

1974 Platform
of the
Libertarian Party

The Party of Principle

Adopted in Convention
Dallas, Texas
June 12-16, 1974

Individual Rights and Civil Order

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.

(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 persons are proved guilty of crimes, such persons should be accorded all possible respect for their 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.) JUSTICE FOR THE VICTIM

The purpose of any system of courts is to provide justice. The present system of criminal law is based on punishment with little concern for the victim. We support restitution for the victim to the fullest degree possible at the expense of the criminal.

(4.) INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENT

We oppose the involuntary commitment of any person to a mental institution. The power to incarcerate an individual not

Statement of Principles

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

We hold that all individuals have the right to exercise sole dominion over their own lives, and have the right to live in whatever manner they choose, so long as they do not forcibly interfere with the equal right of others to live 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 lives of individuals and seize the fruits of their labor without their consent.

We, on the contrary, deny the right of any government to do these things, and hold that where governments exist, they must not violate the rights of any individual; namely, (1) the right to life — accordingly we support prohibition of the initiation of physical force against others; (2) the right to liberty of speech and action — 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 — accordingly we oppose all government interference with private property, such as confiscation, nationalization, and eminent domain, and support the prohibition of robbery, trespass, fraud, and misrepresentation.

Since governments, when instituted, must not violate individual rights, we oppose all interference by government in the areas of voluntary and contractual relations among individuals. People 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; and the resultant economic system, the only one compatible with the protection of individual rights, is the free market.

convicted of a crime, but merely asserted to be incompetent, is a violation of the individual's rights. We further advocate:

- a.) the repeal of all laws permitting nonvoluntary psychiatric treatment of any person including all children and all persons incarcerated in prisons or mental institutions.
- b.) the immediate discontinuation of all programs using tax monies for observational study or experimentation.
- c.) an end to all non-voluntary treatments of prisoners in such areas as psycho-surgery, drug therapy, and aversion therapy.

(5.) 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.

(6.) PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

The government should not use electronic or other covert surveillance of an individual's actions on private property without the consent of that property owner. Correspondence, bank and other financial transactions and records, doctors and lawyers' communications, employment records, etc., shall not be open to review by government without the consent of all parties involved in those actions. The National Census and all National, State and other government agency compilations of data on an individual should be conducted only with the consent of the persons from whom the data are sought.

(7.) THE RIGHT TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS

In recognition of the fact that the individual is one's own ultimate source of self defense we support the right of the individual to keep and bear arms. We oppose compulsory arms registration and regulation.

(8.) 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.

(9.) 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 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. We shall thus oppose restrictions upon the use of property which do not have as their sole end the protection of valid rights.

(10.) UNIONS AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

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 or refuse to recognize a union as the collective bargaining agent of some or all 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.

(11.) DISCRIMINATION

Equality of the rights under law should not be denied or abridged by the United States, or any political subdivision thereof, on account of sex, race, color, creed, age, national origin, or sexual preference. We shall oppose any governmental attempts to regulate purely private discrimination. However, we condemn bigotry as irrational and unjust.

(12.) SECESSION

We support recognition of the right to political secession. Exercise of this right, like the exercise of all other rights, does not remove legal and moral obligations not to violate the rights of others.

Trade and the Economy

Because each person has the right to offer 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 existing governments in the economic realm is to protect property rights, adjudicate disputes, 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 support the private ownership of gold and we demand repeal of all legal tender laws as legal tender laws and the prohibition of gold ownership lead to unsound money systems.

(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.) drastic 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 anti-trust laws, and the abolition of the Department of Agriculture, as the most pressing and critical impediments; and
- e.) 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. 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*, the Anti-Inflation Amendment*, and provision for greater use of the referendum for reducing or repealing taxes. We further propose amendment of the United States Constitution to provide for specific expiration dates of all statutes and to require that increases in federal taxes and criminal penalties be approved by a national referendum.

(6.) TAXATION

Since we believe that all persons are entitled to keep the fruits of their labor, we are opposed to all government activity which consists of the forcible collection of money or goods from individuals in violation of their individual rights. Specifically, we support:

- a.) those who challenge the payment of taxes on legal and constitutional grounds; and
- b.) the eventual repeal of all taxation.

We oppose as involuntary servitude any legal requirements forcing employers or business owners to serve as tax collectors for federal, state, or local tax agencies.

*The full text of the Liberty Amendment and of the Anti-Inflation Amendment follows this Platform.

(7.) ENERGY

As the only reasonable and fair solution to the problem of scarce resources, we oppose all government control of energy pricing, such as that imposed by the Federal Power Commission, Federal Energy Agency, and state public utility commissions. We urge immediate repeal of the fifty-five mile per hour speed limit. We oppose all government subsidies for energy research, development, and operation. We favor repeal of the Price-Anderson Act by which the government limits liability for nuclear accidents. These policies would foster energy conservation by permitting energy prices to be determined solely by the forces of the free market. We further believe that these policies will ultimately reduce the costs and increase the efficient use of resources and production.

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 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. However, we shall oppose paternalistic regulations which dictate to consumers, impose prices, and restrict free choice. We oppose all so-called "consumer protection" legislation which infringes upon voluntary trade. We specifically oppose laws requiring an individual to buy or use so-called "self-protection" equipment such as safety belts, air bags, and crash helmets. We advocate the abolition of the Food and Drug Administration. We specifically oppose governmental regulation of the price, potency or quantity of drugs or other consumer goods. There should be no laws regarding what substances (nicotine, alcohol, hallucinogens, narcotics, vitamin supplements, or other 'drugs') a person may ingest or otherwise use on him or herself.

(3.) POPULATION

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 the right of the woman to make a personal moral choice regarding the termination of pregnancy. We call for the elimination of special tax burdens of

single people and couples with few or no children. 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 to 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.

(6.) MEDICAL CARE

We oppose any compulsory insurance or tax supported plan to provide health services. We support the right of individuals to freely contract with practitioners of their choice, whether licensed by the government or not, for all medical services. We further oppose governmental infringement on the doctor-patient relationship through regulatory agencies such as the Professional Standards Review Organization.

(7.) LAND USE

The role of planning is properly the responsibility and right of the owners of the land. We therefore demand an end to governmental control of land use through such methods as urban renewal, zoning laws, eminent domain, or regional planning.

(8.) OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT (OSHA)

We demand the repeal of the Occupational Safety and Health Act. This law denies the right to liberty and property to both employer and employee and it interferes in their private contractual relations. It also places employers in the untenable position of being found guilty under the provisions of the law without adequate access to the courts.

Foreign Policy

The principle of non-initiation of force should guide the relationships between governments. As long as the United States government is our sole protection from external aggression, it must protect its citizens against the initiation of force from other nations.

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 FOREIGN POLICY

American foreign military policy must be directed toward avoiding involvement of the United States in war. While defensive military actions may from time to time be necessary, wars of aggression and aggrandizement can be the most immoral and destructive of human actions, breeding all manner of abuses which proponents of liberty abhor, the senseless slaughter of innocent individuals, conscription and other infringements on civil liberties, and increases in confiscatory taxation, greater economic controls and regulation of free enterprise.

(2.) MILITARY CAPABILITY

We shall support the maintenance of a sufficient military force to defend the United States against aggression. We should 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 important principle in foreign policy should be the elimination of intervention by the United States in the affairs of other nations. We will extend de facto recognition to any foreign government.

(2.) 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.

Liberty Amendment

SECTION 1. The government of the United States shall not engage in any business, professional, commercial, financial or industrial enterprise except as specified in the Constitution.

SECTION 2. The constitution or laws of any State, or the laws of the United States shall not be subject to the terms of any foreign or domestic agreement which would abrogate this amendment.

SECTION 3. The activities of the United States Government which violate the intent and purposes of this amendment shall, within a period of three years from the date of ratification of this amendment, be liquidated and the properties and facilities affected shall be sold.

SECTION 4. Three years after the ratification of this amendment the sixteenth article of amendments to the Constitution of the United States shall stand repealed and thereafter Congress shall not levy taxes on personal incomes, estates, and/or gifts.

Anti-Inflation Amendment

SECTION 1 — THE RIGHT TO TRADE

Congress shall make no law restricting the freedom of wages and prices nor authorizing commodity allocations. The right of citizens to make contracts and to trade freely among themselves shall not be abridged.

SECTION 2 — MONETARY POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Treasury of the United States to stabilize the supply of cash notes and federal credit in circulation, and thereby to preserve and increase the purchasing power of the currency of the United States.

SECTION 3 — FISCAL POLICY

On the fourth day of July in the year following the year of ratification of this article, the sixteenth article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States shall be repealed. A levy of taxation sufficient to discharge the financial obligations of the federal government shall be apportioned among the several States by Congress annually as the first act of each session, but the power of direct taxation shall be reserved to the several States. Congress shall not impose any tax on the property or income of citizens of the United States, nor shall any internal revenue service be maintained.

SECTION 4 — COMMERCIAL POLICY

The Government of the United States, or of any State, shall not, through any law or administrative action, prevent or forbid any person or corporation from offering for legitimate sale or from lowering the sale price of whatever goods or services may be commercially traded.

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