



The Rescue Delaware Plan



June 2022

Republican Party's Pledge

The Republican Party pledges to work with our communities, businesses and members of the General Assembly to implement the Commitments outlined in this plan to RESCUE DELAWARE.

Fellow Delawareans:

The *Rescue Delaware 2022 Plan* reflects our vision of key policy objectives we believe should be implemented. These principles have been developed with the input of our Republican elected officials, current and former Republican candidates, our Republican Regional Committees, our State Party Chair and many of you!

We believe the proposals in this document are supported by a majority of Delawareans across all party lines, and will lead to a better quality of life for everyone living in our State. These policies are not numbered because they are not presented in order of priority – each of them is important in its own right. Together, they comprise our values and objectives.

The Democrat Party has controlled the Governor's Office since the election of Tom Carper in 1992. Since 2008, the Democrat Party has had firm control of the Delaware General Assembly. Currently, Democrats have a 26-15 advantage in the House and a 14-7 advantage in the Senate. In addition, all statewide elected offices are controlled by the Democrat Party. So, without exaggeration, Delaware's state government is firmly in the grip of the Democrat Party. Unfortunately, this one-party rule has done nothing to improve the quality of education, the availability of health care, or the prevention and reduction of crime.

In fact, Delaware's performance has declined in those areas.

But to get elected, we recognize that Republicans must do more than say Democrat policies are bad. We have to offer what we, as a Republican Party, will affirmatively work toward achieving, what we feel will save, or rescue, Delaware.

We have identified the major policy areas where reform is most needed, such as jobs, education, healthcare and public safety. We offer a fresh perspective to improve these areas through solid Republican principles and, where applicable, market- and community-based solutions. We are willing to be a partner and ally to our state's job creators, entrepreneurs, parents, service providers, first responders, and citizens. It's time to make Delaware work for all!

We hope that the citizens reading this document will be motivated to partner with us to Rescue Delaware.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By all the important barometers that measure the health of a society, our state has fallen into stagnation or outright decline. Delaware ranks at or near the bottom in the diverse areas of healthcare outcomes, accountability, transparency, economic growth, ease of doing business, and competitiveness with surrounding states in education and economic opportunity. In the last pre-Covid economic boom, Delaware was one of only two states in which the poverty rate actually *increased*.

<https://www.caesarrodney.org/cri-focus-areas/Center-for-Analysis-of-Delaware-Economy-and-Government-Spending.htm>

The Delaware Department of Education's own annual Report Card graded the education system as a failure:

- Only 42.18% of students were proficient in English language arts (ELA)
- Only 26.59% of students were proficient in math
- Only 58.58% of 12th-grade students were college and/or career ready
- <https://www.caesarrodney.org/cri-focus-area/New-Research-Confirms-Delawares-Poor-Performance-in-Education.htm>
- <https://www.caesarrodney.org/cri-focus-area/How-well-is-Delaware-Spending-Education-Dollars.htm>

In 2016, the U.S Public Interest Research Group Education Fund ranked Delaware's fiscal transparency as a C+. Incredibly, this parameter fell to a D+ in 2019. The Center for Public Integrity ranks Delaware 48th out of 50 states for public integrity, transparency and accountability.

And yet, we rank among the highest in spending on healthcare, education and state government. We can do better, and we must. Here is where we think we need to go and how we can get there.

PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF DELAWARE CITIZENS

The General Assembly and our other elected officials should conduct the people's business in public, allowing for observation and comment. They should follow the rules that allow for all members' bills to be heard, and they should be responsive to the public's wishes. Executive authority should be able to be reviewed by the legislature when it impacts citizens significantly or for prolonged periods.

A SUPERIOR EDUCATION FOR OUR CHILDREN THAT PREPARES THEM TO COMPETE IN BUSINESS AND THE WORLD

Parents have, and should retain, ultimate authority over the care, custody and education of their children. They should be viewed as partners with any educational staff or institution, and be provided any and all information that is presented to their children in school or through a school program. Parents should have the authority to determine where they want their child to attend school, and their tax dollars should follow the child.

Any instruction of students, as well as teacher and administrator training, must reinforce the premise that characteristics such as race, gender, sexual orientation and religious beliefs do not define an individual's abilities or potential. Delaware should establish Education Zones, modeled after Opportunity Zones, to provide additional support and expanded services to students in schools that have persistent, poor outcomes.

We should prepare our students for success in life and business by providing enhanced civics educations at all grade levels, and financial literacy and planning instruction.

For taxpayer-funded Delaware programs such as, but not limited to, FAST Act, Delaware Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program, SEED, SEED+, and DIMER, require measured outcomes to be reported annually, both to the public and the state legislature.

IMPROVE HEALTHCARE OUTCOMES/LOWER HEALTHCARE COSTS

Delaware has a serious opioid addiction problem that has not been successfully addressed with our current approach. We should convene a commission of experts to propose reforms to Delaware's drug rehabilitation system to improve coverage and performance. We propose to expand the Angel Initiative to allow addicts to report to law enforcement to be directed to treatment for addiction, although we believe we should require addicts to still answer for outstanding warrants.

We need to bring down costs and make health care more accessible. Delaware should follow the lead of other states and eliminate the Certificate of Need (now called the Certificate of Public Review) to encourage competition.

We propose Delaware expand health care alternatives to our citizens, and pass legislation allowing Delaware citizens and businesses to buy health insurance from our neighboring states. We should allow reciprocity of medical licenses with neighboring states, establish incentives for our hospitals to create residency programs and provide better price transparency to consumers.

We also should create incentives for small businesses to provide health insurance coverage for their workers. Businesses should be encouraged to create Health Reimbursement Accounts (HRAs) with tax credit incentives, and we should expand eligibility criteria for Delawareans to open Health-Savings Accounts.

ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY

We support qualified immunity, protecting law enforcement from frivolous lawsuits, and the Law Enforcement Officer's Bill of Rights. We recognize the value of a law enforcement presence in our schools and support maintaining School Resource Officers to safeguard students and staff.

Delaware should increase funding and training for the Delaware police agencies to pursue, apprehend and convict traffickers in prescription opioids, heroin, fentanyl, and illegal drugs. To combat violent crime, we should establish a Task Force of Law Enforcement agencies to include Probation and Parole, law enforcement, the United States Attorney's Office, and the Attorney General's Office to target violent criminals and get them off the street.

To encourage opportunities for student engagement with the public safety community, support the establishment of public safety cadet programs similar to Jr. ROTC programs present in many of our high schools.

ENSURE AND PRESERVE A LIVABLE DELAWARE

Remarkably, some Delaware citizens still have lead pipes in their homes. We should provide grants to pay for remediation of those pipes. Further, there are many homes with unclean drinking water. Long term solutions are some time away. We propose grants for filtration systems to ensure clean drinking water while permanent solutions are implemented.

The largest contributors to waste are businesses. We should provide incentives for businesses to recycle.

Introduce large-scale areas for wildflowers and pollinators, such as median strips and meadows on state-owned land that is not being otherwise utilized.

BE A PARTNER TO DELAWARE SMALL BUSINESSES

Delaware currently ranks in the worst ten states in which to start a new business.

To strengthen small business, the engine in our economy, Delaware should provide a one-year tax holiday for Delaware-based small businesses (those with fewer than 50 employees) for the first \$100,000 in income, reduce employer operating expenses, such as the costs of gross receipts tax and workers' compensation, which are among the highest in the nation.

We should also consider a Small Business Impact/ Regulatory Review to force all executive branch state agencies to submit, along with any proposed regulation, an accurate and good faith estimate of the cost of compliance for individuals and small businesses.

RETURN JOBS AND ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS TO DELAWARE

Delaware implemented tax measures when the revenues were lean. Although we have had significant surpluses recently, Delaware has not returned those funds to the taxpayers. We should repeal the tax hike on real estate transfers, pursue a middle- and working-class tax cut, reinstate or increase the senior citizen tax credit on property taxes and enact tax reform for growing business to spur hiring and growth.

GUARANTEE SECURE ELECTIONS

Secure elections are necessary to a confident and trusting citizenry – an important part of any democracy. We should pass legislation in Delaware that requires a government-issued photo ID for all voters, protect the integrity of our votes by opposing a permanent absentee voter roll, require the Department of Elections to work with state agencies, the Register of Wills and Recorder of Deeds from each county to ensure voter rolls remain valid, ban the use of private money for administering elections, and oppose same-day registration unless the individual who so registers

only votes by provisional ballot to allow for the verification of the information provided before the provisional ballot is counted.

PROTECT AND RESPECT LIFE

We respect life from conception to natural death. We support the enactment of laws limiting abortion after 20 weeks gestation, the age at which studies have consistently shown that unborn children can experience pain, and that would require a physician to offer ultrasound imaging and auscultation of fetal heartbeat before terminating a pregnancy.

We oppose any law that would allow a physician to assist a patient to commit suicide. Research shows that physicians are generally not accurate when determining end of life prognoses. As fewer primary care physicians see their hospitalized patients due to “hospitalists,” these life expectancy predictions have become less accurate. Government-endorsed suicide is wrong.

THE RESCUE DELAWARE PLAN

PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF DELAWARE CITIZENS BY CREATING A TRULY REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

Delaware Republicans recognize that government's most fundamental role is to protect the rights of Delaware citizens. We need to restore transparency to our state government that for too long, has worked to support the interests of those in power and not the needs of the people. In order to do so, all levels of government must operate with the maximum level of transparency. Checks and balances must be maintained, and the structure of government must minimize any opportunity for any one official to affect citizens' rights through their individual whims.

Currently, the Democrats have introduced legislation (SB 155) to make public records even more inaccessible to Delawareans. We must fight to make our government more accessible to the people it governs.

Our Commitment:

- Introduce rules to the Delaware State Senate, similar in form and function to the rules which govern the Delaware State House of Representatives. At present, the State Senate has insufficient rules to allow for all the Senators to be heard.
- Ensure that every bill is presented to a committee where it can be discussed on its merits and allow for public input. Many good pieces of legislation are held up indefinitely due to the suspension or disregard of House Rules, which are designed so bills will be heard in committee not more than (12) legislative days after introduction. The State Legislature *must* do the people's business in an open forum where the citizens have the opportunity to observe debate and express their opinions.
- Attend to the legislative business on the legislative calendar before adjourning. At present, sessions are ended (often because of political games) before hearing and voting on legislation that the public has been told will be heard that day.
- Demand and ensure that each piece of legislation that has a cost to the taxpayers is accompanied by an honest accounting of its fiscal impact.

- Seek *true* transparency in the affairs of both houses of the State Legislature. This includes real-time and recorded virtual sessions so that the people may have a front-row seat to the conduct of their business by their legislators.
- Enact a revised version (changing applicable dates) of House Bill 236 (2021, Smith) that would reform Delaware's state legislative redistricting process with an innovative system that would guarantee that both parties have equal participation in equitably redrawing district lines following the U.S. Census.
- Implement through legislation the entirety of House Bill No. 167 (2019, Postles), which mandates the various state agencies submit real-world regulatory impact statements and projected costs. It also makes agencies responsible for review of regulations that are potentially out of date or the costs exceed the benefits. Outdated regulations, or those regulations that are not accomplishing their stated purpose in an efficient manner, should be deleted from the Del Code. Also, any state agency that proposes an additional regulation must provide an accurate, good faith accounting of the cost to Delaware residents and Delaware businesses.
- Implement the entirety of House Bill No. 203 (2021, Shupe), which prevents governments from suspending Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests during a state of emergency.
- Modify FOIA procedures to include the directive that the responsible State of Delaware employee instruct the requestor how to modify a request to accomplish provision of requested documents, including advice to narrow a request and a discussion of costs to the requestor and/or the agency.
- Pass HB 49 (Collins, 2021) or a similar bill that provides for the General Assembly to approve protracted declarations of emergency. We recognize the statutory authority of the Governor to act in the event of an emergency or disaster. This approval requirement may be waived only when it is not possible for both houses of the General Assembly to convene a quorum either in person or virtually. The Governor should retain the authority to terminate Emergency Orders without approval when the emergency or disaster has passed.

A SUPERIOR EDUCATION FOR OUR CHILDREN THAT PREPARES THEM TO COMPETE IN BUSINESS AND THE WORLD

Delaware is failing in the education of our children. This is the assessment by the Department of Education's own report card. Delaware ranks below its neighbors in reading and math proficiency, high school graduation rates, and the achievement gap. This is despite per capita education spending that rivals the surrounding states. The Department of Education has a budget of approximately \$1 billion dollars which translates to approximately \$16-17 thousand per student. We are not getting a good return on our investment, and the answer of just throwing more money at the problem is not working. Relatively poor educational outcomes are imposing a serious social and economic cost on our students and our state, as well as hampering Delaware's attractiveness to investors and professionals.

For too many years, we have thrown money at the problem. Clearly, that is not the answer because the results are not a proper return on that investment. It is time to seek new bold solutions that provide our children with greater opportunities for advancement and support a stronger economic environment for all Delawareans.

Closing schools as a result of what we regard as an ill-conceived response to COVID has only exacerbated the struggle our children are facing in their attempt to achieve an education that prepares them for adult life. A new Johns Hopkins University study has shown that the lockdowns did little to stem mortality from COVID.

<https://sites.krieger.jhu.edu/iae/files/2022/01/A-Literature-Review-and-Meta-Analysis-of-the-Effects-of-Lockdowns-on-COVID-19-Mortality.pdf>

Other studies have shown the terrible consequences of school closures and the isolation they created for our children. Experts say the full impact may not be evident until years have passed.

Delaware needs to implement new and varied initiatives that support better and more relevant learning by Delaware's students, to include fundamentals that are critical to their success. There should be more accountability about how much money is being spent and for what expected outcomes. Those students who have been most consistently deprived of an education that prepares them to read and hold good-paying jobs should be given some priority in a plan to improve performance statewide. All students should be valued and encouraged to excel. All instruction of students as well as teacher and administrator training should operate on the premise that characteristics such as race, gender, sexual orientation and religious

beliefs do not define an individual's abilities or potential for success. Parents should be a partner in developing and implementing these education initiatives, and should have a choice of where their child attends school. Finally, our children and teachers should be and feel safe in school. Incidents involving any violence or of a sexual nature must be publicly reported.

Our Commitment:

- Amend the Delaware Constitution through appropriate legislation establishing a “Parents’ Bill of Rights” based on HB 145 (Postles, 2019). Declare that, in Delaware, the rights and responsibilities for the care, custody, and control of a child, as well as educational decisions within the law, reside first within the parent or guardian and that parents are partners and not subservient to educators or administrators in the education system.
- Enact “the Delaware Education Right to Know Act” (Postles, 2022). Under the measure, each Delaware public school would need to establish a web portal on which the public would be able to access lesson plans, descriptions of instructional materials, textbooks, and digital resources that educators plan to utilize in each course. Also posted on this portal would be: the school’s policy on how information is communicated to parents/guardians and other stakeholders about violent incidents taking place at the school; what health care services are offered at the school, and how parental/guardian notification and consent are handled regarding these services. Further, the bill requires each parent or guardian have the right to meet with each educator teaching their children at least once per year.
- Enact School Choice, giving parents the right to determine where their child(ren) attends school, and allow their taxpayer dollars to follow the child.
- All instruction of students as well as teacher and administrator training should operate on the premise that characteristics such as race, gender, sexual orientation and religious beliefs do not define an individual's abilities or potential. Teaching to the contrary should be banned.
- Establish Education Zones, modeled after Opportunity Zones, in which schools which have performed poorly consistently receive extra resources to provide a safe environment to learn and engage in safe social interaction, including before and after school recreational and educational services, such as club activities and tutoring. Our priority must be to offer those children who do not currently have access to a solid education, as evidenced by consistent, historical performance assessments, the chance to gain the fundamentals and skills to help them succeed.

- Redesign high schools and prepare students for workplace readiness. Institute widespread, and diverse disciplines, direct trade and skills training, and apprenticeships for high school age students. Delaware graduates should be able to compete for jobs that are available right now. Provide opportunities for learning trade skills.
- Review and revise Delaware's public school testing battery, with the ultimate goal of improving Delaware's educational outcomes. Utilize the SAT, as many states do, for those students who have post-secondary plans and may need the assessment to enter college, rather than paying for every student to take the test, regardless of their post-secondary plans.
- Enact SB232 (Richardson) that would require students to be taught about the Constitution and their rights and responsibilities as citizens of the United States. One study showed that only 26 percent of Americans could name all three branches of government. That is unacceptable. Support enhanced civics education requirements for all students in all grade levels to develop citizens who understand the proper role of government and are invested in the success of our state and country. Include partnerships with community organizations, such as the Delaware Law Related Education Center, to address the lack of knowledge regarding the Delaware and United States governments.
- Prepare students for adulthood with the tools for financial literacy and financial independence. Develop and support a curriculum in middle school and high school to teach such disciplines as balancing a checkbook, household budgeting, investing and planning for life events like starting a family, paying for college, and retirement.
- Enact SB 206 (Richardson) that would require students in Grade 10 to be taught comparative political ideology, including communism and totalitarianism, so they are able to assess the value of the freedoms they enjoy in a democracy.
- Return decision-making about curriculum and course offerings to the classroom and local administrations - where it belongs. Delaware's education system is moving away from teachers and local boards, and student outcomes have suffered.
- For taxpayer-funded Delaware programs, including, but not limited to, FAST Act, Delaware Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program, SEED, SEED+, and DIMER, require measured outcomes to be reported annually, both to the public and the State Legislature. Outcomes that must be presented should include graduation rates and the program's effectiveness in the placement of students in the relevant profession.

- To encourage opportunities for student engagement with the public safety community, we support the establishment of public safety cadet programs similar to Jr. ROTC programs present in many of our high schools.

Improve Healthcare Outcomes/Lower Healthcare Costs

Delaware Republicans support a robust, innovative and cost-effective healthcare system. In order to provide the best healthcare in the world, we must increase our reliance on the power of market forces and ensure a reasonable level of regulation.

Much of southeastern New Castle County and all of Kent and Sussex Counties are designated Medically Underserved Areas (MUA) by the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). The number of primary care physicians providing direct patient care in Delaware declined by 6% from 2013 to 2018. Factors such as lower salaries, low-quality schools in the area, lack of adequate housing, and the lack of spousal job opportunities were all cited as reasons for the low rate of physician retention in Delaware.

There are direct policy changes to insurance and regulation that can assist in lowering costs and delivering superior healthcare to Delawareans. Part of the reason healthcare costs are so high is the lack of competition that exists in the provision of healthcare in Delaware. Much of this is exacerbated by the mandates of the Affordable Care Act. Delawareans have a right to expect healthcare options to be plentiful and affordable, and Delaware's healthcare system should maximize choice and allow families to make their own healthcare decisions.

The Delaware General Assembly has created a bureaucratic maze of overregulation in the provision of healthcare services in Delaware, which does much to protect the monopoly of healthcare services. The Certificate of Need (CON), discussed further later, imposes a burdensome regulation and review process that restricts the development of new healthcare sites. This impacts not only hospitals and Urgent Care facilities but nursing homes, dialysis treatment centers, and other such facilities as well. Fifteen states have repealed their CON laws due to the negative impact on competition and access to healthcare. The Caesar Rodney Institute prepared a document reviewing the impact of the Certificate of Need requirements in Delaware and the case for repeal.

<https://www.caesarrodney.org/CRI-news/COMMENTARY--Healthcare-in-Delaware-can-be-improved.htm>

Our Commitment:

- Convene a commission to reform Delaware's drug rehabilitation system and pass legislation to carry out its recommendations. Delaware has the 13th highest fatal opioid rate in the U.S., as well as the third-highest per capita cost for opioid-related healthcare costs of any state. The University of Delaware estimates that 1 out of every one hundred Delawareans is dependent upon opioids. The total capacity for treatment of opioid dependency in Delaware is only a third of what is needed. Statistics for actual success rates for the drug rehabilitation system in Delaware are stubbornly difficult to find, but what is not controversial is that the current system is failing. We should undertake to research the best practices of the more successful states and develop pilot programs with the goal of reducing rates of relapse and death.
- Pass legislation allowing Delaware citizens and businesses to buy health insurance from our neighboring states (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia) and/or expand the alternatives available to Delawareans in state.
- Initiate a change in regulation allowing the reciprocity of medical licenses from our neighboring states. As an example, Legislatures and Boards of Nursing in 37 states and one territory have joined the Nursing Licensure Compact (NLC), allowing nurses holding a compact license to practice in any of the NLC member states. Delaware citizens would benefit if physicians adopted a similar model.
- Decommission the Health Resources Board (HRB) and its failed oversight of Delaware's Health Care Commission (DHCC) and eliminate the Certificate of Public Review (CPR), which was the Certificate of Need (CON) program once and for all. A 2017 study by the Mercatus Center of George Mason University documented that the state's healthcare expenditures could be reduced by \$270 million a year if the CON program were eliminated. Nationwide, results in similar studies have led to 15 states repealing their CON laws.
- Pass legislation to provide incentives to not-for-profit hospitals to hire and train primary care physicians through residency programs.
- Reform and cut regulatory barriers to access and use of Telehealth.
- Provide incentives for small businesses to provide health insurance coverage for their workers. Businesses should be encouraged to create Health Reimbursement Accounts (HRAs) with tax credit incentives.
- Expand eligibility to Delawareans to open Health-Savings Accounts, allowing Delawareans to save money for health care expenses tax-free. Remove regulations preventing those on Medicare and without high deductible health plans to have access to HSAs. This gives families (\$7,200) and individuals (\$3,600) the ability to save to make their own choices regarding health care.

Delaware Republicans are committed to equality before the law. Law enforcement must be given sufficient resources to serve the community. At the same time, those who betray the public trust must be held accountable. Laws on the books must be enforced before introducing new laws to cure the ills resulting from the lack of effective enforcement of our current laws.

Our Commitment:

- Pass legislation based on HB 13 (2021, Yearick), which increases the penalty for possession of a firearm in the commission of a felony. Increase the penalty from three years for most defendants to five years and for those with two prior felony convictions from five years to ten years.
- Most of the firearm-related offenses filed in Delaware (69% in 2018) are dropped or dismissed. It is time for the Attorney General's Office to start prosecuting possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony. The overwhelming majority of gun-related violent acts in Delaware are perpetrated by former convicted felons. For those persons prohibited from possessing a firearm due to a previous felony conviction, demand that the Attorney General's Office charge those defendants.
- Commission a Task Force of representatives from the Police Chief's Council, The Delaware Troopers Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, and the Attorney General's Office to review the challenges to our Law Enforcement Community. Implement strategies to support increased training and identify barriers and challenges to recruitment and officer retention.
- Preserve qualified immunity, protecting law enforcement from frivolous lawsuits. Protect the Law Enforcement Officer's Bill of Rights.
- Introduce a two-fold initiative to win the fight against widespread opioid addiction. Expand the Angel Initiative to allow addicts to report to law enforcement to be directed to treatment for addiction. Addicts must still answer for outstanding warrants. This should be combined with expanded funding and training for the Delaware State Police and other agencies with the aim of pursuing, apprehending, and convicting traffickers in prescription opioids, heroin, fentanyl, and illegal drugs.
- To encourage opportunities for student engagement with the public safety community support establishment of public safety cadet programs similar to Jr. ROTC programs present in many of our high schools.

- We oppose the removal of School Resource Officers from our schools. We support safety in our schools and recognize the value of having a law enforcement presence to assure the safety of both students and staff.
- Gun violence in the City of Wilmington is out of control and must stop. In a report filed by Chris Barrish of WHY, Wilmington has a gun fatality rate of 1 death per every 1,820 residents. This exceeds Philadelphia, which has a rate of 1 per 3,000 residents. The City Administration and the Attorney General's Office have failed in their duty to protect the citizens of that once vital City. We urge funding to establish a Task Force of Law Enforcement agencies including Probation and Parole, law enforcement, the United States Attorney's Office and the Attorney General's Office, to target violent criminals and get them off the street. It is time to prosecute these violent criminals and restore order and safety to our families in Wilmington, who have suffered enough.

ENSURE AND PRESERVE A LIVABLE DELAWARE

Delaware Republicans believe that good environmental integrity is conducive to a free and prosperous population. Steps to protect the environment should take place in collaboration with private interests whenever possible to avoid the ineffectiveness which results from the politicization of the challenges to be addressed.

We need a sensible approach toward protecting our environment while allowing for growth and the ability for residents and tourists to participate in the activities that make Delaware a desirable place to live and play.

Our Commitment:

- Provide incentives for businesses to recycle. Many commercial concerns don't recycle because of the expensive additional costs. Commercial/industrial waste dwarfs that of private citizens. It is time to develop tax breaks for commercial facilities that choose to recycle.
- Many communities throughout Delaware include homes that do not have access to clean, drinkable water. Legislation has been passed to mitigate this situation. Unfortunately, it may take a decade or more to find a resolution. These Delaware families need help now. Pass HB 69 (2021, Shupe) to provide grants for filtration systems to ensure clean drinking water now.

- Shockingly, Delaware still has a lead plumbing problem. Provide funding or grants to finally ensure lead remediation for lead pipes that enter directly into residential homes.
- Introduce large-scale areas for wildflowers and pollinators. This would include areas such as median strips and meadows on state-owned land that is not being otherwise utilized.

BE A PARTNER WITH DELAWARE SMALL BUSINESSES

Delaware Republicans recognize that small business is the engine of progress, innovation and prosperity throughout the state. Over-regulation tends to thwart small business and cements the position of entrenched powers. Our business climate must encourage upstarts, which will generate a competitive and productive business environment. Delaware government and Delaware small businesses need to be allies once again. The economic boom in the 80s and 90's in Delaware was a result of the keen creative minds of job creators, the hard work of our labor force, and free, lightly regulated, and lightly taxed capital. And they were aided in no small part by smart policies and good governance under great leaders like Pete DuPont and Bill Roth.

Our Commitment:

- Provide a one-year tax holiday for Delaware-based small businesses (those with fewer than 50 employees) for the first \$100,000 in income. The COVID-19 pandemic restrictions have devastated Delaware's small businesses. This includes many of our sole proprietors and family-based businesses. We should support their recovery.
- Pass Small Business Impact/ Regulatory Review to force all executive branch state agencies to submit, along with any proposed regulation, an accurate and good faith estimate of the cost of compliance for individuals and businesses.
- Conduct an assessment of ways to improve opportunities for growth for small businesses, including helping to control and reform incidental employer costs, such as the gross receipts tax and the cost of workers' compensation, which are among the highest in the nation, rivaling the states of New York and New Jersey.

- Pass a comprehensive regulatory reform act. Delaware is becoming a regulatory nightmare. A [Mercatus analysis](#) based on 2019 data showed the Del. Code contains 6.7 million words explaining 104,562 restrictions. As a measure of total employment, we far outstrip any other state in terms of words of state regulations per employee. The enormous expense of hiring lawyers and accountants to understand and comply is a barrier to job creation for businesses, both large and small. In recent years, overspending, higher taxes and more burdensome regulations have made it harder and harder to actually build a business and grow jobs in our state. As a result, Delaware currently [ranks](#) in the bottom ten states in which to start a new business.

RETURN JOBS AND ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS TO DELAWARE

Rating sources such as U.S. News & World Report, WalletHub, and the Tax Foundation continually rank Delaware as having one of the worst business climates in the nation. According to the Center for Analysis of Delaware's Economy and Government Spending, Delaware has had five recessions since 2009, compared to only one nationally. Economic strength is both a reflection of, and a contributor to, a vibrant, prosperous and accomplished citizenry.

The Caesar Rodney Institute has reported that Delaware's per capita personal income was 18% above the national average in 2002. By 2020, it was 5% *below* the national average. From 2002-2020 total earnings in the US increased 88% but rose only 47% in Delaware. From 2002-2020 nationwide income from investments rose by 129%, but Delaware rose just under 89%. Transfer payments (that is, government support) rose nationally 332% between 2002- 2020, but in Delaware, it rose by almost 400%. The impact of economic stagnation in Delaware is significant.

- Our youth leave the state for growth and job opportunities.
- Entrepreneurs and growth companies skip Delaware for states with pro-growth policies.
- Government becomes more and more central for economic support, increasing costs to taxpayers.

Our Commitment:

- Repeal the 2017 tax hike on real estate transfers. Delaware's closing costs are the highest of any state; a tax of \$10,000 is levied on a \$250,000 home purchase.

- Pursue a middle- and working-class tax cut. Despite its reputation, Delaware is not a “low tax” state. Tax collections are the eighth-highest per capita of the 50 states and D.C. Instead of raising the individual tax rates, as has been proposed year after year in the State Legislature, we must instead offer income tax relief to the middle class and working families.
- Reinstate and increase the senior citizen tax credit on property taxes. These citizens do not usually have children in school, which is what those taxes fund, and often are on fixed incomes.
- Legislate tax reform for growing business and to spur hiring and growth. This shall include, but not be limited to, incentives for training/ certification of additional workers and reform of workers’s compensation with a goal of controlling Delaware’s high costs.
- Pass legislation to fully exempt military retirement pay from state income taxes, regardless of age. There are 33 states in total that recognize the value of adding newly retired military to their workforce. The average age of this worker is 38 years old and the average rank is Staff Sergeant/E6. The average person is married with a working spouse and kids about to go to college. By not taxing the military pension, the state will gain taxes from the incomes of the retiree and spouse. These individuals are hard-working, physically and mentally fit, and trained in valuable disciplines that are attractive to prospective employers such as computers, construction, medical fields and administration. Attracting these young retirees to our state will benefit Delaware.
- Keep the minimum wage competitive and reasonable. Delaware wages are not keeping pace with the rest of the country. In fact, they haven’t even kept pace with inflation. In the decade between 2009 and 2019, Delaware’s average private industry wage went from above the national average to below the national average. Some have determined the best course is to artificially increase the pay of the lowest-skilled workers by enforcing an increased minimum wage by government fiat. But as inflation continues to worsen, many business owners and managers have found themselves with little choice but to cut labor costs. The lowest-skilled workers are the first to be cut from Delaware industries. While the Democrats argue that raising the minimum wage provides a safety net for the lowest paying jobs, it does not always work that way in reality. Our goal is to return Delaware to an economic environment that provides good-paying jobs with competitive pay and creates opportunities for advancement.

GUARANTEE SECURE ELECTIONS

Delaware Republicans are committed to fair and secure elections. Every Delawarean who is legally entitled to vote should be able to do so and know that election results accurately reflect the decision made by the legitimate electorate.

As far back as 2005, the Carter-Baker Commission on Federal Election Reform issued their report. It included, among other things, that Photo ID was critical to securing the integrity of our elections. The report also pointed out that widespread absentee voting easily led to voter fraud. Additionally, they found that voter files contained ineligible, duplicate, fictional and deceased voters. Sadly, these conditions set the stage for voter fraud. Despite their best efforts, we know that the Department of Elections' voter rolls are not accurate and they are not current.

When individuals fraudulently cast ballots, it projects doubt on the outcome of one of the most important activities of a self-governed population. The right to vote is sacred. The responsibility of voting should be undertaken after careful consideration of each candidate's position. It is critical to secure the integrity of an election and the strength of each person's vote. Because the right to vote is critical to our democracy, we do not subscribe to any interference with a citizen's right to exercise it.

Our Commitment:

- Pass legislation that requires a government-issued photo ID for all voters.
- Oppose HB 75 that would remove voter protections from the Constitution and place them in the whim of the General Assembly.
- Maintain the current requirements for obtaining an absentee ballot and monitor the veracity of voter claims for qualification.
- Do not provide for permanent absentee voting. Voters must apply for an absentee ballot for each election.
- Require the Department of Elections to work with state agencies, the Register of Wills and Recorder of Deeds from each county to be sure voter rolls remain valid. Use the information each agency collects to assure the accuracy of the voter rolls, to remove those who are deceased and those who no longer living at that address.

- Ban the use of private money for administering elections.
- Oppose same-day registration unless the individual who so registers only votes by provisional ballot, so the information provided can be verified before the vote is counted.

RESPECT LIFE

We respect life and believe in the protection of life from conception to natural death.

Our Commitment:

- Enact SB 108 (Richardson) that would require a physician to offer ultrasound imaging and auscultation of fetal heartbeat before terminating a pregnancy.
- We oppose HB 160 (Baumbach), which allows a physician to assist a patient to commit suicide. Research shows that physicians are generally not accurate when determining end of life prognoses. As fewer primary care physicians see their hospitalized patients due to the use of “hospitalists,” these life expectancy predictions have become less accurate. Government endorsed suicide is wrong.
- Enact SB205 (Richardson, Dukes, 2018) which limits legal abortion to 20 weeks gestation, the age at which studies have consistently shown unborn children can experience pain.

