

Platform of the Libertarian Party of New Hampshire

PREAMBLE

As Libertarians, we seek a world of liberty; a world in which all individuals are sovereign over their own lives and no one is forced to sacrifice his or her values for the benefit of others. We believe that respect for individual rights is the essential precondition for a free and prosperous world, that force and fraud must be banished from human relationships, and that only through freedom can peace and prosperity be realized.

Consequently, we defend each person's right to engage in any activity that is peaceful and honest, and welcome the diversity that freedom brings. The world we seek to build is one where individuals are free to follow their own dreams in their own ways, without interference from government or any authoritarian power.

In the following pages we have set forth our basic principles and enumerated various policy positions derived from those principles. These specific policies are not our goal, however. Our goal is nothing more nor less than a world set free in our lifetime, and it is to this end that we take these stands.

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 the 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.

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I. The Individual

1.1 Natural Rights

We believe that every human is born with certain unalienable rights to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness; and that no individual, group, or government may violate or void these rights. We believe that all people are endowed with such inherent, natural rights regardless of age, sex, gender, orientation, race, nationality, creed, or religion.

1.2 Self-Ownership

We recognize that individuals own their bodies and have exclusive rights over them which other individuals can not exercise. We do not believe that individuals, groups, or governments may ever legitimately claim ownership of other individuals. To these ends, we reject and oppose all laws which allow for the subjugation of individuals by other individuals or groups without just cause or due process.

1.3 Voluntary Action

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1.4 Self-Defense

We support every individual's right to self-defense and, by extension, the right to keep and bear arms. We believe that every person may exercise their right to self-defense wherever they have a right to be. We reject all laws at any level of government restricting, prohibiting, registering, or monitoring the ownership, manufacture, modification, transport or transfer of any item, tool, or accessory that may be used for self-defense.

1.5 Privacy

Just as it is true that the only economic situation consistent with individual rights is the free market, so is it also true that life, liberty and happiness cannot prosper under continuous state surveillance. We oppose the use by the state of people or technology to monitor, account for, and keep Granite Staters under surveillance, especially where there is no evidence of criminal behavior, and thereby restrict the normal interaction of people. We oppose passive surveillance legislation, such as laws that require individuals and businesses to report legal activities without evidence of criminal acts.

II. The Market

2.1 Property

The ownership of property is essential to the function of the market. We hold that rights to property are integral to the individual. We recognize that owners of real property have the full and exclusive right to control, use, improve, dispose of, or in any manner enjoy it without interference, until and unless their exercise infringes the rights of others. We firmly reject the practices of eminent domain and asset forfeiture for either private or public purposes.

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2.2 Taxation

We recognize that, due to its coercive nature, taxation is unequivocally an aggressive, violent practice tantamount to theft. We further understand that no tax can ever be fair, simple, or neutral in a given market. Therefore, we oppose any and all new tax burdens, including any wage, salary, income, or sales tax. We seek the reduction or elimination of all existing taxes including those upon real property and its transfer.

2.3 Exchange & Currency

Individuals and businesses engaged in commerce ought to be free to use and accept any mutually agreed upon commodity, service, or item as a means of exchange. The issuance of debt-based monies is an inherently inflationary and fraudulent practice. We support the acceptance and proliferation of competing forms of currency and money and reject government monopolies in the currencies market. Innovation and competition in the market for currencies will deliver cheaper, faster, and more efficient means of storing and transferring value among individuals.

2.4 Monopoly & Oligopoly

We believe free markets drive economic growth and that competition is essential to free markets. Economic monopolies and oligopolies are inconsistent with the nature of free markets. Both state and corporate monopolies stifle innovation, competition, and service in all segments of the market. Monopolies and oligopolies cannot exist without the protection granted or afforded to them by the state and therefore we advocate for the repeal of all laws that enable such collusion and racketeering to exist.

2.5 Labor & Licensing

Each person and organization has the freedom to voluntarily associate with any other, including for the purpose of compensated and uncompensated labor. We oppose government intervention in the voluntary process of contracting employment via state-run licensing requirements and boards, wage control, or benefit mandates. Contracting between employer and employee should set terms and requirements of employment unencumbered by government intervention. We support the freedom of people to voluntarily associate in, or to establish, unions. Employers may choose to, or not to, recognize a union as the collective bargaining agent of some or all of its employees. Bargaining must only be between an employee, employees, or their agent or agents, and the employer, and on terms mutually agreeable by the parties..

2.6 Healthcare

All individuals have the right to determine their own health care needs and treatment. We support a truly free market healthcare system and oppose government mandates in insurance and healthcare as well as government interference with the relationship between patient and medical practitioner.

2.7 Education

Education is a matter of conscience, values, and free expression, as much as assembly, press, religion, or speech. Accordingly, we advocate the complete separation of education and state, ending government ownership, operations, regulation, and subsidy of schools, colleges, and universities. By separating education and the state, educational institutions will be able to compete in an open market. Until that time, any government funds allocated for education should be entirely under parental and student control, for use in schools of choice (including, but

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not limited to, private, parochial, and homeschooling) or to carry forward for education in a future year.

2.8 Welfare & Charity

Recognizing that the needs of one or many can not reasonably constitute a claim against another, we find any system that coercively redistributes wealth or property to be fundamentally destructive to the rights of the individual. Non-voluntary systems of social welfare negatively affect both those who are stolen from and those who receive the stolen goods; creating an environment in which their economic lives are controlled extensively by the state. We therefore oppose the implementation and expansion of all involuntary state welfare systems, support their reduction or abolition, and support voluntary means of welfare, charity, and assistance.

2.9 Vice

We oppose all laws and regulations that attempt to protect individuals from the consequences of their own behavior and support their repeal. All those presently incarcerated or ever convicted solely for the commission of victimless crimes should be pardoned and their records expunged. We oppose the state monopoly on the sale of liquor as well as licensing and regulation on the use, possession, sale, distribution, and production of beer, wine, and spirits. We favor the decriminalization and deregulation of gambling and the allowance of private competition to the state administered lottery. We favor the decriminalization and elimination of restrictions and regulations concerning the use, possession, sale, distribution, and production of cannabis and other scheduled drugs.

2.10 Sex Work

We oppose the state criminalizing consensual contracts between adults. We assert the right of consenting adults to provide sexual services to clients for compensation and the right of clients to purchase sexual services from consenting sex workers.

III. The Community

3.1 Criminal Justice

Where criminal statutes are necessary for the protection of life, liberty and property, the punishments applied should be proportionate to the crime. Rehabilitation, counseling, and restitution should be sought over incarceration. Offenders should have the opportunity to make the aggrieved party whole, rather than continue to place a drain on society. Ineffective and detrimental incarceration is costly in terms of wasted human potential, as well as tax dollars which are diverted from productive private use.

3.2 Civil Asset Forfeiture

We support the elimination of civil asset forfeiture, which permits the government to take private property without having to prove any criminal wrongdoing. State law should prohibit receiving funds from federal civil asset forfeiture to remove incentives to seize assets wrongly. State law should require a criminal conviction before the state may seize illegitimately obtained property.

3.3 Death Penalty

We recognize that the justice system is imperfect and subject to human error. The possibility of taking an innocent life means there are insufficient moral grounds to justify the use of the death penalty and we oppose its use by the state.

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3.4 Parents, Children, and Families

We oppose government interference in private family matters. We recognise that children are in many cases incapable of giving fully informed consent. We oppose government licensure of marriage or other personal relationships and special benefits conferred thereby and advocate for their repeal. We support the right of everyone to be free from familial violence or abuse. We support the right of adults to adopt and take responsibility for children without interference by government.

3.5 Environment

The environment is a shared resource, a treasure, and an important part of the economy. Pollution of air, water, and land violates the rights to health and life, and rights to property. Polluters, including government, should be strictly liable for harms caused by pollution. Competitive free markets and individual property rights stimulate the moral choices and behavioral changes required to protect our environment and ecosystems. Private landowners have a vested interest in maintaining natural resources. Protecting the environment requires individual rights and responsibilities regarding resources like land, water, air, and wildlife to be protected by individuals. Where damage is inflicted to the environment restitution to the injured parties must be required.

3.6 Electoral Reform

We support the right of the people to determine the process by which their representatives are elected. We advocate for the implementation of an alternative voting system that eliminates the disenfranchisement of constituents who are not members of the factions currently represented within our electoral system. We also advocate for the liberalization of laws restricting access to the ballot for minor political organizations and non-affiliated individuals. We oppose the practice of partisan gerrymandering, on the grounds that it grants undue control over the electoral process to those currently in power by enabling them to marginalize constituents who hold opposing views and nullify the impact of their votes. We support the adoption of electoral practices that would mitigate this problem, such as the implementation of multi-member or at-large Congressional districts, and an Independent Redistricting Commission.

3.7 Sovereignty & Independence

Government being instituted for the common benefit, protection, and security, of the whole community, and not for the private interest or emolument of any one man, family, or class of men; therefore, whenever the ends of government are perverted, and public liberty manifestly endangered, and all other means of redress are ineffectual, the people may, and of right ought to reform the old, or establish a new government. The doctrine of nonresistance against arbitrary power, and oppression, is absurd, slavish, and destructive of the good and happiness of mankind. The people of New Hampshire have the sole and exclusive right to govern themselves as sovereign, free, and independent individuals. 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.

IV. OMISSIONS

Our silence about any other particular government law, regulation, ordinance, directive, edict, control, restriction, regulatory agency, activity, or objections should not be construed to imply approval.