

Statement of Principles

Simply stated, the libertarian philosophy is, “*Live and let live.*” Each individual must be free to do as she or he pleases as long as she or he does not infringe upon the equal rights of others. This is the central idea of our Declaration of Independence.

More specifically, “live and let live” means that *force must not be used on an individual, unless that person has initiated the use of force or fraud.* This is the simple but powerful principle from which the Libertarian Party’s positions on all issues are logically and consistently derived.

All laws empower government to use force on people. Some laws deter and punish those who would initiate force, as in murder, robbery or assault, for example. These laws are entirely consistent with *the legitimate purpose of government, which is to protect and secure our rights.* However, many other laws just restrict or even violate our rights, quite the opposite of protecting and securing them. Thus, our governments, as they grow ever larger, utilize oppressive force on peaceful people through their complex thicket of laws.

Libertarians advocate maximizing liberty by eliminating the use of force on peaceful people.

LPPA Platform

Free and Open Society

- A. Individuals should be free to make choices for themselves and to accept responsibility for the consequences of the choices they make. No individual, group, corporation or government may initiate force or fraud against any other individual, group, corporation 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.
- B. 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 to keep and bear arms without being questioned as recognized by Article I, Section 21, of the PA Constitution and also the Second Amendment of the US Constitution. We oppose abridgement of this right through laws at any level of government and oppose prosecution of any person exercising their right to self-defense.
- C. We support full freedom of expression and oppose all government censorship, regulation or control of communications media and technology. We favor the freedom to engage in or

abstain from any religious activities that do not violate the rights of others. We oppose government actions which either aid or attack any religion.

- D. Libertarians support the right to be secure in our persons, homes, and property. Protection from unreasonable search and seizure or warrantless spying 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.
- E. 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 legal guardians have the right to raise their children according to their own standards and beliefs. Government has no power to define social institutions such as marriage or to impose any restrictions thereon.
- F. The so-called “war on drugs” has failed utterly. In addition to its huge cost, it has incarcerated millions for victimless “crimes” and easy availability of potentially harmful substances is still widespread. End the war on drugs.

Free and Open Markets

- G. Libertarians want all members of society to have abundant opportunities to achieve economic success. A free and competitive market allocates resources in the most efficient manner which produces the most wealth and best satisfies everyone’s wants. Any person or group has the right to offer goods and services to others on the free market. The only proper role of government in the economic realm is to protect property rights, adjudicate disputes, and provide a legal framework in which voluntary trade is protected.
- H. Property rights are entitled to the same protection as all other human rights. The owners of property have the full right to control, use, dispose of, or in any manner enjoy their property without interference, until and unless the exercise of their control infringes the valid rights of others. We oppose all controls on wages, prices, rents, profits, production, and interest rates. Competing currencies should not be prohibited.
- I. Education, like any other service, is best provided by the free market, achieving greater quality and efficiency with more diversity of choice at lower cost. Schools should be managed locally to achieve greater accountability and parental involvement. We support the right of parents to home school their children, as long as the children’s rights are not being abused..
- J. We favor restoring and reviving a free market health care system, thus achieving higher quality and efficiency with more diversity and lower costs. We support the freedom of individuals to determine the level of health insurance they want, 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.

Free and Open Government

- K. The legislative process, and the administration of government, should be open and transparent. Accordingly, all proposed legislation should be available for review and comment at least 5 days before being voted on by the legislature. Before voting for or against any bill, it is the duty of each legislator to have personally read and understood the bill in its entirety. Also, all state government budgets and expenditures should be available for review by the citizens on the Internet.

- L. Article I, Section 5 of the Pennsylvania Constitution specifies that all elections shall be free and equal. We oppose publicly funded primaries and laws that effectively exclude alternative candidates and parties, deny ballot access, gerrymander districts, or deny the voters their right to consider all legitimate alternatives. As private voluntary groups, political parties should be allowed to establish their own rules for nomination procedures, primaries and conventions, all of which should be funded by the political parties themselves.

- M. Criminal laws should be limited to dealing with violations of the rights of others through force or fraud, or deliberate actions that place others involuntarily at significant risk of harm. We support restitution of the victim to the fullest degree possible at the expense of the criminal or the negligent wrongdoer. The rights of due process, habeas corpus, 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.