



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on August 23, 2012

GOP Votes for More Foreign “Guest-Workers,” but Platform is Pro-Life

The Republican Party’s platform for 2012 is taking shape this week, and [according to *National Journal*](#), it calls for a guest-worker program, a plank that mirrors one adopted by Republicans in Texas early this summer.

The platform is also pro-life and anti-homosexual “marriage,” which has angered the pro-abortion left, [as exemplified](#) on the editorial page of the *New York Times*.



Foreign Labor Over American Workers

Although the [unemployment rate in the United States is 8.3 percent](#), Republicans would continue, given that most of these foreign workers will come from Mexico or Central America, inviting [cheap labor](#) — and new Democratic voters — into the country.

The *National Journal* reports that the platform “calls for a ‘legal and reliable source of foreign labor through a new guest-worker program.’ ” The man behind the plank is Brad Bailey. [According to the *National Journal*](#):

“It wasn’t even attacked,” crowed Brad Bailey, a Texas restaurateur who lobbied heavily for the inclusion of a guest-worker program in the document.

Bailey was expecting immigration hard-liners to go after the proposed temporary worker program because a standard GOP campaign line says that illegal immigrants are taking jobs from Americans. Businesses dispute that statement, saying there are many jobs (like roofing and fruit-picking) that Americans won’t do.

The Republican platform also seeks long-term detention for “dangerous but undeportable aliens” and proposes to make gang membership a deportable offense. It is typical of electoral policy platforms to be vague on details — this isn’t legislation, after all. It’s the tone that counts. Note the crime-related wording when it comes to gangs and detention, reinforcing an idea important to Republicans: that they are tougher on illegal immigration than President Obama.

“Complaining about the problem is no longer working. Republicans need to lead in repairing our nation’s immigration policy,” Bailey said on Monday in an e-mail to supporters of a guest-worker program.

The *National Journal* also named who in America wants to open the borders to cheap labor: GOP big businessmen:

The inclusion of a guest-worker program in the GOP platform marks a victory for business-oriented Republicans who are worried that a strict enforcement-only approach to immigration will ruin certain industries, such as agriculture, which relies heavily on undocumented immigrant labor.

Fighting to maintain some immigration controls in the platform was Kansas Secretary of State [Kris Kobach](#), [who crafted](#) Arizona’s tough immigration law, [S.B. 1070](#). The *National Journal* observed,



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Kobach's considerable influence was on display at the Republican platform committee meeting on Tuesday, as he shot down several suggestions from other members who questioned the necessity of mandating electronic verification of workers or asked for market-based quotas on foreign workers.

At Kobach's request, the committee added language to the platform calling for mandatory electronic verification of workers, a border fence, and an end to "sanctuary cities" and in-state tuition for illegal immigrant college students.

[The Hill reported](#) that paradoxically, the party called for more immigration laws such as the one Kobach penned for Arizona.

The national GOP's guest-worker initiative imitates that of the Texas Republicans, [who passed](#) their invitation for more foreign workers in June. The Texas GOP website said the measure was a "bold move" that "calls on the government to create an effective and secure guest worker program and an update for long outdated Social Security card. The guest worker program should be created in a way that will be self-funding."

Social Issues

On social issues, the GOP is pro-life and anti-gay "marriage." [CNN reported](#) that the draft language on abortion includes these words:

Faithful to the "self-evident" truths enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, we assert the sanctity of human life and affirm that the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We support a human life amendment to the Constitution and endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children.

As well, CNN noted:

The party will reaffirm its opposition to federally-funded embryonic stem cell research and demand that the government "not fund or subsidize health care which includes abortion coverage."

Republicans have also inserted a "salute" to states pushing "informed consent" laws — an apparent reference to ultrasound bills that have moved through some state legislatures — "mandatory waiting periods prior to an abortion, and health-protective clinic regulation."

The abortion language [does not include](#) exceptions for rape and incest.

GOP platformers rejected an amendment to approve civil unions for homosexuals.

[Politico quoted](#) a Republican who argued for helping legitimize homosexual behavior:

Barbara Ann Fenton, Rhode Island's representative to the quadrennial session that decides official Republican Party principles, called for a platform plank that would recognize civil union partnerships for heterosexual and homosexual couples.

"As a Roman Catholic, there's nobody in this room who believes [more than I do] that the definition of marriage is between one man and one woman," she said. "But those are my religious beliefs, and this country was founded on the separation of church and state."

"At 31, I don't see people because of the color of their skin and I don't recognize them by their sexuality," she added. "For my own generation, a lot of times homosexuality is not the biggest deal in the world. And that's OK."

The room sat quietly as Fenton spoke. Social conservatives respectfully listened.



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Another liberal Republican also spoke for the amendment. "[Themis Klarides](#) from Connecticut noted that she voted for civil unions in the state Legislature," [Politico reported](#).

"I don't think this diminishes or degrades marriage," she said. "My parents have been married over 55 years, and I believe in that institution. ... But I think those terms have been commingled for so long that we've lost the difference between civil and religious [unions]."

After listening, they rejected the amendment. One opponent was Kobach, Politico observed, on the grounds that all 50 states [governments also forbid](#) polygamous marriage.

One GOP delegate called civil unions "counterfeit marriage," noting that supporting traditional marriage benefits the party politically.

New York Times Sees Extremism

Unsurprisingly, the editorialists at the [New York Times detected](#) extremism in the platform:

The Republican Party has moved so far to the right that the extreme is now the mainstream.

The mean-spirited and intolerant platform represents the face of Republican politics in 2012. And unless he makes changes, it is the current face of the shape-shifting Mitt Romney.

The draft document is more aggressive in its opposition to women's reproductive rights and to gay rights than any in memory. It accuses President Obama and the federal judiciary of "an assault on the foundations of our society," and calls for constitutional amendments banning both same-sex marriage and abortion.

[The GOP is] defending one of the last vestiges of officially sanctioned discrimination — restrictions on the rights of gay men and lesbians to marry. [Its] platform relies on the idea that marriage between one man and one woman has for thousands of years "been entrusted with the rearing of children and the transmission of cultural values." Marriages between people of the same gender pose no threat to marriages between men and women.

As for abortion, the editorial observed, "The draft platform puts the party on the most extreme fringes of American opinion. It calls for a 'human life amendment' and for legislation 'to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children.' That would erase any right women have to make decisions about their health and their bodies."

The platform's endorsement of informed-consent laws is "patronizing," the [Times averred](#), adding that such laws "presume that a woman is not capable of making a considered decision about abortion before she goes to a doctor."

The paper even suggested that the Republican Party might ban birth control.

The [Times concluded](#):

[The platform] is farther out on the party's fringe than Mr. Romney ventured in the primaries, when he repudiated a career's worth of centrist views on issues like abortion and gay marriage.

But the planks hew closely to the views of his running mate, Paul Ryan, and the powerful right-wing. Mr. Romney has a chance to move back in the direction of the center by amending this extremist platform. It will be interesting to see if he seizes it.

Republicans will vote on the platform at their convention in Tampa, Florida, next week.



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