



The Phyllis Schlafly Report

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1988 Party Platform Comparisons

Most news reports about the 1988 Democratic Party Platform said that it is a short, sugar-coated statement of platitudinous generalities. The *Washington Post* editorialized that the platform “doesn’t contain the specific payoffs to all the caucuses and interest groups” that were in the 1984 platform, and *Time* commented that “gone is the usual laundry list of narrow causes.”

The authors of such whitewashing must not have read it. The 1988 Democratic Party Platform does, indeed, contain specific payoffs to the most strident interest groups: the radical feminists and the homosexuals. The Democratic powers-that-be apparently didn’t learn their lesson from the Geraldine Ferraro experience.

The number-one goal of the nagging feminists has always been abortion-on-demand financed by tax dollars. The Democratic platform dutifully promises that “the fundamental right of reproductive choice should be guaranteed regardless of ability to pay.”

The Democratic Platform promises to work for that perennial goal of the radical feminists, the Equal Rights Amendment. Of course, ERA is politically dead, but the liberals continue to pander to futile hopes so that the National Organization for Women can use ERA as a fundraiser.

The feminists’ number-three goal is to get the Federal Government to take over the responsibility and cost of child care because their ideology teaches that it is unfair and oppressive for society to expect mothers to care for their own children. Accordingly, the Democratic platform proposes “major increases in assistance” to day care (that means a big federal spending program), “a strong child care infrastructure” (that means a babysitting bureaucracy), “setting standards” (that means federal regulatory control), “thereby enabling parents to work” (that means the real motive is to provide tax-financed incentives to get mothers out of the home and into the labor force).

The number-four goal of the radical feminists is Comparable Worth, a system of government wage-setting that would “compare” the “worth” of completely dissimilar jobs (such as a nurse and a plumber) and then raise women’s wages while freezing men’s wages. Because the feminists know that Comparable Worth is a negative label, they use the euphemism “pay equity.”

The Democratic platform specifically calls for “pay equity for working women” but says nothing about pay equity for working men. As Lewis Carroll’s Humpty Dumpty said, “When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.”

The platform says, “we honor our multicultural heritage by assuring equal access to government services, employment, housing, business enterprise and education to every citizen regardless of race, sex, national origin, religion, age, handicapping condition or sexual orientation.”

Nobody’s fooled by that language, which is a reprise of the 1984 platform and precisely what the gays and feminists demanded. It means that the Democratic Party proclaims that it accepts homosexuals just as nonjudgmentally and openly as people of different religions, races, colors, or gender.

The same paragraph demands that “the lingering effects of past discrimination [be] eliminated by affirmative action, including goals, timetables, and procurement set-asides.” That can be read to mean that the Democratic Party is calling for affirmative action for all those listed categories.

The demand for affirmative action appears in the same paragraph as the demand for “sexual orientation” rights, and in the same sentence as a call for combatting “the recent surge in hate violence and negative stereotyping.” It is unlikely that the placement of these demands is accidental.

The platform also calls for “protection of the civil rights of those suffering from AIDS or AIDS-Related Complex or testing positive for the HIV antibody.” No mention is made of the civil rights of the noninfected to be protected from disease, or the right of workers to work in a safe and disease-free environment, or the right of spouses or sex partners to be notified, or the right of persons who have been infected with AIDS through blood transfusions to be compensated for the negligence of others.

Likewise, there is nothing “vague” (to use *Time’s* word) about promises to the interest group headed by Jesse Jackson. The platform calls for statehood for the District of Columbia and “comprehensive sanctions” against South Africa, which is labeled “a terrorist state.”

In the words of the old French proverb, the more things change, the more they remain the same. The 1988 Democratic Party Platform is more artfully expressed since the platform’s

author was Theodore Sorensen, President John F. Kennedy's most eloquent speechwriter, but the pitch is the same as the 1984 tune that bugled Mondale-Ferraro's defeat.

The Republican Platform

The big news of the 1988 Republican National Convention is that the Reagan Revolution and the conservative movement are alive and well, while liberalism is politically dead. Just compare the Republican Party Platform with the post-Convention interview given by Michael Dukakis' closest adviser, Paul Brontas.

On ABC's "This Week With David Brinkley," Brontas was pressed again and again to admit that Dukakis is a "liberal." He pointedly refused to accept that label because, Brontas said, "it carries a lot of baggage." Indeed it does. That's why the Democrats are all running away from what is now called the "L" word.

As Republicans rolled into New Orleans for their Convention, the question most frequently asked by inquiring reporters was, Is this the end of the Reagan era? Is the conservative movement finished?

A concerted effort was waged to try to get conservatives to say that George Bush is not their favorite candidate, and that the conservative era was just a flash in the pan that depended on the charisma of a Hollywood actor who is now taking his last curtain calls.

That was just wishful thinking on the part of some closet liberals. Lowell Weicker and his friends who grandstanded on the tube against the Platform couldn't even muster up enough Republican delegates to file a minority report.

The media liberals seemed determined to get George Bush to disassociate himself with Ronald Reagan in order for Bush to be his "own man." That advice comes from those who are no friends of George Bush. The best way for Bush to win is to promise to continue the Reagan economic agenda.

The centerpiece of the Reagan Revolution was restated in the Republican Party Platform like this: "The best jobs program — the one that created more than 17 million jobs since 1982 — is lower taxes on people."

The Reagan Administration cut the top marginal tax rate from 70 percent to 28 percent, thus stimulating the longest peacetime expansion in history. The Reagan tax reform took millions of low-income families off the tax rolls and doubled the personal exemption for all taxpayers, spouses, and every child.

It is fundamental conservative ideology that government didn't work this economic wonder; the people did. In the words of the Platform, "Republicans got government out of the way, off the backs of households and entrepreneurs, so the people could take charge." The stunning historical fact of the 1980s is that "from freedom comes opportunity; from opportunity comes growth; from growth comes progress."

Liberal reporters kept dogging conservative delegates with questions based on reporters' definition of what they think conservative goals are. Conservatives certainly have a full agenda, but everything else together doesn't add up to as much as the fundamental conservative idea that the world is a better place when the work ethic is honored and taxes are cut so that people can spend more of their own money, invest their

savings as they choose, and direct their present and future without government dictate or compulsion.

The number one issue of this and nearly every other campaign for national office is *jobs*. Jobs are essential to family integrity, community welfare, individual well-being and self-esteem, and national prosperity.

So the political question becomes, how best to stimulate more jobs? For years, starting with Roosevelt's New Deal, continuing with Truman's Fair Deal and Kennedy's New Frontier, and flowering under Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, the liberals' answer to that question was higher taxes and more government programs. The essence of liberalism is being liberal with other people's money.

The 1988 Democratic Party Platform is still pushing the politics of the past. It talks vaguely about "creating good jobs at good wages through a national reinvestment strategy to construct new housing, repair our sewers, rebuild our roads and replace our bridges." It's clear that the Democrats think of jobs only in terms of government jobs for which higher taxes are the essential prerequisite.

The crucial issue is as clearly drawn in 1988 as it was in 1984. The Democratic Party Platform's code words for tax increases are "investment through innovative partnerships and creative financing mechanisms." Translated, that means ingenious ways to pressure the American public into accepting tax increases.

George Bush and the Republican Platform stand in concrete against tax increases. "Read my lips ... no new taxes," Bush said in his acceptance speech.

The Skeleton in Bentsen's Closet

Lloyd Bentsen has a skeleton in his political closet that is much worse than his disagreements with Michael Dukakis on social and defense issues, and far worse than all the innuendo spread by the media about Dan Quayle. Bentsen is one of the last few Senators still in office who voted in 1978 to give away the U.S. Canal in Panama.

Other issue positions can be fuzzied up. Politicians can change their minds, or express regret for earlier mistakes. But giving away the Panama Canal is one controversial Senate vote that is carved in granite; time can never erase the black mark on every Senator who participated in that shameful deal.

By the U.S.-Panama Treaty signed by President Jimmy Carter on September 7, 1977 and ratified by the Senate by one vote on April 18, 1978, the United States agreed to turn over our Canal to Panama in the year 1999. That decision was vastly unpopular then, and it has been proven tragically wrong by subsequent events.

The Panamanian dictator to whom the Senate gave our Canal was cut from the same cloth as today's bad man, Manuel Noriega. Omar Torrijos seized power in 1968, threw out his own constitution, and then compiled the worst record on human rights in all Latin America.

According to Freedom House, Panama was then specifically rated as "NF," which stands for "Not a Free Country." The anti-American, pro-Communist, drug-peddling Torrijos handpicked Noriega as his successor.

In the 1970s, many Americans were falsely led to believe that we should have some kind of guilt complex about owning

the Canal and that we should "give back" our Canal to Panama in order to guarantee good relations with Panama and Latin America. In truth, Panama had no claim whatsoever to the Canal; the U.S. taxpayers bought, built and generously paid for the Canal to the tune of \$7 billion. Since giving Panama our Canal, our relationship has sunk to the lowest level in history.

Under the terms of the 1903 treaty, Panama granted us the exclusive use, occupation and control of the Canal Zone and all rights, power and authority as if we were sovereign "to the entire exclusion of the exercise by the Republic of Panama of any such sovereign rights, power or authority." The length of this grant of sovereignty to us was "in perpetuity"; those words "in perpetuity" appear seven times in the 1903 treaty.

Panama did not lease us the Zone. The term "grant" was used 14 times in the treaty; the term "rent" or "lease" does not appear even once.

All we received was a little piece of land, 10 miles wide by 50 miles long, pest-ridden, mosquito-infested, and uninhabitable. No one in the history of the world ever was so greatly enriched for such a then-worthless piece of real estate.

First, the Panamanians got our guarantee of their independence. Panama had unsuccessfully revolted 50 times against Columbia during the preceding 70 years. By the 1903 treaty, the powerful United States pledged to guarantee the independence of this little country.

Secondly, Panama got the promise that we would build our Canal in Panama instead of Nicaragua, which is closer to our country, has a more favorable climate, and has better geographic conditions. Third, Panama got more cash than we paid for any land in all our history, more, for example, than we paid for Alaska.

Fourth, we cleaned up Panama. We spent two years wiping out malaria, yellow fever, and the rats that carried the bubonic plague. We made it a healthful place to live. Finally, we poured in a tremendous investment which gave Panama the highest standard of living in Central America and the fourth highest in Latin America.

All the talk we hear about moving toward "democracy" in Panama is ridiculous. In the 74 years preceding the Canal giveaway treaty in 1978, Panama had 59 chiefs of state. Since World War II, Panama has had 13 changes of government, five of them violent.

The polls showed that 80 percent of Americans opposed the Canal giveaway. So why did the Senate do it? The big push came from the ten largest banks which had loaned a total of \$2.9 billion to Panama. The Torrijos regime was then broke and its credit was gone, so the banks didn't have a chance of collecting their bad loans *unless* Panama somehow got access to the tolls from the Canal.

Now, ten years later, our Canal is hostage to another anti-American, pro-Communist, drug-peddling dictator. It was all so predictable.

Lloyd Bentsen and the other Senators who voted for this giveaway either have no competence in foreign affairs, or they were patsies for the ten biggest banks that wanted to protect their bad loans at the expense of U.S. security and the wishes of the American people. Either way, Bentsen is an embarrassment to the Democratic ticket.

George Bush's Child Care Proposal

George Bush's child care proposal is a very simple plan to reduce taxes on families with children so their parents can spend more of their own hard-earned money for the child care of their choice, without bureaucrats telling them how to spend it. That such a proposal is even controversial shows how far we've gone down the road of Big Brotherism.

Of course, it costs money to raise children! The principal reason why parents are having such a hard time making ends meet is high taxes and the continuing consequences of the double-digit Carter-era inflation.

The liberals used the tax code for years to skew the tax burden against families with children. When I had my first child in 1950, Johnny's tax exemption amounted to 18 percent of the median American family income. By the time I had my first grandchild in 1982 (after 32 years of tax increases and inflation), Tommy's tax exemption amounted to only 4 percent of the median family income.

The liberals didn't just raise taxes across the board. The record is clear that they engaged in tax-code social engineering to punish working families with children and to make a growing segment of the population dependent on federal handouts.

Dukakis' day care position, which is to support the Dodd-Kildee ABC bill, would create a federal baby-sitting bureaucracy and hand out large amounts of money to day care centers, social service employees, government bureaucrats, and regulation writers and enforcers. It's just another expensive liberal spending program gussied up with cute babies in an effort to soften up Dukakis' brittle image.

George Bush is coming from an entirely different direction. He's not trying to establish a government-preferred type of child care. He just wants to reduce the tax burden and let families make their own decisions.

George Bush has also called the bluff of the liberals who sanctimoniously claim to be so concerned about the poor. Whereas the Dukakis-Dodd ABC bill would benefit primarily middle-income, two-earner families (because the mother must be employed to be eligible), the Bush proposal would exclusively benefit low-income working families, those who need it most.

Excerpts from the Republican Platform on Child Care

Republicans affirm these commonsense principles of child care:

- The more options families have in child care, the better. Government must not constrain their decisions. Individual choice should determine child care arrangements for the family.
- The best care for most children, especially in the early years, is parental. Government must never hinder it.
- Public policy must acknowledge the full range of family situations. Mothers or fathers who stay at home, who work part-time, or who work full-time, should all receive the same respect and consideration in public policy.
- Child care by close relatives, religious organizations, and other community groups should never be inhibited by government programs or policies.

In sum, this is a perfect example of the difference between

the two parties. Republicans want to empower individuals, not bureaucrats. We seek to minimize the financial burdens imposed by government upon families, ensure their options, and preserve the role of our traditional voluntary institutions. Democrats propose a new federal program that negates parental choice and disdains religious participation. Republicans would never bar aid to any family for choosing child care that includes a simple prayer.

In returning to our traditional commitment to children, the Republican Party proposes a radically different approach:

- Establish a toddler tax credit for pre-school children as proposed by Vice President Bush, available to all families of modest means, to help them support and care for their children in a manner best suited to their families' values and traditions.
- Establishment of a plan that does not discriminate against single-earner families with one parent in the home.
- Continue to reverse the Democrats' 30-year erosion of the dependent tax exemption. That exemption has been doubled under Republican leadership. This will empower parents to care for their families in a way that public services can never do.
- Make the dependent care tax credit available to low-income families with young children.

Excerpts from the Republican Platform on Peace Through Strength

The Strategic Defense System commonly known as SDI represents America's single most important defense program and is the most significant investment we can make in our nation's future security.

SDI is already working for America. It brought the Soviets back to the bargaining table, and it has energized and challenged our research and technology community as never before. It has started to reverse the trend of unmatched heavy Soviet investment in strategic defense. Republicans insist it is unacceptable that today the citizens of Moscow are protected against ballistic missile attack while Americans have no such protection.

The SDI program has been structured to facilitate a smooth transition to a safer world. It emphasizes deployments based upon the following objectives:

- Providing protection against an accidental or unauthorized launch of a nuclear missile and attack by a rogue nation.
- Changing the emphasis of our deterrent from nuclear offense to non-nuclear defensive weapons and providing the only real safeguard against cheating on offensive arms control agreements.
- Ultimately, providing a comprehensive defense against all ballistic missile attacks.

We are committed to rapid and certain deployment of SDI as technologies permit, and we will determine the exact architecture of the system as technologies are tested and proven.

In response to the dangerous proliferation of ballistic missiles, a joint U.S.-Israel effort is now underway to produce the free world's first anti-tactical ballistic missile system, "Project

Arrow." We will support this use of SDI research funds.

The Democrat nominee for president opposes deployment of any SDI system. He opposes deployment of even a limited ballistic missile defense system to protect Americans against missile attacks that might be launched accidentally or by an outlaw ruler with access to a few nuclear weapons. His position contradicts the sponsorship by certain Democrats in Congress of a system to protect Americans from such missile attacks.

In recognition of our responsibility to provide optimum protection for the American people from terrorists, accidents and — should deterrence fail — from war, we also believe that a high priority should be given to Civil Defense.

Republicans want to begin with protection and add to deterrence. We applaud the leaders of the scientific community for their confidence in the ability of U.S. technology to enhance deterrence and to provide effective defenses. We urge the universities of our country to continue to cooperate with the government and the private sector in establishing the SDI system.

* * *

- We will consistently undertake necessary improvements in our forces to maintain the effectiveness of our deterrent.

- We will not negotiate in areas which jeopardize our security. In particular, we will not compromise plans for the research, testing, or the rapid and certain deployment of SDI.

- We will insist on effective verification of compliance with any and all treaties and will take proportional, compensatory actions in cases of non-compliance. Specifically, the Soviet ABM radar at Krasnoyarsk poses a clear violation of the ABM Treaty and, if not corrected, would constitute a "material breach" of the Treaty.

* * *

We must always remember — and ever remind our fellow citizens — that, when the future of our country is at stake, no treaty at all is preferable to a bad treaty.

* * *

To end our historic reliance on massive nuclear retaliation, we need to develop a comprehensive strategic defense system. This system will deter and protect us against deliberate or accidental ballistic missile attack, from whatever source.

Phyllis Schlafly was an Illinois Delegate to the Republican National Convention in New Orleans. She was also elected a Delegate to the Republican National Conventions of 1956, 1964, 1968, and 1984, and elected an Alternate Delegate to the 1960 and 1980 Republican National Conventions.

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