

Introduction

Newly elected Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy released his Commitment to America (CTA) as a makeshift platform to demonstrate the objectives of the Republican Party during the September before the 2022 midterm elections. It provides several ideas, policies, and concepts that Republicans might pursue with their new House majority. Several Republican members of the House came together in roundtable discussions and meetings to work on and come up with solutions for various pressing issues facing the United States. Like a party platform, much of the CTA's policy priorities were poll and message tested. The purpose of the CTA is to present a new vision for America and for the Republican Party. It is a promise of a better future and a better America for all Americans.

The CTA comes after much criticism from the Republican Party about the Democrat's failure to respond to record-high inflation, rampant crime, and the emergent border crisis. It is broken down into four main sections: "An Economy that's Strong," "A Nation that's Safe," "A Future that's Built on Freedom," and "A Government That's Accountable." Within these four broad categories are subcategories that relate to and supplement the general themes. Through a high-level analysis of the CTA and conversations with key legislative staffers in Speaker McCarthy's office, this report by Mock Convention 2024's Political Department offers a fresh outlook on the promises made in the CTA. This paper will break down each and evaluate what they mean and how they affect the Republican party's message. The conclusion will cover what the CTA means for the future of the party.

Section 1: An Economy That's Strong

Republican candidates dominated the 2022 midterms by campaigning on economic and inflation-related issues. Inflation hit all-time highs during the Biden administration, including a 40-year high over the summer of 2022. This resulted in high-priced necessities, including gas and groceries, and a continual increase in interest rates. These factors, along with the war between Russia and Ukraine, have shaken up supply chains and made products in the U.S. pricey and in short supply. This has devastated millions of Americans, particularly the working and middle classes. Like the campaigns of Republican candidates during the midterms that promised to reduce the inflation-related devastations caused by Democrats, the CTA takes a strong stance on preserving and building up the American economy as it was under the Trump Administration. It promotes similar tax cuts to the 2017 cuts under the Trump Administration. This section of the CTA consists of three main subcategories:

1. Fight inflation and Lower the Cost of Living
2. Make America Energy Independent and Reduce Gas Prices
3. Strengthen the Supply Chain and End Dependence on China

Fight Inflation and Lower the Cost of Living

The Republican Party prioritizes lowering inflation and the price of living through the CTA. This section is largely an umbrella for the following sections. It is a pledge to lower inflation rates and the cost of living. Average mortgage rate payments are 49 percent higher than a year ago and wages have declined nearly 5 percent since President Biden assumed office. Republicans make a vow in the CTA to increase take-home pay, to create better paying and more available jobs, and to increase pro-growth tax and deregulatory policies.

The following two subsections break down specific actions and policy measures that Republicans propose will lower inflation rates and living costs. They include increasing domestic production of oil and gases, simplifying permitting processes for hydropower and natural gas pipeline projects, diversifying supply chains, reducing



barriers to entry into markets, increasing agricultural production, and promoting techniques to reduce carbon in the atmosphere.

A large part of lowering inflationary costs will also come from reducing Congressional spending, to reduce the growing national debt. The Republican Party widely criticized the extraordinarily costly American Rescue Plan at the start of the Biden Administration and various other massive spending packages, most recently the Omnibus package. Republicans have suggested that they will drastically decrease wasteful government spending which will be reallocated to benefit Americans, but the CTA does not specify how or what departments will see budget cuts.

Make America Energy Independent and Reduce Gas Prices

To prop up the economy, a step the Republican Party proposes is regaining energy independence. To do this, the CTA calls for an easier process to drill and mine strategic minerals at home, instead of relying on other countries. This would not only combat supply chain-related issues, but it would also strengthen U.S. power in the global economy. Policies that promote energy independence include speeding up the licensing process for the drilling and construction of renewable hydropower projects and increasing production overall for oil and gas. Bills in the 117th Congress, such as the America Energy Independence from Russia Act ([H.R. 6858](#)) and the Accessing America's Critical Minerals Act ([H.R. 2604](#)), include these provisions and aim to “unlock” American resources.

Strengthen the Supply Chain and End Dependence on China

The final subcategory for “An Economy that’s Strong” is about strengthening the supply chain and ending dependence on other countries, especially U.S. adversaries such as China. Phasing out reliance on China has been a goal for Republicans because it will expand U.S. manufacturing and enhance American competitiveness. Several bills, including the Ensuring Sound Guidance Act ([H.R. 7151](#)) and the International Nuclear Energy Financing Act ([H.R. 1646](#)) push the U.S. to outperform China and other adversaries and boost American economic success.

Republicans tack on a cybersecurity component in the CTA. Passing legislation to strengthen cybersecurity is another way to increase supply chain stock and lessen dependence on China. To Republicans, strong technology is a way to compete with China’s Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Bills such as the Securing American Leadership in Science and Technology Act ([H.R. 2135](#)) is just one example of legislation that could be reintroduced and aimed at advancing cybersecurity to promote economic independence and prosperity.

Section 2: A Nation That’s Safe

This section of the CTA covers national security both domestically and internationally. It makes several recommendations for improving our security and maintaining American dominance.

1. Secure the Border and Combat Illegal Immigration
2. Reduce Crime and Protect Public Safety
3. Defend Americas National Security

Secure the Border and Combat Illegal Immigration

The Republican Party is known for its hardline stance on tight border security and preventing illegal aliens from entering the United States. Under this second section of the CTA, the party makes several recommendations for better border security, advanced cyber security, and strong law enforcement at the Southern border. Other measures include expanding authorities like Title 42 to address the ongoing Fentanyl crisis and the increased



number of illegal crossings.

To secure the border, Republicans propose several strategies, including implementing Migrant Protection Protocols, ending catch-and-release loopholes, strengthening asylum processes, ending the disparate treatment of unaccompanied alien children, funding ICE, mandating employers use E-Verify to confirm citizenship, ending the abuse of parole authority and preventing benefits abuse. Republicans have long criticized the Biden administration for failing to visit or address the border crisis and have made clear border security will be at the top of the agenda when the 118th Congress begins.

Reduce Crime and Protect Public Safety

This section of the CTA focuses on domestic security, particularly how to improve police forces and law enforcement across the United States, to ensure the safety of Americans. Supporting and funding the police has been a key objective of Republican campaigns in the past and continues to be, as seen in the 2022 midterm elections. A recent emphasis on crime suggests that police funding could also be a top policy priority once the new Congress begins. For Republicans, increased security at home would look like increasing police funding, tackling recruitment and retention issues within police forces, addressing crime against police officers, and ensuring transparency from “progressive prosecutors” whom Republicans say are refusing to prosecute crimes and contributing to a culture of lawlessness.

Defend Americas National Security

The subsection of the second section of the CTA covers the most extensive topic: international conflict and foreign relations. The only topic that is not addressed in this section of the CTA is the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. This is important because the Republican party will most likely receive heavy pushback from the Democratic party for not addressing or agreeing to increase funding in support of Ukraine, as the Biden administration did in the past Congress.

The main international issues covered in this section pertain to the U.S.’s relations with China. First, Republicans vow to enact policy to protect American research. The CTA is a response to recent efforts by China’s CCP that steal research and intellectual property capital from the United States. Several bills to address protecting American research include ending the influence of the CCP on American life such as the End College CCP Act (H.R. 1263) and the Foreign Influence Transparency Act ([H.R. 1535](#)). These bills, or bills similar, will likely be reintroduced in the new Congress, and all aim to promote a continuation of American research and protect U.S. intellectual property from China.

Expanding on these proposed legislative actions is Republicans’ call for a select committee to investigate and respond to China-related issues. This would be like the 2020 China Task Force Report, which examined CCP-related issues. It offered several key findings and made hundreds of policy recommendations. A select committee would be bipartisan and would focus on six key areas in relation to China relations including ideological competition, supply chain-related issues, national security, technology, economics and energy, and competitiveness.

The CTA also briefly addresses Taiwan and its importance as an ally to the U.S. The Republican Party has declared that Chinese control of Taiwan would threaten national security and would destroy the global economy. It would also be detrimental to the free world. Several proposed bills would support Taiwan’s independence and will likely be reintroduced come 2023. These included the Arms Exports Delivery Solutions Act ([H.R. 8259](#)), and



the Taiwan PLUS Act ([H.R. 2103](#)). All bills demonstrate the American commitment to the free world, Taiwan's independence, and a rejection of Chinese control.

The final point in this subcategory of the CTA is export controls. The Republican Party takes large issue with U.S. exports falling into the hands of adversaries or bad actors. The party criticizes the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) for its failure to address national security and to enforce or control export law. It has overridden licensing concerns from several national security agencies and has not acted against several CCP semiconductor industries that have allegedly violated export laws. Republicans propose that solving this problem must include oversight of the BIS.

Section 3: A Future That's Built on Freedom

This section of the CTA focuses on the quality and longevity of several government welfare programs relating to healthcare and security and other social topics such as education. It includes policy reform for improving healthcare outcomes and increasing access to good education, and it includes ways to inform parents about childcare and safety.

1. Make Sure Every Student Can Succeed and Give Parents a Voice
2. Achieve Longer, Healthier Lives for Americans
3. Confront Big Tech and Demand Fairness

Make Sure Every Student Can Succeed and Give Parents a Voice

The first subsection of the CTA covers a policy objective that has been recently popularized in Republican agendas: parental choice. It also addresses various ways to improve the U.S. education system to ensure that every child has an equal opportunity. Several proposed bills, such as the Ending Common Core and Expand ([H.R. 65](#)) and the Campus Free Speech Restoration Act ([H.R. 4007](#)), are two of several bills that include education reform. Republicans also propose promoting transparency in the education system to make it clear what is included in the school curricula and that parents have a say in their child's education.

The final reform and one to watch for in the early months of the next Congress is a "Parents Bill of Rights." Republicans first introduced the legislation a year prior to the CTA's release to address parental concerns about the education system, as described above. This initiative would provide clarity and transparency for parents, especially in relation to the school curriculum and Covid-19 regulations. Parental involvement is a concern among many Republican voters and will likely persist as an issue.

Achieve Longer, Healthier Lives for Americans / Confront Big Tech and Demand Fairness

This section primarily tackles the highly contentious issue of healthcare by providing several reform ideas for the U.S. healthcare system. First, the CTA promotes a more modern and efficient system. It emphasizes the need for improving access to convenient, high-quality care, and more extensive telehealth services, and eliminates any unnecessary copays, deductibles, or other shared costs. Second, it includes various policies for treatment solutions. For example, Republicans aim to lower prescription drug costs by passing bipartisan legislation and proposing innovative solutions to lower costs for curative therapies. Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers, a ranking member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, proposes a bill titled the Lower Costs More Cures Act ([H.R. 19](#)) which includes several of the reforms in the CTA regarding healthcare policy.



The CTA also has language on doctor-patient relationship solutions. The aim for Republican lawmakers is to improve these relationships, as they play a vital role in the quality and accuracy of healthcare. Reforms for these relationships include addressing the reasons for delayed patient care and decreasing provider shortages in the workforce. Better oversight is an included solution to poor doctor-patient relationships.

Another aim of the CTA's healthcare policy is to cut the high costs that are associated with the system. The party suggests letting small businesses run their course to increase market competition and contributions to lowering payment costs. The role of small businesses is vital to lowering costs but also to increasing affordability and availability for small business owners. Other solutions include promoting innovation and transparency within the healthcare system.

The final component of healthcare is security. This comes after the pandemic and the Democratic Party's failure to address and respond to the health crisis. Republicans would ensure adequate preparation in the event of another pandemic or global health crisis. Republicans propose securing the supply chain from adversaries through tax reforms and encouraging government agencies to partner with private-sector industries to strengthen national security and healthcare research. The CTA promotes funding for preventative health-based research to maintain the U.S. status as the most medically advanced nation.

The CTA also includes verbiage on Big Tech reform. Republican lawmakers strongly believe that parents should be equipped with the knowledge and tools to protect their children from harmful websites and other online content. Part of the CTA suggests giving parents resources to prevent online harm, prohibits data collection of children by Big Tech without parental guidance or approval, limits the amount of data Big Tech firms are allowed to obtain from children, raises the age of children protected and provides aid for children experiencing cyberbullying. These measures if passed, will hold Big Tech accountable for facilitating any sort of illegal activity or malpractice.

Section 4: A Government That's Accountable

The final section of the CTA focuses on framework and policy ideals that are core to Republican ideology and that ensure that the federal government is doing its job as prescribed in the Constitution and is held accountable.

1. Preserve our constitutional freedoms
2. Hold Washington accountable
3. Restore the people's voice

Preserve Our Constitutional Freedoms

This section covers Republicans' views on many pressing social issues today including free speech, protecting the lives of unborn children and their mothers, religious freedom, and the safeguarding of the second amendment. This covers the general Republican ideology of freedom of speech and religion and the rights of unborn children. The overturning of Roe V Wade sparked a contentious debate between Republicans and Democrats about abortion rights, and Republicans generally take a hard stance against it. The 2022 midterms saw several states with ballot initiatives that left abortion rights up to the people and most voted for it. Additionally, many Democratic candidates campaigned with abortion and other reproductive rights at the front of their campaigns and were successful. Republicans might need to address the issue of abortion more delicately if they wish to turn

several states in the 2024 election.

Hold Washington Accountable

In this section of the CTA, the idea of government reform is urged through various measures. The CTA calls for rigorous oversight to rein in government abuse and corruption, it calls for transparency measures, and it calls out the White House to address its incompetence at home and overseas. It also briefly addresses substantial government welfare programs Medicare and Social Security and their soon-to-be expired trust funds.

Some key measures proposed by Republicans for increased government accountability are sound funding, fiscal discipline, and proper budget enforcement. Through these measures, the Republican party is making a vow to address and actively reduce the national debt and reduce unnecessary government spending. Additionally, these policy reforms will come with stricter guidelines for spending and increasing Congressional oversight over how money is spent and allocated.

The call for the White House to address its perceived failures is a direct reference to the Biden-led withdrawal from Afghanistan. Former Republican Representative Devin Nunes and Republican Representatives Mike Rodgers and Michael McCaul wrote a letter to President Biden voicing their concerns about the abrupt U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. The letter calls on the Biden administration to help Americans stranded in Afghanistan and hints at a possible investigation into the intelligence, diplomacy, and military factors that led to the withdrawal and its failures as described by the Republican Party. Now with a majority in the House, it is probable that such an investigation will occur. The CTA also calls for the Biden administration to address the pressing fentanyl crisis occurring at the border and throughout the United States. Recent statistics reported that fentanyl-related deaths accounted for the most drug-overdose deaths and there was enough fentanyl uncovered to kill every American. The CTA calls on the DEA, the CBP, and the ONDCP to act on this crisis. Several Republican members of Congress call on the DEA to stop the flow of fentanyl across the southern border and are calling on the Biden Administration to preserve all documents and communications related to the drug crisis.

Finally, this section vaguely references the FBI's search of former President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago home. Some Republican House members recently wrote and sent a letter to Debra Wall, the Acting Archivist of the U.S., requesting an immediate briefing on the FBI's recent and unexpected raid on Trump's home in Mar-a-Lago. The letter calls for the assurance that all documents and communications relate to and are confirmed by the FBI's search warrant. There is also a possibility that once in control of the House Republicans could initiate an investigation into the raid, though this is unlikely.

Restore the People's Voice

The final subsection of the government reform section of the CTA covers proxy voting and other measures that increase accountability in Congress and in elections. For transparency measures, the Republican party suggests one key reform: ending proxy voting and remote proceedings. McCarthy and several other Republican members of Congress have spoken in great length and detail about ending proxy voting and remote proceedings and calling for a return to in-person business, especially with the pandemic dying down. Despite several recent, large, and important legislation being passed, more and more members chose to vote by proxy. McCarthy has used ending proxy voting as a campaign issue and has already done away with it within the first month as Speaker. He told lawmakers that they must show up to vote in person now through a tweet saying "No more proxy voting. Effective immediately, Members of Congress must show up to work if they want their vote to count."



Finally, the party calls for several voting security measures in elections. The most prominent is voter ID and observer access. The American Confidence in Elections Act ([H.R. 8528](#)) is one that best displays these policy initiatives. The bill covers many of the challenges faced by voter fraud. It aims to promote election integrity, voter confidence, and faith in elections by removing Federal impediments, improving the military voting programs, and protecting political speech. This bill and others of similar nature are likely to be reintroduced.

Conclusion

While the Commitment to America is a sound way to demonstrate possible policy objectives for the Republican Party and offers a promise to the American people, its journey into legislation will be much easier said than done. Republicans only managed to flip a small number of seats and only regained control in the House, not the Senate. This was not the anticipated outcome, as polls and experts alluded to a likely red wave. The Senate is still under a Democratic majority, which will make it easy for McCarthy to introduce the CTA's contents, but difficult for them to pass both chambers. The CTA is also rather vague at some points, offering unclear objectives and policy solutions to pressing issues in American politics. For example, it promises to protect the lives of mothers and unborn children, to guarantee religious freedom, and to uphold the Second Amendment, but with no explicit method of how these will be done.

Despite its drawbacks, the CTA covers pressing issues and offers a concise summary and solution to them. It includes what occupies many minds of voters from different demographics. Its key points include solving economic-related issues, decreasing crime rates, securing police forces, and addressing the crisis at the border. The CTA also shows a rare form of unity within the Republican Party. In 2016, there was no Republican Party platform, offering no message or policy objectives for Republican voters. The CTA gives at the very least, a set of possible policies that could arise within the next two years.

The CTA mirrors a typical party platform. It is a formal declaration and statement of different values and goals of a given party. It is also a non-binding deliverable that hold a candidate to a certain set of standards and promises. As Mock Convention's Political Platform Chair, the CTA is a useful tool to help brainstorm and predict what policy issues will matter to Republican Party voters in 2024. I will use much of its content to inform my writing of the full Republican Party Platform this upcoming summer and next fall before W&L's Mock Convention.

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Staffers in McCarthy's office

