

## CHILDREN

Children are human beings and, as such, have all the rights of human beings. Because the exercise of some rights requires the ability to understand the possible consequences from actions, some rights may not be realized until an appropriate level of comprehension and responsibility is reached. Until such time, rights are placed in the custodianship of a guardian who is entrusted to exercise these rights on behalf of the child. Children must always have the right to establish their maturity by assuming administration and protection of their own rights, ending dependency upon their parents or other guardians and assuming all the responsibilities of adulthood. The path for full acceptance of all rights and responsibilities (also known as "emancipation") must be easy and clear.

We oppose all laws that empower government officials to seize children and make them "wards of the state" or, by means of child labor laws and compulsory education, to infringe on their freedom to work or learn as they choose. We oppose all legally created or sanctioned discrimination against (or in favor of) children, just as we oppose government discrimination directed at any other artificially defined sub-category of human beings.

We also support the repeal of all laws establishing any category of crimes applicable to children for which adults would not be similarly vulnerable, such as curfew, smoking, and alcoholic beverage laws, and other status offenses. We seek the repeal of all "children's codes" or statutes which abridge due process protections for young people. Juveniles must be held fully responsible for their crimes in accordance with their maturity and ability to administer their own rights and responsibilities.

## FAMILIES

We believe that families and households are private institutions which must be free from government intrusion and interference. Parents, or other guardians, have the right to raise their children according to their own standards and beliefs. Specifically, we believe that choices about such matters as education and health care are the proper domain of families and not the government. We believe that delegation of the care of children to other parties when they are not personally able to provide it, whether that be to extended family or another social group, paid help, or a formal day care center, is both the right and responsibility, including financial responsibility, of the family and not the government.

However families do not have a right to abandon or recklessly endanger their children. Whenever they are unable or unwilling to raise their children, they have the obligation to find others willing to assume guardianship. Accordingly, we oppose all laws that impede these processes, notably those restricting private adoption services, or those forcing children to remain in the custody of, or removing them from the custody of, their parents against their will.

Additionally, children are not property. We deplore any action taken by parents, in their role as guardians of their young children, to mutilate or remove a functioning body part from their child without the child's informed consent, whether justified on religious or cultural grounds, as in female genital mutilation, or in order to benefit another, as in organ donation. Children have the right, as all individuals do, to be free from the initiation of violence. Relatives, close friends, or other concerned people should be free to advocate for and protect the rights of children, including removing them from situations where bodily harm is imminent.

## EDUCATION

We advocate the complete separation of education and state. Government schools lead to the indoctrination of children and interfere with the free choice of individuals. We condemn compulsory education laws and call for their immediate repeal. Government should not be in the business of deciding what is taught, whether in the form of curriculum guidelines, testing requirements, "standards", or approval of textbooks. We call for the abolition of the federal Department of Education and all similar agencies at the state and local level, including school boards.

Government ownership, operation, regulation, and subsidy of schools and colleges must end. The responsibility for the cost of education properly belongs with the people being educated or their parents/guardians. Tax funding is a form of welfare, shifts the cost to other households and to businesses without any connection to the services provided, creates bloated and stagnant bureaucracies, and reduces incentives for innovation that could both improve quality and reduce cost. Government loans and other subsidies for higher education distort students' judgement both about what fields they study and the overall value of such education.

We support the rights of parents who choose to educate their children at home. We support the right of businesses and other organizations to operate schools at all levels, whether on a for-profit or non-profit basis, whether following some traditional format or making use of new methods and technology. We applaud those who have chosen to make free or low-cost educational resources available online to students of all ages. We encourage all who want to help families cover educational expenses to do so through voluntary action.

## LIBERTARIAN PARTY 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 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.

The **Libertarian Party** was founded as a radically different alternative to the old, established political parties.

We don't pick our positions on issues based on polls.

As **The Party of Principle**, we base them on a consistent framework of ideas.

Help promote our ideas and our candidates by getting involved in the **Libertarian Party** today!

**NATIONAL ORGANIZATION**

**LP.ORG**  
**800-ELECT-US**  
**800-353-2887**

**YOUR STATE AFFILIATE**

**LP.org/states**

For libertarian perspectives on more issues see the LPRC Platform at  
<http://LPRadicalCaucus.org/platform>

 **LIBERTARIAN PARTY**  
**RADICAL CAUCUS**

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# FAMILIES AND CHILDREN



## A LIBERTARIAN PERSPECTIVE



## THERE AIN'T NO SUCH THING AS A FREE LUNCH