of candidate will.

52. The Wisconsin Green Party opposes term limits, as they are restrictions on the will of the people.

Nonviolence

The problem of violence in society is complex and multifaceted and must be addressed on different fronts. For this reason we regard economic justice, education and programs that create opportunity to have as much potential at decreasing the incidence of crime and violence as traditional punitive measures. Greens emphasize that the solutions to violence, poverty, alienation, anger and political inequality are the key to solving the dilemma of crime and punishment.

Crime & Punishment

53. The Green Party will continue to oppose the death penalty in Wisconsin.

54. Crimes against people and communities must be punished through restitution and/or jail time. Alternative sentencing must be emphasized as much as possible for victimless crimes and nonviolent offenders. Ex-offenders need to come out into a healthy community that both supports them and holds them accountable.

55. We oppose the privatization of the prison system.

56. Our justice system must attach equal importance to justice for white-collar criminals, including environmental violators of our common property. Corporate executives should be held personally responsible for the consequences of their corporate actions.

57. Community members must be involved directly in crime control in their own communities through citizen police boards and neighborhood watch programs.

LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF WISCONSIN June 2009

Headquarters

State Headquarters: P.O. Box 20815, Greenfield 53220-0815.

Telephone: (800) 236-9236.

Internet Address: www.lpwi.org

State Executive Committee

Chair: BEN OLSON, Wisconsin Dells.

Vice-Chair: JIM MAAS, Rothschild.

Secretary: JOHN GATEWOOD, Oconomowoc.

Treasurer: TIM KRENZ, Osceola.

Past Chair: vacancy.

At-Large Member: PAUL EHLERS, Rhinelander.

At-Large Member: TERRY GRAY, Madison.

Congressional District Representatives:

1st District: Jim Sewell, Racine

 Alternate: Brad Sponholz, Greenfield

2nd District: Tim Nerenz, Madison

 Alternate: Tim Szczykutowicz, Madison

3rd District: Todd Welch, Eau Claire

 Alternate: Randy Palmer, Altoona

4th District: Mike McKenna, Milwaukee

 Alternate: vacancy

5th District: Tim Peterson, Oconomowoc

 Alternate: Toni Cattani, Oconomowoc

6th District: vacancy

 Alternate: vacancy

7th District: Al Arnold, Athens

 Alternate: Will Losch, Osceola

8th District: Ralph Klingsporn, Green Bay

 Alternate: Alan Basche, Green Bay

Source: Libertarian Party of Wisconsin at lpwi.org, June 2009.

State Convention. The Libertarian Party of Wisconsin holds its state convention in the spring of each year to conduct party business. In even-numbered years, the convention adopts proposed changes to the party platform and selects delegates to the national convention. It may also endorse candidates for election. In odd-numbered years, it adopts proposed changes to the constitution and/or bylaws and elects party officers and members-at-large to the executive committee. The congressional district representatives and alternates are also elected in odd-numbered years by a caucus of members from the particular district.

State Officers and Executive Committee. The party is headed by an executive committee consisting of the 4 party officers, the immediate past state party chair who is willing to serve, a representative and alternate from each of the 8 congressional districts, and 2 members-at-large. The 4 party officers and the 2 members-at-large serve 2-year terms, which begin at the end of the convention at which they are elected. Party officer or member-at-large vacancies are filled by a vote of the committee.

Congressional district members are elected by a caucus of members from that district and generally serve for 2 years as well. Congressional district conventions may meet annually, although state party members within a congressional district may hold an election at any time. Any vacant congressional district position is filled by a vote of state party members residing within that congressional district. A party member receiving the most votes at a congressional district election becomes a representative when the executive committee accepts his or her credentials. If no congressional district election is held, the executive committee may fill a vacant congressional district position by a majority vote.

National Committee. The Libertarian National Committee is composed of the 4 national officers, the immediate past chair, 5 members-at-large, and 9 regional representatives. A state's affiliation with a region is determined by the convention delegates from that state and is often the subject of negotiations before and during the national convention. Members of the Libertarian National Committee are selected at each biennial national convention and serve for 2 years from one national convention to the next. The Libertarian National Committee addresses national issues and serves, but does not control, the state parties.

LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF WISCONSIN PLATFORM
As Adopted at State Convention, Madison, April 8, 2006

PREAMBLE

As Libertarians, we defend each person's right to engage in any activity that is peaceful and honest and we welcome the diversity that freedom brings. We seek a world of liberty; a world in which all individuals control their own lives and are never forced to compromise their values or sacrifice their property. We believe that no conflict exists between civil order and individual rights and that individuals, groups, or governments should not initiate force against other individuals, groups, or governments.

PRINCIPLES

LIFE: We believe that all individuals have the right to control their own lives and live in whatever manner they choose, as long as they do not interfere with the identical rights of others.

LIBERTY: The only proper functions of government are the protection of the people from actual foreign or domestic threats to their lives and freedoms; and the protection of their individual rights, namely – life, property, and liberty of speech and action.

PROPERTY: The only economic system compatible with the protection of individual human rights is the free market; therefore, the fundamental right of individuals to own property and to enjoy the rewards of their just earnings should not be compromised.

PREFACE:

While members of the Libertarian Party of Wisconsin advocate abolishing laws governing certain voluntary behaviors, this does not necessarily imply endorsement of such behaviors. We only make the statement that in such matters an individual's right to free choice must be recognized and the morality of such choices is not a concern of government. It follows that our silence regarding any other government activity should not be interpreted as implying our approval of such activity.

TAXES:

We advocate phasing out taxes on incomes, personal property, and real property, along with corresponding decreases in the size of government.

TERM LIMITS:

We advocate limits on the time any elected official may serve in office.

ELECTIONS:

We advocate election law reforms that make it easier for the people to nominate and finance the election of the candidates of their choice.

TREATING ADULTS AS CHILDREN:

We believe laws mandating automobile insurance, use of seat belts and helmets, minimum wage, and curfews hamper individual freedom and the responsibility that must go with it. We further believe that laws restricting such things as cruising and tattoos trivialize the law and breed disrespect for it.

STATE MANDATES:

We believe that state mandates, such as the Binding Arbitration Law, are unreasonable burdens on those who must comply with and pay for them. They only represent the desires of special interest groups and their advocates in the legislature. When these mandates are unfunded they become even more unacceptable.

GUN OWNERSHIP:

We believe the right to keep and bear arms should not be infringed. We therefore oppose all laws which tax or otherwise restrict the ownership, open or concealed carry, manufacture, transfer, or sale of firearms or ammunition. We further oppose all laws requiring registration of firearms. We also cannot ignore the clear lessons from history of the suffering which can fall upon a disarmed people.

CHILDREN AND THE FAMILY:

We believe that children are a special group of citizens possessing fundamental rights involving their life and health. However, until they reach the age of legal responsibility, their other rights are limited and their parents or guardians are responsible for their actions and upbringing. Therefore, the rights and authority that parents or guardians need to fulfill their child raising responsibilities must be respected, but never at the expense of the child's life and health.

EDUCATION:

Since private education is today outperforming public education at half the cost, we call for the phase out of all state and federal involvement in education. We therefore endorse "School Choice".

GOVERNMENT WELFARE:

Today's confusion between a person's material needs and that person's rights has led to our current system of taxpayer provided, government welfare programs. These programs often invade privacy and have proven to be demeaning and inefficient. Welfare is not charity. Charity must be freely given. More charity needs to be substituted for welfare. It is also good to remember that for people to be truly free they must become responsible for their own welfare and actions.

FEDERAL “STRINGS”:

The federal government often uses the threat of withholding “federal” funds to coerce states into specific actions. We strongly urge elected officials of Wisconsin to resist such pressure and applaud them when they do.

ENVIRONMENT:

A clean environment is in everyone’s interest. Our legal system should protect public and private property from pollution. However, a balance must be found between environmental regulation and the long term economic health of a free society. The right of property owners to prosecute any polluter under trespass, nuisance, and negligence laws should be reinstated. It follows that bureaucracies should not be allowed to harass alleged environmental violators or restrict their direct access to just treatment under the judicial system.

TRANSPORTATION:

We support the maximum possible privatization of all publicly owned transportation systems and therefore oppose the creation of any new publicly funded or managed transportation systems.

VICTIMLESS CRIME:

Because only actions that infringe on the rights of others can properly be termed “crimes”, we favor the repeal of federal, state, and local laws restricting our fundamental freedom to govern our own lives.

In particular, we advocate: The repeal of laws restricting the production, sale, possession, or use of prohibited drugs and medicines. The repeal of laws regarding a minimum drinking age which are in conflict with the legally recognized age for maturity and responsibility. The repeal of laws restricting consensual sexual relations between adults. The repeal of laws regulating or prohibiting gambling. The decriminalization of assisted suicide.

HEALTH CARE:

We believe the problems with our current health care system are due to government interference and mandates and that any government program to “provide” health care to some at the expense of others will most certainly reduce the overall quality, responsiveness, and individuality of health care for everyone. It would also reduce the influx of the most talented people our society has to offer into the medical profession and diminish the exemplary worldwide progress and leadership our medical system has demonstrated. For these reasons, we advocate the free enterprise system as the only system capable of making quality, affordable, individualized medical care available to all.

PRIVACY:

We believe that free individuals may not be compelled to authorize the assignment, collection or dissemination of personal and private information on themselves; nor may any rights and privileges available to others be denied to them for using such discretion.

REPUBLICAN PARTY OF WISCONSIN June 2009

Headquarters and Staff

State Headquarters: 148 East Johnson Street, Madison 53703.

Telephone: (608) 257-4765; *Fax:* (608) 257-4141.

Internet Address: <http://www.wisgop.org>

Executive Director: MARK JEFFERSON.

Political Director: JUSTON JOHNSON.

Communications Director: KRISTIN RUESCH.

Finance Director: KARI REZIN.

IT Coordinator: BRIAN KIND.

Telemarketing Manager: RICHARD DICKIE.

State Executive Committee

State Chairman: REINCE PRIEBUS, Kenosha.

Finance Chairman: MARK CULLEN, Janesville.

Vice Chairmen: 1st – BILL JOHNSON, Hayward; 2nd – DARLENE ROSS, Shawano; 3rd – MICHELLE LITJENS, Oshkosh; 4th – TROY FULLERTON, Waukesha.

Secretary: DAVID ANDERSON, Malone.

Treasurer: CATHY STEPP, Sturtevant.

National Committeewoman: MARY BUESTRIN, Mequon.

National Committeeman: STEVE KING, Janesville.

Wisconsin African American Council: HATTIE DANIELS-RUSH, Milwaukee.

Republican Heritage Council: PERFECTO RIVERA, Milwaukee.

Wisconsin Labor Council Chairman: vacancy.

Immediate Past Chairman: BRAD COURTNEY, Whitefish Bay.

Congressional District Chairmen and Vice Chairmen:

1st District

Tyler August, Walworth
Bob Geason, Burlington

2nd District

Kim Babler, Madison
Regina Schaar, Lake Mills

3rd District

Maripat Krueger, Menomonie
Steve Brody, Mineral Point

4th District

Bob Spindell, Milwaukee
Doug Haag, Milwaukee

5th District

Crystal Berg, Hartford
Curt David, Brookfield

6th District

Ralph Prescott, Chilton
Dan Feyen, Fond du Lac

7th District

Sean Duffy, Ashland
Mike Monson, Antigo

8th District

Jean Hundertmark, Clintonville
Grant Staszak, Bonduel

Source: Republican Party of Wisconsin at wisgop.org. June 2009.

County Organization. County party organizations are the basic building blocks of the Republican Party of Wisconsin. County party leaders are elected in county caucuses prior to April 1 of the odd-numbered year. Each committee has a chairman, first vice chairman, secretary, and treasurer.

Congressional District Organization. Each congressional district has an organization that coordinates the activities of the county organizations in the district, with special emphasis on the election of Republican congressional candidates. The district organization is directed by a committee consisting of district members of the state executive committee and, at minimum, an elected chairman, vice chairman, secretary, and treasurer. Committee officers are elected in odd-numbered years prior to the state convention.

State Officers and Executive Committee. Party leadership is vested in a 32-member state executive committee, consisting of the 11 party officers (including the chairman of the county chairmen's organization and the chairman of the Young Republicans Professionals, who are designated respectively as the third and fifth vice chairmen of the committee); the immediate past state party chairman; the chairman and vice chairman from each of the state's 8 congressional district organizations; and the Wisconsin Republican African American Council, the Wisconsin Heritage Council, the Wisconsin Senior Citizen Council, and the Wisconsin Labor Council. State committee vacancies are filled by the committee. Five of the 11 party officers – the chairman, first and second vice chairmen, secretary, and treasurer – are selected in odd-numbered years by the state executive committee at an organizational meeting within 30 days following the state convention. Their 2-year terms begin upon adjournment of the organizational meeting. The persons holding those offices and the immediate past state party chairman may not vote in the selection of the new officers. The national committeeman and committeewoman are included among the 11 state executive committee officers and are elected for 4-year terms by state convention delegates in presidential election years. They serve from the adjournment of one national party convention to the end of the next and must be approved by the assembled delegates at the party's national convention. The party finance chairman is also included among the 11 party officers. The finance chairman serves at the pleasure of the newly elected state chairman and is appointed with the consent of the committee to a term that continues until a successor is named.

State Convention. The party holds its state convention in May, June, or July of each year to pass resolutions and conduct other party business. In even-numbered years, the convention adopts a state party platform. A national committeeman and committeewoman are selected in those years in which a national party convention is held.

National Convention and National Committee. The Republican National Committee consists of a committeeman, committeewoman, and a chairman from each state, plus American Samoa, Washington, D.C., Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Each state and territory has its own method of electing representatives. National committee members serve from convention to convention. The national committee is led by a chairman and cochairman, who serve 2-year terms.

REPUBLICAN PARTY OF WISCONSIN PLATFORM
As Adopted at the State Convention, Stevens Point, May 2008
PREAMBLE

It's time to Make Wisconsin Great Again.

For six long years the state that led the nation in meaningful reforms and innovation has floundered under a Democrat administration. Sadly, our state motto, *Forward*, has become a symbol of the past instead of the beacon that reflected our people's traditional passion and potential for the future.

As Republicans, we know Wisconsin deserves better. And we will strive to ensure the *Wisconsin Spirit* is no longer held in check, but flourishes to lift the hearts and minds of every Wisconsin family. The soul of that spirit embodies certain principles and values that unite us.

We believe that keeping the reference to "One Nation Under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance is very important.

We will hold true to our values and traditions that strengthen families, builds moral character and protects the innocent.

We believe that English should be the official language of government.

We believe we have an obligation to be good stewards of God's creation for future generations, and we will do so while safeguarding our property rights.

We believe taxpayers should be given the option of a single rate system that will give them the convenience of filing their taxes with just a single sheet of paper.

We believe that The United States should only grant citizenship to those who want to embrace and defend American values and culture.

We believe that every worker should continue to have the right to a federally supervised secret ballot election when deciding whether to organize a union.

We will defend our right to protect family and home while defending America and her allies and defeating America's enemies.

We will demand accountability in all public institutions and at all levels of government.

We will lead our state into a new era of prosperity, innovation and opportunity for all.

The changes we propose in government have to occur in all 513,000 elected offices throughout the country and will start here in Wisconsin.

As Republicans, we *can and will* make Wisconsin and our country better for future generations.

AMERICAN VALUES AND AMERICAN SOLUTIONS

We want to strengthen and revitalize America's core values which unite a large majority of Americans.

Our goal should be to provide long-term solutions instead of short-term fixes.

Government clearly has to change the way it operates by bringing in ideas and systems currently employed in the private sector to increase productivity and effectiveness.

The changes we need in government have to occur in all elected offices throughout the country and cannot be achieved by focusing only on Washington.

ENGLISH AND THE AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

English

English should be the official language of government, and all election ballots and other government documents should be printed in English.

Immigrants should be required to learn English.

Government should make available English language instruction to all who need it.

Businesses should be able to require employees to speak the English language while on the job.

American Civilization

Individuals have basic Constitutional rights to defend themselves, their families and property.

We believe that our basic Constitutional rights begin at conception and continue until death.

It is important to have references to God in the Pledge of Allegiance. As it states in the Declaration of Independence, "we are endowed by our Creator with the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" which makes clear that certain rights can't be taken away by government.

Statements regarding religion and morality made by the Founding Fathers are just as important today as they were 200 years ago.

The language in the Pledge of Allegiance and the Declaration of Independence are very important and must be protected. We reject the idea that because the times change so must the meaning of the language in the Pledge and the Declaration.

Public schools should teach more American history and civics.

IMMIGRATION, THE BORDER, AND ASSIMILATION

The United States should grant citizenship only to those who want to embrace and defend American values and culture.

The American people believe border control is a security issue and current laws must be vigorously enforced.

Illegal immigrants who commit felonies should be deported. Allowing illegal immigrants to remain in this country undermines respect for the law.

There should be a worker visa program making it easier for people to work legally in the United States.

When applying for a temporary worker visa each worker should take an oath to obey American law and be deported if they commit a felony while in the United States.

In a worker visa program each worker will receive a secure identification card that will allow the government to locate him or her.

Each worker must go to immigration centers in their home country that will help them find jobs in the United States so they apply for a visa with a job in hand.

There should be heavy monetary fines against employers and businesses who knowingly hire illegal immigrants.

The Internal Revenue Service should conduct audits of companies who hire illegal immigrants to determine if those companies have paid the taxes they owe.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

There will be incredible possibilities to meet our country's challenges in a variety of fields because in the next 25 years there will be 4 to 7 times the amount of new science and technology in the world as in the last 25 years.

Therefore we should dramatically increase our investment in math and science education.

We must rely on innovation and new technology if we are going to compete globally.

ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

We have an obligation to be good stewards of God's creation for future generations.

We can have a healthy economy and a healthy environment.

We can solve our environmental problems faster and cheaper with innovation and new technology than with more litigation and more government regulation.

Entrepreneurs are more likely to solve America's energy and environmental problems than bureaucrats.

If we use technology and innovation we do not need to raise taxes to clean up our environment.

We want to encourage businesses to voluntarily cut pollution.

We should give tax credits to homeowners and builders who incorporate alternative energy systems in their homes including solar, wind, and geothermal energy.

We should hold city governments to the same standards for cleaning waste water as are applied to private industry.

We are prepared to develop public and private partnerships to preserve green space and parks and to protect natural areas from development.

OIL AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Our current dependence on foreign oil threatens our national security and economic prosperity by making us

vulnerable.

We should encourage the building of more oil refineries in America to lower the cost of gas and reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

With appropriate safeguards to protect the environment we should drill for oil off America's coasts to reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

TAXES

The federal income tax system is unfair and the death tax should be abolished.

Taxpayers should be given the option of a single income tax rate. Taxpayers would still have the option of filing their taxes in the current system if they choose to do so.

The option of a single rate system should give taxpayers the convenience of filing their taxes with just a single sheet of paper.

We favor the option of a single corporate tax rate of 17% that would lower taxes for some businesses that pay up to 38% while also closing loopholes that some corporations use to pay less in taxes.

The United States has one of the highest corporate tax rates in the industrialized world making it difficult for U.S. corporations to compete internationally which gives incentives for companies to move overseas. This plan will make America a more attractive place for businesses that provide good paying jobs.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND RETIREMENT

It is important for the President and Congress to address the issue of Social Security in the next few years.

The current Social Security systems is broken and if it isn't reformed future generations will no longer have it as a safety net for retirement.

We favor a Social Security proposal in which Personal Social Security Savings Accounts would be optional, with workers given the choice of continuing to depend on the current system with current benefits.

We favor a Social Security proposal in which when a worker retires he or she would use the money in the account to buy an annuity, which is a type of financial benefit. The annuity will pay at least the same amount as traditional Social Security would.

We favor this Social Security proposal because in the current system, workers cannot pass onto their family members the money they paid into Social Security. This would not be the case in this new plan.

We favor a Social Security proposal in which any money in the account left after the purchase of an annuity would be the property of the worker and the extra money can be left to family members at death.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Statements regarding religion and morality made by the Founding Fathers are just as important today as they were 200 years ago.

References to the Creator in the Declaration of Independence are very important. We reject the Ninth Federal Circuit Court declaring the Pledge of Allegiance unconstitutional.

The phrase "Under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance is perfectly in line with the United States Constitution.

Separation between Church and State does not mean there can be no references to God in government sanctioned activities or public buildings.

The best way to ensure religious freedom is to protect ALL religious references and symbols; including those on public buildings, lands, or documents.

Children should be allowed a moment of silence to pray for themselves in public school if they desire.

We reject banning all prayer in public schools.

We support the right of high schools students saying thanks to God in a graduation speech.

We approve of nativity scenes, Menorahs or other religious symbols being placed on public property during their appropriate holiday season.

We favor a law to protect city, county, and state lands that have crosses or other religious symbols from being removed.

Many of the problems our country faces are because America is no longer as religious and moral as it once was.

The Founding Fathers understood that religion and morality were important to creating and building this country and talked about it regularly. This was understood throughout American history and is central to America's success today.

We reject that this violates the U.S. Constitution and discriminates against those who are of other faiths or are not religious.

DEFENDING AMERICA

We must help defend America and her allies and defeat our enemies.

America should take the threat of terror by fanatical religious groups seriously.

We have to be prepared to survive an attack by a nuclear, biological, or chemical weapon.

Terrorist organizations pose very serious threats for the United States and it will not be possible to negotiate with these groups.

Iran poses a serious threat to the United States.

There should be a death penalty for someone caught and convicted of carrying out a terrorist attack in the United States.

Congress should make it a crime to advocate acts of terrorism or violent conduct or the killing of innocent people in the United States.

The Department of Homeland Security and other government agencies should develop programs to teach Americans what they can do as individuals to help in the fight against terror.

Terrorist websites at home and abroad should be closed down using technology.