

Here's What We Can Expect From a GOP-Led Federal Government

Because of the recent election, Republicans now control the White House, the U.S. Senate (51 percent), the House of Representatives (54 percent), 31 of the 50 state governorships (62 percent) and a record 67 of the 98 partisan state legislative chambers in the nation (68 percent).

What will they do with all that power and influence?

To predict what policies the GOP will champion over the next two to four years we can turn to the most recent party platform. Although the document is not binding on the presidential nominee or any other politicians, political scientists have found that over the past 30 years lawmakers in Congress tend to vote in line with their party's platform: 89 percent of the time for Republicans.

Here are the agenda items that are related to issues covered by the Acton Institute. (Note: This level of government that would handle each item is not designated, so some issues may be handled at the state level and others by the U.S. Congress.)

Conscience Rights

Allow all organizations to "provide, purchase or enroll in health care coverage consistent with their religious, moral or ethical convictions without discrimination or penalty."

Provide parents the right to determine the proper medical treatment and therapy for their minor children.

Criminal Justice Reform

Limit the creation of new “crimes” and a create a bipartisan presidential commission to purge the Code and the body of regulations of old “crimes.”

Require *mens rea* elements in the definition of any new crimes to protect Americans who, in violating a law, act unknowingly or without criminal intent.

Codify the Common Law’s Rule of Lenity, which requires courts to interpret unclear statutes in favor of a defendant.

Require mandatory prison time for all assaults involving serious injury to law enforcement officers.

Allow victims of crime and their families to be told all relevant information about their case, allowed to be present for its trial, assured a voice in sentencing and parole hearings, given access to social and legal services and benefit from the Crime Victims Fund.

Implement legislation to protect prisoners against cruel or degrading treatment by other inmates.

Provide incentives for states to encourage opportunities for literacy and vocational education to prepare prisoners for release to the community.

Education

Propose a constitutional amendment to protect parental rights “from interference by states, the federal government or international bodies such as the United Nations.”

Allow school choice for all students.

Have the bulk of federal money through Title I go to 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.”

Refuse any new impositions of national standards and assessments.

State legislatures to propose offering the Bible in a literature curriculum as an elective in America's high schools.

Require background checks for all personnel who interact with school children

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.

Require investigations by civil authorities and prosecution in a courtroom of sexual assault claims, rather than having them adjudicated in the "faculty lounge" of colleges. Such convictions for sexual assault would be punished to the full extent of the law.

Federal Budget and Debt

Propose a constitutional amendment for a federal balanced budget.

Reduction and ultimately elimination the system of conditioned grants to states.

Impose firm caps on future debt and accelerate the repayment of current debt.

The Federal Reserve

Audit the Federal Reserve's activities every year.

Create a commission to investigate ways to set a fixed value for the dollar.

Financial Markets

Removing regulations that prevent access to capital for community banks.

Abolish the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau or, if that cannot be done, subject it to congressional appropriation.

Require that settlements arising from statutory violations by financial institutions must be used to make whole the harmed consumers, with any remaining proceeds given to the general Treasury.

Introduce legislation to ensure that the problems of any financial institution can be resolved through the Bankruptcy Code

Propose regulations that will ensure that FDIC-regulated banks are “properly capitalized and taxpayers are protected against bailouts.”

Reject the use of disparate impact theory in enforcing anti-discrimination laws with regard to lending.

Human Trafficking

Use the full force of the law against those who engage in commercial sexual exploitation and forced or bonded labor of men, women or children; involuntary domestic servitude; trafficking in persons for the purpose of organ removal; and the illegal recruitment and use of child soldiers.

Increase diplomatic efforts and accountability for foreign governments to prosecute traffickers, including “penalties for any public officials who may be complicit in this devastating crime.”

Implement legislation to stop slave labor by “taking steps to prevent overseas labor contractors who exploit foreign workers from supporting military bases abroad or exporting goods to the United States.”

Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Introduce legislation to reduce or repeal occupational licensing laws.

Labor

Introduce legislation to allow all workers, including union members, to be free to accept raises and rewards without veto power from union officials.

Introduce federal legislation allowing all right of states to enact Right-to-Work laws.

Poverty

Evaluate, modify and/or repeal poverty programs that do not actually reduce poverty or that do not increase the personal independence of program participants.

Include work requirements for all poverty programs.

Allow states and localities to have greater responsibility for, and control over, public assistance programs.

Private Property and Intellectual Property Rights

Have state legislatures nullify the impact of the Supreme Court's *Kelo* decision within their jurisdiction by legislation or state constitutional amendments declaring that private property may be taken only for true public use.

Pass the Private Property Rights Protection Act.

Require by law that any money for the takings of private property for public use come from the budget of the agency performing the taking.

Enact reforms to protect law-abiding citizens against abusive asset forfeiture tactics.

Introduce legislation to enforce intellectual property laws against all infringers, whether foreign or domestic.

Regulations

Require that major new federal regulations be approved by Congress before they can take effect.

Revisit existing laws that “delegate too much authority to regulatory agencies” and review all current regulations for possible reform or repeal.

Require approval by both houses of Congress for any rule or regulation that would impose significant costs on the American people

Religious Liberty

Implement legislation preventing government discrimination against businesses or entities which decline to sell items or services to individuals for activities that go against their religious views about such activities.

Reject all legislation that attempts to tax religious organizations.

Repeal the Johnson Amendment.

Pass the First Amendment Defense Act, legislation in the House and Senate which will bar government discrimination against individuals and businesses for acting on the belief that marriage is the union of one man and one woman: “This Act would protect the nonprofit tax status of faith-based adoption agencies, the accreditation of religious educational institutions, the grants and contracts of faith-based charities and small businesses, and the licensing of religious professions—all of which are under assault by elements of the Democratic Party.”

Pass legislation similar to the First Amendment Defense Act at

the state level.

Pass laws to confirm the “longstanding American tradition that religious individuals and institutions can educate young people, receive government benefits, and participate in public debates without having to check their religious beliefs at the door.”

Implement legislation allowing the public display of the Ten Commandments.

Empower the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

Restoring “advocacy of religious liberty” to its “central place” in diplomacy.

Have the State Department designate the systematic killing of religious and ethnic minorities as genocide.

Taxation

Lower the tax rates, curb corporate welfare and eliminate special interest provisions and loopholes.

Change the tax code to make it simpler and clearer.

Oppose all retroactive taxation.

Prevent legislation that would tax religious organizations, charities and fraternal benevolent societies.

Lower the corporate tax rate to be on a par with, or below, the rates of other industrial nations.

Switch to a territorial system of taxation so that “profits earned and taxed abroad may be repatriated for job-creating investment here at home.”

Reduce tax barriers so that American companies are headquartered in America.

Technology and Electricity

Increase funding for scientific missions in space.

Expedite siting processes and the expansion of the electric grid.

Transportation

Remove from the Highway Trust Fund programs that “should not be the business of the federal government.”

Phase out the federal transit program and reform provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act.

Repeal of the Davis-Bacon law, which “limits employment and drives up construction and maintenance costs for the benefit of unions.”

Refuse all increases in the federal gas tax.

Prevent unionization of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

Defund Amtrak.

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