

PURE PRINCIPLES DRAFT PROPOSAL

from the 2008 Libertarian Party Platform Committee

NOTE: This proposal would seek to delete all current platform planks and section introduction text (leaving only the Preamble and the Statement of Principles) and adopt the replacement planks below.

1.0. Personal Liberty

Individuals should be free to make choices for themselves and to accept responsibility for the consequences of the choices they make. Our support of an individual's right to make choices in life does not mean that we necessarily approve or disapprove of those choices.

1.1. Expression and Communication

We support full freedom of expression, and oppose government censorship, regulation or control of communications media and technology. We recognize that freedom of communication does not extend to the use of other people's property to promote one's ideas without the voluntary consent of the owners. We favor the freedom to engage in or abstain from any religious activities that do not violate the rights of others.

1.2. Personal and Bodily Privacy

We support the protections provided by the Fourth Amendment to be secure in our persons, homes, and property. Only actions that infringe on the rights of others can properly be termed crimes. We favor the repeal of all laws creating "crimes" without victims, such as the use of drugs for medicinal or recreational purposes.

1.3. Personal Relationships

Sexuality or gender should have no impact on the rights of individuals. Consenting adults should be free to choose their own sexual practices and personal relationships. Government does not have legitimate authority to define or license personal relationships. We oppose all coercive measures for population control.

1.4. Crime and Justice

The purpose of a justice system is to provide restitution to those suffering a loss at the expense of those who caused the loss. Government exists to protect the rights of every individual including life, liberty and property. Criminal laws should be limited to violation of the rights of others through force or fraud, or deliberate actions that place others involuntarily at significant risk of harm. Individuals retain the right to voluntarily assume risk of harm to themselves. We oppose reduction of constitutional safeguards of the rights of the criminally accused. We favor all-volunteer juries and assert the common-law right of juries to judge not only the facts but also the justice of the law.

1.5. Self-Defense

The only legitimate use of force is in defense of individual rights — life, liberty, and justly acquired property — against aggression, whether by force or fraud. This right inheres in the individual, who may agree to be aided by any other individual or group. We affirm the right to keep and bear arms.

2.0. Economic Liberty

A free and competitive market allocates resources in the most efficient manner. Each person has the right to offer goods and services to others on the free market. The only proper role of government in the economic realm is to protect property rights, adjudicate disputes, and provide a legal framework in which voluntary trade is protected. We oppose all government interference with voluntary and contractual relations among individuals. People should be allowed to deal with one another as free traders; and the resultant economic system, the only one compatible with the protection of individual rights, is the free market.

2.1. Property and Contract

The owners of property have the full right to control, use, dispose of — or in any manner enjoy — their property without interference, until and unless the exercise of their control infringes the valid rights of others. Property rights are entitled to the same protection as all other human rights. We oppose all controls on wages, prices, rents, profits, production, and interest rates. We oppose all violations of the right to private property, liberty of contract, and freedom of trade. The right to trade includes the right not to trade — for any reasons whatsoever. Where property, including land, has been taken from its rightful owners by the government or private action in violation of individual rights, we favor restitution to the rightful owners.

2.2. Environment and Resources

Pollution of other people's property is a violation of individual rights. We support the development of an objective system defining resource rights as individual property rights. The laws of nuisance and negligence should be modified to cover damage done by air, water, and noise pollution.

2.3. Government Finance and Spending

All persons are entitled to keep the fruits of their labor. We call for the repeal of the income tax, the abolishment of the Internal Revenue Service and all federal programs and services not required under the US Constitution. Government should not incur debt, which burdens future generations without their consent. We support the passage of a "Balanced Budget Amendment" to the US Constitution, provided that the budget is balanced exclusively by cutting expenditures, and not by raising taxes.

2.4. Money and Financial Markets

We favor free-market banking, with unrestricted competition among banks and depository institutions of all types. Individuals engaged in voluntary exchange should be free to use as money any mutually agreeable commodity or item. We call for the abolition of all regulation of financial and capital markets.

2.5. Monopolies and Corporations

We advocate a strict separation of business and State. We seek to divest government of all functions that can be provided by non-governmental organizations or private individuals. We defend the right of individuals to form corporations, cooperatives and other types of companies based on voluntary association. We oppose government subsidies to business, labor, or any other special interest. Industries should be governed by free markets and held to strict liability.

2.6. Labor Markets

We support the right of free persons to voluntarily associate in, or to establish, labor unions. We support the concept that an employer may recognize a union as the collective bargaining agent of some or all of his employees. We oppose governmental interference in bargaining. We call for the abolition of government agencies that restrict entry into any profession. No consumer should be legally restrained from hiring unlicensed individuals.

2.7. Education

We advocate the separation of education and State. Education, like any other service, is best provided by the free market, achieving greater quality and efficiency with more diversity of choice. As an interim measure to encourage the growth of private schools and variety in education, including home schooling, we support tax credits for tuition and other expenditures related to an individual's education.

2.8. Health Care

We advocate the separation of medicine and State. We favor restoring and reviving a free market health care system. We recognize the freedom of individuals to determine the level of health insurance they want, the level of health care they want, the care providers they want, the medicines and treatments they will use and all other aspects of their medical care.

2.9. Retirement and Income Security

Retirement planning is the responsibility of the individual, not the government. Participation in Social Security should be made voluntary. The proper source of help for the poor is the voluntary efforts of private groups and individuals.

3.0. Securing Liberty

The principles which guide a legitimate government in its relationships with other governments are the same as those which guide relationships among individuals: no individual, group, or government may initiate force against any other individual, group, or government.

3.1. National Defense

We support the maintenance of a sufficient military to defend the United States against aggression. The United States should abandon its attempts to act as policeman for the world. We oppose any form of compulsory national service.

3.2. Internal Security and Individual Rights

The defense of the country requires that we have adequate intelligence to detect and to counter threats to domestic security. This requirement must not take priority over maintaining the civil liberties of our citizens. The Bill of Rights provides no exceptions for a time of war. Intelligence agencies that legitimately seek to preserve the security of the nation must be subject to oversight and transparency. We oppose the government's use of secret classifications to keep from the public information that it should have, especially that which shows that the government has violated the law.

3.3. International Affairs

The important principle in foreign policy should be the elimination of intervention by the United States government in the affairs of other nations. American foreign policy should seek an America at peace with the world and the defense — against attack from abroad — of the lives, liberty, and property of the American people on American soil. We recognize the right of all people to resist tyranny and defend themselves and their rights. We condemn the use of force, and especially the use of terrorism, against the innocent, regardless of whether such acts are committed by governments or by political or revolutionary groups.

3.4. Free Trade and Migration

We support the removal of governmental impediments to free trade. Political freedom and escape from tyranny demands that individuals not be unreasonably constrained by government in the crossing of political boundaries. Economic freedom demands the unrestricted movement of human as well as financial capital across national borders. However, we support control over the entry into our country of foreign nationals who pose a threat to security, health or property.

3.5. Franchise and Discrimination

Government should not deny or abridge any individual's rights based on sex, wealth, race, color, creed, age, national origin, personal habits, political preference or sexual orientation. Parents, or other guardians, have the right to raise their children according to their own standards and beliefs, without interference by government — unless they are abusing the children.

3.6. Representative Government

We support electoral systems that are more representative of the electorate at the federal, state and local levels. As private voluntary groups, political parties should be allowed to establish their own rules for nomination procedures, primaries and conventions. We call for an end to any tax-financed subsidies to candidates or parties and the repeal of all laws which restrict voluntary financing of election campaigns. We call for the repeal of restrictive state laws that effectively prevent new parties and independent candidates from being on the ballot.

4.0. Omissions

Our silence about any other particular government law, regulation, ordinance, directive, edict, control, regulatory agency, activity, or machination should not be construed to imply approval.