

The Difference between Democrats and Republicans

Part A

Use the following information concerning the Democratic and Republican platforms to answer the three questions at the end of part A.

Issue	Democratic Platform Position	Issue	Republican Platform Position
Defense	Calls for "stable" defense spending and "readiness and mobility" over "dubious new weapons."	Defense	Calls for modernizing land, sea and air nuclear arms (B-1, B-2, Trident, MX) and for "rapid and certain" deployment of strategic defense not subject to negotiation; 600-ship Navy with two new carriers; updated chemical weapons.
Superpower Relations	Calls for testing intentions of new Soviet leaders on arms control, emigration, human rights, then reciprocating; allies should pay for more of common defense.	Superpower Relations	Avoid. "naive inexperience or overly enthusiastic endorsement of current Soviet rhetoric"; Soviets must release political prisoners, open borders.
Central America	Support for Arias plan; no mention of contras.	Central America	Supports military aid to Nicaraguan contras.
Trade	Use all tools "to export more goods and fewer jobs."	Trade	Renews free-trade commitment.
Economics	Advance notice of plant closings, major layoffs; opposition to "unproductive mergers, takeovers."	Economics	Supports enterprise zones, deregulation, free-market principles.
Spending Cuts	Restrain defense spending, farm subsidies.	Spending Cuts	"With Gramm-Rudman and a flexible freeze," budget can be balanced by 1993.
Taxes	Calls for "the wealthy and the Pentagon" to pay "fair share," for "investing in America" and reducing deficit.	Taxes	"We oppose any attempts to raise taxes" and support new tax incentives for saving; lower taxes on capital gains; taxpayers' Bill of Rights.
Health	"Every family should have the security of basic health insurance."	Health	"Nationalized medicine" is disastrous; competition and choice are only cost-cutters.
Education	Deserves "highest priority"; no one to be denied college for lack of funds; create National Teacher Corps.	Education	Parents have right to control child's education; competition, choice produce quality.
Drugs	Calls for "drug czar" empowered to use every agency necessary, including armed forces.	Drugs	"Strict accountability" for users and traffickers.
Housing	"Steps should be taken to ensure a decent place to live for every American."	Housing	"The best housing policy is sound economic policy: low inflation rates, low interest rates and the availability of a job with a good paycheck . . ."
Environment	Calls for aggressive enforcement of toxic cleanup, anti-dumping laws, ban on offshore drilling in sensitive areas.	Environment	Takes credit for Superfund Act; but also supports cost-benefit analysis of clean-ups; urges new nuclear power plants with uniform design.
Women	Supports Equal Rights Amendment. Supports pay equity. Supports right to abortion regardless of ability to pay.	Women	Opposes Equal Rights Amendment; supports rights of fetus that "cannot be infringed" for any reason; opposes public funding of abortion.
Minorities	Supports affirmative action goals, timetables and procurement set-asides.	Minorities	Expanding economy should provide opportunity for all regardless of race or gender; opposes timetables, quotas.
Farm	Mix of supply management and "reasonable" price supports.	Farm	Opposes production controls; upholds price support system of 1985 farm bill.
Crime	Calls for ban of "cop-killer" bullets; abhors greed in economy and in Reagan administration.	Crime	Supports death penalty for capital crimes; would deny prison furloughs for murderers; opposes gun control. ¹

¹Ronald D. Elving, "Party Platforms Helped Shape Fall Campaigns," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* (October 22, 1988): 3042-3043.
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