

# Research paper on the libertarian party

[Philosophy](#), [Freedom](#)



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## **Introduction**

This research paper concerns the Libertarian Party of the U. S., (also known as the “ Third Party”). Aspects covered in this research paper are the party’s platform, the reasons it was originally formed, the type of people who have either joined or supported it, what successes they have achieved as a party, the effects this party has had on American life or politics, and if and why the Libertarian Party is still viable today.

## **The Research**

“ Libertarian Party 2012 Platform” on the party website provides the detailed information. The preamble to the detail announces that they “ seek a world of liberty; a world in which all individuals are sovereign over their own lives and no one is forced to sacrifice his or her values for the benefit of others.” The preamble also stresses that the basic principles outlined in the platform document are not their goal, “ which is nothing more or less than a world set free in our life time, and it is to this end that we take these stands.”

Following the preamble, the document opens with a Principles Statement that challenges state control and defends everyone’s right to control their own lives. They also insist that government must not interfere with those

rights or property and must permit free speech.

The first main item in the platform structure concerns personal liberty.

Essentially, the party supports and promotes full freedom of expression including religion, defends personal privacy to the extent of “ protection from unreasonable search and seizure” including one’s medical and other records, and believe that laws relating to using drugs – for either recreational or medicinal purposes – should be repealed. The Libertarians also oppose any discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender, and support freedom of sexual relationship choices and practices for consenting adults. Similarly, they believe that decisions on abortion should be a matter of individual choice. With regard to crime and justice, the Libertarian position is that criminal laws should be limited and that restitution to the victims by offenders should be maximized, as well as reducing the constitutional rights of the accused. They also support the bearing of arms and ammunition for self defense purposes.

Under the heading of “ Economic Liberty” the party supports a free market society with minimal government intervention, including in the arena of property rights, and firmly supports “ a clean and healthy environment” that also precludes government subsidy of any energy sources. Controversially, the Libertarian platform calls for the abolition of the IRS and income tax, seeking a “ Balanced Budget Amendment” to the US Constitution that requires government to balance their budgets by cutting expenditure instead of collecting tax. The party platform also opposes government control of institutions that could be privately run, encourages freedom of access to employment and opposes compulsory retirement. In the labor sector union

membership should be a free choice. The party also supports a free market education system and similar for healthcare, calls for an end to the State – operated retirement program and seeks to replace it with a voluntary privately-funded system.

“ Securing Liberty” is the third and last major part of the platform document. Under that heading the party calls for a defense system that is sufficient to defend the US from aggression, but opposes alliances with other nations to act as “ policeman for the world.” Instead they say we should encourage peace with all other nations. The party also is against compulsory military service. Our security services should be transparent. Free trade and movement across borders is important, though the party recognizes the need to control entry for those considered as a threat to security. The platform also supports equal rights of individuals regardless of race or origin. In terms of elections, the platform document calls for more representative elections and would ban tax-deductible subsidies to political parties in that regard. The platform also supports the idea that if any government proves to be counter to civil liberties, the people should have the right to abolish it. As to the reason the Libertarian Party was formed, according to their website, under “ America’s Third Largest Party” it was created in 1971 “ by people who realized that the politicians had strayed from America's original libertarian foundation, with disastrous results.” Those who created the party stated their “ vision was the same as that of America’s founders” which they defined as “ a world where individuals are free to follow their own dreams in their own ways, a world of peace, harmony, opportunity, and abundance.” The party website page on “ Frequently Asked Questions” (n. d.) covers the

topic of the type of people that join or support the party. According to that feature, Libertarians are neither liberal nor conservative, but (the feature claims) advocate a wide spectrum of personal and economic freedoms and are socially tolerant. They ask us to consider them as having a “live and let live” outlook. They also claim that the people who join or support the party are “people like you” – that is people from the entire spectrum of society, who formerly supported either of the two main parties or considered themselves as independent.

In terms of successes to date for the Libertarian Party, according to an article entitled “Libertarian Party” (n. d.) published by the free legal dictionary, the party achieved some success in the electoral arena when in 1980 its presidential candidate Ed Clark polled over a million votes in total, although as he had not won the popular vote in any individual US state, he gained no “electoral votes.” In the three subsequent presidential elections, the party’s candidate Andre Marrou gained fewer votes. However, according to the same article, as of 1994 the party had state representation in two states and had mayors in the state of California, and across the country as a whole had more than 30 members on city councils. Along with other successes, in the 2000 elections for the House of Representatives, the Libertarians gained 1.7 million votes in total, making it the first time ever that a “third” party had polled over a million votes for that election.

In terms of the impact of the Libertarian party it can be separated into political impact and social impact. As far as political impact is concerned, it will undoubtedly have already made the organizations behind the two major parties sit up and pay attention. Any party taking away a significant number

of their votes would have the same effect. However, so long as they remain no real threat, the impact will be minimal. Similarly, with social impact; while the Libertarians can only talk about what they would do if in power, their impact is very small. Should they ever gain power, the situation would be very different. If they were to succeed in abolishing state social security programs for example, all those now on the poverty line or on benefits would see a drastic deterioration in their living standards, as mentioned in Loo's article "Libertarianism and Poverty" (2003).

According to a feature on Debate.org entitled "Will the Libertarian Party soon replace the Republican Party?" (2013) the current online vote is 71 percent "Yes" and 29 percent "No", suggesting that the Libertarian Party is still most definitely a viable entity, though has yet to secure enough popular support to have any real effect on the status quo. No doubt its continuing viability stems from widespread dissatisfaction with current and recent regimes.

Conclusions

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