Handout #2: Where does your assigned party stand when it comes to fiscal management?

Your Assigned Party / Expert Group: _______________________________

Directions: Find your respective party’s platform online (see links below). Begin by reading through the platform Preamble. (This should give you a good introduction to your party’s governing goals.) Then explore the platform more closely to identify policy options that are consistent with where your party stands on major issues.

- Democratic Party Platform: https://www.demconvention.com/platform/
- Republican Party Platform: https://www.gop.com/the-2016-republican-party-platform/
- Libertarian Party Platform: https://www.lp.org/platform
- Green Party Platform: http://www.gp.org/platform

1. Governing Goals – Circle which of the governing goals listed below reflect your party’s priorities for government.

- Reduce Inequality: The disparity between Americans who have the most and the least income is growing, mirrored by disparities in education, health, and family structure. You want to narrow the widening gaps in incomes and well-being at the top and the bottom.
- Strengthen National Defense: Projections of current policies show defense spending, measured as a share of the economy, falling over the next decade and then plateauing. You’d bolster the U.S. military by providing it with more personnel and more arms. (To reach fiscal sustainability, you’ll have to pay for these somehow.)
- Fight Climate Change: You want to use government policies to promote a cleaner, healthier environment, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and avoid the damage that could be caused by global climate change.
- Strengthen Social Safety Net: You believe it’s important for the federal government to give a hand up to those in poverty and protect those at risk of falling down the income ladder when times are tough. You want to expand and protect programs that protect the vulnerable.
- Tax Cutter: You believe lower taxes will boost economic growth and want to allow Americans to keep more of what they earn. Your goal is to substantially reduce federal tax revenues as a share of the economy. (To reach fiscal sustainability, you’ll have to cut spending, too.)
- Shrink Government: You believe that we’re better off with a leaner federal government, shifting responsibilities to the private, non-profit and state and local sectors. Spending on general government operations and federal programs (other than health and retirement benefits) is projected under current policy to decline over the next decade. You’d reduce it more.
- Shield the Elderly: Under current policy, about 60% of the increase in federal spending over the next decade will go to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and other major health programs, much of that for the growing number of people who will be over age 65. You want to protect benefits for senior citizens.
- Invest in the Future: You believe in planting seeds today that will be harvested in years to come. You want policies to increase, above what’s currently projected, government and private investment in children and young adults and in education, infrastructure and research that will pay off in the future. (To reach fiscal sustainability, you’ll have to pay for these somehow.)
- Fiscal Hawk: You’re not satisfied with restraining the projected increase in the federal debt so that in 25 years it’s roughly where it is today, measured as a share of the overall economy. To put the government and the economy on a sounder footing, you want to reduce it substantially below today’s levels.
- Rein in Entitlements: Spending on retirement, health and other government benefits, much of that for the elderly, account for two-thirds of non-interest spending today and threaten to squeeze out spending on everything else—from equipping soldiers with modern gear to repairing old bridges to pursuing cures for cancer. You want to restrain this spending to make room for other priorities.
2. Policy Options – Circle specific policy options below that are consistent with your party’s platform. (Reminder: Don’t forget the end goal of this game and what reducing the national debt entails. In other words, be sure you are reading through the platform closely to identify as many options as possible for increasing government revenue and decreasing government expenditures.)

**POLICY OPTIONS ON THE FISCAL SHIP**

**ARTS & SCIENCES**
- Boost National Science Foundation funding
- Cut National Institutes of Health funding
- Cut National Science Foundation funding
- End human space exploration
- Increase funding for arts and humanities
- Increase NASA budget
- Increase National Institutes of Health budget
- Reduce funding for arts and humanities

**CORPORATE TAXES**
- Cut corporate tax rate, close some loopholes
- Increase corporate tax rate
- Reduce taxes on international profits
- Set minimum tax on foreign profits

**FOOD & AGRICULTURE**
- Block grant and cut food stamps
- Double FDA funding
- Reduce farm subsidies
- Tax sugary drinks
- Tighten eligibility for food stamps

**DEFENSE & FOREIGN AFFAIRS**
- Build fewer submarines
- Cancel new aircraft carrier construction
- Cut active duty Army by half
- Cut foreign aid
- Expand U.S. Navy fleet
- Increase active duty Army
- Increase defense R&D spending
- Increase foreign aid
- Kill F-35 Joint Strike Fighter

**EDUCATION**
- Eliminate student loan subsidies
- Eliminate the Department of Education
- Free tuition at public colleges
- Limit Pell grants to neediest students
- Preschool for four-year-olds
- Slash interest rates on existing student debt
- Two years of community college tuition-free

**ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT**
- Double the EPA’s budget
- Eliminate renewable fuel subsidies
- Eliminate the EPA
- End tax breaks for fossil fuels
- Extend renewable energy tax credits
- Imose a carbon tax
- Increase the gas tax

**TAXES ON INVESTMENTS**
- Cut taxes on investment income
- End tax on capital gains, interest, dividends
- Imose new tax on financial transactions
- Increase tax on capital gains and dividends
- Tax carried interest as ordinary income

**SEE REVERSE FOR MORE POLICIES**
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<tr>
<td>Cap Medicare spending</td>
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**INCOME & PAYROLL TAXES**

- Reduce income tax rates, consolidate brackets
- Boost taxes on the super rich
- Eliminate cap on wages subject to payroll tax
- Implement a 15% flat income tax
- Increase all income tax rates
- Increase Medicare payroll tax
- Increase Social Security payroll tax

**INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORTATION**

- Cut infrastructure spending
- Double subsidies for Amtrak
- Eliminate funding for Amtrak
- Increase infrastructure spending

**LABOR & EMPLOYMENT**

- Expand unemployment benefits
- Reduce federal employees' pensions
- Reduce federal employment through attrition
- Slow increases in government pay

**LAW & ORDER**

- Cut spending on law enforcement
- Enact immigration reform
- Increase Homeland Security spending
- Reduce Homeland Security spending
- Spend more on law enforcement

**TAX CREDITS & DEDUCTIONS**

- End tax breaks for fossil fuels
- Convert mortgage interest deduction to credit
- Curtail charitable deduction
- Eliminate renewable fuel subsidies
- Eliminate state and local tax deductions
- Expand Earned Income Tax Credit
- Expand the child tax credit
- Raise the standard deduction