

To: Eagle Forum State Leaders
From: Colleen Holcomb
RE: **Eagle Forum Republican Party Platform Initiative**
Date: July 14, 2016

The 2016 Republican Party Platform has just been sent to print. I am honored to report that this year's Platform is the strongest, most pro-family and the most conservative Platform in history, in spite of a well-funded, well organized effort from the left.

Billionaire hedge fund manager, Peter Singer contributed \$6 million to a concerted effort to interject homosexual agenda items into the Republican Party Platform. By all accounts, these efforts failed miserably.

Thanks to the unwavering leadership of Eagle Forum First Vice-President, Eunie Smith, and the generous support of Florida Eagle Forum President, Pat Andrews and her husband Mark, we were able to join forces with Family Research Council, March for Life Action and Concerned Women for America to identify and train conservative, pro-family delegates.

Phyllis appointed me to lead the Platform efforts in 2014, and I consulted with Platform veterans Colleen Parro Ballargean, Connie Mackey and Mary Summa. I attended the RNC meetings in Scottsdale, Arizona in May 2015 and in Cleveland, Ohio in July 2015 to network and identify the conservative Committeemen and Committeewomen to ensure that they would connect their conservative Platform Delegates, once elected, with us. Oklahoma Committeewoman and Eagle Forum Board Member, and Oklahoma State Chapter President, Carolyn McLarty provided invaluable assistance in this effort.

In the months preceding the Convention, as the delegates were elected and the Platform delegates were selected, we joined forces with Family Research Council, March for Life Action and Concerned Women for America through a series of regular telephone conferences to compile a list of Platform Delegates, and to identify solid conservatives we

should invite to our training, as well as identifying liberal delegates who might counter our efforts.

Each of the organizations was eager to influence the Platform, but none had the budget to fully underwrite the effort. When the Andrews pledged their support, enabling me to move forward in securing a venue for the delegate training, the other organizations followed suit and pledged their support. The combined sponsorship allowed us to hold a training dinner in an ideal location, a hotel immediately adjacent to the Convention Center where the Platform Delegates were gathered.

This funding also allowed us to bring Mary Summa to Cleveland to train and advise the delegates throughout the process. Mary has been working with Phyllis and Colleen Parro Ballargean to train delegates and lead the efforts to keep the Platform pro-life and conservative since 1988. Mary provided invaluable training on how to effectively use Robert's Rules of Order to the 23 delegates present at the dinner and worked with staff from FRC to equip the delegates with sample amendments and talking points supporting the amendments.

The Delegates received their copies of the Platform at an RNC reception immediately preceding our event, so while the delegates had dinner and listened to Mary's training, our staff copied the Platform. We had placards on each table identifying the separate subcommittees so the Delegates could sit together and get to know their fellow members of their subcommittees during dinner. After the dinner and training, the delegates and staff read through the Platform with their subcommittee and identified areas of concern or areas that needed strengthening, and before leaving, the delegates wrote out their amendments at the table for submission by 7:30 the next morning.

Here is a list of delegates who joined our training:

Alabama: Jim Carns and Judy Carns

Arizona: Len Munsil

Colorado: Robin Coran

Iowa: Tamara Scott

Kansas: Kris Kobach and Mary Kay Kulp

Louisian: Tony Perkins and Sandy McDade

Missouri: Bev Ehlen and Hardy Billington

Montana: Debra Lamm and Seth Berglee

North Carolina: Mary Frances Forrester

Oklahoma: Carolyn McLarty and Marc Hader

South Carolina: LaDonna Ryggs

South Dakota: Nancy Neff

Texas: Diana Denman and David Barton

Utah: Gayle Ruzicka

Virginia: Cynthia Dunbar and Tommy Valentine

I helped the Government Reform Subcommittee. Hardy Billington (MO) from our group offered an amendment to add language to prohibit Medicaid funding for organizations that perform abortions. This language passed.

Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, a nationally renowned expert on voter fraud and immigration, offered the following amendments:

- Language indicating that immigration policy must serve the national interest.

- Language condemning President Obama's amnesties by Executive Order.
- Language specifying that the wall between the U.S. and Mexico must be an actual physical barrier, not simply electronic surveillance.
- An amendment striking language encouraging a guest worker program and amended the language to request reform of guest worker programs.
- Language regarding the treaties into which President Obama entered into illegally, declaring that all such treaties should be declared null and void, and that treaties should go through the proper constitutional process of being ratified by the Senate.
- An amendment changing the term "illegal immigrants" to "illegal aliens."
- Kris killed an amendment that opposed English as our country's official language.

One of the hottest battlegrounds was the Defense and Foreign Policy Subcommittee. Washington, D.C. delegate, Rachel Hoff, the first openly gay member of the Platform Committee, served on this subcommittee. She worked hard and made several emotional appeals to insert language supporting women in combat and a reference to the LGBT community's being particularly targeted in terrorist attacks. I am grateful that longtime Eagle Elaine Donnelly, President of the Center for Military Readiness, who has been fighting social experimentation in the military for decades, attended our dinner. Elaine provided essential language, research and talking points to enable the members of the Defense and Foreign Policy Subcommittee to fight these well-organized and well-funded efforts. Our delegates, including Gayle Ruzicka of Utah, Tamara Scott of Iowa, and Jim Carns of Alabama, who was a co-chair of this subcommittee, were well-prepared to fight this effort in both subcommittee and full committee.

Carolyn McLarty was a co-chair of the Family and Education subcommittee, so she was able to recommend improvements even before the subcommittee met.

Family Research Council focused on the Family and Constitutional subcommittees and had substantial impact. Every effort to reaffirm support for life, traditional marriage, and religious freedom was supported, and every effort to interject homosexual issues was rejected.

The issue of a Constitutional Convention came up just once in an amendment introduced by Hal Wicks of South Dakota, who was urging an Article V Convention for the purpose of passing a Balanced Budget Amendment. Gayle Ruzicka and Sandy McDade quickly raised their hands to speak out against Con Con. Sandy urged opposition to the Amendment by noting that we do not want Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi rewriting the Constitution. Her remarks were met with loud applause. A Delegate called the question for a vote before Gayle was able to speak out against Con Con. The amendment failed so resolutely, even the Delegate who introduced it ended up voting against it.

Our effort was a tremendous success. I thank Mary Summa for her leadership as she mentored and trained the young attorneys and staffers from FRC, CWA, and March for Life.

During the full committee hearing, I took notes on the delegates in order to identify the good and bad for future efforts.

It is essential that Eagle Forum continue to lead the way in sending bold, well-informed conservative delegates to the Platform Committee. Opponents of our values and freedoms are well-funded and well-organized. We must not let our guard down!

I am so thankful for the opportunity to participate in this effort. Please do not hesitate to contact me at cholcomb@attorneyholcomb.com.