**Responsible Political Parties**

Ideally, in a democracy, candidates should say what they will do if elected, and once elected, they should carry out those promises. However, too often, this is not the case. The responsible party model argue that parties should meet certain objectives:

1. Parties should offer clear and distinct choices to the voters.
2. Voters should use these choices as cues to their own preferences on a candidate.
3. Once elected, parties should carry out their campaign promises.
4. Parties should take responsibility for the performance of their policies while in government.

Using the table belowas your guide, discuss the differences between the two parties on the five issues provided. In addition, in one or two paragraphs discuss whether the American political parties follow the responsible party model given the criteria listed above. Please cite all outside sources!

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| Issue | Democratic Platform | Republican Platform |
| Abortion | Strongly supports *Roe v. Wade* (1973) and a woman’s right to choose | Upholds the “sanctity of life”; believes unborn children have “individual right to life.” |
| Defense | Supports reductions in federal defense spending. | Believes that cuts in defense spending would be a “disaster” for national security. |
| Medicare | Opposes any movement toward privatization of or vouchers for Medicare. | Believes in “premium-support” model for Medicare. |
| Public Employee Unions | Opposes attacks on collective bargaining undertaken by some Republican governors. | Supports Republican governors’ efforts to reform laws governing unions. |
| Same-Sex Marriage | Supports marriage equality and equal treatment under law for same-sex couples. | Supports constitutional amendment defining marriage as between one man and one woman. |

\*Adapted from the 2012 Democratic and Republican platforms in Ginsberg et al. *We the People*.