

Platform

LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF PENNSYLVANIA

STATE PLATFORM

Revised May 2009

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

We, the members of the Libertarian Party of Pennsylvania, support and defend the rights of individuals.

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 do the same.

Specifically, we are for

- (1) the right of individuals to liberty of action, belief, and communication, and
- (2) the right of individuals to own, to use, and to dispose of their property.

We stand firmly for the Principle of Non-aggression: that no one—neither a government agent nor any individual nor any group—may initiate force or fraud against an individual or his property.

Thus, we are against

- (1) the initiation of (or threat of) physical force (e.g., mugging, kidnapping, rape, murder),
- (2) trespass and robbery, and
- (3) fraud and misrepresentation.

Governments should not force individuals to sacrifice their lives and property for the benefit of others. Individuals should be left free to deal with one another as free traders in a free market.

To maximize civil and economic liberty, we intend to shrink Pennsylvania's state government to its true constitutional limits. All of our platform planks directly follow from our principles.

I. LIBERTY

A. Civil

1. Individuals and the Government

Issue: The government has placed itself in a position of superiority over its citizens, denying our rights under the guise of "compelling state interest."

Principle: No conflict exists between civil order and individual rights. Both concepts are based on the Principle of Non-aggression.

Libertarian Solution: If violence, theft, or fraud has been initiated, the government has the task of proving it and coercing criminals to make restitution to victims. The state should not be involved in activity that coerces individuals other than criminals. Thus, the state should not be involved in the health, education, social development, economic development, transportation, or recreation of individuals.

Libertarian Action/Transition: No individual rights should be denied or abridged by the laws of Pennsylvania on account of sex, race, religion, creed, sexual orientation, age, ethnic group, or national origin. Minors should have the right to sue for majority or for change of guardianship. Homosexuals should have the right to contract with one another, just as heterosexuals do. The government should not discriminate for or against any individual or group; thus, government-sponsored "affirmative action" programs and special preferences should end. Likewise, we oppose so-called "hate crime" legislation that creates special

Platform

categories of victims; a crime is a crime, regardless of the characteristics of the victim. Private organizations that receive no funding from the government should be able to discriminate as they wish.

2. Individual Rights

Issue: Pennsylvania's government today interferes in a variety of ways with our freedom of action, belief, and communication. The denial of these freedoms fosters irresponsibility in the citizenry.

Principle: Each individual should be entitled to liberty of action, belief, and communication, and should be held responsible for the consequences of his actions. The state should not constrain peaceful acts of individuals.

a. action

1) choice:

Libertarian Solution: Recognize the right of each individual to associate or not to associate with any other individual or group.

Libertarian Action/Transition: Individuals must not be forced to participate in a jury or other agency of the state. Associations may not use the power of the state to impose their will on other associations or individuals.

2) movement:

Libertarian Solution: We hold that no peaceful individual (or business) should be forced to move or be prevented from moving anywhere in Pennsylvania; the law of eminent domain should be abolished. We welcome legal immigrants to Pennsylvania but they (not the existing citizenry) should bear all of the accompanying costs.

3) privacy:

Libertarian Solution: We support the right of an individual to privacy.

Libertarian Action/Transition: Correspondence, bank and other financial transactions and records, doctors' and lawyers' communications, employment records, computer files, and the like should not be open to review by government.

4) self-protection:

Libertarian Solution: We support each individual's right to protect his life and property. Thus we oppose registration and all laws restricting the manufacture, sale, ownership, or transfer of firearms and non-firearm protective devices. Also, each individual should have the option not to protect himself, such as requesting that no action be taken against violators of his rights; in capital cases, if the victim opposed capital punishment, then the state must not carry it out.

Libertarian Action/Transition: We oppose concealed carrying laws and waiting period laws. Individuals convicted of such laws should be issued pardons. Each individual should also be able choose to commit suicide or assent to euthanasia, with proper safeguards to ensure intent.

5) substance use:

Libertarian Solution: We advocate the repeal of all laws prohibiting the production, sale, possession, or use of drugs (nicotine, alcohol, hallucinogens, narcotics, marijuana/hemp, laetrile, artificial sweeteners, supplements, herbs, etc.), and of all medical prescription requirements for the purchase of vitamins, drugs, and similar substances. Intoxication from whatever substance should not be allowed to be used as a criminal defense. Manufacturers should be able to make health claims for their products, but may be held liable for making fraudulent claims.

Libertarian Action/Transition: All non-violent drug "offenders" should be pardoned and be immediately released from prison; all property taken under so-called "asset

Platform

forfeiture" laws should be returned to their rightful owner. We favor privatizing the state liquor store system and abolishing the pharmaceutical assistance fund. Money from the tobacco master settlement should go just to those individuals who can prove the tobacco companies defrauded them.

6) sex:

Libertarian Solution: We advocate the repeal of all laws regarding consensual sex, including prostitution, strip club lap dancing and massage, and homosexual relations.

Libertarian Action/Transition: We support an end to all subsidies for or against child-bearing built into our present laws. Since we believe in free choice, we advocate that each independent school have the right to offer or not to offer sex education courses.

7) abortion:

The government shall not sponsor or support abortion or abortion education.

b. belief

1) religion:

Libertarian Solution: We defend the right of individuals to engage in (or abstain from) any religious or philosophical activity that does not violate the rights of others.

Libertarian Action/Transition: We oppose government actions that either aid or attack any religion. We oppose government funding of any religious agency.

2) education:

Principle: Government schools lead to the indoctrination of children and interfere with the free choice of individuals.

Libertarian Solution: We advocate that government ownership, operation, regulation, and subsidy of schools and colleges be ended.

Libertarian Action/Transition: The Pennsylvania Department of Education should be abolished, and the state college and university system should be privatized. We specifically call for the amendment of Article III of the Pennsylvania Constitution to repeal sections 14 and 15, so that all schools will be financed and attended solely on a voluntary basis. In the meantime, only individuals with dependents in government schools should be required to contribute to these schools, and compulsory attendance, forced busing, corporal punishment, and state mandated testing/standards should be eliminated.

3) politics:

Libertarian Solution: Elections should be in the control of those who wish to participate in them or voluntarily support them.

Libertarian Action/Transition: We call for the repeal of state laws that make it difficult for new parties or independent candidates to be on the ballot and thus entrench the two major parties. We oppose any law that would compel taxpayers to subsidize politicians and political views they do not wish to support. We call for the introduction of initiative, referendum, and recall in Pennsylvania to give the citizenry more choice. We call for the replacement of any unreliable, inaccurate voting machines or methods. We call for an end to political "slush funds" and "walking around money." For national presidential elections, we favor switching from the current "winner take all" method of determining state electors to the following method:

a) each congressional district will have one electoral vote, which will go to the candidate with the most votes there;

b) the state as a whole will have two electoral votes, which will go to the candidate with the most votes state-wide.

Platform

4) **mental health:**

Libertarian Solution: We advocate an end to involuntary commitments to mental institutions and an end to insanity or mental retardation as a criminal defense.

Libertarian Action/Transition: Repeal all laws permitting involuntary psychiatric treatment. End the spending of tax money for programs of psychiatric or psychological research or treatment and for mental health propaganda campaigns.

c. **communication**

Libertarian Solution: End all attempts by government to abridge the freedom of speech and press.

Libertarian Action/Transition: Since we oppose all forms of government censorship, we oppose anti-pornography laws. We oppose the government's invasion of newsrooms or the premises of other innocent third parties in the name of law enforcement. We also condemn court orders gagging press coverage of criminal proceedings. Government ownership or subsidy of broadcast band (or cable or satellite) radio or television networks (such as the Pennsylvania Public Television Network) must end. We oppose government efforts to control broadcast content, restrict the number of channels, or restrict and regulate cable or satellite TV networks. We oppose government interference in the content or operation of the Internet, and we oppose government imposition of a sales tax on Internet commerce.

B. **Economic**

1. **Individuals, Businesses, and the Government**

Issue: Government intervention in the economy imperils the personal freedom and the material prosperity of every Pennsylvanian.

Principle: Because each individual has the right to offer goods and services to others on the free market, and because government interference can only harm such free activity, we oppose all action by government in the market except to protect property rights, adjudicate disputes, and provide a legal framework to protect voluntary trade. Efforts to forcibly redistribute wealth or forcibly manage trade are intolerable.

a. **subsidies and regulations**

Libertarian Solution: In order to achieve a free economy in which the state victimizes no one for the benefit of anyone else, end all state subsidies to business, labor, education, agriculture, science, broadcasting, the arts, sports, transportation, and any other special interest. Lift all regulations--except those related to fraud and misrepresentation--of business, labor, education, agriculture, science, broadcasting, the arts, sports, transportation, and any other special interest. Voluntary associations can set technical standards with which individuals and businesses can choose to comply or not to comply. Such businesses must bear full liability for any damages they may cause, in any case.

Libertarian Action/Transition: Therefore we call for the end of these Pennsylvania state agencies: Milk Marketing Board (which sets a minimum price for milk), Liquor Control Board, Ben Franklin Technology Development Authority, BrainGain Initiative, Interactive Marketing, Animal Health Commission, Agricultural Research, Local Development Districts, Digital E-Readiness Program, "Sound" Land Use Activities, Small Business First Fund, State Job Training/Scholarships, Tuition Payment Fund, Minority Business Development Fund, Machinery and Equipment Loan Fund, Small Business Development Centers, Pennsylvania Shipyard Development Corporation, Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency, Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority, Pennsylvania Infrastructure Authority, Pennsylvania Life and Health Insurance Guaranty Association, Pennsylvania Property

Platform

and Casualty Insurance Guaranty Association, Public School Employees' Retirement System, State System of Higher Education, Pennsylvania Economic Development Financing Authority, Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority, Vocational Rehabilitation Fund, Water Facilities Loan Fund, Environmental Stewardship Fund, State Racing Fund, Nursing Home Loan Development, Volunteer Companies Loan, Tourist Promotion Assistance, Grants to the Arts Program, Historical and Museum Commission, Capital Access Network Program, PENNCARE Program, Public Transportation Assistance Fund, and SEPTA.

b. economic controls

Libertarian Solution: End all existing or proposed governmental controls on wages, prices, rents, profits, production, or interest rates.

Libertarian Action/Transition: Immediately end the Pennsylvania minimum wage law and the price controls on milk and liquor.

c. taxes

Libertarian Solution: Since we believe that all individuals are entitled to keep the fruits of their labor, we propose phasing out all state, county, and local taxes.

Libertarian Action/Transition: Over the years the state government has added one new tax after another and now the list is enormous: corporate net income tax, capital stock and franchise tax, utility gross receipts tax, utility property tax, financial institutions tax, sales and use tax, personal income tax, realty transfer tax, inheritance tax, fire insurance tax, hotel occupancy tax, liquid fuels tax, fuels use tax, motor vehicle sales tax, motor carriers road tax, interstate bus compact fuels tax, oil company franchise tax, boxing and wrestling exhibits tax, cigarette tax, malt beverage tax, liquor tax, and wines tax . In addition, there is the county tax, the business privilege tax, the occupational privilege tax, the township real estate tax, the township mercantile tax, the township amusement tax, the township per capita tax, the personal tax, the property school tax, the city income tax of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Erie, the Allegheny Regional Asset District Tax, and the unemployment compensation tax. We call for the repeal of all of these.

The minimal state that we envision, with a vastly reduced budget, would have no need for these taxes or the "tax farmers" to collect them. Instead, the minimal state can be financed by user fees, contributions, and other voluntary means, such as by proceeds from the state lottery and by fees for state enforcement of individual or business contracts. Section III of this platform will show how we can make the transition from the present regime to a minimal state.

2. Employment

Issue: Government has enacted a multitude of laws dealing with conditions of employment. These laws impede Pennsylvania's citizens from finding suitable employment, and hinder Pennsylvania's employers from achieving their optimal workforce.

Principle: We recognize the right of individuals to seek employment and of employers to voluntarily employ anyone of their own choosing under mutually acceptable terms.

Libertarian Solution: Repeal all laws that impede the ability of a person to find employment, such as minimum wage laws, so-called protective legislation for women and children, equal opportunity legislation, and restrictions on private day care centers.

Libertarian Action/Transition: We call for the abolition of the Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs which licenses architects, auctioneers, barbers, cosmetologists, chiropractors, dentists, engineers, funeral directors, landscape architects, physicians, auto dealers and salesmen, nurses, nursing home administrators, optometrists, osteopaths, pharmacists, physical therapists, podiatrists, psychologists, public accountants, real estate

Platform

brokers, and veterinarians; other state agencies which license teachers, lawyers, and stock brokers should also be abolished. State licensing restricts competition, raising prices and reducing quality. Instead, we suggest that each professional and occupational group provide voluntary certification of its members.

3. Unions

Issue: Government interference in the relationship between employers and unions always favors one side or the other.

Principle: We support the right of individuals to establish, associate in, or not associate in, labor unions. An employer should have the right to recognize, or refuse to recognize, a union as the collective bargaining agent of some or all of his employees. While we agree with the right of workers to withdraw their services as a negotiating strategy in the collective bargaining process, we oppose their use of force or intimidation to limit the peaceful activities of others.

Libertarian Solution: End all government involvement in the collective bargaining process, including mandating bargaining.

Libertarian Action/Transition: We oppose all government back-to-work orders as imposing a form of forced labor. We oppose any existing or proposed "prevailing wage" law.

4. Welfare

Issue: All government welfare, relief projects, and "aid to the poor" programs are privacy-invasive, paternalistic, demeaning, and inefficient.

Principle: The proper sources of help for the unemployed, the young, and the old are the individual's family and private charitable institutions, such as those funded by United Way.

Libertarian Solution: We call for the abolition of the Pennsylvania Department of Public Health and Welfare and its programs: County Child Welfare, Public Day Care Services, other children's services, support for "low-income" Pennsylvanians, support for people with disabilities, and support for services to older Pennsylvanians.

Libertarian Action/Transition: Until such time as the Pennsylvania income tax is eliminated, we advocate dollar-for-dollar tax credits for donations to private welfare agencies.

5. Property and Trade

Issue: Property rights are the rights of human beings with respect to property. Thus, government actions that interfere with our full enjoyment of our property are just as much violations of human rights as restrictions on speech, religion, or assembly.

Principle: We hold that 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 rights of others. Furthermore, the role of planning is properly the right and the responsibility of the owners of land, water, and other natural resources. We recognize the right of each individual to offer to purchase or sell any good or service on the market.

Libertarian Solution: End all government efforts to regulate or ban the use of property in the name of aesthetics, owner risk, moral standards, cost-benefit estimates, or the promotion or restriction of economic growth. Private deed restrictions and private neighborhood covenants are a voluntary means to influence growth and development. A property owner who materially lowers the value of the property of his neighbors may be sued.

Libertarian Action/Transition: End government-sponsored urban renewal, zoning laws, building codes, eminent domain, regional planning, and purchase of land or development rights with tax money. Repeal regulations that dictate to consumers, impose prices, define standards for products, or otherwise restrict risk-taking and free choice. Repeal laws that

Platform

require an individual to buy or use so-called "self-protection" equipment such as motorcycle and bicycle crash helmets and vehicle seat belts.

6. Legal and Medical Services

Issue: Government involvement in the fields of law and medicine has led to bureaucratic top-down management, rapidly escalating prices, costly regulations, and a host of other problems.

Principle: We support the right of individuals to contract freely for services provided by others, such as lawyers and doctors.

Libertarian Solution: End compulsory insurance or tax-supported plans to provide legal services or health services. The practitioners of law and medicine (and other disciplines) and the administrators of Health Maintenance Organizations must be responsible for their actions (and liable for actual economic damages caused). We thus call for the repeal of laws limiting liability for negligence, and we oppose tax-subsidized malpractice insurance. We call for the repeal of laws compelling individuals to submit to medical treatment or testing.

7. Business Rights

a. general

Issue: Government interference in the marketplace acts for the advantage of politically favored businesses, and for the disadvantage of the politically disconnected.

Principle: We defend the right of individuals to form corporations, partnerships, proprietorships, cooperatives, or other types of voluntary business organization. Laws of incorporation should not include grants of monopoly privilege or limits on corporate liability for damage to third parties. We oppose government limits on the size of private companies, and we defend the right of companies to merge with others or to divest subsidiaries.

b. specific

1) banking industry:

Libertarian Solution: We favor free market banking.

Libertarian Action/Transition: We thus call for the abolition of the Pennsylvania Department of Banking and all government-sponsored credit agencies. We further support

(a) the lifting of all restrictions on branch banking;

(b) the repeal of all state usury laws;

(c) the abolition of government control over the interest paid on time deposits; and

(d) the revocation of all other selective credit controls.

2) transportation:

Libertarian Solution: We recognize the right of individuals to offer transportation on the market. We call for the end of attempts by government to monopolize transportation by limiting or eliminating competition. We oppose any regulation inhibiting the operation of a transport business, such as those requiring bus, railroad, or airline companies to maintain uneconomical routes or schedules. We urge further deregulation of the trucking industry.

Libertarian Action/Transition: We call for the privatization of SEPTA and the state-owned airports. We call for an immediate end to the state auto inspection system and the state emission inspection system. All state expressways should be sold; in the interim, they should become toll roads so that only users pay for their upkeep. Until such time as the remainder of the state's roads can be privatized, the state's gasoline tax should go only for upkeep and maintenance of highways and for construction of new ones; it should not be diverted to fund mass transit or any other current state

Platform

function . The state police should stop only those motorists who are a clear and present danger to other motorists (or the public at large); driving at high speed (without endangering others) should not be a crime in and of itself.

3) **public utilities:**

Libertarian Solution: We advocate the termination of government-created franchise privileges and government monopolies for such services as garbage collection, fire protection, electricity, natural gas, telephone, water supplies, and cable TV.

Libertarian Action/Transition: All rate regulation in these industries should be abolished, along with the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission. In particular, all caps on wholesale and retail power prices should be removed. The law must not curtail the right to offer such services on the market.

4) **energy:**

Libertarian Solution: We favor the creation of a free market in energy by repealing all state controls over price and output of the energy industries. End all government subsidies for energy research, development, and operation.

Libertarian Action/Transition: All government-owned energy resources should be turned over to private ownership; the Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority and the Office of Conservation and Natural Resources should be abolished. End all direct and indirect government participation in the atomic energy industry; the imposition of full liability--not government agencies--should regulate atomic power. The atomic power plant owners should bear the full cost of disposing their radioactive waste products.

We consider all attempts by the state to impose an operating or standby program of gasoline rationing as unworkable, unnecessary, and tyrannical.

5) **pollution and conservation:**

Libertarian Solution: We support the development of an objective system defining property rights to air and water. We hold that ambiguity in these rights (e.g., the concept of "public property") is a primary cause of our deteriorating environment. Present legal principles that allow the violation of individual rights by polluters must be abolished. Laws regarding property rights should be modified to cover damage done by air, water, and noise pollution. While we maintain that no one has the right to violate the property rights of others by polluting, we strenuously oppose all attempts to transform the defense of such rights into any restriction of the efforts of individuals or businesses to advance technology, to expand production, or to use their property peacefully. All pollution cases should be handled by the courts. We therefore support the abolition of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Libertarian Action/Transition: The 116 state parks should be sold to environmental groups and become completely fee-based. There will then no longer be a need for the state Game Commission, the Fish and Boat Commission, and the Land and Water Development Fund. If this is infeasible, then at the very least the operation of these state parks should be funded solely by user fees, not from general tax revenues.

6) **entertainment and drink:**

Libertarian Solution: Since it is not the proper function of the state to be involved in entertaining the people, we advocate that state funding of farm products and shows, fairs, harness racing, and horse racing be ended. All forms of private gambling should be allowed, with gambling proprietors subject only to the usual laws against violence and fraud.

Platform

Libertarian Action/Transition: It is also not the proper function of the state to distribute or sell liquor. We thus insist that the state stores be sold, with the proceeds going to the taxpayers, and that no restrictions be placed on the opening of additional retail liquor outlets.

II. PROTECTION OF LIBERTY

A. Definition of Crimes

Issue: The government has criminalized behavior that hurts no one except the person himself.

Principle: A crime occurs when an individual is a victim of the initiation of force, theft, or fraud by another individual or group of individuals. There is no crime without such a victim.

Libertarian Solution: All laws regarding behavior not involving a victim should be repealed.

Libertarian Action/Transition: All individuals now imprisoned solely for a victimless "crime" should be freed.

B. The Government as Criminal

Issue: Governmental violations of rights undermine the people's sense of justice with regard to crime.

Principle: A crime is no less a crime when committed by the government itself.

Libertarian Solution: All state restrictions on the rights detailed in the previous planks must be ended, along with taxes. The government's practice of taking our money and running our lives must cease.

We favor an immediate end to the doctrine of "Sovereign Immunity" which implies that the state can do no wrong and holds that the state, contrary to the tradition of redress of grievances, may not be sued without its permission or held accountable for its actions under civil law.

Pennsylvania's so-called "limited" sovereign immunity is a sham.

Libertarian Action/Transition: The present state budget allocates 88% of tax money to special interest groups (the remaining 12% go to protection of life and property). A Libertarian administration will seek to reduce the state budget to less than 12% of the present budget--no money will be used to apprehend victimless criminals. During the transition period, individuals now dependent on government services would be referred to appropriate private agencies.

C. The Court System and Due Process

Issue: The criminal court system has become biased against defendants by means of excluding jurors who understand our rights under the constitution, and through rules of evidence that prevent defense attorneys from presenting mitigating facts.

Principle: Until such time as persons are proved guilty of crimes, they should be accorded full respect for their rights.

Libertarian Solution:

1. Innocent until Proven Guilty

End preventive detention and so-called "no-knock" laws.

2. Arbitration Services

We advocate that parties to a dispute should always have the option to use private arbitration services, rather than the state court system.

3. Peremptory Challenges

We call for a reform of the present judicial system allowing criminal defendants and civil parties to a court action a reasonable number of peremptory challenges to proposed judges, similar to their right under the present system to challenge proposed jurors.

4. Fully Informed Juries

Juries should be told of their right to judge the law as well as the facts of a case.

5. Immunity

We oppose the use of grants of immunity from prosecution to compel testimony.

Platform

6. Insanity and Mental Retardation

We advocate an end to criminal defense based on "insanity" or "mental retardation", which absolves the guilty of their responsibility.

7. Restitution

In the commission of a crime, the rights of an individual, not society, have been violated, resulting in a loss to the individual. We propose a system of justice based solely on self-defense and restitution for victims of crimes. Upon conviction, a criminal should be required to compensate the victim or the victim's survivors for their losses, and compensate the victim's insurance company or the justice system itself for all costs involved, including his maintenance.

8. Restoration of Criminal's Individual Rights

A criminal, having paid for his crime, shall enjoy full restoration of individual rights. *Libertarian Action/Transition:* We support full restitution for all loss suffered by individuals arrested, indicted, tried, imprisoned, or otherwise injured in the course of criminal proceedings against them which do not result in their conviction. When they are personally responsible, government police employees or agents should be liable for this restitution.

D. The Legislature

Issue: The legislature has turned into a full time occupation wherein (non-Libertarian) legislators spend most of their time concocting new ways to control and tax the citizenry.

Principle: Legislators should be ordinary citizens who volunteer a small part of their lives to serve their fellow citizens by enacting laws to protect their rights. After a term in the legislature, they should return to private life to live under the laws they have crafted.

Solution: Libertarian legislators will spend their time working to repeal all existing state laws that restrict individual liberty.

Libertarian Action/Transition: We favor a part-time, rather than full-time, legislature. The longer the legislature is in session, the greater the opportunity for mischief. Of course, the governor should continue to have the authority to convene the legislature in case of emergency.

E. The Government and Ethics

Issue: Many individuals fail to question the means by which the government obtains its funds. Tax collection involves the coercion of individuals who can in no way be considered criminals--hence this process is inherently unethical.

Principle: The proper function of government is to enact individual rights into law (or repeal restrictions), apprehend and try violators of these rights, and coerce such violators to make restitution to victims. Such action is inherently ethical; criminals are coerced, but non-criminals are not. Unfortunately, at present, the state is much more adept at coercing innocent individuals than it is at coercing criminals.

Libertarian Solution: See Section III that follows.

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF LIBERTY

A. Current Executive Departments

The size and scope of Pennsylvania's state government have grown for hundreds of years. Here is the list of current executive departments: Governor's Office, Executive Offices (including Office of General Counsel, Office of Budget, and Office of Policy Development), Lieutenant Governor's Office, Aging, Agriculture, Banking, Civil Service Commission, Community and Economic Development, Conservation and Natural Resources, Corrections, Education, Emergency Management Agency, Environmental Hearing Board, Environmental Protection, Fish and Boat Commission, Game Commission, General Services, Health, Historical and Museum Commission, Infrastructure Investment Authority, Insurance, Labor and Industry,

Platform

Liquor Control Board, Military and Veterans Affairs, Milk Marketing Board, Municipal Employees' Retirement, Probation and Parole Board, Public Television Network, Public Utility Commission, Public Welfare, Revenue, School Employees' Retirement System, Securities Commission, State, State Employees' Retirement System, State Police, Tax Equalization Board, and Transportation.

B. One Department for Protection of Persons and Property

In contrast, there would be only one department in a minimal state: Protection of Persons and Property. Programs and individuals from Executive Offices, Civil Service, Corrections, Emergency Management, Probation and Parole Board, Revenue, and State Police departments could be moved into this one department. Specialists in contract law and fraud detection from the departments of Agriculture, Banking, Health, and Insurance and from the Securities Commission could also be moved over to the one department.

C. Omnibus Bill for Liberty

A Libertarian governor would ask the Office of General Counsel and Office of Policy Development to make a categorized list of all existing Pennsylvania laws that violate individual liberty. An omnibus bill to repeal all of these laws would then be submitted to the legislature. If a majority of members of the General Assembly are elected Libertarians, then the bill will pass. In that fortuitous event, we could then begin radically shrinking the size and cost of the state government. We will do this in a rational and orderly fashion. What follows is one possible path to the minimal state.

D. Office of Transition Services

An office of Transition Services will be set up to coordinate the closing of departments. Before closing, the staff of each department will compile a computerized list of private and voluntary organizations across the state that can perform the same or similar functions. This list will be added to the master computer list kept at the office of Transition Services. Citizens calling the state for anything other than protection of persons or property will be referred to the appropriate private or voluntary agency.

E. Existing Workers and Contracts

Existing state workers who are no longer needed in the minimal state will be given a three month notice of termination to give them an opportunity to find work in the private or volunteer sector. Existing state contracts with businesses will be kept if they are for a duration of one year or less; after completion, the contracts will not be renewed unless they are involved with the protection of persons or property. Current multi-year contracts with businesses or individuals will have to be renegotiated or terminated. State obligations to retired state employees will have to continue to be honored.

F. Pardon of Victimless Criminals

A Libertarian governor will pardon and free all incarcerated individuals convicted solely of a victimless crime.

G. Pay-off of State Debt

Existing tax revenues will be used to pay off the state debt, which now totals over 4 billion dollars.

H. Ending of Taxation

After the debt is paid off, all state taxes will be abolished immediately, with the exception of the sales tax and gas tax (which are partially voluntary). The sales tax will then be reduced by 1 ¼ points each year for four years, in tandem with cuts in government spending. By the end of the fourth year, the minimal state will be financed by the 1% sales tax, the state lottery, the gasoline tax, and fees for contract enforcement. We plan to end the 1% sales tax and gasoline tax in the fifth year.

Platform

I. State Endowment Fund

Any excess of revenue over spending will go into the state endowment fund (currently called the “rainy day fund”). Presumably, by the fifth year of the transition, proceeds from the state lottery, from fees for contract enforcement, and from distributions of the endowment fund will be enough to fund the minimal state, in which case the sales and gasoline tax will be eliminated entirely. At that point, the office of Transition Services will be closed, and its referral database will be privatized. Proceeds from the sale of the state colleges, the state parks, and the state liquor stores will go into the state endowment fund.

J. Operation of the Minimal State

To non-criminals, the state will be virtually invisible. To those who initiate force, theft, or fraud, the state will be very visible. State-of-the-art equipment and highly trained personnel will be used to apprehend and try such criminals and, upon their conviction, coerce them to make restitution to their victims. The state will have no other focus or purpose. The part-time legislature will continue to fine-tune a minimal code of law. Successful demonstration of the blessings of liberty will be our party’s answer to critics in other parties and the news media.

K. Less Rosy Scenarios

The above scenario is our most optimistic one. If, instead, we have a Libertarian governor but a non-Libertarian legislature, then we can promise this: all government spending increases will be vetoed; all government spending reductions will be approved; all tax increases will be vetoed; all tax reductions will be approved. Similarly, if we have a non-Libertarian governor and less than a 2/3 Libertarian majority, then we will have to proceed in a piece-meal fashion, working with the governor to get the largest possible spending and tax cuts.

CALL FOR SUPPORT

The Libertarian Party is the only party proposing both maximal civil liberty and maximal economic liberty. Why waste your vote on politics-as-usual? Why not make your vote count by voting for the principles of liberty and a party that can back up its words with actions? People who are now supporting the Libertarian Party care about their country. They have chosen a political alternative that offers hope for a better future. How about you?