

# Georgia insight

*Sue Ella Deadwyler*  
[www.georgiainsight.org](http://www.georgiainsight.org)  
*"She hath done what she could."*  
*Mark 14:8a*  
*"...and having done all ... stand."*  
*Ephesians 6:13c*

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## The Better-Than-Good Republican Platform of 2016

*We dedicate this platform with admiration and gratitude to all who stand strong in the face of danger so that the American people may be protected against it – the men and women of our military of our law enforcement, and the first responders of every community in our land – and to their families.*

– Republican Platform 2016

The Republican Platform adopted by the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio on July 18, 2016 is a power-packed, 58-page document of facts, promises, and proposals developed<sup>1</sup> by the 19-member GOP Platform Committee, 110 committee members, 36 staff, and a myriad of participants listed as deserving of special thanks.

### **GOP Platform Sound Bites**

#### *Taxes*

“Republicans consider the establishment of a pro-growth tax code a moral imperative.”

#### *Government*

“We envision government at all levels as a partner with individuals and industries in technological progress, not a meddlesome monitor.”

#### *Religion*

“We pledge to defend the religious beliefs and rights of conscience of all Americans and to safeguard religious institutions against government control.”

#### *Abortion*

“We call for a permanent ban on federal funding and subsidies for abortion and healthcare plans that include abortion coverage.”

#### *Energy*

“We support the development of all forms of energy that are marketable in a free economy without subsidies, including coal, oil, natural gas, nuclear power, and hydropower.”

#### *Immigration*

“America’s immigration policy must serve the national interest of the United States.”

#### *Education*

“Maintaining American preeminence requires a world-class system of education in which all students can reach their potential.”

#### *Veterans*

“America has a sacred trust with our veterans, and we are committed to ensuring them and their families’ care and dignity.”

#### *Israel*

“It is the responsibility of our government to advance policies that reflect Americans’ strong desire for a relationship with no daylight between America and Israel.”

<sup>1</sup>In addition to the Republican National Committee chairman, Platform Committee members included a chairman, two co-chairmen, 15 subcommittee co-chairmen, two members from each of the 50 states, two from the District of Columbia, and a total of eight from American territories. Georgians on the Platform Committee: Ranya Casey, Curtis “Scott” Johnson.

## **GOP Platform Excerpts: Peace Through Strength**

*A Republican administration will begin at once to undo the damage of the last eight years.*

– Republican Platform 2016

“We are the party of peace through strength. We believe that American exceptionalism – the notion that our ideas and principles as a nation give us a unique place of moral leadership in the world – requires the United States to retake its natural position as leader of the free world. ...

“Quite simply, the Republican Party is committed to rebuilding the U.S. military into the strongest on earth, with vast superiority over any other nation or group of nations in the world. We face a dangerous world, and we believe in a resurgent America. ...

“Our aging naval capabilities are inadequate for their job. The Air Force fields the smallest and oldest force of combat aircraft in its history. The Marines have only two-thirds the number of battalions they have historically needed to meet day to day operational demands. The Army is at its lowest group levels since before World War II. ...In summary we have returned to the hollow force days of Jimmy Carter.

“Also neglected are our strategic forces, especially the development and deployment of ballistic missile defenses. The Ground-Based Midcourse Defense system has been delayed and underfunded ... the number of planned interceptors in Alaska has been reduced. A new START agreement ... so weak in verification and definitions that it is virtually impossible to prove a violation, has allowed Russia to build up its nuclear arsenal while reducing ours. ...

“We must rebuild troop numbers and readiness and confirm their mission: Protecting the nation, not nation building. The United States should meet the Reagan model of ‘peace through strength’ by a force that is capable of meeting any and all threats to our vital national security...

“... We must fund, develop, and deploy a multi-layered missile defense system. We must modernize nuclear weapons and their delivery platforms, and the policy of Mutually Assured Destruction, and rebuild relationships with our allies, who understand that as long as the U.S. nuclear arsenal is their shield, they do not need to engage in nuclear proliferation. ...

“To keep our people safe, we must secure our borders, enforce our immigration laws, and properly screen refugees and other immigrants entering from any country. In particular we must apply special scrutiny to those foreign nationals seeking to enter the United States from terror-sponsoring countries or from regions associated with Islamic terrorism. ...

“Military families must be assured of the pay, healthcare, housing, education, and overall support they have earned. ... We support the rights of conscience of military chaplains of all faiths to practice their faith free from political interference. ...A Republican commander-in-chief will protect the religious freedom of all military members, especially chaplains and will not tolerate attempts to ban Bibles or religious symbols from military facilities. ...

“We oppose the reinstatement of the draft, except in dire circumstances like world war, whether directly or through compulsory national service. We support the all-volunteer force and oppose unnecessary policy changes, including compulsory national service and Selective Service registration of women for a possible future draft. ...

“Our Reserve and National Guard forces are national assets that must be nurtured in a manner commensurate with their role as America’s sentinels. ...”

## **GOP Platform Excerpts: Marriage, Family and Society**

*Our laws and our government's regulations should recognize marriage as the union of one man and one woman and actively promote married family life as the basis of a stable and prosperous society. For that reason, as explained elsewhere in this platform, we do not accept the Supreme Court's redefinition of marriage and we urge its reversal, whether through judicial reconsideration or a constitutional amendment returning control over marriage to the states.*

– Republican Platform 2016

“...[The American family] is the foundation of civil society, and the cornerstone of the family is natural marriage, the union of one man and one woman. ...Strong families, depending upon God and one another, advance the cause of liberty by lessening the need for government in their daily lives. ...We oppose policies and laws that create a financial incentive for or encourage cohabitation. ...We urge marriage penalties to be removed from the tax code and public assistance programs ...

“To ensure religious liberty we will ensure that faith-based institutions, especially those that are vital parts of underserved neighborhoods, do not face discrimination by government. ...[W]e urge greater state and local responsibility for, and control over, public assistance programs. ...

“Parents have a right to direct their children's education, care, and upbringing. We support a constitutional amendment to protect that right from interference by states, the federal government, or international bodies such as the United Nations. ...

“We reject a one-size-fits-all approach to education and support a broad range of choices for parents and children at the state and local level. We likewise repeat our long-standing opposition to the imposition of national standards and assessments, encourage the parents and educators who are implementing alternatives to Common Core, and congratulate the states which have successfully repealed it. ...

“[W]e encourage state legislatures to offer the Bible in a literature curriculum as an elective in America's high schools. ...All personnel who interact with school children should pass background checks and be held to the highest standards of personal conduct. ...

“We support options for learning, including home-schooling, career and technical education, private or parochial schools, magnet schools, charter schools, online learning, and early-college high schools. ...We propose that the bulk of federal money through Title I for low-income children and through IDEA for children with special needs should follow the child to whatever school the family thinks will work best for them. ...

“We renew our call for replacing ‘family planning’ programs for teens with sexual risk avoidance education, that sets abstinence until marriage as the responsible and respected standard of behavior. ...We oppose school-based clinics that provide referral or counseling for abortion and contraception and believe that federal funds should not be used in mandatory or universal mental health, psychiatric, or socio-emotional screening programs. ...

“We emphatically support the original, authentic meaning of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ... that opened up for girls and women a world of opportunities [but strongly oppose using Title IX] to impose a social and cultural revolution upon the American people by wrongly redefining sex discrimination to include sexual orientation or other categories. ...[S]exual assault should be punished to the full extent of the law. ...”

## **New Law: Governor to Add Two Justices to Georgia Supreme Court**

**H.B. 927**, the Appellate Jurisdiction Reform Act of 2016 by Representative Christian Coomer, passed March 22<sup>nd</sup>, and Governor Deal signed it May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Its passage authorized the governor to appoint two additional Georgia Supreme Court justices. The additions require reconfiguration of the Supreme Court bench to accommodate nine justices instead of seven, and office space for two new justices, their law assistants, and essential staff.

The Georgia Supreme Court, founded in 1845, currently consists of seven justices, although nine are authorized by the State Constitution. The governor will appoint two additional justices for initial two-year terms that begin January 1, 2017, and continue through December 31, 2018, until successors are elected for six-year terms. The court's Chief Justice serves on a rotating basis, after being elected from among and by the state justices.

A 2012 survey indicated that Georgia had the 20<sup>th</sup> most conservative court. The Court of 2012 was comprised of the current seven sitting justices. The annual salary for the Chief Justice and Associate Justices is \$167,000.

## **New Law: Religious Expression in Athletics**

**S.B. 309** by Senator Burt Jones provides that high schools receiving state funding cannot participate in an athletic association which prohibits religious expression on the clothing of student athletes or prohibits member schools from organizing and playing scrimmage matches, games, or other athletic competitions with nonmember schools, effective July 1, 2016.

## **New Law: Stun Guns & Tasers Legal on Georgia Campuses**

**H.B. 792** by Representative Buzz Brockway made it legal for anyone age 18 or older who is currently enrolled in classes in or on any building or real property of a public technical school, vocational school, college or university or other public institution of postsecondary education to carry, possess or be in control of an electroshock weapon, including a stun gun or Taser.

Electroshock weapons are restricted in Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Michigan, Illinois, Connecticut, parts of Maryland and Hawaii. Such devices are not allowed in terminal areas of airports, and may be confiscated in a government building.

## **New Law: HIV/AIDS Exam & Treatment Confidential from Parents**

**H.B. 1058** that became law July 1, 2016 overturned a law requiring parental notification when a child under age 18 is diagnosed with or treated for HIV/AIDS, thereby further eroding parental authority. It authorized minors to personally consent to medical treatment for HIV/AIDS, with no parental notification required for either testing or treatment.

## **New Law: "Georgia Right to Try Act"**

**H.B. 34** that became law on July 1<sup>st</sup> allows patients with terminal illnesses to use potentially life-saving investigational drugs, biological products, and devices that are not yet approved for general use, but already approved by Food and Drug Administration clinical trials, yet still under FDA investigation.

Patients must have considered all other FDA-approved treatment options, have a physician recommendation for investigational treatment, and give written informed consent that includes a description of possible best and worst outcomes, a realistic description of the likely outcome, and the possibility of new, unanticipated, different, or worse symptoms that might hasten death.

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*Georgia Insight* is a conservative publication financed entirely by its recipients.