

## **ELECTORAL SYSTEMS**

Electoral systems matter. The predominant use of "winner-take-all" elections in gerrymandered, single-member districts fosters political monopolies and creates a substantial government-imposed barrier to election of non-incumbent political parties and candidates. We call upon legislative bodies to adopt electoral systems that are more representative of the electorate at the federal, state, and local levels, such as proportional voting systems with multi-member districts for legislative elections and ranked choice or approval voting for single winner elections. Further we oppose implementation of the electoral system known as Top Two.

In order to grant voters a full range of choice in federal, state, and local elections, we propose the addition of the alternative "None of the above is acceptable" to all ballots. We further propose that in the event that "none of the above is acceptable" receives a plurality of votes in any election, either the elective office for that term must remain unfilled and unfunded, or there shall be a new election in which none of the losing candidates shall be eligible.

## **CAMPAIGN FINANCE**

We demand repeal of all regulations and regulatory structures including the Federal Election Campaign Act and the FEC which suppress voluntary support of candidates and parties; compel taxpayers to subsidize some politicians and political views which many do not wish to support; invade the privacy of American citizens; and protect the Republican and Democratic parties from competition. We call for an end to all government subsidies to candidates or parties and the repeal of all laws which regulate or restrict voluntary financing of election campaigns.

## **POLITICAL PARTIES AND BALLOT ACCESS**

We call for an end to government control of political parties, consistent with individual rights to freedom of association and freedom of expression. Political parties are private voluntary groups, and must be allowed to establish their own rules for nomination procedures, primaries, and conventions. At the same time, political parties must not be given any special privileges or subsidies in their internal decision-making process. To that end, we call for the complete abolition of primary elections that are funded or controlled by any government body. "Voters" do not own political parties – the people who invest their time and money in them do, and the state must not interfere in their right to run their parties in the manner that suits them.

Many state legislatures have established prohibitively restrictive laws which in effect exclude alternative candidates and parties from their rightful place on election ballots. Such laws wrongfully deny ballot access to political candidates and groups and further deny the voters their right to consider all legitimate alternatives. We hold that no state has a legitimate interest to protect in this area except for the fair and efficient conduct of elections.

The Australian ballot system, introduced into the United States in the late nineteenth century, is an abridgment of freedom of expression and of voting rights. Under it, the names of all the officially approved candidates are printed in a single government sponsored format and the voter indicates their choice by marking it or by writing in an approved but unlisted candidate's name. We advocate for a strict separation of ballot and state, and call for a return to the previous electoral system where there was no official ballot or candidate approval at all, and therefore no state or federal restriction of access to a "single ballot." Instead, voters submitted their own choices and had the option of using "tickets" or cards printed by candidates or political parties.

## **CANDIDATE DEBATES**

Competition in ideas and government policies is important to the electoral process and is a cornerstone of fundamental freedoms. At the national level, The Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD), created in 1987 by the Republican and Democratic national parties for the express purpose of keeping minor party and independent candidates out of debates, intentionally limits participation in the nationally-televised debates to the Democratic and Republican Party nominees. The presidential debates organized by the CPD exert a de facto influence on the outcome of presidential elections, because a presidential candidate who is excluded from presidential debates has virtually zero chance of winning the general presidential election. The right to form a party for the advancement of political goals means little if that party's nominee can be arbitrarily excluded from debates and denied an equal opportunity to win votes. While we support the abolition of all intrusive election and other laws affecting the operation of private political parties, to the extent that these laws exist, they must not be manipulated to benefit the dominant parties to the exclusion of minority parties or independent candidates and to the ultimate detriment of the voters who are not presented with the range of potential choices. This effectively disenfranchises voters and violates First Amendment freedoms. Therefore, in accordance with current ballot access laws, we call upon all organizations that host debates to have fair and objective debate criteria that must include all candidates who are legally qualified to serve and whose names appear on the ballot, or in the case of Presidential debates all candidates who appear on enough ballots to potentially secure a majority in the Electoral College.

## 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**

YOUR STATE AFFILIATE  
**LP.org/states**

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



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# CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS



## A LIBERTARIAN PERSPECTIVE



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