

2012 Election Guide: A Voter Group's Concise Analysis of the Romney & Ryan Platform on Jobs, Defense, the assault on Women's Rights, Gay Rights, & the 47%

Romney stated in September, just two months before the election, that he as the contender for the Presidency of the United States of America did not need to provide details of his plans for the American people.

We as a group of concerned voters decided that clarifying the moving target of the Romney Campaign and Republican Party is important for the American people.

0. ROMNEY WOULD DISOLVE FEMA

Romney stated he would eliminate FEMA and return these functions back to the states during his campaign. This position defies reason. When a state is under siege as in a state of emergency, frequently they do not have power and possession of needed resources to repair the damages the state sustains. Romney refused to respond to questions regarding FEMA in Ohio recently.

1. DEATH POLICY FOR MOTHERS WITH LIFE THREATENING PREGNANCIES AND TO A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE

According to Paul Ryan, abortion is not an option even if the health of the woman is in danger, or she has been violated by rape or incest. During the debate of October 11th, he reversed this. Ryan voted for the Akin amendment in the last few months which is the opposite of what he stated during the debate. "Look no further than the inclusion of the Akin amendment in the Republican Party platform, which bans abortion, even for rape victims," wrote Republican turned independent Charlie Crist, the former governor of Florida. Remember Rep. Todd Akin (R-Mo.) believed as recently as August that rape rarely leads to pregnancy and that there is such thing as a "legitimate rape". The Republican platform calls for a permanent ban on all federal funding and subsidies for abortion and healthcare plans that include abortion coverage.

It is unclear if the *Republican National Committee's Platform* ban on abortions includes any exceptions for when the health of the mother is at stake. From the platform statements and from Ryan during the debate, it looks as if the Republican National Committee plan is to leave this up to the states to pass laws governing exceptions for abortions for rape, incest and for the health of the mother---an idea which frankly makes no sense.

Now Rep. Joe Walsh (R-Il.) is among the uninformed stating again that there is no exception for the life of the mother because he thinks that with modern technology there is no need to abort to save the mother's life. The truth is that Ryan, Akin, Walsh and the Republican National Committees policies were in place three of our collaborators on this article would not be alive today. Two of our collaborators would have died without removal of a fetus growing in the fallopian tubes which is deadly for women and an offspring would not be alive today. In addition in the second case, this would have meant that the mother would have died, a brother and sister would not have been born, the husband would have lost his wife and his young daughter would not have had a mother under these policies. According to the National Library of Medicine of National Institutes of Health, "An ectopic pregnancy is a pregnancy that occurs outside the womb (uterus). It is a life-threatening condition to the mother. The baby (fetus) cannot survive".

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Why is a full grown woman's life not worthy of being saved? Why does it make more sense to let her die, rather than to use life-saving measures if they are really pro-life? Why do these pro-lifers not apply this pro-life stance to war and to inmates on death row and abolish the death penalty?

The bottom line here is that Romney and Ryan believe that women's bodies should be managed by the elected officials in government--- not by women themselves. It begs the question which century the Republican Party is in. Are women still chattel (property) to be managed by others?

2. JOBS & TAX CUTS

Romney and Ryan claim they will increase the number of jobs by cutting taxes. None of this job creation happened with the Bush Tax Cuts nor has it ever worked using the same trickle-down economics. They claim that cutting taxes for the wealthy is needed for the health of the economy, and we are supposed to believe that it is only a coincidence that it puts money in the pockets of Romney and his friends. Never mind that it has never worked. In addition, the burden of these cuts is to be picked up by those with less income, the middle class.

The tax cuts proposed by Romney and Ryan would mainly benefit the vast majority of the super rich. Romney wants to reduce their tax rate from 35% to 28%. The cost of the tax cuts he proposes is 5 Trillion dollars. He says he will pay for this by cutting loopholes. During the first debate, Obama pointed out that the math does not work. There are not enough loopholes to cut in order to pay for reducing the tax for the wealthy without cutting tax loopholes for the middle class. What is left to cut are the deductions which benefit the middle class: mortgage interest, health insurance, and college tuition. Again these are deductions which the middle class and small businesses depend on for economic survival. Ryan refused to acknowledge which tax loopholes they were planning on closing in the vice presidential debate.

In 2011, Romney paid 14.1% tax on \$13.7 million in income, while struggling Americans pay two to three times that rate. In 2010, he made \$21.7 million and his effective tax rate was 13.9 percent. In addition, he sailed to the Republican National Convention in a yacht registered in the Cayman Islands to avoid sales tax. He also claimed \$75,000 worth of tax write offs on his wife's horse of an estimated value of \$500,000. His tax rate is so low by the use of tax shelters and loopholes. It is widely suspected that Romney has other holdings offshore that are untaxed since they do not appear on his tax return.

Obama asked Romney for his jobs plan. Romney hasn't presented a job plan other than this trickle-down economics. His only other idea is to increase the military budget which means they are planning to build more weapons and possibly take us to war with Iran and Syria. This also goes against Romney's supposed plan to reduce the deficit.

Romney accuses Obama of not having a jobs plan, but the President has put plans in front of Congress again and again to create more jobs, and the Republicans blocked their passage.

3. DISDAIN FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS: EXPERIENCE LAYING OFF WORKERS & SHIPPING JOBS OVERSEAS

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At a \$50,000 a plate fundraiser, Romney displayed his disdain for 47% of Americans who do not pay income taxes which was leaked to Mother Jones in a very public video that went viral. The 47% Romney refers to includes senior citizens depending on social security, the working poor, members of the US military in war zones who at their incomes are not required to pay taxes, people out-of-work, students, and working families of four, for example, who may have tax credits. He said these people "believe that they are victims... So my job is not to worry about those people. I'll never convince them they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives".

This is how Romney demonstrates his interest in American jobs and job creation. When Romney was CEO at Bain Capital, he was in the business of acquiring American companies, many of which were profitable, in hostile takeovers, loading them up with debt to make them unprofitable, filing bankruptcies, selling off their assets and laying off the workers. In addition to dismantling formerly healthy companies, Romney also dismantled American factories and sent the manufacturing jobs overseas. Romney's past actions demonstrate that his main interest is not in the middle class as he claimed in the first debate, but with the super wealthy and corporations.

Referring to the return of the automotive industry, Romney said, "I'll take a lot of credit for the fact that this industry's come back." In May 2008, Romney wrote A New York Times op-ed titled "Let Detroit Go Bankrupt" in which he said if GM, Ford and Chrysler got a government bailout "you can kiss the American automotive industry goodbye." Romney was wrong and the government bailout of the auto industry was a success creating about 250,000 new jobs.

4. DISMANTLING SOCIAL SECURITY & MEDICARE

Romney and Ryan want to turn Medicare into a voucher program. Under this plan, people would be given vouchers to pay for either Medicare or private insurance. Unfortunately, if this happens private insurers would pick off the healthiest people leaving Medicare to take the least healthy. This would cause Medicare to collapse fiscally under the weight of covering the care for the least healthy of society. In the end the vouchers toward private insurance companies may not even cover what Medicare would have covered, still leading to outstanding medical costs even with a voucher program.

Romney and Ryan seek to destroy Social Security by privatizing it. As Biden stated in the debate, who would you trust to protect Social Security and Medicare? Someone like him who spent his whole life fighting for it or Ryan who just said last week that he would dismantle Social Security and Medicare?

5. CONNECTION IN LATIN AMERICA

Romney said he'd have a better shot at winning this election if he was Latino. He said he was saying it jokingly, but many Latinos did not find this funny. Even less funny than that, to raise funds for his private equity firm Bain Capital, Romney did business with Solá, Salaverría and Dueñas families, financiers of paramilitary death squads in El Salvador.

Regarding the undocumented, Republicans want a policy of self-deportation, a creation of legal structures making it too difficult for them to work or go to school. Romney states that they can choose self-deportation or join the military. "It's even more ironic that Romney, whose own family once

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sought shelter in Mexico, would deny immigrant youth the same opportunity that Mexico gave his family", writes Teresa Puente.

6. LGBT RIGHTS

Both Romney and Ryan opposed same-sex marriage in Massachusetts and in Wisconsin, respectively. Romney has promised a federal marriage amendment and Ryan has voted twice in 2004 and 2006 supporting legislation which opposes same sex marriage. There's more, but you get the idea.

7. POVERTY & UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS

In February, Romney stated outright, "I'm not concerned about the very poor," stating that there was a safety net in place. This further shows how out of touch Romney is.

When the issue of his hiring undocumented worker immigrants to landscape his home came up in the Oct 11, 2011 debate Romney said, "I'm running for office, for Pete's sake. We can't have illegals."

8. SUPREME COURT JUSTICES

Republicans have for forty years wanted to outlaw Roe v. Wade which provides for a woman's right to choose. During the next four years, with four justices in their 70s, two Reagan and two Clinton appointees, there is a very real opportunity to replace Supreme Court justices which could change the balance of support on Roe v. Wade and other important policies.

Romney stated to Mike Huckabee that he would "absolutely" support a constitutional amendment defining life as beginning at conception. This even opens the door for women to be held criminally liable if they engage in unhealthy behaviors during pregnancy. Romney also has stated "I hope to appoint justices to the Supreme Court that will follow the law and the constitution. And it would be my preference that they reverse Roe v. Wade and therefore they return to the people and their elected representatives the decisions with regards to this important issue." Implied here is Romney's idea that women are not wise enough to make decisions about their bodies, but elected officials and other people ought to be regulators of their bodies. Again, what century is it at Republican Party Headquarters?

If just one of the five justices who currently favor upholding Roe v. Wade leaves the bench in the next four years and is replaced by a Romney nominee, there will be a 5-4 majority on the court to overturn a woman's right to choose. This is something Romney has stated he would do, replace the justice with a stance against a woman's right to choose. In addition, if Romney were elected and able to select justices, other areas would be affected such as criminal justice, affirmative action, gay rights, health care reform, campaign fund raising, and civil rights.

9. MILITARY SPENDING & BUDGET

Military spending is the largest area of discretionary spending in the federal budget. Today, the United States military budget is larger than all other nations' military budgets combined. Recently, Nader said our military budget is a higher part of GDP than it was even during the cold war. While Romney and Ryan claim to be concerned with deficits, their plan is to increase military spending to unprecedented

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levels---2 Trillion dollars more than what the military requested. During the vice presidential candidate's debate, Ryan asked Biden why we were not doing more in Syria. Ryan quickly backed off when Biden said, "What more would they do other than put American boots on the ground? The last thing America needs is to get in another ground war in the Middle East." This demonstrates a kind of willingness on Ryan's part to consider more aggressive measures that would not serve the US in the long run. While an increase in military spending would result in more defense related jobs, the same amount of money would create many more jobs in education for example. Also these people are not building costly weapons, but teaching our children, our future generation.

Romney says he's going to remove things from the budget that he thinks he has to borrow money for. It's not the extremely over inflated military budget he's talking about cutting, instead it's Big Bird with PBS and he also cited Planned Parenthood. It is unclear how the military budget will be funded 2 Trillion more dollars from Romney's statements.

Here are some other ideas from Romney:

"Some people have said we ought to close Guantanamo. My view is we ought to double Guantanamo," said Romney at the South Carolina Republican debate May 15, 2007.

"It's not worth moving heaven and earth spending billions of dollars just trying to catch one person." Romney stated about the pursuit of Osama Bin Laden on April 26, 2007.

As Biden pointed out in the debate, the Bush wars were not funded under the military budget, but rather outside of it as an additional expenditure adding directly five billion dollars a month to the enormous deficits and essentially on credit. This 5 Billion a month, which Ryan voted for, added to an enormous hemorrhaging of the fiscal integrity of the US.

The policies of the Bush Administration did unprecedented damage to the US Economy. The US Treasury, our tax dollars, were raided as a result of waging two wars of choice that we had no way of paying for and at the same time cutting taxes on the wealthiest Americans. The result is that we had to borrow trillions of dollars from China, putting our country and economy in vulnerable position with respect to that rising super power.

"The final bill [for the Bush wars] will run at least \$3.7 trillion and could reach as high as \$4.4 trillion, according to the research project "Costs of War" by Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies... In human terms, 224,000 to 258,000 people have died directly from warfare, including 125,000 civilians in Iraq. Many more have died indirectly, from the loss of clean drinking water, healthcare, and nutrition. An additional 365,000 have been wounded and 7.8 million people -- equal to the combined population of Connecticut and Kentucky -- have been displaced. The cost of blood has been nearly 7000 soldiers killed in the past ten years plus 125,000 wounded." according to Reuters News and www.costsofwar.org.

Our massive debt and deficits have also resulted in the loss of public sector jobs. The money that we are spending to service the debt as well as the money we spent in Iraq and Afghanistan are funds we

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could have used to hire American workers in education, health care, repair of our infrastructure and research in green energy.

Dwight Eisenhower warned the American people about the push of the military industrial complex in one of his last addresses. Today, you may not have a job, we believe partly because of this extremely costly use of our US tax dollars which also resulted in the bloodshed and damage of other countries. These wars seem to have increased instability and terrorism in these regions and added to hostilities toward our country, quite the opposite of what some people were expecting. In addition, we posit there is a link between this wasted money and fiscal crises across the globe.

Ryan and Romney have signaled their willingness to go to war with Iran, a country four times the size of Iraq, which would result in enormous human and environmental costs for all of us.

Obama has set an end of occupation of Afghanistan of 2014 and is less likely to lead us to more wars.

10. DIPLOMACY

Internationally, Romney has made multiple gaffes during the Olympics in the UK, in the Middle East and in Poland. He obviously, does not know how to conduct himself in a diplomatic situation. He criticizes Obama on foreign policy when Mitt has made more gaffes already in his campaign than Obama has made in 4 years. How would a man who cannot handle these international trips wage peace, or god forbid, handle a war?

In the vice presidential debate, Ryan was silent on the issue of burning the Koran. We need a presidential team who would peacefully respect the faiths of others if we want peace in the world.

11. CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is serious and its happening fast, even faster than scientists predicted. Already half of the country is in drought, and NASA acknowledges it's linked to climate change. Every major scientific organization in the world acknowledges the earth is getting warmer and that humans are causing it. To have a president or even a Congress that won't directly address this issue is dangerous. What does Mitt say? "I'm not in this race to slow the rise of the oceans or to heal the planet". Climate change may be the greatest threat humanity has ever faced. We need a leader who does not have his head in the sand regarding such an important issue as climate change.

12. SUMMARY

So, if you are interested in jobs, women's rights, LGBT rights, are Latino, care about the environment or are one of the 47%, Romney has something for everyone. As you can see, it really does matter what the policies of the President of the United States are and would be under a Romney/Ryan ticket. In so many areas such as our military policy and women's rights as well as the environment and climate change, all of us will be affected.

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