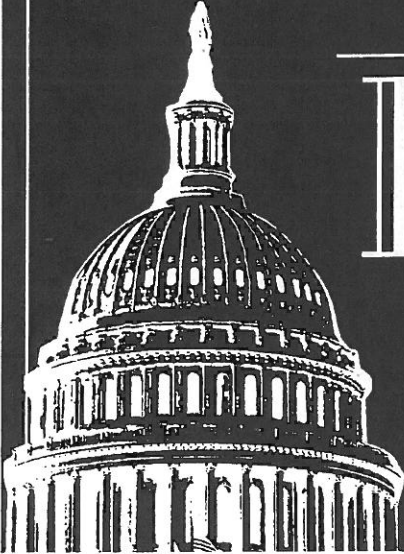


OFFICIAL POSITIONS ON IMPORTANT PUBLIC ISSUES

National Program

OF THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY



UPDATED BY THE LIBERTARIAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE 30 APRIL 1995

LIBERTARIAN PARTY ★ 2600 VIRGINIA AVENUE, NW, SUITE 100 ★ WASHINGTON DC 20037 ★ (202) 333-0008 ★ FOR INFORMATION: (800) 682-1776

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 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

- 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. ■

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

that our system is in crisis.

Twenty years ago, health care was a \$42 billion per year industry. Today, health care costs Americans more than \$2 billion per day, more than 14% of our Gross Domestic Product. These soaring costs are putting enormous financial pressures on American businesses, forcing thousands of small businesses to reduce or drop benefits for their employees. Moreover, health care costs are an increasing burden to already strained family budgets. At the same time, nearly 35 million Americans lack health insurance.

But, President Clinton's proposals for socialized medicine are worse than the disease. The Clinton plan would increase costs, destroy jobs, impose broad new taxes on the American people, destroy consumer choice, and lead to the rationing of care.

The only health care reforms that are likely to have a significant impact on America's health care problems are those that draw on the strength of the free market. The Libertarian Party has developed a comprehensive proposal for health care reform that will reduce health care costs, while

extending access to care.

The Libertarian Party believes there is a better way. Our five-point plan is as follows:

➤ Establish Medical Savings Accounts. One key to controlling health care costs is strengthening the role of the individual health care consumer. As part of this process, an individual should be exempted from taxes on money deposited in a Medical Savings Account (MSA), in the same way that he currently pays no taxes on deposits to an IRA. Money could be withdrawn from an MSA without penalty to pay medical expenses. This would increase consumer responsibility, while increasing access and controlling costs.

➤ Restructure tax policy. As a second consumer-based reform, taxes should be restructured to establish equity in the treatment of employer-provided health insurance, individually purchased health insurance, and out-of-pocket medical expenses. All health care expenditures should be 100% tax deductible. This will add a measure of fairness to current tax policies which penalize the self-employed, part-time workers, and employees of small businesses, while subsidizing health care for the most affluent in our society.

➤ Deregulate the health care industry. There should be a thorough examination of the extent to which government policies are responsible

for rising health costs and the unavailability of health care services. America can help lower health care costs and expand health care access by taking immediate steps to deregulate the health care industry, including elimination of mandated benefits, repeal of the "Certificate-of-Need" program, and expansion of the scope of practice for non-physician health professionals.

➤ Replace the FDA. The Food and Drug Administration is clearly an unnecessary burden on the American health care system. There is no evidence that agency offers Americans any real protection, but there is massive evidence that it is causing great harm — driving up health care costs and depriving millions of Americans of the medical care they need. The agency should be abolished and replaced with voluntary certification by a private-sector organization, similar to the way Underwriters Laboratories certifies electrical appliances.

➤ Privatize Medicare and Medicaid. The current Medicare and Medicaid systems have clearly failed. Costs are skyrocketing. Patients are receiving second rate care. And, providers are being shortchanged. The time is ripe for drastic reform. The federal government should begin to restructure the system to give Medicaid and Medicare recipients more flexibility to purchase private health insurance. ■



VIOLENCE, CRIME, & DRUGS

America suffers from an epidemic of violence and crime, victimizing one family out of four every year. There is a murder every half hour, a rape every five minutes, and a theft every four seconds.

Despite decades of tough talk, the anti-crime policies of the Republicans and Democrats have clearly failed. The Libertarian Party believes a fresh approach is needed. That's why we're offering this five-point plan for making America's streets safe:

➤ **Protect Victims' Rights.** Protecting the rights and interests of victims should be the basis of our criminal justice system. Victims should have the right to be present, consulted and heard throughout the prosecution of their case.

In addition, Libertarians would do more than just punish criminals. We would also make them pay restitution to their victims for the damage they've caused, including property loss, medical costs, pain, and suffering. If you are the victim of a crime, the criminal should fully compensate you for your loss.

➤ **End Prohibition.** Drug prohibition does more to make Americans unsafe than any other factor. Just as alcohol prohibition gave us Al Capone and the mafia, drug prohibition has given us the Crips, the Bloods and drive-by shootings. Consider the historical evidence: America's murder rate rose nearly 70% during alcohol prohibition, but returned to its previous levels after prohibition ended. Now, since the War on Drugs began, America's murder rates have doubled. The cause/effect relationship is clear. Prohibition is putting innocent lives at risk.

What's more, drug prohibition also inflates the cost of drugs, leading users to steal to support their high priced habits. It is estimated that drug addicts commit 25% of all auto thefts, 40% of robberies and assaults, and 50% of burglaries and larcenies. Prohibition puts your property at risk.

Finally, nearly one half of all police resources are devoted to stopping drug trafficking, instead of preventing violent crime. The bottom line? By ending drug prohibition, Libertarians would double the resources available for crime prevention and significantly reduce the number of violent criminals at work in your neighborhood.

➤ **Get Tough on Real Crime.** The Libertarian Party is the party of personal responsibility. We believe that anyone who harms another person should be held responsible for that action. By contrast, the Democrats and Republicans have created a system where criminals can get away with almost anything.

For instance: sentences seldom mean what

they say. Fewer than one out of every four violent felons serves more than four years. Libertarians would dramatically reduce the number of these early releases by eliminating their root cause — prison over crowding.

Since nearly six out of every ten federal prison inmates are there for non-violent drug-related offenses, it's clear that drug prohibition is the primary source of this over-crowding. It has been estimated that every drug offender imprisoned results in the release of one violent criminal, who then commits an average of 40 robberies, 7 assaults, 110 burglaries and 25 auto thefts. Early release of violent criminals puts you and your family at risk. It must stop.

➤ **Protect the Right to Self-Defense.** We believe that the private ownership of firearms is part of the solution to America's crime epidemic, not part of the problem. Evidence: law-abiding citizens in Florida have been able to carry concealed weapons since 1987. During that time, the murder rate in Florida has declined 21% while the national murder rate has increased 12%.

In addition, evidence shows that self-defense with guns is the safest response to violent crime. It results in fewer injuries to the defender (17.4% injury rate) than any other response, including not resisting at all (24.7% injury rate). Libertarians would repeal waiting periods, concealed carry laws, and other restrictions that make it difficult for victims to defend themselves, and end the prosecution of individuals for exercising their

rights of self-defense.

➤ **Address the Root Causes of Crime.** Any society that lets kids grow up dependent on government welfare, attending government schools that fail to teach, and entering an economy where government policy has crushed opportunity, will be a society that breeds criminals. No permanent solution to crime will be found until we address these root causes of crime.

The Libertarian Party would increase employment opportunities by slashing taxes and government red tape. We would also end the welfare system with its culture of dependence and hopelessness. Most important of all, we would promote low-cost private alternatives to the failed government school system.

The Libertarian Party's anti-crime plan would do what the Democrats and Republicans have not done:

➤ **Respect the victim's rights and make criminals pay full restitution.**

➤ **Hold all criminals responsible for their actions.**

➤ **Double the police resources available for crime prevention without any additional government spending.**

➤ **Reduce the number of criminals at large on our streets.**

➤ **Defend the most effective crime deterrent available, the private ownership of guns.**

➤ **Create jobs, end welfare dependence, and improve education.** ■

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.

Total payment \$

ACCT. #

EXPIRES

SIGNATURE FOR CREDIT CARD PAYMENT

Please make checks payable to:

THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY
2600 Virginia Avenue, NW, Suite 100
Washington DC 20037

SIGNATURE REQUIRED FOR MEMBERSHIP

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

HOMEPHONE

WORKPHONE

EMPLOYER

OCCUPATION

Federal law requires political committees to report the name, mailing address, and occupation and name of employer for each individual whose contributions aggregate in excess of \$200 in a calendar year. Political contributions are not tax-deductible.