

Report of the
2012 Libertarian Party Platform Committee



Recommendations adopted December 9, 2011
(DRAFT for committee review – last updated 12/22/11)

2012 Platform Committee Members

LNC Appointees:

Chris Barber
Jeff Dimit
Randy Eshelman
Sam Goldstein
Joe Hauptmann
Brian Holtz
Alicia Mattson - Chair
Richard Randall
Rebecca Sink-Burris
Aaron Starr

Top-Ten State Appointees:

Bruce Dovner (CA)
John Shuey (TX)
Lynn House (FL)
Ann Leech (OH)
Christian Padgett (NY)
Jim Lark (VA)
Kent McMillen (IL)
Vern Etzel (PA)
Debbie Schum (CO)
Jason Pye (GA)

Alternates

LNC Appointees:

(none)

Top-Ten State Appointees:

Jon Roland (TX)
Dianna Visek (IL)

NOTES:

This report is subject to amendment at the committee's next meeting on May 2, 2012 in Las Vegas, prior to the national convention.

The committee has not yet determined in which order these proposals will be presented to the convention delegates. That decision will be made in our May 2, 2012 meeting.

The entire current platform can be found at: www.lp.org/platform. This report merely shows the portions for which the committee is recommending changes.

LEGEND:

Unchanged text from current platform

~~Text proposed to be deleted~~

[Text proposed to be added](#)

1.0 Personal Liberty

committee adopted by vote of 12-0

~~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.

The committee also recommended a pending amendment for the delegates to consider substituting an alternate proposal as shown below for the proposal above:

pending amendment adopted by vote of 12-1

~~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.

1.2 Personal Privacy

committee adopted by vote of 13-0

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.

The committee also recommended a pending amendment for the delegates to consider amending the final sentence of the above proposal as follows:

~~Individuals Adults~~ 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.

1.4 Abortion

*first of two recommendations for this plank
committee adopted by vote of 9-4*

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.](#)

*second of two recommendations for this plank
committee adopted by vote of 13-0*

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.](#)

1.5 Crime and Justice

committee adopted by vote of 13-0

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.

1.6 Self-Defense

committee adopted by vote of 11-1

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.

2.4 Government Finance and Spending

committee adopted by vote of 12-1

~~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.

2.5 Money and Financial Markets

committee adopted by vote of 11-1

~~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.

2.7 Labor Markets

committee adopted by vote of 9-4

~~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.

2.8 Education

committee adopted by vote of 12-0

~~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.

2.9 Health Care

committee adopted by vote of 12-0

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.

3.4 Free Trade and Migration

committee adopted by vote of 12-0

~~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.

3.5 Rights and Discrimination

*first of two recommendations for this plank
committee adopted by vote of 9-1 with 3 abstentions*

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.

*second of two recommendations for this plank
committee adopted by vote of 13-0*

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.

3.6 Representative Government

*first of two recommendations for this plank
committee adopted by a vote of 13-0*

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.

*second of two recommendations for this plank
committee adopted by a vote of 10-0 with 3 abstentions*

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.