

June 2010

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Not a Dime's Worth of Difference?

Simply put, political parties give voters an idea of the beliefs of candidates. --NY Daily News, 6/10/2010

The mid-June Washington State Republican Party convention may not have been one for the record books. But it was certainly well-attended. Nearly 1,200 enthusiastic delegates—about double the turnout for the last mid-term convention in 2006, “squeezed” into the Vancouver Hilton Hotel, anxious to conduct party business and meet many hopeful candidates. And there were candidates aplenty. While many of the delegates appeared to be already on board with one or another of the three leading GOP candidates hoping to unseat Sen. Patty Murray in November, all three spoke and all three were treated with equal gusto from a very fired-up crowd.

As if waiting their turn, Washington State Democrats also trekked to Vancouver (this past weekend), drawing maybe a third the number of delegates the Republicans did. The press didn't report the number—but who's counting? According to one indiscreet internet blogger, however, Democrats endorsed I-1068, the controversial initiative that seeks to legalize the sale and use of marijuana in the State of Washington. The vote was 314-to-118. Another blogger reported 314-to-185. Do the math.

Although it happens that both parties held their powwows the same month, in the same city, and even in the same hotel, the coincidences and similarities end there. Judging by their platforms, differences between the Rs and Ds are not cosmetic as some infer. They are cosmic!

Following are selections from similarly-titled planks in each political party's 2010 platform: *

Republican (Preamble): ⁵“It has been over two centuries since our Founders established the American creed—government under God and accountable to the people.”

Democrat (Preamble): ¹⁴“We believe in the values of community, dignity, equality, opportunity, fairness, tolerance, respect, and the common good of the world we share.”

Republican: [CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY] ¹“All the civil liberties in the U.S. Constitution are God-given and therefore unalienable.” ³It is the obligation of every government to perpetually observe and respect those rights. The role of the judiciary... [is] to uphold the law in a manner faithful to the original intent of the state and federal constitutions.”

Democrat: [CIVIL RIGHTS] ¹⁹“We have the right to sovereignty over our own bodies, including a woman's right to choose to terminate a pregnancy regardless of age or ability to pay; Marriage, as a legal union of consenting adults, should not be restricted by sexual orientation or gender identity. End... legalized discrimination against Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgendered (LGBT) people and seeking repeal of ‘Don't Ask Don't Tell’ and the federal and state ‘Defense of Marriage’ acts.”

Republican: [LIMITED GOVERNMENT] ⁶“In an era of endless bailouts of failing industries, the government take-over of auto companies, the seizure of the healthcare industry, and the perpetual redistribution of income, we see the detrimental results that occur when governments exceed the powers they were initially granted.”

Democrat: [*GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL REFORM*] ⁵¹ "... statehood for any U.S. Territory that votes for it; A Constitutional amendment providing for direct election of the U.S. President... ⁶²...reinstatement of the Fairness Doctrine; Strengthening the wall of separation between church and state by eliminating taxpayer funding for religious institutions or "faith-based" initiatives... ⁷²Establishing a cabinet-level *Department of Peace and Nonviolence* ⁸²...Increased funding for human and social services and reduced defense spending;"

Republican: [*ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY*] ⁶"When entire segments of society are exempted from the responsibility that self-governance carries, we create populations that have no incentive to limit the size or costs of government. ⁸Economic growth would benefit from a balanced budget, simplified tax code, the abolishment of the death tax, and the prevention of a state income tax."

Democrat: [*ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT*] "We oppose: ³⁴Excessive corporate profits and executive compensation; ³⁶Privatization of Social Security or reduction of benefits; ³⁹Favoritism toward the wealthiest that has permitted them undue influence on public policy to the detriment of everyone else; ⁴¹The use of credit scores for insurance rating and hiring."

Republican: [*STRONG AMERICA*] ³"National security is best preserved when America's national sovereignty is never abdicated to any foreign or international organization. ⁴The safety of the United States is undermined when the President unilaterally weakens our deterrence posture by announcing that he will not use our nuclear arsenal to deter attacks from chemical and biological weapons by other nations."

Democrat: [*FOREIGN POLICY*] ³⁶"Cooperative participation in the United Nations and... ³⁷the signing and ratification of the U.N. agreement forming an International Criminal Court... ⁴⁰and honoring the original United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights; We oppose: ¹⁰⁵The production, testing, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons, as well as the development of new or enhanced nuclear weapons;"

Republican: [*BORDERS AND IMMIGRATION*] ²"The individual rights, political stability, economic opportunity and prosperity we enjoy which attracts legal immigrants from all over the world are only possible because of our system of law and order. ³We welcome those who wish to build a new and better life... and who recognize that the price of such opportunity is their willingness to embrace our language, culture, and legal system, beginning at our national borders..."

Democrat: [*IMMIGRATION*] ¹⁰"All children regardless of immigration status are entitled to education... [and] access to health care and human services... ¹⁶Immigration arises from global displacement and disproportionate distribution of wealth, and is not a matter of Homeland Security. ⁵⁸We oppose: State or local police involvement in the enforcement of federal immigration laws [and] ⁶³Legislative attempts to establish English as the sole official language of the United States."

Republican: [*HEALTH CARE*] ⁸"Recently-adopted healthcare reform ignores the third-party-payer dilemma, which is the primary driver of cost, places too much power over medical decisions within the hands of government bureaucrats, potentially regulates private insurance to the point of extinction, and unconstitutionally mandates people to buy health care."

Democrat: [*HEALTH CARE*] ¹¹"A comprehensive, single-payer national health care plan... ²⁹Support of global family planning;"

Republican: [*FAMILY*] "The family unit is the cornerstone of a free and moral society. It is the responsibility of parents, not the state, to guide their children to be good citizens. Government's responsibility is to uphold and respect traditional institutions, such as marriage between one man and one woman, protect the elderly and children from the harmful elements of society, and defend the unalienable right of human life from conception to natural death."

Democrat: []

Any questions?

Rick Forcier