

1972 PLATFORM
of the
LIBERTARIAN PARTY

THE PARTY OF PRINCIPLE

Adopted in Convention

Denver, Colorado

June 17-18, 1972

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Adopted unanimously by the delegates to the first national convention of the Libertarian Party, on June 17, 1972.

We, the members of the Libertarian Party, challenge the cult of the omnipotent state, and defend the rights of the individual.

We hold that each individual has the right to exercise sole dominion over his own life, and has the right to live his life in whatever manner he chooses, so long as he does not forcibly interfere with the equal right of others to live their lives in whatever manner they choose.

Governments throughout history have regularly operated on the opposite principle, that the State has the right to dispose of the lives of individuals and the fruits of their labor. Even within the United States, all political parties other than our own grant to government the right to regulate the life of the individual and seize the fruits of his labor without his consent.

We, on the contrary, deny the right of any government to do these things, and hold that the sole function of government is the protection of the rights of each individual: namely (1) the right to life – and accordingly we support laws prohibiting the initiation of physical force against others; (2) the right to liberty of speech and action – and accordingly we oppose all attempts by government to abridge the freedom of speech and press, as well as government censorship in any form; and (3) the right to property – and accordingly we oppose all government interference with private property, such as confiscation, nationalization, and eminent domain, and support laws which prohibit robbery, trespass, fraud and misrepresentation.

Since government has only one legitimate function, the protection of individual rights, we oppose all interference by government in the areas of voluntary and contractual relations among individuals. Men should not be forced to sacrifice their lives and property for the benefit of others. They should be left free by government to deal with one another as free traders on a free market; and the resultant economic system, the only one compatible with the protection of man's rights, is laissez-faire capitalism.

INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND CIVIL ORDER

The protection of individual rights is the only proper purpose of government. No conflict exists between civil order and individual rights. Both concepts are based on the same fundamental principle: that no individual, group, or government may initiate force against any other individual, group, or government. Government is instituted to protect individual rights. Government is constitutionally limited so as to prevent the infringement of individual rights by the government itself.

1. **Crime.** We hold that no action which does not infringe the rights of others can properly be termed a crime. We favor the repeal of all laws creating "crimes without victims" now incorporated in Federal, state and local laws — such as laws on voluntary sexual relations, drug use, gambling, and attempted suicide. We support impartial and consistent enforcement of laws designed to protect individual rights — regardless of the motivation for which these laws may be violated.

2. **Due Process for Criminally Accused.** Until such time as a person is proved guilty of a crime, that person should be accorded all possible respect for his individual rights. We are thus opposed to reduction of present safeguards for the rights of the criminally accused. Specifically, we are opposed to preventive detention, so-called "no-knock laws" and all other similar measures which threaten existing rights. We further pledge to do all possible to give life to the Sixth Amendment's guarantee of a speedy trial, and shall work for appropriate legislation to this end. We support full restitution for all loss suffered by persons arrested, indicted, imprisoned, tried, or otherwise injured in the course of criminal proceedings against them which do not result in their conviction. We look ultimately to the voluntary funding of this restitution.

3. Freedom of Speech and The Press. We pledge to oppose all forms of censorship, whatever the medium involved. Recent events have demonstrated that the already precarious First Amendment rights of the broadcasting industry are becoming still more precarious. Regulation of broadcasting can no longer be tolerated. We shall support legislation to repeal the Federal Communications Act, and to provide for private ownership of broadcasting rights, thus giving broadcasting First Amendment parity with other communications media. We support repeal of pornography laws.

4. Protection of Privacy. Electronic and other covert government surveillance of citizens should be restricted to activity which can be shown beforehand, under high, clearly defined standards of probable cause, to be criminal and to present immediate and grave danger to other citizens. The National Census and other government compilations of data on citizens should be conducted on a strictly voluntary basis.

5. The Right to Keep and Bear Arms. In recognition of the fact that the individual is his own last source of self-defense, the authors of the Constitution guaranteed, in the Second Amendment, the right of the people to keep and bear arms. This reasoning remains valid today. We pledge to uphold that guarantee. We oppose compulsory arms registration.

6. Volunteer Army. We oppose the draft (Selective Service), believing that the use of force to require individuals to serve in the armed forces or anywhere else is a violation of their rights, and that a well-paid volunteer army is a more effective means of national defense than the involuntary servitude exemplified by the draft. We recommend a complete review and possible reform of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, to guarantee effective and equal protection of rights under the law to all members of the U.S. armed forces, and to promote thereby the morale, dignity, and sense of justice within the military which are indispensable to its efficient and effective operation. We further pledge to work for a declaration of unconditional amnesty for all who have been convicted of, or who now stand accused of, draft evasion and for all military deserters who were draftees.

7. Property Rights. We hold that property rights are individual rights and, as such, are entitled to the same respect and protection as all other individual rights. We further hold that the owner of property has the full right to control, use, dispose of, or in any manner enjoy his property without interference, until and unless the exercise of his control infringes the valid rights of others. We shall thus oppose restrictions upon the use of property which do not have as their sole end the protection of valid rights.

8. Unions and Collective Bargaining. We support the right of free men 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, such as compulsory arbitration or the obligation to bargain. We demand that the National Labor Relations Act be repealed. We recognize voluntary contracts between employers and labor unions as being legally and morally binding on the parties to such contracts.

TRADE AND THE ECONOMY

Because each person has the right to offer his goods and services to others on the free market, and because government interference can only harm such free activity, we oppose all intervention by government into the area of economics. The only proper role of government in the economic realm is to protect property rights, adjudicate disputes and protect contracts, and provide a legal framework in which voluntary trade is protected. All efforts by government to redistribute wealth, or to control or manage trade, are improper in a free society.

1. **Money.** We favor the establishment of a sound money system. We thus support the private ownership of gold, and demand repeal of all legal tender laws.

2. **The Economy.** Government intervention in the economy imperils both the material prosperity and personal freedom of every American. We therefore support the following specific immediate reforms:

- (a) reduction of both taxes and government spending;
- (b) an end to deficit budgets;
- (c) a halt to inflationary monetary policies, and elimination, with all deliberate speed, of the Federal Reserve System;
- (d) the removal of all governmental impediments to free trade — including the repeal of the National Labor Relations Act, the Interstate Commerce Act, all antitrust laws, and the abolition of the Department of Agriculture, as the most pressing and critical impediments;
- (e) and the repeal of all controls on wages, prices, rents, profits, production, and interest rates.

3. **Subsidies.** In order to achieve a free economy in which government victimizes no one for the benefit of anyone else, we oppose all government subsidies to business, labor, education, agriculture, science, the arts, or any other special interests. Those who have entered into these activities with promises of government subsidy will be forewarned by being given a cutoff date beyond which all government aid to their enterprise will be terminated. Relief or exemption from involuntary taxation shall not be considered a subsidy.

4. **Tariffs and Quotas.** Like subsidies, tariffs and quotas serve only to give special treatment to favored interests and to diminish the welfare of other citizens. We therefore support abolition of all tariffs and quotas as well as the Tariff Commission and the Customs Court.

5. **Interim Reforms.** In order to effect our long-range goals, we recommend, among others, the following interim measures: the adoption of the Liberty Amendment, and provision for greater use of the referendum for reducing or repealing taxes.

6. **Long-Range Goals.** Since we believe that every man is entitled to keep the fruits of his labor, we are opposed to all government activity which consists of the forcible collection money or goods from citizens in violation of their individual rights. Specifically, we support the eventual repeal of all taxation. We support a system of voluntary fees for services rendered as a method for financing government in a free society.

DOMESTIC ILLS

Government intervention in current problems, such as crime, pollution, defraud of consumers, health problems, overpopulation, decaying cities, and poverty, is properly limited to protection of individual rights. In those areas where individual rights or voluntary relations are not involved, we support an immediate reduction of government's present role, and ultimately, a total withdrawal of government intervention, together with the establishment of a legal framework in which private, voluntary solutions to these problems can be developed and implemented.

1. **Pollution.** We support the development of an objective system defining individual property rights to air and water. We hold that ambiguities in the area of these rights (e.g. concepts such as "public property") are a primary cause of our deteriorating environment. Whereas we maintain that no one has the right to violate the legitimate property rights of others by pollution, we shall strenuously oppose all attempts to transform the defense of such rights into any restriction of the efforts of individuals to advance technology, to expand production, or to use their property peacefully.

2. **Consumer Protection.** We shall support strong and effective laws against fraud and misrepresentation. We shall oppose, however, that present and prospective so-called "consumer protection" legislation which infringes upon voluntary trade.

3. **Overpopulation.** We support an end to all subsidies for child-bearing built into our present laws, including all welfare plans and the provision of tax-supported services for children. We further support the repeal of all laws restricting voluntary birth control or voluntary termination of pregnancies during their first hundred days. We shall oppose all coercive measures to control population growth.

4. **Education.** We support the repeal of all compulsory education laws, and an end to government operation, regulation, and subsidy of schools. We call for an immediate end of compulsory busing.

5. **Poverty and Unemployment.** We support repeal of all laws which impede the ability of any person to find employment — including, but not limited to, minimum wage laws, so-called “protective” labor legislation for women and children, governmental restrictions on the establishment of private day-care centers, the National Labor Relations Act, and licensing requirements. We oppose all government welfare and relief projects and “aid to the poor” programs, inasmuch as they are not within the proper role of government, and do contribute to unemployment. All aid to the poor should come from private sources.

FOREIGN POLICY

The principles which guide a legitimate government in its relationships with other governments are the same as those which guide relationships among individuals and relationships between individuals and governments. It must protect itself and its citizens against the initiation of force from other nations. While we recognize the existence of totalitarian governments, we do not recognize them as *legitimate* governments. We will grant them no moral sanction. We will not deal with them as if they were proper governments. To do so is to ignore the rights of their victims and rob those victims of the knowledge that we know they have been wronged.

ECONOMIC

1. **Foreign Aid.** We support an end to the Federal foreign aid program.
2. **Ownership in Unclaimed Property.** We pledge to oppose recognition of claims by fiat, by nations or international bodies, of presently unclaimed property, such as the ocean floor and planetary bodies. We urge the development of objective standards for recognizing claims of ownership in such property.
3. **Currency Exchange Rates.** We pledge to oppose all governmental attempts to peg or regulate currency exchange rates. International trade can truly be free only when currency exchange rates reflect the free-market value of respective currencies.

MILITARY

1. **Military Alliances.** The United States should abandon its attempts to act as policeman for the world, and should enter into alliances only with countries whose continued free existence is vital to the protection of the freedom of all American citizens. Under such an alliance, the United States may offer the protection of its nuclear umbrella, but our allies would provide their own conventional defense capabilities. We should in particular disengage from any present alliances which include despotic governments.

2. Military Capability. We shall support the maintenance of a sufficient military establishment to defend the United States against aggression. We should have a sufficient nuclear capacity to convince any potential aggressor that it cannot hope to survive a first strike against the United States. But, as our foreign commitments are reduced, and as our allies assume their share of the burden of providing a conventional war capability, we should be able to reduce the size of our conventional defense, and thus reduce the overall cost and size of our total defense establishment.

DIPLOMATIC

1. Diplomatic Recognition. The United States should establish a scheme of recognition consistent with the principles of a free society, the primary principle being that, while individuals everywhere in the world have unalienable rights, governments which enslave individuals have no legitimacy whatsoever.

2. Secession. We shall support recognition of the right to secede. Political units or areas which do secede should be recognized by the United States as independent political entities where: (1) secession is supported by a majority within the political unit, (2) the majority does not attempt suppression of the dissenting minority, and (3) the government of the new entity is at least as compatible with human freedom as that from which it seceded.

3. The United Nations. We support withdrawal of the United States from the United Nations. We further support a Constitutional Amendment designed to prohibit the United States from entering into any treaty under which it relinquishes any portion of its sovereignty.

If you are in substantial agreement with this platform, and would like to help ensure that the libertarian viewpoint is represented in this and future elections, you can do so by joining the Libertarian Party as a working member. Annual dues are \$4 for students, \$6 for regular members, and \$12 for sustaining members, who make it possible to have a reduced membership fee for students. Lifetime membership is \$100, and Life Sustaining membership is \$250. All members receive a subscription to the Party's monthly Newsletter as part of their dues; non-members may subscribe for \$3 per year.

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