



## ACTIVITY 4 – PARTY PLATFORM

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### OBJECTIVE:

To have students develop a party platform for their party affiliation that will be submitted to the State Party Platform Committee for the Kids Voting Presidential Mock Party Convention.

### MATERIALS:

- The Republican and Democratic Party Platform can be found at <https://www.gop.com/platform> and <https://www.democrats.org/party-platform>.
- Party Platform Position Form

### GET READY:

- Review the information from the Democratic and Republican websites on political parties to enhance your knowledge of the most current party platforms.
- Make copies of the two national party platforms for your students.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Explain to your students what a party platform is. According to Wikipedia, a **party platform**, or **platform** “is a list of the actions which a political party, individual candidate, or other organization supports in order to appeal to the general public for the purpose of having said peoples’ candidates voted into political office or the professed opinion(s) proposed as part of law(s) or otherwise made into social policies.” This often takes the form of a list of support for, or opposition to, socially relevant, urgent, controversial, or complicated topics or issues. Individual topics, and a party’s, person’s, or organization’s opinion on them are often called the “planks” of their platform in reference to a basic stage made out of boards or planks of wood, similar to what can be assembled for public speaking or debates to be held on.
- Assign party platform issues to smaller workgroups in each party for purposes of developing a proposed position paper.
- Positions on the individual issues must reflect the party philosophy and should be no less than one-half of a type-written page or more than one page in length.
- Have each small group present their position or read the other positions so the entire class can caucus to determine their State Party Platform.
- Identify the State Party Platforms for each party.
- Identify two students to attend the State Party Platform Committee meeting.
- The State Platform Committee will be made up of two representatives from each high school (county) and shall be chaired by a member elected at the Platform Committee meeting.
- Submit the finalized State Party Platforms and names of the two students that will attend the State Platform Committee meeting by October 2, 2020, to [KVUSAMC@live.com](mailto:KVUSAMC@live.com).
- Arrange transportation for the two students elected to represent your school (Activity 5) at the State Party Platform Committee to be held from 6:00 to 8:00 pm on Monday, October 12, 2020, at UW Stevens Point at Wausau or during a classroom experience.

### POSSIBLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How important are political party platforms in defining a political party?
- What happens if all members of a political party don’t agree with every position outlined in a political party platform?
- What happens if elected officials don’t support every position outlines in their political party platform?
- How do the platforms of the Republican Party and the Democratic Party differ?
- Are political party platforms relevant in today’s system of government?



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MORE:

- Invite local party leaders to your classroom and discuss their respective political party platforms.
- Invite elected officials from both parties to your classroom to talk about political party platforms and how platforms impact their votes on specific issues.
- Have students attend the annual county party caucus when positions on issues are discussed and debated. Information regarding meetings is available online at <http://www.marathondems.com/> and <http://marathon.wisgop.info/>.
- Have students research the platforms between the two major parties and facilitate a student-led classroom debate or discussion on the two parties.