

Reform Party USA – 2023 Platform

(approved by Convention 07-Oct-2023)

Platform Planks - 2023

1. Government and Ethics
2. Fiscal Responsibility
3. Tax Policy
4. Legislative Processes and Lobbying
5. Election Process
6. Economy and Job Market
7. Individual Rights and Freedoms
8. Public Education
9. Healthcare
10. Justice and Penal Systems
11. Social and Cultural Issues
12. Government Size and Scope
13. Foreign Relations
14. Energy and the Environment
15. National Security

The Platform Committee proposes that our (15) planks should appear in this order. Numbers are only for the sake of presentation and do not carry meaning regarding the importance of one stance over another. We value all our stances and believe they exist as a cohesive group that consistently reflects the values of the Reform Party USA.

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1. GOVERNMENT AND ETHICS

1st Level Language

The Reform Party exhibits and promotes high ethical standards and expects our candidates and all elected officials to do the same.

2nd Level Language

The Reform Party believes that democracy requires all levels of government to adhere to ethical standards. An office-holder's influence should be solely for the benefit of their constituents and in service to their oath to the US Constitution.

Public servants, elected and appointed, will find themselves privy to non-public information. Public servants must not be allowed to take measures to profit from this information. Likewise, non-government entities ^[1] must not inappropriately benefit from their relationship with public officials.

Activities that yield an unexplained advantage to any party, in government or not, must be examined for ethical breaches. Ethical areas to be monitored include:

- Lobbying Irregularities
- Campaign Fundraising
- Committee Assignments
 - o Political affiliation as a consideration
 - o Conflicts of interest
- Office-holder Investment Transparency and Limitations
- Office-holder Benefits, Including Compensation and Retirement

The Reform Party seeks the enforcement of laws and regulations (with new legislation as needed) that address the above concerns.

References:

1. (Electronic) Code of Federal Regulations (eCFR):

[https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-12/chapter-I/part-35/section-35.11#p-35.11\(j\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-12/chapter-I/part-35/section-35.11#p-35.11(j))

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2. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

1st Level Language

The Reform Party promotes and practices fiscal responsibility. We hold all who serve in public office, at all levels of government, accountable for the conservation and proper use of public resources.

2nd Level Language

The Federal Government should reduce, with the intention of ending, the ongoing cycle of deficit spending and commit to a practice of accountability without loopholes, for the benefit of all people of the United States. Reform Party founder, Ross Perot, identified the already building trend of having the US Treasury issue bonds with proceeds to fund current government operations. Our goal is to end the practice of borrowing against future tax revenues without a clear plan to settle this debt.

Although not a typical year, in the fiscal year 2021 the federal government collected \$4.05 trillion and spent \$6.82 trillion, resulting in a one-year deficit of \$2.77 trillion. The total national debt was \$28.43 trillion at the end of fiscal year 2021. ^[1]

The Reform Party promotes careful budgeting, spending control, and a focus on programs that support, improve, and promote the general welfare of communities.

To promote accountability, the Reform Party supports the mission of the Government Accounting Office (GAO) and Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and similar State and local agencies to provide financial audits and reviews that evaluate department and program results against planned outcomes.

Department and program functions should be monitored for adherence to mission and for overlapping mission scopes. Each department should be established with the intention to keep responsibilities and the use of resources transparent.

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The Reform Party calls for a Constitutional amendment that constrains deficit spending. It is necessary to enforce fiscal discipline with consequences that have an impact on every legislative district. The amendment we favor would allow for Congress to declare an emergency before penalties become effective. A national emergency declaration will also delay budgetary penalties. A plan to return to fiscal discipline must be enacted when the emergency declaration expires.

References:

1. Source: <https://www.usaspending.gov/>

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3. TAX POLICY

1st Level Language

The Reform Party promotes balanced tax policies built with a focus on economic stability, security, and growth. We seek balance in governmental burdens between all entities that interact with the economy of the United States. These entities include domestic and foreign individuals, businesses, and others who connect to commerce or government services.

2nd Level Language

The Reform Party is concerned about the system of deductions and credits that complicates completing tax returns and leaves many wondering if others are receiving more favorable treatment.

For income tax purposes, the Reform Party supports graduated taxation where low-income households are taxed at the lowest percentage. Households that may not owe income tax should be encouraged to participate in filing annual tax returns so they are prepared to handle this responsibility when their income level improves.

Special tax treatment for businesses and industries, if warranted, must be undertaken with care and oversight. Each instance of such must be monitored and eventually eliminated when its purpose is no longer required. Subsidies and tax incentives often create advantages for large corporations over smaller businesses. The Reform Party believes that financial incentives interfere with normal market function and their benefits diminish with time.

Trade policies, including tariffs and import limitations, must be considered without placing US-based services and products at a disadvantage.

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4. LEGISLATIVE PROCESSES AND LOBBYING

1st Level Language

The Reform Party promotes simplicity and transparency in the legislative process and the influences upon it (i.e., lobbying). Proposed bills should adhere to a single theme with minimal addenda.

The Reform Party maintains that the legislative process, which creates new laws and regulations, must include regular reviews of existing laws and regulations.

2nd Level Language

Simplicity and conciseness are the roots of good legislation. Single-themed bills promote transparency by improving understanding of their intent. Unnecessary complications, often introduced by outside interests (professional lobbyists, etc.) can serve hidden agendas.

A legislator's priorities should come from constituents in their district/State, not outside interests. Lobbyist influence in legislative development may raise concerns regarding a representative's honorable service to their constituents. Misguided intent can be obscured by:

Bill Complexity:

- To preserve ethics, each bill's purpose and contents should be clearly named in its title. For example, a budget bill should not contain changes to voting processes.
- Sources and contributing authors should be named in a document that accompanies all bills.

Inappropriate Influence:

- An entity should not be allowed to contribute to the campaign of a legislator or the promotion of a ballot measure in a district/state where they have no presence or activity.
- The Reform Party encourages monitoring and transparency of political campaign receipts and expenses.

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- We support the mission statement of the U.S. Office of Government Ethics – “Public service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws and ethical principles above private gain.”^[1]

The Reform Party believes that the legislation that governs the people should be understood by the people. For this purpose, bills in every legislative body should focus on a single theme/purpose and contain minimal addenda. We believe a review process should exist in all jurisdictions to evaluate and recommend the removal of laws whose missions are outdated or have been shown to be ineffective. Each governing body should consciously remove laws (and any budget needs) that no longer benefit their constituents.

The Reform Party holds that trust and transparency are critical components of a responsible, representative government. We promote a legislative process that is accessible and understandable by all.

References:

1. https://www.oge.gov/web/oge.nsf/about_what-we-do

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5. ELECTION PROCESS

1st Level Language

The Reform Party actively supports education and participation in our government's administration of elections. We hold officials and lawmakers responsible for ensuring ethical and transparent elections.

The Reform Party keeps a critical eye on campaign regulations and oversight. Although campaigns are private activities, our government must maintain regulations to prevent harm to the public's trust in the election process.

2nd Level Language

The Reform Party will continue to propose improvements to government election processes as well as private campaign processes. All positions of trust and authority should reflect the voters (as individuals) of the location they serve. We will remain skeptical of corporate, industry, political, and other special interest groups who seek or receive greater participation in government policy than the voters.

Government Election Processes include:

- Voting and Election Administration
- Ballot Access Validation
- Redistricting

Regulation of Campaigns and Lobbying:

- Campaign Regulation
- Fundraising and Use-of-Funds Regulation
- Ballot Access Requirements
- Candidate, Campaign, and Lobbying Enforcement

The Reform Party holds government officials and lawmakers responsible for ensuring reasonable and convenient access to voter registration, voting, and candidacy for all eligible voters and those seeking a position on the ballot (ballot access).

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The Reform Party promotes voting methods that encourage greater voter participation and election transparency. To this end, we support Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), Score Voting, and None-Of-The-Above (NOTA) along with other voting methods that increase the likelihood of the election winner being the candidate who best reflects the will of the community. We oppose voting methods and ballot rules that discourage participation in the election process or leave voters without the ability to express dissent.

Congressional districts are redrawn after each US Census. The Reform Party will monitor this process and take appropriate action when districts are proposed that are not compact, do not reflect complete communities, or do not follow existing political boundaries (such as county borders) where possible. We believe that gerrymandering inhibits the political expression of a local community.

Each Member of Congress is obligated to represent the public interest. The Reform Party will ensure that lobbying practices are established to provide an appropriate connection where the public interest intersects with private interests.

Campaign finance regulations must not place an undue burden on candidates or parties. The Reform Party believes that candidates and political parties must have reasonable access to placement on state and local ballots and participation in election debates. However, campaign and lobbying legislation must include enforcement actions and authorities. Consistent, competent, and effective enforcement will keep political parties and candidate campaigns compliant with the governing election law.

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6. ECONOMY AND JOB MARKET

1st Level Language

Economic prosperity and broadly available opportunities are fundamental resources in a well-functioning society. The Reform Party supports and promotes job creation and economic policies that prioritize our citizens' best interests in trade agreements, industry, and innovation.

2nd Level Language

Our citizens' and our nation's future are dependent on economic security, opportunity, and prosperity. The Reform Party commits itself to holding America's political leaders responsible for prioritizing our country's financial security and economic stability in all global trade policies and agreements.

The Reform Party promotes effective:

- trade priorities and domestic policies that build industry, manufacturing, and technological innovation.
- trade policies that adhere to mission and strategic vision statements and implement audit and compliance requirements.
- periodic trade agreement reviews and revisions to prepare policy for future trends.

U.S. economic standards depend on:

- contributions of domestic capital, innovation, and labor.
- trade policy transparency, awareness, and understanding.
- dynamic regulations, ready to respond to changing conditions.

Government regulations should encourage economic stability and growth. To support the domestic job market, it is necessary to review and revise labor regulations to promote the efficacy of employment opportunities and conditions.

The Reform Party believes that entrepreneurship is a core American value and small business success is a primary driver of our country's economy.

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7. INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

1st Level Language

All citizens should uphold the US Constitution, including the Bill of Rights and all subsequent amendments. The US Constitution and the Declaration of Independence inform and guide the Reform Party regarding the responsibilities and limits of government and the rights of US citizens. We promote literacy in these documents.

2nd Level Language

The Reform Party defends the rights of US citizens. Topics of concern include the right to:

- vote as the Constitution provides without restrictions.
- legally purchase and possess firearms while ensuring responsible ownership and due process as provided by the Constitution.
- protest peacefully, without compromising public safety, and without fear of government interference.
- worship or not as one chooses.
- pursue and improve life, liberty, and happiness.
- protect each citizen's privacy.

The Reform Party supports limitations on federal government power as stated in Amendment 10 of The Bill of Rights.

The U.S. Bill of Rights - AMENDMENT X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people. (Note: The US Bill of Rights was ratified in 1791)

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All rights include responsibilities. It is the government's duty to promote the general welfare. However, when the government considers curtailing the freedoms of individuals in the performance of its duty it must be able to provide a compelling governmental interest in doing so. Examples include temporary curfews and travel restrictions. Each instance deserves consideration and must be subject to judicial review when warranted.

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8. PUBLIC EDUCATION

1st Level Language

Economic stability and national security are dependent on an informed and educated public. Each level of government has an interest in providing educational resources in all communities. The Reform Party will seek alliances with policy groups and subject matter experts. With their guidance, we will pursue and promote access to education for all and performance and financial accountability metrics for all programs supported with public funds.

2nd Level Language

All communities benefit from having educated workers, voters, public servants, and residents.

Every child - in every community - should have access to quality education that prepares them to compete in a global economy. Likewise, adults should have access to college and continuing education to support employment, career advancement, and personal growth. This enables everyone to contribute to their community.

Government resources must be wisely allocated, and outcomes monitored, with a goal of continual improvement in all government-supported programs. Initiatives that promote standardization and universal testing must not negatively impact the primary mission of education.

We support research and pilot programs targeted at resolving gaps in educational opportunities. For example, salary incentive programs may be necessary to ensure full staffing in core subjects in some locations.

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9. HEALTHCARE

1st Level Language

Medical services and treatment should be accessible to all Americans and those in our country. The Reform Party will develop and promote recommendations regarding healthcare availability and financing, including facility-based costs, insurance costs, and government involvement.

2nd Level Language

Health maintenance and treatment should be managed between individuals and their doctors. Insurance providers and government policies should support these relationships without interfering in them.

Medical decisions should be primarily between patient and doctor, following accepted medical practices. Barriers to patient-doctor medical decisions should be identified and minimized.

Patients and their families should have transparent access to alternative treatment plans and good-faith estimates, so they can make informed decisions. Market costs, demographics, and benefits must be tracked. This includes medical providers, the health insurance market, regulation compliance, medical equipment, and pharmaceutical costs. The out-of-pocket cost to patients is a priority, including both time and financial resources that must be devoted to seeking and receiving a high standard of care.

Attention must be devoted to the costs of:

- Medical equipment
- Medical software
- Pharmaceutical production

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The healthcare market in the United States is vast. Continual improvements must be pursued in areas such as:

- Quality of Care/Outcomes
- Medical Provider Accountability and Lawsuits
- Administrative Costs
- Health Insurance Affordability and Flexibility
- Long-term Health Maintenance and Preventative Costs (such as medical equipment and pharmaceuticals)

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10. JUSTICE AND PENAL SYSTEMS

1st Level Language

The Reform Party supports refinements and practices that reinforce Justice in our law, law enforcement, judicial process, and penal system.

We adhere to the values and principles enshrined in the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and subsequent Amendments that form the foundation of our justice system.

2nd Level Language

The Reform Party supports improvement to law enforcement, court, and incarceration processes. These institutions must be impartial and fair to victims of crime, those accused of a crime, the convicted, and the community.

- Law Enforcement:
Police have the right to be safe while performing their duties, and still be required to recognize the rights and dignity of those they serve.
- Legal Process (courts):
Plea agreements must be managed responsibly. They should not be used for expediency by either the prosecutor for the people (District Attorney, Attorney General, etc.) or the attorney for the defendant (i.e., public defender).

The sentencing process should allow judicial discretion when extenuating circumstances exist to ensure equal justice for all under the law.

The Reform Party believes the effectiveness of plea agreements and sentencing guidelines should be monitored for concerns regarding the unequal application of justice.

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- Incarceration:

We need a system that removes dangerous criminals from society and provides opportunities for rehabilitation with the purpose of reducing recidivism. The nation's prisons must not be a place for society to hide those who can be rehabilitated, those with addiction issues, and the mentally ill. Job training should be provided for those incarcerated and employment placement assistance should be offered once they are released.

The Reform Party believes our justice system needs to meaningfully address effective addiction treatment, long-term mental health services, and rehabilitation programs.

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11. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ISSUES

1st Level Language

The Reform Party promotes and encourages freedoms and assurances named in the Constitution of the United States. The party will not promote a position on social, cultural, and other non-governmental issues. We will engage when Constitutional rights and freedoms are central to an issue.

Candidates endorsed by the Reform Party may take a position and engage in debate on social and cultural questions. Candidates do not speak for the party.

2nd Level Language

The Reform Party believes that social and cultural issues (i.e., abortion, gay marriage, end-of-life decisions, and similar topics) should not be our focus as a party. Reform Party members and candidates may hold their own positions, with the understanding that they do not speak for the party on these issues.

To be consistent with our desire for a limited and well-focused government, the Reform Party does not believe that laws and regulations should dictate medical decisions, how relationships are formed, or the activities of groups or individuals that do not infringe on the rights of non-participants.

Some social topics involve constitutional protections, such as privacy, equal treatment, and personal autonomy. The Reform Party may participate in debate on a social or cultural issue in support of constitutional rights.

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12. GOVERNMENT SIZE AND SCOPE

1st Level Language

The Reform Party favors localized government with limited and appropriate oversight.

We advocate for government services with a specific mission and scope that is not unduly duplicated by multiple agencies. Programs and services (and their administrators) should be responsive, available, and accountable.

2nd Level Language

The Reform Party recognizes that Federal and State (and local) government spending has grown disproportionately in relation to population and productivity. Over the past several decades, Federal spending as a share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has increased dramatically. Total Federal Outlays in 2000 were 17.7% of GDP; while in 2022, Federal Outlays were 25.1% of GDP. Outlays (spending) have exceeded Receipts (revenue) every year since 2002. ^[1]

The scope of government must prioritize efficiency and effectiveness to avoid problems arising from an increasing spending-to-revenue ratio:

1. Government offices and programs should have sufficient but not excessive resources to perform their mission.
2. Oversight of a program should not interfere with the program's mission (i.e., State and Federal education programs and regulations).
3. Mission overlap should be limited. For example, OSHA and EPA established a Memorandum of Understanding in 1991 to manage circumstances where their jurisdictions overlap. ^[2]

The Reform Party will foster awareness of these concerns beginning with individual voters and extending to the leaders they elect.

References:

1. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/historical-tables>
<https://www.cbo.gov/publication/58888>
2. <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/mou/1991-02-13>

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13. FOREIGN RELATIONS

1st Level Language

The Reform Party respects the sovereignty of all nations. The United States is responsible for adhering to all treaties and formal obligations it negotiates. The Reform Party is critical of treaties and policies that do not promote mutual benefit.

2nd Level Language

The duty of the United States government is to its people and its foreign policy is the medium between its citizenry and the rest of the world. The political and economic policies within this framework must not undermine the well-being of our nation.

The Reform Party believes that United States foreign relations must navigate the complex interactions between principles, including:

-Sovereignty of Nations:

Borders between nations should only change when no party is under duress and all parties agree. Borders within nations are the responsibility of its citizens. When a nation poses a danger to the United States' national security, we may respond diplomatically and economically. When a clear and present threat exists, military options must be considered.

-National Interest:

The United States has a long-term interest in supporting nations that respect the dignity and rights of their citizens. When invited by the duly elected government of another country, the United States may assist in building and maintaining freedom and prosperity. Building beneficial relationships with all countries improves national security and economic stability. The Reform Party believes the United States should invest in maintaining a healthy and helpful reputation.

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-Fiscal Responsibility:

The United States benefits from the peace and stability of all nations. Facilitating this incurs a cost that should not be the sole responsibility of our taxpayers. Efforts to assist other countries in achieving and maintaining stability require the cooperation of all interested parties.

The Reform Party supports innovations, including carefully constructed regulations and agreements that allow charities and other Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) to address deficiencies in basic human needs in any country that requires aid.

The Reform Party supports goodwill efforts, using government assets, to respond to disasters in other countries. We recognize the occasional need to spend United States' funds on infrastructure and potentially imbalanced trade agreements to benefit the citizens of another country in the short term while returning benefits to the United States in the long term. These efforts and agreements must provide for the responsible termination of these efforts.

As good stewards of the public trust, the Reform Party supports devoting assets where they are effective. The Reform Party advocates for an approach that prioritizes our citizens while recognizing that the well-being of other nations is to the benefit of our nation.

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14. ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

1st Level Language

The Reform Party will promote a balanced approach between the energy needs and independence of the United States and the need to protect and preserve our environment and public resources.

2nd Level Language

The Reform Party actively promotes the responsible use of public and private resources in the United States.

The Reform Party believes American society, services, and industry must be sustainable, responsible, and competitive. Technology and population growth have increased consumption of resources in the United States and the world. To protect against destabilizing trends, the Reform Party supports regulations and industry initiatives that cultivate a healthy environment and high quality of life.

We focus on these areas:

- Energy Production and Distribution
- Environmental Planning and Utilization
- National Security

Energy Production and Distribution:

We recognize that the availability of energy resources (i.e., renewables, carbon-based, and nuclear) varies throughout the country. Energy can be derived from diverse sources and made available to meet the demands of all locations in the country.

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The Reform Party advocates for responsible development, deployment, and use of evolving sources, such as biofuels and thermal depolymerization of organic waste.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) website illustrates the diversity of energy resources based on physical geography. ^[1]

EIA data suggests that energy requirements will continue to increase regardless of gains in production and efficiency. ^[2]

Environmental Planning and Utilization:

It is irresponsible not to consider the environment when planning for population growth and industrial expansion.

The United States is rich in natural resources. The Reform Party seeks to preserve these through responsible-use guidelines, education, laws, and regulations.

In every case, there is a balance between enabling our current society to thrive and ensuring that future Americans will also thrive.

National Security:

Modern economics is dependent on energy access. Economic trade with other nations includes energy. We must ensure that sufficient domestic production, reserves, and diversity of resources are maintained to protect our society from foreign interference.

References:

1. <https://atlas.eia.gov/apps/5039a1a01ec34b6bbf0ab4fd57da5eb4/explore>
2. <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=51478>

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15. NATIONAL SECURITY

1st Level Language

National security is the primary responsibility of our federal government. We must preserve our peace, economy, and sovereignty to “secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity,” as stated in the preamble to the U.S. Constitution.

The Reform Party considers national security in all party policy stances. Our policies promote the security of our national borders, the safety of our citizens from foreign and domestic threats, and the stability of America's economic interests.

2nd Level Language

The Reform Party believes that the United States National Security policy must establish prosperity, stability, and security for our society. Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution grants Congress the power to fulfill and maintain this primary responsibility. We believe all the enumerated Congressional powers affect national security.

Prosperity arises from sound economic policies that include infrastructure, trade and commerce, labor, immigration, monetary policies, and access to rewards for, and protection of, individual effort and improvement.

Stability requires effective governance (such as a balanced budget and monetary policy), the maintenance and improvement of infrastructure, and citizens who are confident in their future.

Security is established by border integrity, a capable military, effective justice systems, and positive international relations. It also involves protecting intellectual property, communication and infrastructure networks, and identifying other vulnerabilities.

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The Reform Party promotes effective institutions and civic responsibility as the foundation of our national security because prosperity, stability, and security are codependent elements and require constant monitoring to support our nation's health. Our government has been described as "...of the people, by the people, for the people, [that] shall not perish from the earth." ^[1] Therefore, it is each citizen's responsibility to ensure the continued existence of our nation.

References:

1. The Gettysburg Address by Abraham Lincoln