Party Platforms and Candidate Positions: How the Two Parties Measure Up on HIV

Evaluate HIV-related issues in the 2016 election.

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Republicans:

- PEPFAR: Support investment in Africa through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. This is the only specific mention of HIV in the Republican platform.
- Affordable Care Act: Repeal and replace Obamacare with, for example, block grants for state Medicaid programs. Reduce mandates for obtaining insurance. Promote health savings accounts, insurance portability and free-market solutions to rising health care costs, including price transparency. Allow individuals to purchase insurance across state lines.
- LGBT: Condemn the Supreme Court marriage equality ruling. Support religious liberty legislation, which opponents characterize as codifying discrimination against LGBT people. The platform appears to implicitly support "conversion therapy" to change children's sexual orientation.
- Planned Parenthood: Respect states' rights to cut off Medicaid funding to the organization.
- Sex education: Replace "family planning" sex ed programs with curricula prioritizing abstinence.

Donald Trump:

Trump has not specifically addressed HIV in his campaign. He supports repealing and replacing Obamacare and defunding Planned Parenthood, says marriage should be only between a man and a woman and, according to the Human Rights Campaign, has a mixed record of statements regarding LGBT discrimination.

He promotes an isolationist approach to foreign policy, which raises the question of whether as president he would support U.S. investment in the global HIV fight.

In 2015, Trump's running mate, Indiana Governor Mike Pence, signed his state's religious liberty law; an outcry from local businesses helped force him to amend the bill.

During Pence's successful run for Congress in 2000, he advocated diverting Ryan White CARE Act funds from those who "celebrate and encourage" homosexuality and into institutions that promote sexual orientation conversion.

Democrats:

- PEPFAR: Support PEPFAR, increase global funding for HIV prevention and treatment.
- Affordable Care Act: Expand Obamacare to cover more Americans, including through a public option, allowing those over 55 to buy into Medicare and pushing for the expansion of Medicaid in every state.
- LGBT: Advocate for LGBT rights worldwide.
- Planned Parenthood: Support.
- Sex education: Support comprehensive, evidence-based sex ed.
- Pharmaceuticals: Combat price gouging.

The platform's HIV-specific points also include:

- "Democrats believe an AIDS-free generation is within our grasp. But today far too many Americans living with HIV are without access to quality care and too many new infections occur each year."
- Fully implement the National HIV/AIDS Strategy.
- Increase National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding.
- Cap out-of-pocket prescription drug costs.
- Reform HIV criminalization laws.
- Expand access to harm reduction and PrEP, especially for at-risk groups.
- Protect people with HIV against stigma and discrimination.

Hillary Clinton:

Clinton's positions are in line with all these Democratic Party stances. However, in March, she

enraged many in the HIV community by claiming, quite erroneously, that Nancy Reagan had been a notable AIDS advocate. She issued a detailed apology and later met with a group of HIV activists and advocates to discuss HIV policy.

Since then, her campaign has worked with that group to refine her HIV platform. Clinton recently pledged to create a working group in her administration that would set aggressive, specific goals to end the AIDS epidemic in the United States and globally.

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