HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 1

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**Abortion**

Woman should have the right to make all decisions regarding their reproductive health, including the right to an abortion. The government should not play a role in this private decision that should be made by a woman, her family, and her doctor. We believe that abortions should be of access to all women, regardless of their income or insurance. This right allows women to protect the state of their lives, wellbeing, and health if they are in an unstable or unsafe position to have a child. The important decision regarding an abortion does not only impact a woman and her family, but may also prevent children from being raised in an environment where they are unsafe, lack adequate resources, or are neglected by their family.  While we do advocate for this right, we believe that it is a matter to be taken seriously and with thorough consideration.

Although we believe that the right to abortion is a protection of women’s rights guaranteed in the Constitution, we firmly advocate the use of contraception if unwilling to accept the results of unprotected sex, such as pregnancy. The right to an abortion should not be taken for granted and should not be a first-resort solution. We also support the implementation of programs to aid pregnant and newborn mothers, as well as adoption programs.

Despite the Roe v. Wade decision, allowing women to legally have an abortion, women across the country are being denied access to abortions due to the power of states to regulate components of an abortion. Moving forward, the following state laws/policies need to be abolished:

* The Federal Abortion Ban, which criminalizes safe abortions in the second trimester of a pregnancy
* 20 week abortion plans, which prevent women from having safe abortions after 20 weeks of their pregnancy
* Restrictions that prevent women from having an abortion due to lack of income and/or insurance to cover the cost
* TRAP Laws, which are designed to limit the abilities of abortion providers

**Crime**

There must be a crackdown on crime. We support the use of the death penalty on murderers, and believe that there needs to be an overall tougher, stricter sentencing on crime. That is the only way in which crime will start to diminish. Criminals on-the-loose and possible-criminals will start to analyze the consequences of stricter sentencing, and realize that committing a crime is not worth the sentence. Caught-criminals cannot hurt others behind bars. The first step to lowering the amount of crime in the United States is by imposing the laws already set forth by state and federal governments. We need swift action on gang violence and gang activity in the United States, by performing legal raids of known gang locations, we will break the long cycle of gang members roaming our streets. Additionally, we will strengthen our witness-protection programs in order to encourage people with information leading to the conviction of guilty parties. Additionally, we will provide more funding for our local police stations, this funding will be spread out to the equipment, technology, training and mental health support programs, an increase in funding, means more police and more qualified police, in turn, reducing crime.

Using this four-step method we propose the following, the Crime Resistance Program (CRP).

* Imposing laws that are set out by state and federal governments.
* Swift action on gangs, imposing strict laws and performing legal raids.
* Strengthen our witness protection programs, and encourage the public to express information about criminals and their whereabouts.
* Provide more funding for our local police, this funding should be used towards equipment, technology, training and mental health programs.

This program will be instituted effectively by our local units and will lead to crime being limited. We want the public to be safe and the only way to do that is by punishing the criminals and supporting stronger domestic safety programs.

Finally, we support the policy to notify sexual-assault victims if and when their abuser is released from jail.

**Death Penalty**

The Death Penalty must be used reasonably and justly. It should only be used in capital murder cases, and should be designated only for this crime. The lower courts should be able to regulate who receives this penalty, but they must take proper steps before instituting the penalty.

* Be sure that the Death Penalty is in line with state constitutions. The legality of the Death Penalty is not a decision by congress; it is up to the states if they want to legalize it.
* Conduct DNA testing on the accused.
* Give the accused his/her proper rights and let them defend themselves in front of the court of law.
* Release the accused if he/she, in fact, did not commit this crime.
* Only execute with the method of lethal injection.

The only humane way of carrying out an execution is through lethal injection. It is ungodly to kill someone by firing squad, gas chamber or hanging. It is not proper to conduct these ways of killing upon the criminal. The accused will not have a choice of what method they are killed by, as they did not give a choice to the victim on if they should die.

There should be a viewing site for an execution, as this is scarring for witnesses and very emotional, however the families of the victim and accused should be notified after the execution.

**Education**

Our main focus is on creating an environment for as many students to succeed as possible, but maintaining equality within the education system. Students should be rewarded, not punished, for their success. Hard work in primary and secondary education should reflect their success in tertiary/higher education. However, if a student starts to lag behind the rest, they will not be forgotten, and will be given the proper attention (but not preference).

The acceptance of students into higher education should be primarily based on the rigor of their studies, efforts, and success in school. Following should be extra-curricular, sports, community service, etc. What should *not* be a determining factor is race, income level, ethnicity, gender, etc. Factors that a student cannot help (in a positive or negative way), should neither benefit, nor hinder their chances into progressing on to a higher education. By focusing on their efforts and success, it provides students with an incentive to work harder in school, take more rigorous classes, and partake in extracurricular and sports, rather than relying on their gender, race, etc. to get them into college or university.

Sexual education should not be abstinence-centered education. Students must be informed about contraceptive usage, and sexually transmitted diseases. They must be aware of the consequences of unprotected sex and the process of reproduction. However, abstinence should be taught as a valid option and should not be discouraged.

Again, equality of opportunity, not equality of results, should be at the center of education.  Focusing on the high-achieving students discourages the lower-achieving education students, by allowing them to fall behind and become demotivated to try. Focusing on the low-achieving students shows the higher-achieving students that their hard work does not matter. So teachers should provide attention to students of all levels.

Education should have local aspects to it, however, Common Core State Standards Initiative shouldn’t be abolished, as it provides a national standard for education, and prepare students for life after high school, college, the workforce, etc.

**Gay Marriage**

We believe that all existing human rights should be guaranteed to the LGBT community, including the right to marriage. Laws and policies should exist in order to advance the lives of all people in America, regardless of sexual orientation. We will always defend those being discriminated against in order to withhold the rights of all Americans. Any implemented policies that hinder LGBT people from marrying should be abolished.

We believe that the right to gay marriage is guaranteed by the Constitution in the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th amendment, stating, no person shall be "deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law."

There are numerous legal benefits included with marriage that don’t exist for domestic partners. LGBT couples who wish to be married should not be denied of this right or the legal advantages that come with having a spouse. These benefits include:

* Inheritance rights if partner is to die
* Filing a joint tax return to reduce tax burden
* Joint retirement and health insurance
* Access to family health coverage
* Consenting to after death procedures if partner is to die
* Receiving criminal recovery benefits and visiting rights to jail if spouse commits crime

Ultimately, the right to marriage should be guaranteed to all people living in America, regardless of who they love or their sexual orientation. We commend Obama’s perusal of human and civil rights during his presidency and plan to continue the push for these efforts.

**Gun Control**

Here in the United States of America, we have been granted the right to bear arms under the second amendment in our national constitution. Our right to do so has been interpreted by the Supreme Court, and while we do believe that we should have access to guns we also believe there should be regulations.

The Gun Control Act (GCA) states that anyone who wishes to make a purchase of a firearm must have a federal license. It also states that any “prohibited person” cannot purchase a handgun. A “prohibited person” is one that:

* Has been convicted in court for a criminal punishment for over a year
* Is a fugitive
* Is addicted to any controlled substance
* Has been defined as mentally defective or sent to an institution
* Is an illegal alien in the United States
* Has been issued to not be allowed because of stalking, harassing, or threatening others

Despite these checks all being valid, people blame that guns are the cause of recurring problems in the United States of America. It isn’t the gun themselves that cause the problem, but the misuse of them by those who shouldn’t have guns, but obtain them in an alternative way (illegal purchasing). We believe that all checks upon a person by The Gun Control Act should be more thorough and dig deeper than just a check of the surface of a person's background. We also believe that checks should happen every so often, as conditions in a person can change over a lifetime. We’re for having checks every year or every other year, hoping that would make the process of keeping reckless and mentally defective people from possessing firearms.

**Health Insurance Reform**

Health insurance should be affordable and the citizens’ choice to have it or not. Individuals should not be required to have health insurance, but should understand the consequences of not having it.  They also have the constitutional right to chose their health insurance provider(s). Furthermore, access to healthcare should, in part, be dependent on an individual’s willingness to take care of his or her own health. Affordable health insurance comes from reducing the overall spending on healthcare.

While many consider the Affordable Care Act or the ACA (“Obamacare”) as ‘health care reform’; in many ways, it was mostly ‘health insurance reform’.  There are elements of the ACA that are sensible, and others that are not. Moving forward, we need the following adjustments to the ACA:

* Keeping focus on giving people access to health insurance (but adding the need to be educated about it, the cost of healthcare, and the consequences of not having insurance)
* Taking away insurance mandate (as Trump did), but adding the possibility for having less access to services
* Adding more focus on decreasing defensive medicine for cost reduction, in turn, making it harder to sue for malpractice in frivolous cases
* Creating greater individual patient responsibility for their healthcare. (By making individuals’ responsible for their health status and by reducing some services when the result is from ongoing, repeated lack of attention to one’s own health)
* Keeping focus on quality over quantity (making providers more accountable for outcomes)
* Keeping expansion of Medicaid (since expansion allows for more people to qualify for Medicaid which gets more people insured).  States also got money from federal government to pay for expansion, so it was “budget neutral” to the states
* Keeping the private markets and not universal/single-payer healthcare to decrease chance of inaccuracy or malpractice

**Military**

America has the strongest military in the world. We have all sorts of high tech weapons and the most up to date bombs and missiles. We should keep our military strong because if there’s one thing that a lot of people can agree on, it’s that we want government to keep us safe. It’s also just good to have some sort of defense at anytime because we never know what we’ll need and when we’ll need it so having it there when needed is beneficial. In the unlikely event of a terrorist attack on the United States, we would like to be able to defend ourselves and not be caught off guard.

We do think that there should be some major changes to the United States military in terms of personnel enlisted. We believe that people of all genders, races, and of all sexual orientations should have the same right to enlist as your stereotypical soldier. Therefore we believe all genders, not just males, should have an equal opportunity to join the armed forces. We also believe that all races should be allowed. The stereotypical American soldier is white so we believe that there should be more races included in our military, however quotas will not be set. Also, when dealing with military personnel, we generally see straight males.  We believe that no matter what your sexual orientation is whether you consider yourself, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or any other orientation, you should have a fair chance to be enlisted, and if you choose for that information to be confidential it should be kept away.

We believe that the military deserves an increased defense budget. Again, you never know when the country must use militant forces, whether that be a counter attack, terrorism, or even another world war. It is better to be prepared ahead of time. An increased defense budget may also boost morale amongst military workers, and give them the confidence they need to protect this country.