

**AMERICAN CONSERVATIVE UNION  
2008 RNC CONVENTION**

**A CONSERVATIVE  
AGENDA  
FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE**



**THE  
AMERICAN  
CONSERVATIVE  
UNION**

My Fellow Americans:

This November millions of us will go to the polls and cast our vote for President, Congress, Governor, and thousands of legislative and local candidates across America.

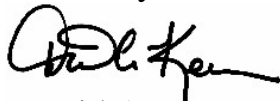
Our country is facing numerous challenges here at home and abroad. The decisions ordinary citizens from all walks of life will make in that quiet moment in the voting booth will determine the course our country will take for generations to come.

America needs strong political leadership committed to sound economic and fiscal policies. Leadership that understands we can only remain free if we are determined to remain strong. Leadership that knows success is built on dreams, hard work, and perseverance—not by more government intrusion in our lives.

The American Conservative Union is proud to present a “Conservative Agenda for America’s Future.” An Agenda compiled from input received from tens of thousands of citizens from across America.

America has spoken. It is time now for our political leaders and those running for office this November to listen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David A. Keene". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "K".

David A. Keene

Chairman

American Conservative Union

# **THE AMERICAN CONSERVATIVE UNION**

## **Presents**

### **A CONSERVATIVE AGENDA FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE**

Tens of thousands of citizen activists from across America provided important input and assistance in the preparation of this document. Their views on the important issues of the day such as taxes, government spending, border security, international affairs, education, energy development, and family values are reflected in what follows. Whether by joining in nationwide teleconference townhall meetings, responding to opinion surveys, or communicating through the internet, these ordinary citizens are determined to have their voices heard by their elected officials, the media, and the two major political parties this election year.

A clear set of guiding principles emerged from this process.

Most Americans want less government in their lives, but the government they need must be honest and competent. They want their government to spend less but spend wisely. Laws and regulations should encourage risk taking and avoid punishing success, protect individual liberty, and secure our freedom.

We reaffirm our commitment to limiting the size, cost, and authority of government. We believe that government does not possess the solution to every problem. It cannot prevent every possible difficulty people encounter, and it cannot and should not attempt to regulate the risk out of doing business in a free market economy or even out of normal everyday life. We believe government regulation is often counter-productive and that unfettering business, especially small business, and relying more on market efficiency should be a major goal of the next administration. We do not believe bureaucracy can or should replace the market or community, although we do believe that government can be reformed to work more efficiently for its proper constitutional functions.

For forty years, the Democrat-controlled Congress expanded government at every level. But big government did not solve the problems and the people turned to Republicans. They did so, in a large part because Republicans promised that the family, parents, churches, schools and private entities and communities closer to the individual are all in a better position to know and address most of the problems of the individual and the local communities than big, bureaucratic national government. Government spending can be controlled. President Reagan cut the growth of nondefense discretionary government by 9.7 percent over his term and total domestic spending as a percentage of gross domestic product went down from 17.9 to 16.4 percent. The first Republican Congress in 40 years also initially cut unnecessary spending but it has exploded ever since. John McCain has promised to reverse the course of the "profligate spending" of recent years and return to the party's tradition of fiscal responsibility.

There should be a safety net to help those unable to care for themselves and who may need temporary support, but existing entitlement programs must be fundamentally reformed. Entitlements are currently completely out of control and unless major reforms are instituted they

will literally bankrupt the nation or at the very least force incredible and economically destructive tax increases on us.

We believe the unborn have rights and deserve protection.

America has welcomed people from all over the world and our doors should remain open to those who follow the rules and commit themselves to becoming part of our society. However, the American taxpayer should not be expected to provide non-emergency services to those who refuse to play by the rules and are in this country illegally.

We treasure our freedom of association, speech, and religion and expect those who come here to do the same. We respect other cultures and people from every ethnic background, but expect them to return that respect.

We are free to pursue our own personal goals because numerous Americans have laid down their lives to secure our future. Freedom is not cheap and security is not a given. We must remain strong as a country and be prepared to protect our freedom at what ever the cost.

The right of the individual to keep and bear arms is protected by the 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment to the Constitution.

Our country has given much to many around the world. We have fought for others' freedom and many of our sons and daughters have died doing so. America is generally the first to arrive with aid and assistance when natural disaster strikes. However, our tax dollars pay the larger share of the cost of many international organizations such as the United Nations. We do not seek unfair advantages or demand our views hold sway, neither do we wish to be taken advantage of or taken for granted.

Economic and political freedom is essential to attaining world peace and prosperity.

# **A Conservative Agenda for America's Future**

August 26, 2008

## **The Economy**

- Reduce taxes, abolish the Alternative Minimum tax and simplify the tax code
- Lower government spending, reduce the regulatory burden, and end the practice of earmarks
- Reform entitlements
- Expand free trade opportunities including agreements with trading partners like Taiwan
- No more unfunded mandates on states and other levels of government

## **Peace and Security**

- Reform and equip our military to meet both the challenges of today and the future
- Maintain a strong defense able to protect our interests in a dangerous and ever changing world
- Provide tighter border security and provide harsher penalties for those illegally entering the United States
- Make a long-term investment in our military personnel, giving them the best equipment and training before sending them into harms way and caring for their families while they are deployed
- Make the best possible facilities and treatment available for the wounded upon their return from deployment
- Always remember that this nation's foreign and military policies must be based on our just national security and economic interests

## **Energy Independence**

- Drill responsibly in ANWR, off our coastline and on public lands in the intermountain west, develop oil shale, and reduce our dependence on foreign oil and to offset the constantly increasing cost of petroleum products due to growing worldwide demand
- Encourage the construction of new refineries and nuclear plants within the United States
- Oppose new taxes on development, production, and consumption
- Speed up the research into new sources of energy like solar and wind
- Encourage energy conservation measures that have no negative impact on the economy
- Develop a written strategic long term energy security policy

## **Education**

- Reaffirm our national commitment to public education with control at the local level
- Encourage educational innovation to improve traditional public schools while providing educational choice to those parents seeking to send their children to private schools and public charter schools while continuing to allow parents to home school their children without fear of government harassment
- Set standards and performance requirements and reward successful teachers and administrators
- Keep politics out of the classroom
- Return the control of our educational system to parents and teachers not union leaders and bureaucrats

## **Federal Judges**

- Judicial nominees should be committed to interpreting rather than making law from the bench and have a record of commitment to making decisions based on the law and the U.S. Constitution

## **The Family**

- Promote the intact, traditional family
- Abolish the marriage penalty tax
- Respect the sanctity of life
- Promote home ownership
- Marriage should be recognized as an institution worth preserving, should be restricted to recognizing the union of a man and woman.

## **Health Care**

- Health care reformers should pledge as physicians must to “do no harm”
- Health care reform should be focused on giving patients consultation with their doctors for greater choice and control
- Third party control of health care by insurance companies, employers, and government has led to higher cost and lower quality
- Americans should be able to purchase health care that transcends state lines, people should be able to buy health insurance in an interstate market; plans licensed in one state should be available for purchase in other states to increase competition and bring down cost
- Reforms designed to improve the availability and lower the cost of health care to Americans should be designed to increase individual choice and power, reduce the regulatory burden on providers and avoid the bureaucracy envisioned by liberal health care schemes
- Responsible reform should include a major focus on preventative care

- Small businesses should be allowed and indeed encouraged to join together to purchase health care
- Investment in research for cures and prevention of disease should be encouraged rather than punished

## **International Affairs**

- Base all U.S. policy first on a commitment to protect the sovereignty, rights and interests of the United States and its citizens in a dangerous and ever changing world
- Demand meaningful United Nations reform
- Work to encourage changes in the policies of those nations seeking to do us and our friends harm while isolating those nations who implacably oppose and threaten our just interests
- Support our friends around the world including Taiwan and Israel as we work to minimize threats to their very existence
- Encourage others to emulate the United States' lead on religious tolerance

## **Americans and Their Government**

- The federal government should be smaller and less intrusive, but it should work
- It should not penalize success
- It should not pick winners and losers among businesses and industries
- Promote entrepreneurship
- It should protect not threaten its citizens

# The American Conservative Union

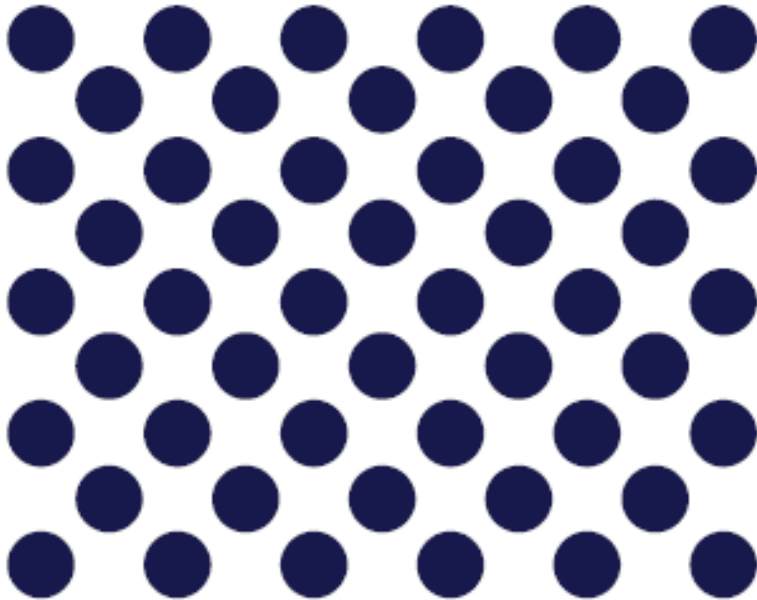
The American Conservative Union (ACU) proudly serves as the nation's oldest and largest grassroots conservative lobbying organization.

The ACU supports lower taxes, less government spending, a market economy, individual responsibility, a strong national defense, the doctrine of original intent of the framers of the Constitution and traditional moral values.

The ACU was founded in 1964 in response to the clarion call for change that was sounded by the defeat of Senator Goldwater by Lyndon Johnson. Conservative leaders like Frank S. Meyer, Jameson Campaigne Sr., John Ashbrook, Katharine St. George, William F. Buckley Jr., L. Brent Bozell and Robert E. Bauman gathered together after Goldwater's defeat, and the result of their meeting was the formation of the American Conservative Union.

The ACU began with a three-fold mission:

- to consolidate the overall strength of the American conservative movement through unified leadership and action;
- to mold public opinion; and
- to stimulate and direct, responsible political action.



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