

Libertarian Party Platform Committee

Meeting Minutes - December 9, 2011

Red Rock Hotel – Las Vegas, NV

Document Status: **DRAFT** – last updated 12/22/11

Legend for Platform Proposals: Unchanged existing text, ~~Text to be deleted~~, Text to be inserted

Call to Order

The Libertarian Party Platform Committee meeting was called to order by interim chair Alicia Mattson on December 9, 2011 at 8:40am in the Willows Board Room of the Red Rock Hotel in Las Vegas, NV.

Attendance

Those present at the call to order were:

LNC Appointees: Alicia Mattson, Brian Holtz, Chris Barber, Jeff Dimit, Richard Randall, Joe Hauptmann, Rebecca Sink-Burris, Aaron Starr

Top-Ten Affiliate Appointees: John Shuey (TX), Christian Padgett (NY), Dianna Visek (IL alternate), Debbie Schum (CO)

Bruce Dovner (CA) arrived approximately 30 minutes into the meeting.

Members not present for the meeting were:

LNC Appointees: Randy Eshelman, Sam Goldstein

Top-Ten Affiliate Appointees: Lynn House (FL), Ann Leech (OH), Jim Lark (VA), Kent McMillen (IL), Vern Etzel (PA), Jason Pye (GA)

Agenda Adoption

Ms. Mattson moved to adopt the printed agenda. Mr. Randall moved to amend by adding an agenda item at the end to allow introduction of new proposals, and the amendment was adopted without objection. The agenda as amended was adopted without objection and was as follows:

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Election of Officers | 15 minutes |
| Chair | |
| Secretary | |
| Platform Proposals | 20 minutes each |
| Plank 1.0 Personal Liberty – Mattson/Starr/Holtz | |
| Plank 1.2 Personal Privacy – Holtz/Starr | |
| Plank 1.5 Crime and Justice – Mattson | |
| Plank 1.6 Self Defense – Mattson/Starr/Holtz | |
| Plank 2.4 Government Finance & Spending – Mattson/Starr/House | |
| Plank 2.5 Money and Financial Markets – Mattson/Starr/Holtz | |
| Plank 2.7 Labor Markets – Mattson | |
| Plank 2.8 Education – House | |
| Plank 2.9 Health Care – House/Mattson | |
| Plank 3.4 Free Trade and Migration – Starr | |
| Plank 3.5 Rights and Discrimination – Holtz | |
| Plank 3.5 Rights and Discrimination – Mattson | |
| Plank 3.6 Representative Government - Mattson | |
| Plank 1.4 Abortion – Mattson/Starr/Schum/Randall/Holtz | |
| New Proposals | |

Election of officers

Mr. Starr nominated Alicia Mattson for Chair. There were no other nominees, so the committee elected Alicia Mattson as Chair by acclamation. By unanimous consent Alicia Mattson was also elected to serve as Secretary.

Plank 1.0 Personal Liberty

Mr. Starr moved to adopt a recommendation for Plank 1.0 Personal Liberty, and after amendment it became:

~~Individuals should be free to make choices for themselves and to accept responsibility for the consequences of the choices they make. No individual, group, or government may initiate force against any other individual, group, or government. Our support of an individual's right to make choices in life does not mean that we necessarily approve or disapprove of those choices.~~

The very foundation of America is our recognition of the right of individuals to make choices, even those of which we may personally disapprove, provided they bear the consequences of those decisions. The right to make a choice depends on both understanding that it has consequences and accepting responsibility for them. Adherence to this ideal has brought about unrivaled freedom and abundance, and allows the greatest number to pursue happiness in their daily lives. Libertarians seek to preserve and enhance this distinctively American quality and view government's proper role as ensuring the right to make personal choices for themselves and voluntarily in concert with others.

Mr. Randall moved a substitute which after amendment became:

~~Individuals should be free to make choices for themselves and to accept responsibility for the consequences of the choices they make. No individual, group, or government may initiate force against any other individual, group, or government. Our support of an individual's right to make choices in life does not mean that we necessarily approve or disapprove of those choices.~~

Libertarians recognize individual self-ownership and the right to make personal choices. Our support of an individual's right to make choices does not mean that we approve or disapprove of those choices. With rights come responsibilities, and the right to make a choice depends on both understanding that it has consequences and accepting responsibility for them. Government's proper role is to protect the rights of every individual.

Mr. Holtz moved to substitute the following recommendation:

Individuals should be free to make choices for themselves and ~~to~~ accept responsibility for the consequences of the choices they make. Fraud and the initiation of force are attempts to impose choices on others, and so should be banished from human relationships. No individual, group, or government may initiate force against any other individual, group, or government. Our support of an individual's right to make choices in his or her own life does not ~~necessarily~~ mean that we ~~necessarily~~ approve or disapprove of those choices. The right to make a choice depends on both understanding that it has consequences and accepting responsibility for them.

Following debate, without objection, the committee chose between the 3 proposals above and by a vote of 12 in favor and 0 opposed adopted a recommendation to amend plank 1.0 as follows:

~~Individuals should be free to make choices for themselves and to accept responsibility for the consequences of the choices they make. No individual, group, or government may initiate force against any other individual, group, or government. Our support of an individual's right to make choices in life does not mean that we necessarily approve or disapprove of those choices.~~

Libertarians recognize individual self-ownership and the right to make personal choices. Our support of an individual's right to make choices does not mean that we approve or disapprove of

those choices. With rights come responsibilities, and the right to make a choice depends on both understanding that it has consequences and accepting responsibility for them. Government's proper role is to protect the rights of every individual.

Mr. Starr moved to offer the delegates a pending substitute motion for Plank 1.0 Personal Liberty, which after amendment became:

~~Individuals should be free to make choices for themselves and to accept responsibility for the consequences of the choices they make. No individual, group, or government may initiate force against any other individual, group, or government. Our support of an individual's right to make choices in life does not mean that we necessarily approve or disapprove of those choices.~~

The very foundation of America is our recognition of the right of individuals to make choices, even those of which we may personally disapprove, provided they bear the consequences of those decisions. The right to make a choice depends on both understanding that it has consequences and accepting responsibility for them. This ideal creates unrivaled freedom and abundance, and allows the greatest number to pursue happiness in their daily lives. Libertarians seek to preserve and enhance this distinctively American quality and view government's proper role as ensuring the right of individuals to make personal choices for themselves and voluntarily in concert with others.

The motion to offer a pending substitute with the amended wording was adopted by a vote of 12 in favor and 1 opposed.

Plank 1.2 Personal Privacy

Mr. Holtz moved to adopt a recommendation for plank 1.2 Personal Privacy, and after amendment it became:

1.2. ~~Personal~~ Privacy and Self-Ownership

Libertarians recognize that each individual owns himself and therefore has the right to privacy. Libertarians support the rights recognized by the Fourth Amendment to be secure in our persons, homes, and property. Protection from unreasonable search and seizure should include records held by third parties, such as email, medical, and library records. ~~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.~~ Individuals have the freedom and responsibility to decide what media and substances they knowingly and voluntarily consume, and what risks they accept to their own health, finances, safety, or life.

And offer the delegates a pending amendment to consider changing "Individuals" to "Adults" in the final sentence.

Mr. Starr moved a substitute to instead move some content from Plank 1.2 to Plank 1.5, and with amendment the proposal became:

1.2 Personal Privacy

Libertarians support the rights recognized by the Fourth Amendment to be secure in our persons, homes, and property. Protection from unreasonable search and seizure should include records held by third parties, such as email, medical, and library records. ~~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.~~

1.5 Crime and Justice

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, [such as the use of drugs for medicinal or recreational purposes](#). We support restitution of the victim to the fullest degree possible at the expense of the criminal or the negligent wrongdoer. We oppose reduction of constitutional safeguards of the rights of the criminally accused. The rights of due process, a speedy trial, legal counsel, trial by jury, and the legal presumption of innocence until proven guilty, must not be denied. We assert the common-law right of juries to judge not only the facts but also the justice of the law.

Mr. Dovner moved a substitute recommendation:

1.2 Personal Privacy

Libertarians support the rights recognized by the Fourth Amendment to be secure in our persons, homes, and property. Protection from unreasonable search and seizure should include records held by third parties, such as email, medical, and library records. ~~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.~~ [Adults have the freedom and responsibility to decide what risks they accept to their own health, finances, safety, or life.](#)

1.5 Crime and Justice

Government exists to protect the rights of every individual including life, liberty and property. [Only actions that infringe on the rights of others can properly be termed crimes.](#) 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, [such as the use of drugs for medicinal or recreational purposes](#). We support restitution of the victim to the fullest degree possible at the expense of the criminal or the negligent wrongdoer. We oppose reduction of constitutional safeguards of the rights of the criminally accused. The rights of due process, a speedy trial, legal counsel, trial by jury, and the legal presumption of innocence until proven guilty, must not be denied. We assert the common-law right of juries to judge not only the facts but also the justice of the law.

The motion to substitute Mr. Dovner's proposal for Mr. Starr's failed.

The motion to substitute Mr. Starr's proposal for Mr. Holtz's failed.

Mr. Holtz's amended proposal as the main motion was adopted by a vote of 13 in favor and 0 opposed.

Plank 1.5 Crime and Justice

Ms. Mattson moved to adopt a proposal for Plank 1.5 Crime and Justice, and after amendment it became:

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 support restitution ~~of~~ [to](#) the victim to the fullest degree possible at the expense of the criminal or the negligent wrongdoer. We oppose reduction of constitutional safeguards of the rights of the criminally accused. The rights of due process, a speedy trial, legal counsel, trial by jury, and the legal presumption of innocence until proven guilty, must not be denied. We assert the common-law right of juries to judge not only the facts but also the justice of the law.

The motion was adopted by a vote of 13 in favor and 0 opposed.

Plank 1.6 Self Defense

Mr. Holtz moved to adopt a proposal to amend Plank 1.6 Self Defense, and after amendment it became:

~~The only legitimate use of force is in defense of individual rights — life, liberty, and justly acquired property — against aggression. This right inheres in the individual, who may agree to be aided by any other individual or group. We affirm the individual right recognized by the Second Amendment to keep and bear arms, and oppose the prosecution of individuals for exercising their rights of self-defense. We oppose all laws at any level of government requiring registration of, or restricting, the ownership, manufacture, or transfer or sale of firearms or ammunition.~~

Libertarians affirm the individual right recognized by the Second Amendment to keep and bear arms, recognizing that the only legitimate use of force is in defense of individual rights against aggression. Societies are safer when the self-defense rights of peaceable individuals are not abridged by laws prohibiting ownership, requiring registration of, or burdening the transfer or sale of personal defense weapons. Private property owners should be free to establish their own conditions regarding the possession or use of personal defense weapons on their own property.

Ms. Visek moved a substitute proposal:

The only legitimate use of force is in defense of individual rights — life, liberty, and justly acquired property — against aggression. This right inheres in the individual, who may agree to be aided by any other individual or group. We affirm the individual right recognized by the Second Amendment to keep and bear arms, and oppose the prosecution of individuals for exercising their rights of self-defense. We oppose all laws at any level of government requiring registration of, or restricting, the ownership, manufacture, or transfer or sale of firearms or ammunition by peaceable individuals.

And offer the delegates a pending amendment to change “individuals” to “adults” in the final sentence.

Mr. Randall moved a substitute proposal:

Societies are safer when the self-defense rights of peaceable individuals are not abridged by laws prohibiting or regulating the ownership, possession and transfer of personal defense weapons. The only legitimate use of force is in defense of individual rights — life, liberty, and justly acquired property — against aggression. This right inheres in the individual, who may agree to be aided by any other individual or group. We affirm the individual right recognized by the Second Amendment to keep and bear arms, and oppose the prosecution of individuals for exercising their rights of self-defense. ~~We oppose all laws at any level of government requiring registration of, or restricting, the ownership, manufacture, or transfer or sale of firearms or ammunition.~~ Private property owners should be free to establish their own conditions regarding the possession or use of personal defense weapons on their own property.

The motion to substitute Mr. Randall’s language for Ms. Visek’s was adopted, making Mr. Randall’s the primary amendment.

The motion to substitute Mr. Randall’s language for Mr. Holtz’s was adopted, making the Randall language the main motion.

The main motion (Randall language) was adopted by a vote of 11 in favor and 1 opposed.

Without objection at 12:10pm the committee adjourned until 1:15pm for lunch. At approximately 1:15 the meeting was called back to order.

Plank 2.4 Government Finance & Spending

Ms. Mattson proposed to adopt a recommendation for Plank 2.4 Government Finance & Spending, which after amendment became:

~~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 U.S. Constitution. We oppose any legal requirements forcing employers to serve as tax collectors. Government should not incur debt, which burdens future generations without their consent. We support the passage of a "Balanced Budget Amendment" to the U.S. Constitution, provided that the budget is balanced exclusively by cutting expenditures, and not by raising taxes.~~

People should be free to keep the fruits of their labor and live the American dream without having their success taxed for pork projects, social engineering, special favors to lobbyists, bailouts of failed private investments of others, subsidies for private industries, charities chosen by the government rather than by the donor, and funding the consequences of other individuals' irresponsible personal choices. We call for the federal government to be scaled back to its Constitutional limits, which would allow the elimination of income, payroll, and many other taxes. Future generations should not be born into a debt burden from previous generations, as it is taxation without representation, so government has a responsibility to eliminate its long-term debt and operate under balanced budgets.

Mr. Starr offered a substitute motion to instead split the same plank into three separate ones as follows:

2.4 Restoring Constitutional Government

People should be free to live the American dream without having their success taxed for pork projects, social engineering, special favors to lobbyists, bailouts of failed private investments, subsidies for private industries, charities chosen by the government rather than by the donor, and funding the consequences of other individuals' irresponsible personal choices. Accordingly, we call for the federal government to be scaled back to its Constitutional limits, which would allow the elimination of income, payroll, and many other taxes.

New 2.5 Ensuring Federalism

Most legitimate functions of government belong not in Washington, D.C., but rather at state and local levels, where programs and policies can be more responsively tailored to protect people's rights and meet local conditions. Our country's Founding Fathers understood the power of the purse. To better ensure the federal government is limited in its scope, reduce its intrusion into our daily lives and hold it more accountable to the states, we propose its operations be funded solely by states in proportion to population, with each state deciding the best manner of providing its share of such funds, provided that such methods do not impede interstate commerce.

New 2.6 Balancing the Budget

Because our children and grandchildren should not be born into a debt burden imposed upon them by previous generations – perhaps the most glaring form today of taxation without representation – government has a moral responsibility to operate under balanced budgets and extinguish its long-term debts.

With consent of the body, Mr. Starr's proposal was withdrawn.

The main motion as amended was adopted by a vote of 12 in favor and 1 opposed.

Mr. Starr moved to adopt a new plank as follows:

New 2.5 Decentralizing Government

Most legitimate functions of government belong not in Washington, D.C., but rather at state and local levels, where programs and policies can be more responsively tailored to protect people's rights and meet local conditions. Our country's Founding Fathers understood the power of the purse. To better ensure the federal government is limited in its scope, reduce its intrusion into our daily lives and hold it more accountable to the states, we propose its operations be funded solely by states in proportion to population, with each state deciding the best manner of providing its share of such funds, provided that such methods do not impede interstate commerce.

The main motion failed by a vote of 5 in favor and 7 opposed.

Plank 2.5 Money and Financial Markets

Mr. Holtz moved to amend Plank 2.5 Money and Financial Markets as follows:

We favor free-market banking, with unrestricted competition among banks and depository institutions of all types. Markets are not actually free unless fraud is vigorously prosecuted and neither profits nor losses are socialized. Individuals engaged in voluntary exchange should be free to use as money any mutually agreeable commodity or item. We support a halt to inflationary monetary policies and repeal of unconstitutional legal tender laws.

Mr. Starr moved a substitute proposal which after amendment became:

~~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 support a halt to inflationary monetary policies and unconstitutional legal tender laws.~~

Libertarians would halt government's manipulative monetary policies, which favor large financial institutions and special interests while reducing the purchasing power of hard-working Americans. Government has a legitimate role combating fraud in financial markets. We favor free financial markets, where private investors assume financial risks, and are entitled to the rewards of honestly acquired gains, without expecting taxpayers to subsidize them or bail out their losses.

The motion to substitute was adopted, making Mr. Starr's language the main motion.

The main motion (Starr language) was then adopted by a vote of 11 in favor and 1 opposed.

Plank 2.7 Labor Markets

Ms. Mattson moved to adopt the following recommendation for Plank 2.7 Labor Markets:

~~We support repeal of all laws which impede the ability of any person to find employment. We oppose government fostered forced retirement. We support the right of free persons to associate or not associate in labor unions, and an employer should have the right to recognize or refuse to recognize a union. We oppose government interference in bargaining, such as compulsory arbitration or imposing an obligation to bargain.~~

Libertarians believe employment and compensation agreements between private employers and employees are outside the province of government, and these private contracts should not be impeded by government-mandated benefits and social engineering requirements. We support the right of private sector employers and employees to choose whether or not to bargain with each other through a labor union, provided that it is conducted without governmental interference such as compulsory arbitration. Since government employers are protected monopolies funded by taxpayers and not subject to market forces, we oppose government employee unions and advocate replacing government employee defined-benefit pensions with defined-contribution plans which are typically found in the private sector.

The main motion was adopted by a vote of 9 in favor and 4 opposed.

Plank 2.8 Education

Mr. Randall moved to adopt the following proposal for Plank 2.8 Education:

~~Education, like any other service, is best provided by the free market, achieving greater quality and efficiency with more diversity of choice. Schools should be managed locally to achieve greater accountability and parental involvement. Recognizing that the education of children is inextricably linked to moral values, we would return authority to parents to determine the education of their children, without interference from government. In particular, parents should have control of and responsibility for all funds expended for their children's education.~~

Education is best provided by the free market, achieving greater quality, accountability and efficiency with more diversity of choice. Recognizing that the education of children is a parental responsibility, we would restore authority to parents to determine the education of their children, without interference from government. Parents should have control of and responsibility for all funds expended for their children's education.

The main motion was adopted by a vote of 12 in favor and 0 opposed.

Plank 2.9 Health Care

Mr. Starr moved to adopt a proposal submitted by Ms. Mattson for Plank 2.9 Health Care:

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 (if any), 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, including end-of-life decisions. People should be free to purchase health insurance across state lines.

The main motion was adopted by a vote of 12 in favor and 0 opposed.

Plank 3.4 Free Trade and Migration

Mr. Starr moved to adopt a proposal for Plank 3.4 Free Trade and Migration, which after amendment became:

~~We support the removal of governmental impediments to free trade. Political freedom and escape from tyranny demand 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 credible threat to security, health or property.~~

We welcome those not requiring public assistance to come to our country to embrace the American dream, as their pursuit of happiness enriches their lives and our own. However, to ensure the general welfare of those already here, we would bar from entry those foreign nationals posing a credible threat to security, health or property. Because Libertarians understand that free trade improves standards of living and reduces the likelihood of war, we support the free movement of goods and capital across national borders.

The main motion was adopted by a vote of 12 in favor and 0 opposed.

Plank 3.5 Rights and Discrimination

Mr. Randall moved to adopt a recommendation for Plank 3.5 Rights and Discrimination, which after amendment became:

~~We condemn bigotry as irrational and repugnant. 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.~~ [Libertarians embrace the concept that all people are born with certain inherent rights. We reject the idea that a natural right can ever impose an obligation upon others to fulfill that "right." Government should neither deny or abridge any individual's human right based upon sex, wealth, ethnicity, 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.

The main motion was adopted by a vote of 9 in favor and 1 opposed and 3 abstentions.

Mr. Holtz moved to adopt a separate recommendation for Plank 3.5 Rights and Discrimination:

We condemn bigotry as irrational and repugnant. 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 [— unless a jury finds abuse, neglect, or reckless endangerment.](#)

The motion was adopted by a vote of 13 in favor and 0 opposed.

Plank 3.6 Representative Government

Ms. Mattson moved to adopt the following recommendation for Plank 3.6 Representative Government:

We support [electoral voting](#) 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 oppose laws that effectively exclude alternative candidates and parties, deny ballot access, gerrymander districts, or deny the voters their right to consider all legitimate alternatives.

The main motion was adopted by a vote of 13 in favor and 0 opposed.

Mr. Padgett moved to adopt a separate recommendation for Plank 3.6 Representative Government, which after amendment became:

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 oppose laws that effectively exclude alternative candidates and parties, deny ballot access, gerrymander districts, or deny the voters their right to consider all legitimate alternatives. [We advocate initiative, referendum, recall and repeal when used as popular checks on government.](#)

The main motion was adopted by a vote of 10 in favor and 0 opposed with 3 abstentions.

1.4 Abortion

Following extensive debate of various options, Mr. Starr moved to adopt the following recommendation for Plank 1.4 Abortion:

Recognizing that abortion is a sensitive issue and that people can hold good-faith views on all sides, we believe that government should be kept out of the matter, leaving the question to each person for their conscientious consideration. [We welcome both pro-life and pro-choice members into the Libertarian Party.](#)

The main motion was adopted by a vote of 9 in favor and 4 opposed.

Mr. Starr moved to adopt a separate recommendation for Plank 1.4 Abortion:

Recognizing that abortion is a sensitive issue and that people can hold good-faith views on all sides, we believe that government should be kept out of the matter, leaving the question to each person for their conscientious consideration. [Taxpayer funds should not be used to pay for abortions.](#)

The main motion was adopted by a vote of 13 in favor and 0 opposed.

New Proposals

Mr. Randall moved to adopt a recommendation for a new plank as follows:

[1.7 Government Service](#)

[All forms of government service, such as serving in the military or serving on a jury, should be voluntary. Government service must never be a prerequisite for exercising a civil right.](#)

The main motion failed by a vote of 1 in favor and 12 opposed.

Mr. Starr moved to adjourn, which motion failed by a vote of 5 in favor and 6 opposed.

Following informal discussion to see if there was support for a proposal suggested by LNC member Dan Karlan on the subject of torture, no motion came from the discussion.

Mr. Holtz moved to adjourn, and it was adopted without objection at 5:30pm.