

FROM THE DESK OF
LINDA LINGLE

August 23, 2012

Chairman Reince Priebus
Republican National Committee
310 First Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

Aloha Chairman Priebus,

With the 2012 Republican National Convention just around the corner, I appreciate you taking the time to read my thoughts on the upcoming Party Platform, specifically related to the draft language in the proposed Human Life Platform Plank, which opposes a woman's right to choose and supports a constitutional amendment banning abortion.

The national Party platform gives voters an understanding of our Party's principles and policies, but it only serves the people and the Party well if the language accurately reflects the beliefs of its membership. I do not believe this year's proposed Human Life Platform Plank accomplishes this objective.

This platform plank as drafted fails to recognize the views of pro-choice Republicans like myself. Throughout my years of public service, I have listened with great interest to both sides of this issue. The positions taken were argued with equivalent passion and commitment. But I have always been an ardent supporter of women's rights, including a woman's right to choose, and I do not stand alone in this opinion.

An April 2012, Pew Research Center study found 40% of Republicans favor legal abortion. The "Human Life" platform plank offends and does not represent a significant portion of our Party's own self-identified voters. Also of note, more than half (54%) of independent voters – who will be the deciding factor in many races across the country – favor legal abortion in most cases. By alienating our own membership as well as prospective voters who align with us on critical issues like the economy and national defense, we are jeopardizing our future as a viable option for voters.

While I respect differing points of views, and find strength in debate between our members, for the Party as a whole to adopt an overarching platform plank such as this would be divisive and serve as fuel for the inflamed, partisan political atmosphere that has gone on too long all across the country.

I have always stood firm in my pro-choice beliefs, but I know not all residents of Hawaii agree with my view on this issue. I challenge the Republican Party as a whole to recognize that just like here in Hawaii, Americans in general, and Republicans specifi-

cally are split on this issue. When I was Chair of the Hawaii Republican Party from 1999-2000, I recommended that we remove reference to the pro-choice/pro-life issue from our platform precisely because there were such strong opinions on both sides of this very personal issue, and instead focus on those issues upon which we agreed.

While social issues like a woman's right to choose often dominate national political discussions, it is increasingly clear that our nation and our Party must renew our focus on the pressing issues of creating jobs for our citizens, promoting economic policies that allow our small businesses to prosper, addressing the out-of-control deficit spending of our federal government and honestly tackling the looming debt of our nation which is clouding our economic prosperity today and threatening the future prosperity of America's young people.

I appreciate you taking the time to consider my opinion on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Linda Lingle', written in a cursive style.

LINDA LINGLE

c: Gov. Bob McDonnell, Chairman, Convention Platform Committee
U.S. Representative Marsha Blackburn, Co-Chairman, Convention Platform Committee
U.S. Senator John Hoeven, Co-Chairman, Convention Platform Committee