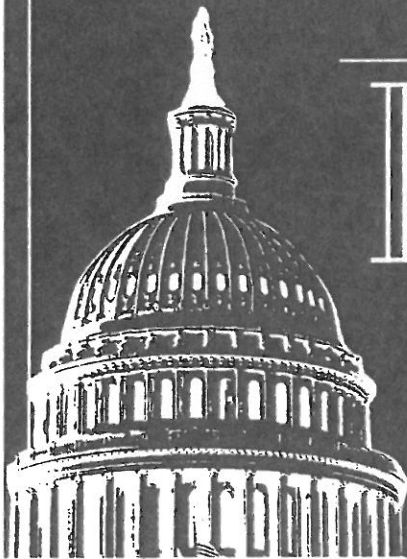


OFFICIAL POSITIONS ON IMPORTANT PUBLIC ISSUES

National Program

OF THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY



ADOPTED BY THE LIBERTARIAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE 23 AUGUST 1992

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PREAMBLE

Libertarians believe that each of us should be allowed to plan his or her own future. We believe that individuals have the right to deal with their own problems. This can be done individually or by working with others in a peaceful and honest way. We reject the initiation of force by anyone, including government.

Today our government uses force, or the threat of force, to achieve most of its goals. Repeated failures by our government have shown us that this is not a practical approach. As Libertarians, we also believe that this use of force is immoral.

Libertarians seek a world in which voluntary cooperation replaces force in human relationships. We recognize that such a world cannot be achieved overnight. We have identified several important issues which are topics currently in the political spotlight. In each case, we believe there are substantial changes that could be made to move toward our goal — replacing aggression and force with peace and cooperation.

Toward that end, we offer the following Program.



JOBS & UNEMPLOY- MENT

Millions of Americans who are willing and able to work are unemployed. Republicans and Democrats argue over band-aids like extending unemployment benefits and creating make-work government jobs. Meanwhile, they ignore the major cause of unemployment: their own policies. When government officials inflate the supply of money, when they give special privileges to banks, and when they try to plan the economy, they cause cycles of boom and bust — cycles that misdirect investors, destroy healthy companies, and put workers out of work.

Some politicians propose that the government should guarantee a job to every American. Other politicians believe a national industrial policy will put people to work. The Soviet Union tried these policies for decades. The result was national bankruptcy and widespread poverty. Why should we make the same mistakes that the Soviets made?

The only cure for unemployment is a real job. The only effective way to create real jobs is to have a strong economy.

The Democrats and Republicans have destroyed jobs by:

- Taking money consumers and businesses would otherwise use to purchase goods and services,
- Taking money individuals and companies would otherwise use for investment,
- Subsidizing foreign governments, foreign businesses, and foreign citizens,
- Financing their massive budget deficit with borrowed money that otherwise could be used for business expansion and job creation,
- Smothering workers, business people, and investors with endless regulations and bloated bureaucracy, and
- Restricting commerce and trade.

Each year, our government takes over \$200 billion in taxes from American consumers and businesses to subsidize foreign governments, foreign companies, and foreign citizens. The U.S. provides foreign countries free defense, direct military aid, direct economic aid, guaranteed loans, and other subsidies too numerous to list. Our government is sending your hard earned dollars to many of our fiercest competitors. This puts businesses here at a competitive disadvantage.

The U.S. corporate income tax discourages the flow of capital into America to open and expand businesses and create new jobs. Companies that pay lower taxes can produce goods and services at a lower cost and be more competitive in world markets. Companies that pay higher taxes have to pass those extra costs on to someone — usually their customers. This raises prices for American consumers and helps price American goods out of foreign markets. The result is lost jobs at home.

More jobs are lost because of useless regulations and bureaucratic mandates. Large companies must devote resources to comply with each new regulation instead of becoming more competitive, expanding, and creating new jobs. Small businesses, which generate the vast majority of new jobs, frequently cannot afford to comply. They go out of business and unemployment rises.

The free flow of goods and services is a major source of employment in a market economy. Anything which restricts trade, either within a country or between countries, contributes to unemployment. Democrats and Republicans may talk about eliminating subsidies, trade barriers, and tariffs, but they haven't done it. The current U.S. policy of subsidizing agriculture, limiting imports, and erecting countless other barriers to

trade is the exact opposite of the free trade position that our government claims to support.

To enable Americans to find jobs, we must do everything in our power to give workers, and the companies they work for, the ability to compete in world markets. The Libertarian Party supports five major initiatives to achieve this goal:

- Phase out all direct and indirect subsidies to foreign nations, foreign companies, and foreign citizens.
- End double taxation of corporate profits.



EDUCATION & SCHOOLS

Public schools are supposed to provide a good education for our children. More often than not, they don't. Each year public schools graduate more and more students who are unable to read, write, or do basic arithmetic. Our children's talents are wasted because we continue to trust politicians to do this important job. Politicians have had decades to fix these problems, and they haven't been able to do so.

In recent years, government involvement in education has grown rapidly. At the same time, the quality of the education offered to most public school students has gone down. We are finding, as with so many other government efforts, that throwing more money or more regulations at this problem does not fix it. The best way to end the crisis in education is to deal with the main cause — government involvement.

The politicians who run the public schools have created new regulations and mandated new programs. These are imposed on local schools. We have more bureaucracy and less innovation. We have more red tape and less creativity. More resources are spent on these matters. The cost of education goes up. The quality of education goes down.

Many public schools have become dangerous places for our children. The news is filled with reports of drug use, rapes, assaults, and murders in our schools. It's difficult to expect a child to learn in a place where the child does not feel safe. Yet most families have no choice but to send their children to the local public school, no matter how dangerous.

It's no surprise that poor children suffer the most under the current system. Wealthy parents can afford to send their children to better or safer

➤ Eliminate regulations and mandates that make companies less competitive and cost jobs.

➤ Unilaterally end all domestic subsidy programs, trade barriers and tariffs.

➤ End government economic meddling that results in depressions and recessions that destroy jobs. ■

schools. Poor parents have no choice. Their children generally end up in the schools with the worst problems. These children end up at a public school, which is obligated to accept every local student, even those who are not interested in learning or who have a reputation for being disruptive or dangerous. The current system traps poor children in poor schools. This is just one reason that many parents have given up hope that their children will escape the poverty they have known.

To solve a crisis, you must recognize and eliminate its cause. The crisis in education is no different. The most important step is to end government control of education. We must move toward a system where parents have good, safe, affordable choices for educating their children.

To transfer control of education from bureaucrats to parents and teachers and encourage alternatives to the public school monopoly, the Libertarian Party would:

➤ Support a true market in education — one in which parents and students would not be stuck with a bad local school, because they could choose another.

➤ Implement measures such as tax credits so that parents will have the financial ability to choose among schools.

➤ Provide financial incentives for businesses to help fund schools and for individuals to support students other than their own children.

➤ Eliminate the U.S. Department of Education, which spends billions on education and educates no one. The growth of this agency and its numerous regulations is a major reason for runaway costs in American schools. ■



POLITICAL CORRUPTION

Americans of all backgrounds are sick and tired of the growing problem of political corruption and abuse. Every day more and more examples of the abuse of power by elected and appointed officials hit the newsstands. These problems are epidemic in both the Democratic and the Republican parties.

The House Bank — set up with bipartisan support — was supposed to be a convenient way for busy congressmen to cash their paychecks. What it turned out to be was a scam for many congressmen — a way to write bad checks often totalling more than a congressman's pay. If you or I did this at our local bank, we would be subject to criminal prosecution and fines in most states. Why should congressmen allow themselves to do something wrong? Should we be surprised that a group of people who cannot balance their own checkbooks cannot balance our national budget?

Both parties in Congress have voted to give themselves dozens of special privileges — everything from free airport parking to health clubs to

cheap haircuts to passing laws that do not apply to them. How different is this from the way that kings, queens, and dictators make demands of their citizens while they do what they please?

Both the Democrats and the Republicans vote to use our tax dollars to pay for their election campaigns and their conventions. Tens of millions of taxpayer dollars are used for this every four years. They use our money for their purposes so that they don't have to use their own. Isn't it time that members of Congress pay their own bills instead of making us pay them?

Then, to make it harder to challenge their power, both parties have cooperated in enacting laws in almost every state that make it very difficult and extremely expensive for any other candidate to get on the ballot. Even billionaire Ross Perot has commented that the law in most states makes it difficult to get on the election ballot. If the business of Congress were anything other than politics, people would be calling for Congress and its members to be subject to anti-trust laws to prevent their monopoly from being abused ever again. Congress has done a good job to make sure that the laws they write to rule over

others don't apply to Congress or its members.

And to add insult to injury, Congress has had no problem finding the time or spending the money to give themselves a big, fat raise. Wouldn't you love it if you only had to vote "yes" to get a huge raise whenever you wanted one? If nothing else, doesn't this make it clear that members of Congress see themselves as a special, privileged class?

Libertarians believe that elected officials should not hide behind special privileges that exempt them from the rules they impose on the people who elect them. Libertarians believe that elected officials do not deserve and should not have any rights or privileges that are different from those of any other citizen. We support:

- Elimination of special rights and privileges for elected or appointed government officials.
- Revision of any law or regulation that exempts the government or its officials from compliance.
- Ending government funding of any political party or candidate.
- Revision of state and federal laws to enable all candidates for elective office to be included on election ballots. ■



HEALTH CARE & HEALTH COSTS

During childhood, most of us learned that if a little bit of something is bad, a lot is usually worse. Regrettably, most Republican and Democratic politicians haven't learned this simple lesson. Congress has 535 members who have submitted over 600 proposals for some form of socialized medicine (known as "national health care") or national health insurance. They are tripping over each other to solve a problem that they helped cause.

The most common reason given for further government involvement in health care is the rapidly growing cost of these services. While medical costs certainly have risen rapidly, it is necessary to understand the reasons for the cost increases before proposing any solution. Among these reasons are:

- Advancement of new technologies, many of which are expensive to develop and to provide to patients.
- Expansion of federal and state regulation of medical services, which has led to skyrocketing costs. Examples of such regulations include certificates of need, hospital licensure, and Medicaid

reimbursement policies.

- Growth of fraud in federal and state programs.
- State-mandated insurance benefits, which drive up the cost of insurance by forcing employers to provide unwanted and unneeded frills.
- Food and Drug Administration drug approval procedures, which cost consumers about \$200 million for each new drug while failing to assure drug safety.
- The government-sponsored licensing monopoly that requires physician services when others (e.g. midwives, nurses, optometrists, and pharmacists) could perform as well and at a much lower cost to the patient.
- Tax policy that encourages employers, rather than their employees, to make health care choices. This discourages individuals from acting as informed consumers of health insurance or health care.

All but one of these factors involve an action taken by the government which results in increased prices for health care.

It is clear that national health care or national

health insurance will not address any of the sources of price increases:

- If we want to have new technology available, someone has to pay the price to develop and provide it. Passing a law cannot reduce these costs. It can only affect who pays for them. The Pentagon has taught us that the government is a horrible purchasing agent.
- Adding new government programs will not address the cost increases which have resulted from prior government programs. If anything, it is another step in the wrong direction, and it is certain to increase costs.
- If the government cannot control Medicare and Medicaid fraud today, it is foolish to think that it could cope with the same issues more effectively under a nationwide program covering everyone.
- State mandates will not be eliminated when the government controls health care. Federal control means that all health services will be provided subject to federal regulations and mandates.
- National health care will in no way eliminate the current regulations and requirements for

introduction of a new drug.

A little bit of government involvement in the health care industry brought increased problems. Greater involvement brought about the current mess. Expanding the role of government involvement further is clearly the path to disaster. We believe that a government-operated health care system would have the efficiency of the Post Office, the cost-effectiveness of the Pentagon,



VIOLENCE, CRIME, & DRUGS

As violent crime increases, each of us grows more and more concerned. We should feel safe and secure, but our government has failed to protect us.

Violent crime continues to increase in this country. We must devote more resources to finding and prosecuting people who commit violent crimes such as murder, rape, assault, and arson. Unfortunately, we cannot, because so many resources go to a battle we cannot win — the “war on drugs.”

Drug dealers, not drug users, commit most violent crimes associated with drugs. The “war on drugs” drives up drug prices, which attracts more people to the drug trade. When potential profit increases, drug dealers resort to greater extremes, including violence. They fight each other and law enforcement officials to defend their very profitable turf. Occasionally they kill innocent bystanders in the crossfire. Those few crimes committed by drug users also are a result of artificially high drug prices. Desperate drug addicts commit more and more robberies to keep up with the increasing cost of their habits.

We know from past experience how to solve this problem. During Prohibition, when alcohol was banned, violence increased from turf wars between bootleggers. When Prohibition ended, so did the violence related to bootlegging. The per capita murder rate decreased for nine consecutive years after the end of Prohibition.

Do we hear about alcohol distributors having a shootout on the street today? Of course not. Why? Because there is no reason to commit violent crimes when operating a legal business. While those addicted to alcohol certainly suffer, at least they don't have to steal to support their habit. People addicted to alcohol don't rob houses because they can obtain enough money through other means, be it a job or panhandling.

Earlier this century, drugs were legal in the United States. If the importation, sale, and use of

and the compassion of the Internal Revenue Service. If you doubt this, then we suggest you look north to Canada where the Canadian national health program has people dying while they wait for rationed health services.

The Libertarian Party advocates reversing direction and getting the government completely out of the health care business. ■

drugs were legal again, open competition would eliminate the extreme profitability of drug dealing. The violence of drug dealing would cease because dealers would no longer have the economic incentive to commit violent crimes. We can expect the end of drug prohibition to lead to the same decrease in violent crime we experienced after the end of alcohol Prohibition.

Illegal drugs are no different than the legal drugs called alcohol and tobacco. Some illegal drugs may be harmful to the mind or body, just like alcohol and tobacco. Some are addictive, just like alcohol and tobacco. If these drugs were made legal, as they once were, the government would not be encouraging their use, just as the government does not encourage alcohol or tobacco use, even though they are legal.

Over 500,000 Americans die each year as a result of using alcohol, tobacco, and other legal

and illegal drugs. Alcohol and tobacco combined account for almost 95% of the total. Another 4% come from overdoses of legal drugs. Even though millions of Americans use illegal drugs every year (over 26 million in 1990 according to the government), these drugs are responsible for only about 1% of these deaths. If banning drugs to protect people from themselves makes sense, it makes more sense to ban alcohol and tobacco. Yet there is no call for such a ban, because Prohibition has already failed, as would a ban on tobacco. When will the government learn that all attempts at prohibition will fail in a free society?

The Libertarian Party recognizes that if people in a free society want a product — be it whiskey, cigarettes, Valium®, marijuana, or cocaine — they will find a way to get it, whether or not it is legal.

We do not endorse drug use. We do not encourage drug use. We do, however, support legalization of all drugs. We realize that government action in a free country cannot stop drug use. Legalization will help to eliminate drug-related violent crime and will, therefore, help reduce our overall crime problem.

The Libertarian Party also recognizes that resources devoted to the “war on drugs” could better be used to fight other crimes such as murder, rape, theft, and fraud. As long as billions of dollars are spent on a battle we cannot win, we will have inadequate resources to fight these other battles that we must win. ■

HOW TO JOIN THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY

YES! I want to become a proud dues-paying member of the Libertarian Party. I have enclosed \$25. I'll receive 12 monthly issues of the party newspaper, *LP News*, and a bonus copy of the book *Libertarianism in One Lesson*.

I certify that I do not believe in or advocate the initiation of force as a means of achieving political or social goals.

Check/money order enclosed.
(No corporate checks, please.)

Please bill my: Visa MasterCard.

SIGNATURE REQUIRED FOR MEMBERSHIP

Total payment \$

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ACCT. #

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Please make checks payable to:
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1528 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
Washington DC 20003

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