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Comparing the Two Party Platforms

A reading of the Democratic and Republican Party Platforms should convince most people that there is a fundamental difference between them. In goa1s, values, and approach to the institutions of family and government, the two parties are headed in opposite directions.

The Democrats are trying hard to abandon what they call “the old notion that there's a [government] program for every problem,” but like a confirmed alcoholic who says he's going to take just one more drink, their Platform promises ever more costly programs that will surely require higher taxes.

The Republican Platform comes down foursquare on the tax issue: “We will-oppose any attempt. to increase taxes.” The Democrats' code word for tax increases is “investment” -- they want to “invest” in more government regulations, more government research, more government education, more government infrastructure, more government babysitting, and more government projects of all kinds.

The Republicans are specific about taxes, “The most dramatic change in the tax code in our lifetime,” the Platform explains, “is one that has never been explicitly enacted by Congress or reported as a specific news event. It is the gradual, year by year, erosion of the personal exemption, until it was indexed by a Republican Administration in 1986.” Republicans doubled this exemption to $2000, and the Platform promises: “We are committed to ful1y restoring the inflation- adjusted value of the personal exemption.”

The Republicans recognize the serious national problem that “our current educational system is not educating our children.” The Republican solution is: “Parents have the right to choose the best school for their children,” and the Platform offers a “GI Bill for Children” to provide $l000 scholarships to enable children to attend the school of their choice.

Respecting parental authority, the Republican Platform states that parents “should have the right not only to participate in their child's education, but to choose for

their children among the broadest array of educational choices, without regard to their income," including homeschooling. The Republican Platform even demands that "schools should teach right from wrong." The Democratic Platform is vehement against school choice: "We oppose the Bush Administration's efforts to bankrupt the public school system through private school vouchers."

The Democratic Platform continues appealing to the special-interest pressure groups which for 20 years have had a stranglehold on the national Democratic Party. The Platform reaffirms the discredited concept of "affirmative action," and for the first time would extend "civil rights protection for gay men and lesbians and an end to Defense Department discrimination."

The Republican Platform counters, "We oppose efforts by the Democrat Party to include sexual preference as a protected minority receiving preferential status under civil rights statutes at the federal, State, and loca1 level. We oppose any legislation or 1aw which legally recognizes same-sex marriages and allows such couples to adopt children or provide foster care."

The Democratic Platform comes out unequivocally for "Choice Democrats stand behind the right of every woman to choose, consistent with Roe v. Wade, regardless of ability to pay, and support a national law to protect that right." Funny thing, the Platform fails to mention exactly what women will be choosing (but it certainly won't be the school their children attend).

The Republicans adopted the same Platform language on abortion that they won on in 1984 and 1988: "We believe the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed."

The two parties are poles apart on the controversial National Endowment for the Arts. The Democrats call it "firmly rooted in the First Amendment's freedom of expression guarantee," whereas the Republicans condemn "the use of public funds to subsidize obscenity and blasphemy masquerading as art."

On Family Values, the Republican Platform states, "Because divorce, desertion, and illegitimacy account for almost all the increase in child poverty over the last 20 years, we put the highest priority upon enforcement of family rights and responsibilities." It asserts that "today's liberal Democrats are hostile toward any institution government cannot control, like private childcare or religious schools."

The Republican Platform stands firm in support of Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), which now has a new mission. "SDI is now designed to provide the U.S. and our allies with global defenses against limited ballistic missile attacks" and serves as our "shield against technoterrorism." The Democrats, looking to the past, stil1 claim that "a Comprehensive Test Ban" is the way to stop nuclear weapons.

The Democratic Platform is full of defeatist rhetoric -- a "cry of frustration," "the American dream of expanding opportunity has faded," we are "still falling behind," "people are torn by divisions," "anguish and anger," and we're in "a long-term slide." The Republicans, taking their cue from ever-optimistic Ronald Reagan, are determined to "choose hope over fear."