

# ***Libertarian Party Radical Caucus***

## ***Platform Committee Report***

***16 August 2021***

This is the report of the 2021 Platform Committee, containing proposals for consideration at the annual membership meeting scheduled for 16 October.

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### **Platform Committee Members**

- ◆ *Joe Dehn (chair)*
- ◆ *David Demarest*
- ◆ *James Gholston*
- ◆ *Susan Hogarth*
- ◆ *Anna Mosashvili*

## **Proposal: Epidemics (revise existing plank)**

Recommended by a vote of 5:0:0

*Replace the existing text:*

During times of a virus epidemic, we oppose government, at all levels, seizing the opportunity to curtail our liberties. We support individuals engaging in self-quarantine, healing and medicating each other through voluntary initiatives, and informing each other on best practices to avoid, contain, and eliminate such biological threats.

*with the following expanded text:*

During times of an epidemic, we oppose government, at any level, seizing the opportunity to curtail our liberties. Epidemics present serious problems for individuals and for society which must be addressed, but as with all other challenges they must be addressed while respecting individual rights, and they can best be addressed through the mechanisms of voluntary action and the market. Experience has shown that failure to adhere to these principles has led to widespread violations of rights, loss of life that could have been avoided, poor allocation of resources in addressing the problem, and severe damage to the economy and society as a whole.

We support individuals engaging in self-quarantine, healing and medicating each other through voluntary initiatives, and informing each other on best practices to avoid, contain, and eliminate such biological threats.

We oppose actions by any level of government that:

- a. "lock down" or otherwise generally limit the freedom of movement in a geographic area;
- b. quarantine any individuals absent specific evidence that they are contagious;
- c. force businesses, churches, or other organizations to stop operating or limit their hours;
- d. prevent individuals from acquiring and using medicines, vaccines, masks, or any other product that they believe may be helpful to them;
- e. ration access to such products by age, occupation, or other personal characteristic;
- f. require any individuals to make use of any such products or other preventive measures;
- g. prevent private businesses and property owners from requiring protective measures they judge necessary for the protection of themselves and their employees, customers, or guests;
- h. discriminate against certain businesses or industries by declaring them "non-essential";
- i. require use of a government-issued medical passport or require businesses to make use of any privately-issued equivalent.

## **Proposal: Universal Basic Income (new plank)**

Recommended by a vote of 5:0:0

*[to be inserted after 2.2 Inflation and Depression, with the rest of that part renumbered]*

Any government-supported universal basic income scheme is another form of welfare, and we object to it for the same reasons. "Guaranteeing" income to everybody inevitably will involve taking income or assets from other people through taxation or inflation, violating their rights, and making the overall economy less productive.

Moreover, the universality of this form of welfare doesn't make it better – if anything it makes it worse. By making welfare a part of everyone's financial life, UBI would obscure the natural relationship between work and income, making it harder for average citizens to understand basic economic principles. Money magically appearing in an arbitrary, politically-determined amount will encourage the idea that goods and services and the prices we pay for them are also arbitrary, and should also be determined by government. Future generations will be unable to envision life without it, leading the population as a whole further toward a condition of serfdom.

In addition, we oppose government sponsored "demonstrations" of UBI even where the funds are provided by non-government sources. While we recognize and support the right of private individuals to provide financial assistance to anyone they deem deserving, private organizations don't need government help to provide such assistance. Such "trials" are not serious experiments, since by their nature they can measure neither the true costs nor the overall effect on society as a whole of a full-scale program. They are, rather, propaganda vehicles the transparent purpose of which is to build political support for government-funded versions.

## **Proposal: Science (new plank)**

Recommended by a vote of 5:0:0

*[to be inserted after 3.7 Libraries, with the rest of that part renumbered]*

We support the separation of science and state. Science is an ongoing process by which we increase our understanding of the natural world, always seeking better models, not a set of facts that can properly be the subject of legislation or edict.

Government has no business endorsing scientific theories or findings. Science has its own standards for evaluating, documenting, and sharing such knowledge. Throughout history, attempts by authoritarian institutions to impose "official" views on scientific questions have interfered with progress. Famous examples include suppression of the heliocentric model of our solar system and the promotion of the Lamarckian theory of evolution. Our society today is not exempt from repetition of such follies.

Similarly, government should not endorse or attempt to discredit scientists or scientific organizations. Experts in various scientific fields are best identified by their peers. Science, like all human endeavors, has enough internal politics, which can be made worse by government interference, and the general public should not be misled by titles bestowed by politicians and bureaucrats.

We oppose government funding of scientific research and education. Government funding creates perverse incentives which can lead to waste of resources, while discouraging research that might lead to both better understanding of the natural world and practical new products and methods. Scientific research should be funded by businesses, universities, and other institutions that allow those interested in various areas of research to pool their resources for this purpose.

## **Proposal: Health Care (revise existing plank)**

Recommended by a vote of 5:0:0

Replace the existing text:

We advocate a complete separation of medicine from the state. Accordingly, we support a free market health care system and oppose government mandates in insurance and healthcare. We recognize the freedom of individuals to determine the services they want (if any) and all other aspects of their medical care. We advocate replacing compulsory or tax supported plans to supply health services or insurance with voluntarily supported efforts. We oppose expansion of existing tax supported plans to cover more people, including any form of "Medicare for All". We oppose any government restriction or funding of private medical or scientific research.

with the following expanded text:

We advocate a complete separation of medicine from the state. Accordingly, we support a free market health care system and oppose government mandates in insurance and healthcare. We recognize the freedom of individuals to determine the services they want (if any) and all other aspects of their medical care.

We advocate replacing compulsory or tax supported plans to supply health services or insurance with voluntarily supported efforts. We also oppose government-imposed insurance mandates for employers, and tax and other incentives to link medical coverage to employment, which distorts the market for health insurance, making it essentially a tool of government policy. This discourages individual or mutual group insurance purchases and job mobility for workers, and hinders companies' ability to grow and to employ workers in full time positions, which hurts both employers and employees.

We oppose expansion of existing tax supported plans to cover more people, including any form of "Medicare for All". We oppose any government restriction or funding of private medical or scientific research. We support the reduction or elimination of state granted drug patent monopolies and protectionist government bans on medication imports, which hurt patients, especially the poor, by prohibiting manufacturing and importation of less expensive pharmaceuticals, resulting in astronomically inflated prices.

## **Proposal: punctuation changes**

Recommended by a vote of 5:0:0

Insert commas after "scope" in two places in the first sentence of the second paragraph of the Preamble, as follows:

Until we reach that end, we support reducing, and not replacing, the size, scope, and power of government at all levels and on all issues, and oppose increasing the size, scope, and power of government at any level, for any purpose.

Insert a comma after "equipment" in the first sentence of 5.11 Weapons of Mass Destruction, as follows:

We believe that no government agency must be allowed to acquire, purchase, or otherwise accept for use any vehicles, equipment, or weapons unless such hardware is readily available in an open commercial market.

## **Proposal: Emergency Powers (new plank)**

Recommended by a vote of 4:0:1

*[to be inserted after 4.8 Internal Security and Civil Liberties, with the rest of that part renumbered]*

It is fundamental to the idea of an "emergency" that special action is required for a limited time. A problem can certainly be serious even if it isn't an "emergency". But it is an abuse of any "emergency power" to apply it to issues of a longer-term nature.

The fact that citizens have been willing in the past to tolerate some violations of their rights for a limited time in cases of actual emergencies, e.g., earthquakes or floods, cannot be accepted as legitimizing similar violations of rights as a way of dealing with changes of a permanent nature, such as the existence of a new disease, or that are expected to take place over decades or centuries, such as rising sea levels.

The best solutions to serious new problems of an ongoing nature are the same as for serious old problems of an ongoing nature – ones based on the consistent application of individual rights and mechanisms for voluntary trade and assistance. The best way for government to help when an emergency becomes an ongoing problem is to get out of the way as soon as possible and allow the market to function.

Therefore we:

- a. support the inclusion of strict time limits in legislation that authorizes any kind of "emergency powers";
- b. oppose any "emergency" policies which allow the president, governors, or mayors to exercise legislative functions beyond the time that the respective legislative bodies can resume operation, or which allow police, military, or administrative officials to exercise judicial functions beyond the time that regular courts can resume operation;
- c. oppose use of "declarations of emergency" as an excuse to impose any regulations or taxes that do not relate directly to addressing the specific actual emergency.

## **Proposal: Reproductive Rights (new plank)**

Recommended by a vote of 4:1:0

*[to be inserted after 1.9 Sexual Rights, with the rest of that part renumbered]*

No level of government should regulate, prohibit, subsidize, or encourage any reproductive choice. We defend the right of all persons to privacy in and control over this aspect of their biological nature, including decisions about contraception, termination of pregnancy, surrogate motherhood, artificial insemination, and cloning.

## **Proposal: Social Services (new plank)**

Recommended by a vote of 4:1:0

*[to be inserted as 2.1, with the rest of that part renumbered]*

The role and substance of government consists of nothing more than glorified social services improperly justified by the alleged need for authoritarian protection and adjudication. All social services benefit from free market competition and collaboration. People are imperfect and institute voluntary private sector free markets that are similarly imperfect. Nevertheless, free market social services and leaders by example serve mankind far more effectively and ethically than tax-funded government social services and rulers by force.