

**A
LIBERTARIAN
PRIMER
FOR THE
GAY COMMUNITY
(AND EVERYONE ELSE)**

by Elinor Brandt

**Dedicated to
Daniel J. Brandt,
my Dad
and my first
Libertarian
teacher**

CONTENTS

Introduction

1. Libertarian Principles

2. Gay Issues

3. Animal Rights

4. War on Drugs

5. Charity

6. Education

7. Environment

8. Social Security

9. Health Care

10. Immigration

11. Abortion

12. Foreign Policy

13. The Economy

14. Wasted Vote

Appendix

INTRODUCTION

My purpose in writing this is to tell you on a personal level what benefits a Libertarian lifestyle can offer you. Also, it is meant to suggest the Libertarian Party as the ideal political affiliation for the LGBT community.

I knew I was a Libertarian long before I knew I was a Lesbian - and long before I had a word for either one.

When I was a child my Dad used to say “There ain’t no such thing as a free lunch”, meaning, of course, that even if you don’t pay for it, somebody has to. That’s a saying that the current Libertarian Party has abbreviated to TANSTAAFL because the concept is basic to the party’s principles.

My Dad was a true Libertarian even though he died 2 months before the party was created in December, 1971. He taught me the logical morality of Libertarianism because he lived by it. He was a wonderful example of consideration and respect for the rights of others. He was only 62 when he died; this May (2009) was the 100th anniversary of his birth.

He was a kind and generous man, and also graciously accepted the kindness and generosity of others. But he believed that he was not entitled to anyone else’s assistance or money, nor were they to his. He had only a 9th grade education but wanted his children to be college educated so we could make a good life for ourselves. He almost always had a second job, as well as supplementing his income with meat provided by hunting and fishing.

My Mother had a high school diploma but was a stay-at-home Mom, as were almost all women in those days. In addition to performing all the usual household responsibilities, she made most of our clothes, and canned food when the crops of neighboring farmers were ripe. Together my parents gave us a full and happy life, and my brother and sister and I were never aware that we were “poor”. Our parents demonstrated self-sufficiency and respect for others, and showed us that life, for the most part, was good. We were encouraged to have dreams and to work toward achieving them. My Mother is still alive at 93. Her body and mind aren’t what they used to be, but her unconditional love and support of her family remain the same.

My siblings and I started working at a young age, to earn money for clothes and incidentals. Starting at age 11, I picked strawberries for a few weeks after the school year ended, for 7 cents a basket. A couple years later I started working weekends in the summer at an amusement park, selling tickets and refreshments for 50 cents an hour. During high school, I worked evenings selling candy & popcorn at a movie theatre (I loved that job because I could stay & see all the movies after my shift ended). Then during college, I spent summers cleaning motel rooms. When I was in veterinary school, I was able to get lab & research jobs at the school during the summers. Working was a way of life for me, and it was a good feeling being able to contribute to my own support. My Mother also went to work when we kids were in college - paying the bills was a family project that we all took pride in.

My Dad was a respected father-figure to friends and relatives, who often came to him for advice. He very rarely offered unsolicited advice. Whether or not it was solicited, he never insisted that it be followed - it was given freely for consideration.

My parents were generous in other ways. Three times we had relatives living with us temporarily when they needed a roof over their heads; they all got back on their feet and did well. My Dad coached a little league baseball team, and he cooked banquets for his church as well as teaching children at church. He had many friends - at his funeral there was barely room for everyone who attended.

There were things that we had help with. When my younger sister came down with rheumatic fever, my uncle (who was college educated) volunteered to help with the hospital bills. I don’t know

whether it was a loan or a gift, but I remember how grateful my Dad was. And when my parents first bought a house in the mid-1940s (for \$1500), a friend who owned a bowling alley volunteered to co-sign the bank loan, which otherwise my parents didn't qualify for. Government handouts were never something that my parents considered.

My childhood life was lived by Libertarian principles, and it always felt right to me. My parents were registered Republicans and attended the Lutheran church. Neither of these seemed quite right to me, as they didn't always follow the principles that we lived by. I quit going to church when I went off to college, because churches seemed hypocritical to me. They did not tolerate people who were different. I did not then realize that I was gay, but I could see the church's intolerance of those who were different in other ways. I knew instinctively that that was wrong, and I couldn't accept that any God could be that flawed. Of course, now I know that it was the people, not God, who were flawed. I have since discovered Metropolitan Community Church, which is mainly for "Queer" people and gay-friendly people, and am happy with it. MCC preaches love, acceptance, and tolerance, and the people in the church are wonderful and diverse.

I registered Republican when I reached voting age, but did not occupy myself much with politics. While in veterinary school I read Ayn Rand's books and became a follower of hers. Nathaniel Branden's books and classes were even better; he took Rand's principles and humanized them. Whenever Rand & Branden disagreed on anything, I usually was more attuned to his side. I became an Objectivist & subscribed to Reason magazine.

When the Libertarian Party grew out of the Objectivist movement in the early '70s, I was one of the first to join and to switch my registration. I had found my political home! By then I was married, and raising 2 sons (still without a conscious clue that I was a Lesbian). I remember when the kids were in grade school and had projects related to the current presidential race, I gave the teacher material on the Libertarian candidate to include. I thought it was important for the kids to learn that there were more than 2 choices.

I was in my late 40s, and my sons were 14 and 16, before I came out to myself as a Lesbian. When I started meeting other Lesbians and gay men, I discovered that the great majority of them are Democrats. I told some that the Libertarian Party is more accepting of homosexuals than are Democrats, for the simple reason that we accept everyone as they are (unless they're harming others). The main response was that Libertarians are not in a position to do anything about it because there are few in office. Also, I learned that many gays want to be fully accepted, meaning that they want being gay to be "right" in everyone's minds, not just to be tolerated. Democratic friends tend to categorize Libertarians as more conservative than Republicans, while Republicans seem to think we're more liberal than Democrats. Neither is true; we follow principles that are foreign to the two major parties, although they were not foreign to our country's founding fathers.

My spouse is a registered Democrat who went through a period of being a Randist and Objectivist in the 1960s. She is convinced that a vote for any third party is a vote thrown away - otherwise she says she would vote for the Green Party. I hope by writing this book that I can convey to others, if not to her, that there are moral and practical reasons for gay people to be Libertarians. But even if the Libertarian Party is not for you, I would like to give you a better idea what it represents. If you are gay (or not) and have any interest in or curiosity about the Libertarian Party, I hope this book will help to clarify what the party is all about.

If you want to find out where you stand politically in regard to the beliefs of various parties, take the "World's Smallest Political Quiz" (see the Appendix). It only takes a few minutes, and many people who take it are surprised to find that they score within range of Libertarian principles.

CHAPTER 1

LIBERTARIAN PRINCIPLES

My Dad used to tell me to not be concerned what other people thought, as long as I knew I was doing the right thing. It was a warning against peer pressure, but, even more, it was a strong message telling me that I'm my own person.

Both liberals and conservatives believe government should force peaceful people to live the way "they" think they should. Libertarians disagree.

Libertarianism is based on the fact that each person owns himself. No other person or group owns you, and you own nobody else. Each person has the right to do what he wishes with his own body, his own life, and his own property (if he acquired it honestly). But he only has the right to do these things if he does not infringe on the same rights of others. Every joint activity must be by mutual agreement so that nobody's rights are violated.

You have the right to live your life as you see fit; everybody else has the same right. Nobody should kill you, enslave you, beat you, or steal from you, nor should you do these things to anyone else. In most cases it is easy to decide whether an action infringes on another's basic rights, but some situations are more complex and can be difficult to sort out.

The property that you own, including your money, is the result of your labor, or possibly a gift from another. Nobody has the right to take it from you. You can keep it, use it up, or give it away, but nobody may take it because they want or need it. Even if they think they would put it to better use than you do, it is not their decision to make. (If property was acquired illegally or immorally, that is another matter.)

Individual liberty and personal responsibility are the key elements of Libertarianism. Each person is free to live his life on his own terms, and responsible for the outcome of his actions. If he causes harm to himself, it is not the government's place to punish him for it, and nobody is responsible for bailing him out; they may do so if they wish, but it is their decision. If he causes harm to others, he is responsible for restitution as far as it is possible, and government does have a responsibility to enforce this when necessary.

Since each person is responsible for himself plus anyone else he assumes responsibility for (such as his children, a spouse, a parent, or any other person), there is no need for a large government. People can take care of themselves except when there is a conflict between people's rights. When criminal acts are committed against an individual, we need police and court services. When people have honest conflicts, we need courts to make decisions. When a foreign power attacks us, we need an army to defend us. Other than to defend citizens against each other or a foreign power, we do not need government.

Our original government did little besides the above functions; they initially added only a postal system and a money system to make trade easier. All the other functions of our current government have been added over the years.

A minimal government as described above would not cost much. It could be supported by user fees and voluntary contributions. Without our huge tax burden, we could use our money as we see fit. People would be free to work and trade and live the life they choose.

You may think this sounds simplistic. It is simple, but it works. It worked in the days following our Declaration of Independence from the tyranny and taxation of the British government, and when our Constitution was written. Present government bears little resemblance to what our Constitution says. It was designed to protect us from the growth of government, but over the years the government has found ways to circumvent the protections.

Government gets bigger and bigger. In the year 1900 federal, state, and local governments consumed 8% of the national income (the total earned income of all Americans). In 2000, they consumed 47% of the national income. No matter which party is in office, it grows and grows.

In 1900, when government used only 8%, crime was a much smaller problem, the economy was growing faster, people were not starving and were not defenseless against unsafe products. What are we getting for the rest of the money government is now taking from us? Mostly we're getting programs that don't work, and that often harm the people they were devised to help.

Our major political parties operate on the premise that the average person is not smart enough to take care of himself and/or not moral enough to consider the rights of others. Therefore government needs to micromanage our lives and our finances. One party wants to control our personal lives but allow us some freedom to manage our finances; the other wants to control our finances but give us more freedom in our personal lives. Both started with good intentions, believing they knew what was right, but the results are repressive and immoral.

The truth is, most people, most of the time, act morally - we don't lie, cheat, steal, rape, or murder. We generally respect each other. Also, most of us are not weak, stupid, or incompetent; we are capable of taking care of ourselves.

There are always a small percentage of people who are unethical and power-hungry. Where would you rather see these people, in business or government? They tend to gravitate toward positions of power and wealth. Imagine one of these people running a private company with no ties to government favoritism. If they make a defective product, or overcharge, or treat their customers with less than respect, what will happen to the company? People will take their business elsewhere, and the company will either clean up its act or fail.

Now imagine one of these unethical people with a government position, or running a corporation with government protection (subsidies, laws that protect it from competition, bailouts when it's in trouble, etc). People have to deal with them because it's the law, or because there's no competition. Taxes or prices go up and there's nothing anyone can do on an individual level. Quality of service or products goes down and people just have to put up with it.

So in a free market, it's not essential for everyone to be honest and competent, because you don't have to deal with any particular person or company. Since not everyone is well-intentioned and competent, do you want to have the freedom to distance yourself from these trouble-makers, or give them the power to force you to do their bidding?

Even otherwise honest and ethical people who are not power-hungry, when they get in a position of government power, tend to become abusive of the power. What they want to accomplish may be worthwhile, even noble. But the way to get it done in our present system is to take money from the taxpayers and give it to the intended program, which in most cases doesn't work anyway. In his desire to do something that he considers worthwhile, this honest politician creates another increase in big government.

Utopia is not possible, unfortunately. There will always be problems to deal with. The greatest good for the greatest number of people is the best we can hope for. And this is best accomplished when everyone is free to act and be held responsible for the consequences of his actions.

On a personal level, Libertarianism is the most moral and fair of all the philosophies ever proposed. On a national level, we were closest to it when our country first came into being, and it worked much better than what other countries had. The mish-mash that our government has degenerated into just does not work. We are paying higher and higher taxes, and going deeper and deeper into debt, and our expensive programs don't accomplish what they were meant to accomplish. In fact, usually they seriously worsen the problems they were intended to fix.

This has covered basic principles of the Libertarian philosophy, and I'm sure you have questions about how specific topics would be dealt with under a Libertarian government. Also, these propositions assume a totally Libertarian government, and the jump from what we now have to the

proposed ideal is difficult to imagine even when one believes completely in the principles. Moving away from big government toward small government is a complicated matter that many authors have considered. See the book list in the Appendix for further reading if you are interested.

The next chapter deals with specific gay issues under a Libertarian government, and subsequent chapters deal with other issues that concern everyone.

CHAPTER 2

GAY ISSUES

My Dad died before I came out to myself as a Lesbian, so he and I never discussed the issue. However I know from the way he conducted his life that he would have been a supporter of our causes. He accepted people for what they were, and did not try to change them to meet his standards. He had a very diverse group of friends and acquaintances, and they liked and respected him.

Most gay people tend to be Democrats because that party often supports our causes. But I propose that the party that offers us the most is the Libertarian Party. Why? Because they believe we have the same rights as everybody else. Even those Libertarians who aren't particularly interested in gay issues would vote with us any time equal rights come to a vote. Around 20-30% of Democrats would probably vote against us, depending on the issue, as would about 50-80% of Republicans. I doubt if a single Libertarian would vote against us. Libertarians are the only political group that proposes to take away the government's power to inflict one person's values on another.

Gay marriage is the issue that has currently been in the forefront. The Libertarian view on marriage is that it's really none of the government's business. But as long as the government does regulate it, we should have the same rights as everyone else. It's that simple. We should have whatever rights, privileges, and responsibilities come with marriage for anybody else.

Ideally, married people would have no more or less rights or benefits than single people, so it wouldn't matter. Any decisions on marriage would be between the people involved, and their church if they have one. Marriage would be a contract promising certain things, such as fidelity, emotional and financial support, having and raising children, division of labor, or whatever the individuals desire. If the marrying people belong to a church, the church would probably set up their own guidelines, but that's fine because church membership is voluntary (at least so far, although that could change if our government keeps expanding). When I say church, the same applies to synagogues and other religious institutions.

Churches have historically been almost as much of a problem to gays as government has been, with one major exception - in our country these institutions don't pass laws that criminalize us and punish us for being gay. If you don't like a church's rules, you can go to another church; it's a lot harder to move to another country. In some other countries, the church dictates the government's laws, but fortunately it has not gotten that bad in our country (although the religious right would like to be in charge of the laws).

The big problem with churches is that many of us are raised to believe that if we don't follow the beliefs of our church, we are sinners and doomed to eternal punishment. And our families may treat us as outcasts because of their religious beliefs. It can play havoc with our minds and lead to self-loathing, mental illness, addictions, and even suicide.

As I said above, church membership is voluntary. But that doesn't help if you allow the church to convince you that you're a sinner because you were born gay. So if the church troubles you as much as more than the government does - find the MCC nearest you, or one of the other gay-friendly denominations. You can be both religious and gay if that is your inclination.

Religions that preach love instead of hate are an excellent source of support and community. The biggest fault of religious institutions is that most of them seem to preach they are the only one that has the right answers, and following any other beliefs will lead you to Hell. But fortunately they are not all like that.

To get back to the government, under a Libertarian system basic rights, or civil liberties, would be the same for gays as for anyone else. People more on the fringe of society, like bisexuals and transsexuals, currently are discriminated against even more, and even by some gays. That would have to end - we have to be as accepting of others as we want people to be of us.

Personal rights in a Libertarian society would differ from what we're used to in some ways. Each person would have the right to live his life as he pleases, as long as he doesn't violate those same rights of others. Any government institution would have to treat everyone equally. But some individuals would still have their prejudices - prejudice can't be regulated away. We could not act on our prejudices in ways that violate the rights of others, but others do not have a right to use our property without our permission. So if you have a prejudice against a certain race, for example, and own a business, you could keep those people from patronizing your business. Chances are, your prejudice would not be strong enough to forego the profits generated by their business (and the business of those who would boycott your business due to your discrimination), but if you do feel strongly enough you can keep them out. In the same way, gays could be kept from patronizing some businesses. But we can always find others that do accept us - unlike our situation when the government passes laws to take away our rights.

The prevailing public sentiment in a Libertarian society would be minimal prejudice, because people would not be afraid of being excluded themselves. It's natural that when you are accepted, you tend to be more accepting of others. Each minority group would not have to fear that another group would get control of government and impose their values on everyone. As stated before, Utopia is not an option. However, under Libertarianism fewer people would have fewer prejudices, and those who had them would have less power to make life difficult for others.

Hate crimes are crimes that are committed because of hatred of a group that the victim belongs to; the victim is quite often a stranger to the perpetrators. These are distinguished from crimes against an individual that is hated or feared for personal reasons, and crimes that are committed for the personal gain of the criminal. A Libertarian society would not need separate laws against hate crimes, because a murder (or mugging or rape) would be prosecuted and punished whatever the motivation behind it. The reason we have separate hate crime laws on the books now is to protect us from the inaction of the police and courts. Before hate crime laws were enacted, if local law officials or juries hated the same group that was victimized, they often looked the other way or gave unreasonably light punishments. This would not be tolerated in a Libertarian society.

Currently, victimless crimes are acts that have been deemed illegal, but that do not constitute force against anyone, or harm anybody except possibly the persons committing the "crime". Examples are drug use, prostitution, and gay sex. Much money and effort are wasted enforcing laws against these "crimes". Laws against victimless crimes, like drug use, have spurred the growth of true crime to finance the resulting underground industries. There would be no such thing as victimless crimes under Libertarianism. Gay people, along with various other groups, would no longer be criminals unless they actually infringed the rights of others.

For now, equal rights for LGBT people need to be voted on piecemeal, so that hopefully we can approach the level of full equality we would have under a Libertarian system. All true Libertarians are with us on this quest, whether or not they have any personal interest in us and our problems. It is a matter of principle with them.

CHAPTER 3

ANIMAL RIGHTS

There are three basic things by which I define, in my own mind, who I am: a Libertarian and a Lesbian and a Veterinarian. I am many other things - a spouse, a mother, a photographer, a traveler, etc, but they are secondary to who I am deep inside.

As a veterinarian, I would like to add animal rights to the issues. No other Libertarian book that I know of has addressed it, but I think it is important. I believe it is also important to most gay readers, because gay people tend to be wonderful pet parents who respect the value of inter-species relationships.

My Dad modeled kind and respectful treatment of pets, livestock, and wild animals. He was an animal lover; my Mother wasn't, but she still treated them with respect and kindness. It was this background, as well as a love of science, that motivated me to become a veterinarian.

Humans have the inherent right to be left alone to live their lives as they see fit, but what rights do other species have? Whatever they are, I believe we have a duty to allow them their rights, just as we must allow other humans their rights.

To determine what their rights are, I think we need to look to nature. Whether by evolution or divine intervention, nature has resulted in a system that works for the greatest good for the greatest number (when man doesn't interfere), and for minimal suffering. Remember, there's no utopia, but there are things that work most of the time. And there are parallels between what works for other species and what works for humans.

In the wild, each species has its own life path; nature does not treat a lion the same as it treats a horse or a snail. Members of some species eat members of other species. Predators are smarter and more independent. Prey animals usually are less intelligent and eat plants, and are more gregarious within their own species, which offers a degree of protection. Within a species, there is usually little fighting except for scarce resources like food, territory, and mates. They allow each other to do as they please.

Pain serves a purpose - a warning to get away from whatever is causing the pain. But when death is inevitable, such as when a prey animal is caught by a predator, the pain mechanism is turned off and the animal does not suffer. The same thing has been reported many times by people who were seriously injured in accidents but survived - they did not feel any pain until they were no longer close to death.

Animals take care of each other; particularly, mothers and sometimes fathers take care of their young until they become self-sufficient. Also, herd animals will often protect the young that are not their own. Whether you call it love or instinct, nature has provided for the protection of the young. While I was on a Tanzanian photographic safari, we saw a mother gazelle frantically running in circles after a hyena had grabbed her baby and taken off with it. The baby felt no pain, but the mother certainly did. We humans cried with the mother. Another day we saw a herd of zebras shielding a young zebra from the hyenas that were trying to catch it. The herd outran the hyenas and everyone in our Land Rover cheered.

Wild animals, particularly pack animals, sometimes take care of other adults of their species when they need help, and sometimes they leave them to die when they are very sick or injured. If the ailing one is beyond help, nature has provided for him to fade away with minimal suffering, while not holding back the rest of the pack from doing what they need to do to survive.

What do we owe wild animals? I think we need to respect their rights to live whatever life their species lives when left on their own. What about hunting? We are omnivores, so I think we have as much right as a lion or wolf to hunt for our meals. But we have an obligation to kill as humanely as possible, and to not kill more than we will eat. Since we have the brain power to devise

ways to kill off whole populations, I think it is our responsibility to restrain ourselves and show our respect for nature.

When we domesticate an animal, or bring an already domesticated one into our home, we have taken away his chances to live a “normal” life for his species. In exchange, I feel that we are obligated to give pets a life as close to normal as we can, and to keep them free from suffering pain, hunger, and emotional stress. They are brought into our lives for our enjoyment, and we owe them a comfortable and enjoyable life of their own.

As a veterinarian, I have seen opinions on animal rights change over the years. Some people, in recent years, feel that every animal has the right to as long a life as possible, even if heroic, expensive measures are required, and even if it is a life of daily painful treatments and enforced immobility. My opinion on this is more old-fashioned. I believe they are entitled to a comfortable, happy life as long as it is possible with reasonable efforts. Then they are entitled to a painless death in the comforting arms of their human caretakers.

There is also controversy about working animals, including those on farms, animal actors, circus animals, seeing-eye dogs and other animals trained to help in specific areas. Some people believe we have no right to enlist them to work for us. I believe we have a right to use them as long as we do not expect too much of them. Most domestic animals seem to enjoy having a job to do - if you have a dog, you have seen evidence of this. They act happier with some structure in their lives, and they want to be helpful, to be a contributing member of the family pack. They are like us in feeling better about themselves when they do something useful. But we must give them jobs that are appropriate for their species and individual talents and inclinations, we must train them with kindness, and we must not overwork them. As with humans, they function best and are happiest with jobs that are appropriate to the individual, and with down-time for rest and relaxation. Animal species that are amenable to being domesticated are generally animals that are comfortable being part of a pack or herd, and most of them are happier being a follower than the leader. They just want to be treated with kindness and respect. They're really not much different from sociable humans.

Food animals are also entitled to a comfortable and stress-free existence. They should be free to move around on their own, to a degree that is comfortable for their species, and to live as closely as possible to how they would live in nature. Animals that must be killed for us to eat should not suffer in the process. Their lives are short but they should still be peaceful and happy. The farmer does not have the right to make animals suffer to increase his profit, any more than he has the right to enslave humans to increase his profit.

CHAPTER 4

THE WAR ON DRUGS

The War on Drugs is not working. I think most of us would agree that drug addiction is something to be avoided, but it is an individual choice. On the surface it might seem that it would be a good thing to keep harmful drugs away from people, especially children. But the current attempts at control, besides trampling on people's right to control their own lives, just do not work. Not only are drugs readily available, to the extent that any junior high school student knows where to find them, but a huge portion of the crime in this country is related to the sales and use of illegal drugs. The solution isn't "more of the same" – it is crazy to continue doing the same thing that hasn't worked and expect different results.

I had a teenage son with a drug problem, so I know firsthand the heartache that fills the life of people who are involved with this issue. Fortunately my son responded well to 4 months of rehab, followed by an affiliation with the 12-step program, and has been clean and sober for the past 20 years now. But his friends did not all do as well - at least one of them is dead from an overdose a few years after he got out of rehab.

I know that stricter drug laws would not have saved my son from what he went through, or his friend from his fatal overdose. Repeal of all the drug laws would not have changed it, either, of course. There will always be people who become addicted, and that is too bad, but it is a fact of life. As I said before, there is no utopia.

What turned my son around was partially an intense rehab program in a private hospital, followed by years of AA, but mostly it was his own determination to make it work. Nothing the government did helped him - only his parents and several private organizations were able to be of any help. Even these do not always help, but they have a much better record than any government program.

What would be accomplished by repealing the drug laws if it would not prevent addiction? One advantage would be that casual drug users would not be classified as criminals, and if their addiction progressed they would be less likely to actually become criminals as a means of supporting their habit. Another advantage of repealing drug laws would be that AIDS patients and others would be better able to get and use medical marijuana. As of now, some states have legalized medical marijuana, while using it is still a federal crime. The Feds have been known to go after people who are complying with the law of their own state.

Crime in our country would probably drop by over half if the drug laws were repealed. Users could get drugs at reasonable prices, and would be much less likely to resort to crime to raise the money to support their habits. Users would bother nobody most of the time. But the biggest reduction in crime would be with the drug suppliers, the gangs and others who make lots of money importing or making and selling drugs. Violent gangs exist on drug money; they would no longer have a market. Lawful businesses could sell drugs, as they now sell alcohol. There is much less crime associated with alcohol than illegal drugs, even among teenagers who must wait until a certain age to be able to acquire it legally. This is because there now is no black market controlling the supply of alcohol.

When alcohol was illegal, during Prohibition (1920 through 1933), there was a lot of criminal activity associated with it. People didn't stop drinking, they just resorted to illegal ways to acquire what they wanted. Criminal activity became rampant - and when Prohibition was ended, this associated crime all but disappeared.

Yes, drugs are bad for the user, but keeping them illegal doesn't stop their use any more than it did for alcohol. It only keeps the illegal suppliers in business and makes criminals out of weak but

otherwise peaceful people. Think how much safer and more peaceful our cities would be if the underground drug trade did not exist.

If we were not concentrating so much on trying to stop the supply of drugs and arresting peaceful users, we could put the attention where it might do some good, and we could free our police to solve actual crimes. Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous are more successful than anything else that is available. Private rehab programs and individual therapy are also useful in certain cases. Court-enforced government rehab doesn't work – people are sentenced to participate for a short time, and when released are no better off than before.

We will always have addicts among us, unfortunately, but it would be better if they were peaceful addicts who harm nobody except themselves and those who love them. Education, not criminalization, is our only chance of reducing the problem to any degree.

CHAPTER 5

CHARITY vs WELFARE

Most people are kind and generous. Even with our current level of taxation and government handouts to the needy, people generously support churches and private charities. In fact, 90% of us donate voluntarily to charity, an average of 3% of our income. If the government were not doing as much as it does, individuals would more than take up the slack. The present level of donation is higher among those who do not believe charity is the government's job, but even the others donate significantly.

As a matter of fact, government welfare is contradictory to Christian philosophy, although most Christians don't realize it. A fundamental tenet of Christianity (and of most other religions) is that humans have free will, and if we didn't, we could not be held responsible for our actions. There is no free will in government welfare. An act of charity is only a Christian act when it involves free will. Giving up your taxes under duress, to be redistributed to others, is not a Christian act.

What I learned from my Dad on this subject is that true charity consists of donating your own money and/or time to causes that you deem worthwhile. He gave his time and what money he could afford to his church, and he volunteered for other community causes. Appropriating other people's money for your causes is theft, just as it would be if you commandeered their resources to feed your family. This is what politicians are doing when they tax us and hand out the money to people that they believe need it (after, of course, skimming off much of it for administration and graft).

Government "charity" is not working. It is largely controlled by pork-barrel projects so that politicians' pet projects get most of the money - that is, most of the little that's left over after government "expenses". The money that we turn over to the government in taxes could do at least ten times as much good if we were allowed to give it directly to private charities of our own choice. Because it would be our choice, the charities would have to convince us that their projects are above-board and economically managed, in order to earn our contributions.

Government welfare recipients tend to become "trained" to continue living on welfare. There are a few who are incapable of becoming self-sufficient due to mental or physical health problems, or extremely low intelligence. But the majority of those who live on welfare are as much victims of the system as are those of us who pay the taxes that support them - even more so. After all, it is only money that is being stolen from us - it is their self-respect that is being stolen from them by making it possible for them to survive with no effort of their own.

The growing welfare state is a big factor in the increasing crime level in our society. People who exist on handouts are less likely to seek honest employment, and much more likely to commit crimes. They have children they cannot support and as a result get more government money. They remain single, as marrying would decrease their handouts. The men feel irrelevant, as the government has replaced them as breadwinners. Single men tend to be much more irresponsible than married men who feel a sense of responsibility toward their families. All these factors lead to increased crime.

Welfare programs are a factor in the most controversial portion of illegal immigration - those who come to our country and collect handouts. New immigrants collected over \$700,000,000 in welfare benefits in 1997. In California, about 3 times as many new immigrants (percentage-wise) as US-born citizens collect Medicaid. Those who accept welfare only until they can get on their feet again could easily be supported temporarily by private charity organizations. They tend to be grateful, and anxious to get "off the dole", so that they can maintain their self-respect.

Those who make a career of living on welfare need to be taught to become self-sufficient as a condition of accepting the help. Government programs make no attempt, or very little, to do this.

True, not all private charities do this either, but they would be in a better position to do so without the government programs offering free, permanent support for their victims.

The number of homeless people living on the streets, especially in climates that are warm enough year-round to make survival possible, is growing by leaps and bounds. Does this sound like our system is working? The situation is getting worse, not better. What our government is doing is not working. Of course the liberals blame the conservatives for spending money on wars instead of welfare, and the conservatives blame the liberals for coddling the homeless. But the unavoidable truth is that what both parties are doing is not working even though they are confiscating taxpayers' money at increasing rates.

We can't leave the discussion of welfare without bringing up the subject of corporate welfare. This is the term for government assistance to businesses that have gotten themselves into trouble and/or that lobby government for special favors. Most people don't equate welfare for the poor with welfare for businesses, but the concept is quite similar. In general, liberals push for the former and conservatives for the latter - but both are taking money from taxpayers to give to those who have mismanaged their lives or businesses, and both are encouraging more of the same behavior that created the problems to begin with. Corporate welfare will also be addressed in the chapter on the Economy, but the point needs to be made here that it is not that much different from other forms of welfare.

I will close with an analogy between our government and a parent of, say, a dozen adult children. Four of the children are self-sufficient and self-supporting, with enough extra money that they give some to the parent and it doesn't break them. Four of the children are not working; two live on the street and two live in the parent's garage. The parent gives them enough money to survive, and tries to convince them to do better but is not successful. They're resigned to their life of dependence. The last four children started businesses but made unwise choices and the businesses are failing. The parent keeps them from going under by giving them money whenever they need a bailout. They'd be better off to let go of their failing businesses, but instead they just keep doing what doesn't work because the bailout money keeps coming.

With all the handouts to eight of the children, the parent is also going under. The four successful children are put under increasing pressure to contribute more money, and to buy from the businesses of their siblings instead of from viable businesses. Also, the parent is giving money to many extended family members, and borrowing from other extended family members (analogous to foreign countries), making the total picture that much more complex. What is the solution to all of this? As I see it, there is no solution unless the handouts are discontinued.

Without the handouts, the non-working children will be forced to clean up their acts, or lean on their friends (analogous to private charities). These friends will quickly tire of the situation, and when they do, they'll be better than the parent at teaching the children what they need to learn. Perhaps one of the non-working children is physically or mentally incapable of learning to take care of himself. In this case, his friends will be able to find a permanent placement for him where he can thrive better than under his parent's thumb, and the money that supports him will come from voluntary donations (probably including from the solvent siblings whose finances are no longer being drained by the parent). Lastly, the children with the failing businesses will be forced to let the businesses go and start over, hopefully wiser for their experience.

CHAPTER 6

EDUCATION

Schools initially were not the business of the government. Today most schools are run by governments, but there are also many run by churches and other private groups, and there is a growing trend for home schooling. A large number of parents are unhappy with government schools. Increasing numbers of government-run schools are failing to teach even the basics, and are exposing students to dangerous gang crimes. Smaller communities still have some public schools that work, thanks to the standards of individual teachers, administrators, and participating parents. But the larger the school district, the lower the prevailing standards and levels of safety and learning.

When I was growing up, the schools were government-run, but the standards were not nearly as compromised as they are today. My parents went to PTA meetings, and my Dad was a PTA officer because he felt it was important to the education of his children. My parents and teachers knew each other, and felt they were on the same “team”. Local control of schools was still the standard. And we kids got a good education.

By the time my sons were in school in the ‘70s and ‘80s, we lived in Los Angeles and public schools were not a viable alternative. Most caring parents who were not destitute sent their children to private schools, or moved to smaller communities.

Poor children, unfortunately, end up in the worst schools. Other children are taken out of the schools so they can get a better education, and the standards continue to deteriorate in the absence of the more motivated students and parents. The better teachers move to schools where they feel they can accomplish something.

Government schools no longer work except in small towns, but we are throwing huge amounts of tax dollars at them. We are building school structures and paying for teachers and administrators whose hands are tied as far as actually educating our children. We are not even rewarding the most effective of the teachers for their efforts, because it is “unfair” to the others who have given up on the seemingly impossible task of teaching the unteachable. Our teachers start out, for the most part, with the best of intentions, but are thwarted by the system. The best ones often switch to private schools where, usually for a sacrifice in salary, they are able to educate instead of police their students.

The children who are home-schooled usually score the highest in college admission tests, showing that how much their teachers care about them is the most important variable in education. Huge public school districts do not foster a caring attitude about individual students. Their teachers are better educated in teaching theory than the average home-schooling parent, but that is secondary to motivation.

The bottom line is that public schools do not work unless caring teachers are free to do what they do best - and that is becoming the exception rather than the rule. In private schools, teachers are more free to educate, and students are more free to learn. Success is not guaranteed, but the odds of success increase dramatically in private schools. And without our current high tax rates, many more parents would be able to afford private schools.

Our children would be better educated and much safer if we could replace the public schools with small private schools, but that is unlikely to happen any time soon. Some possible interim measures might be tax credits for tuition expenses, making private schools tax-exempt even when they’re not sponsored by religious groups, and decentralizing the large school districts.

CHAPTER 7

ENVIRONMENT

Do you believe in Global Warming? I do, but it is more or less irrelevant to this discussion. Whether or not we are warming the planet, it is wrong to pollute and to use up the resources of the earth. The gauge of what is right or wrong in the Libertarian philosophy is whether the act harms others. Pollution is a form of trespassing and can poison or otherwise harm unsuspecting people. And using up the earth's resources definitely will harm our children and grandchildren.

My Dad was a nature-lover and a conservationist long before it was popular or politically correct. One of his mottos was "Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints". He was a hunter and fisherman, but was adamantly opposed to killing anything that we were not going to eat. He didn't suspect the degree of damage that is being done today, but he knew that doing any amount of damage is wrong.

Many environmentalists concentrate on what the government "should" do to protect the environment. But this is like saying the government "should" fund our favorite charity projects. Both involve stealing resources from taxpayers, and dictating how they may live.

Government's only proper roles in protecting the environment are (1) repealing the laws that are in place that contribute to harming it (like exempting governments and certain favored businesses from pollution laws) and (2) enforcing the laws that are designed to prevent people from doing things that harm others.

The person most unlikely to pollute the environment or use up the natural resources is the owner of the property in question. Why would a person devalue his own property? A person is more likely to pollute someone else's property - but if the owner of that property is aware of it, he will take action to prevent it. However, when the government owns the property, it often allows it to be polluted because nobody has enough of a stake in the value of the property to care what happens. The government also pollutes its own property - unlike the majority of private owners.

The biggest polluter is government, much bigger than any large corporation, simply because government is bigger than any corporation, and it exempts itself from the rules that apply to businesses and individuals. Also many corporations are exempt due to their contractual arrangements with government - allowing them to harm the public as well as giving them a financial advantage over their competitors.

In 1992, 10% of government facilities were out of compliance with pollution laws, and in 1996 the figure was 27%. It's surely much higher today. The Departments of Energy and Defense are among the largest violators. States try to enforce their regulations, but the Federal Government refuses to comply.

Another problem is that government spends \$40 billion a year on programs that lead to increases in pollution - like farm subsidies and killing of wildlife to encourage farming of marginal land. This leads to greatly increased use of pesticides to protect crops on the new farming land. And the government sells below-market-value flood insurance to encourage building in environmentally fragile places that would otherwise not be occupied, leading also to more pollution and destruction of environment.

There are many other areas where government has a terrible pollution record. So besides enforcing the laws to keep us from poisoning each other, they need to stop poisoning us. And, most importantly, each individual needs to do his part to avoid damaging the environment and other people. This is an area where we are usually not caught when we do it wrong, so we have to be accountable to our own consciences.

Balance in the environment is like homeostasis, which is the term for the multitude of processes by which our bodies (and all other organisms) maintain life. We are kept in balance

internally in routine situations by thousands of natural physiological processes that are self-regulating. As long as we have air, water, food, and a reasonable environment, our bodies function automatically. We can heal from routine infections and mild to moderate physical trauma, as well as the effects of toxins and other physical and emotional stresses. If the stressors are too extreme, we need the help of the medical profession, but otherwise we can recover on our own.

I believe our planet Earth has a similar homeostasis. Nature is a system of interdependent organisms and processes. It can maintain balance over a wide range of conditions, but eventually it reaches its limits, just as do our bodies if they are invaded by a virulent pathogen or fall off a cliff. I believe we humans are pushing the limits of our planet, and in order for it to recover, it needs for us to back off, or else it needs to rid itself of our presence.

As I see it, one of the biggest factors in destroying the environment is the human population explosion. Multiply the effects on the earth caused by one person (even one who strives to cause the least harm possible) by the greatly increasing number of people, and the earth doesn't stand a chance. We already have 10 times as many people as we did 300 years ago, and the world population is expected to double again, long before the end of this century. The earth just cannot support such a large population.

The main hope for population reduction lies in the realization that smaller families would lead to higher standards of living for the individuals in the family. In the old days, larger families were advantageous, producing more people to work on the family farm or to otherwise support the family. Nowadays we don't do much farming on a family scale, and children are financial drains rather than assets. The counterbalance to this is an emotional one - many parents love having children, with the rewards and challenges of raising them. But the financial realities hopefully will keep them satisfied with one or two children instead of a large family. And those who still want to raise a large family could choose adoption or foster parenting.

As an aside, the gay community can be viewed as an asset to the population problem, as we produce far fewer children than do our straight counterparts.

A promising factor is that the rate of world population growth has slowed to a degree - but not enough to solve the problem.

I have read predictions that nature will self-correct the situation by famine or disease (partially resulting from global warming), unless humans correct it first by either war or education. I vote for education.

CHAPTER 8

SOCIAL SECURITY

Social security has become one of the most expensive items in the federal government, costing working people 15.3% of their earned income (including the amount for Medicare). Yes, you only pay 7.65 %, but your employer pays an equal amount. This, along with other taxes and government-enforced add-ons, cost your employer around 30% of your salary. If he didn't have to spend this extra 30%, he could pass some or all of it on to you as a nice salary raise. Add this loss to the amount of taxes that are deducted from your salary and charged when you purchase products and services, and you can see how much better off you would be without our heavy tax load.

When Social Security was started in 1937, the tax rate was 1% each for the employee and the employer. In 1940 the rate was doubled, and then it increased 20 more times to reach the present rate of 7.65% each (6.2% for Social Security and 1.45% for Medicare), or 15.3% total. The amount paid out to retirees in 1940 was \$35 million. In 2004 it was \$492 billion.

Social security is a cross between an enforced insurance system and an involuntary Ponzi scheme. We pay premiums while we are working, in order to receive monthly checks after we retire, or if we become disabled and cannot work. In theory it seems good except that we cannot opt out of it. The main problem with it is that it is not working. More people are living longer, creating a growing burden on younger workers. Add to that the practice of government of "borrowing" from social security to fund other programs, and the whole system is going broke.

What can be done about it? The government owes retirement income to all the people who have been forced to pay into it. The options of paying retirees less, or of charging current workers more, are repeatedly proposed. But the system gets deeper and deeper into the hole it's dug for itself.

People have learned to depend on receiving social security in their old age, and many have made no alternative arrangements - or not enough to survive without social security. If they hadn't been forced to contribute 15.3% of their income to the system they grew to depend on, they'd have been more motivated (and better able to afford) to plan for their retirement. But this is not the situation, so what do we do?

Government employees are the only group that has not been universally forced to participate in social security. They generally have a pension system for retirement, some with very generous monthly payouts, and others with little to none. Again this is a big expense for taxpayers, and hardly fair in the inequity among recipients.

What is to be done? The government can't just stop paying retirees who depend on their stipends - or even stop paying those few who don't need the money, because they have an implied contractual right to them. Also, they can't keep increasing the costs to current workers ad infinitum.

What would be fair and moral? It would be to stop forcing workers to pay into social security, and to pay everyone who has paid into it whatever is owed to them.

But is this something the government could possibly do?

The government owns a lot of property that government has no business owning. It could hold a huge sale, and use the money it collects to pay off those who "invested" in social security. It could offer them either the monthly payments for life that it originally agreed to, or a lump sum payment, based on what each one has paid into the system (plus interest). It has been proposed to pay off only those over 50, since they don't have enough time to plan adequately for their retirement. But that's still not fair to the younger ones who have had to contribute; they should be paid off too if it is at all possible.

When participants have been paid what they're owed, they can save or invest that money for their retirement. Without having to pay 15.3% of their salary into Social Security, they can also save or invest that amount. They could not be forced to plan for retirement, but more people would be

inclined to do so if they knew it was their responsibility, and if they had control over the money that the government previously took from them.

Also, if we stop trying to police the world, we can reduce our military expenses greatly, and that will help to pay off our debt to those who have paid into Social Security.

CHAPTER 9

HEALTH CARE

We had the best health-care system in the world before the government got involved. Costs were reasonable enough for the average working family to afford, and there were thousands of charitable organizations that helped provide health care for the poor. Also, many doctors would provide free and/or low-cost care to patients who needed it. Insurance to cover unexpected huge bills was much more affordable, because the insurance companies were not paying for routine things that could be anticipated and planned for.

As I was growing up, the cost of health care was not a focus in our low-income family. My Dad could afford it when it was needed. The only time it was a problem, when my sister was hospitalized, he got help from my uncle. That was the way it worked in those days.

Then everything changed, starting in 1965. Since then the cost of health care has been rising much faster than our overall cost of living, and its accessibility has been declining. True, health care has improved technologically in many ways, but the miraculous treatments, tests, and surgeries that have been developed are not accessible to the average patient. They cost insurance companies and the government (that is, the taxpayers) astronomical amounts when a patient does achieve access to them. People who have some money but inadequate insurance are going overseas in increasing numbers, where they can have surgery for about 60% less than here at home.

A few HMO-type organizations first appeared around 1930, offering pre-paid medical care. More of them gradually appeared in the 1940s through the 1960s, but still they were not on a large scale. The government became involved in 1965, and in the early 1970s they grew rapidly and were first called Health Maintenance Organizations. New laws encouraged their development, and the 1980s showed spectacular growth. Also, the insurance plans that were our only alternatives started covering routine treatment, so were similar to HMO's except that patients still had some choice of providers. Costs for all types of medical insurance and medical care skyrocketed.

Laws practically forced most employers to provide coverage. They made HMOs and insurance policies tax-deductible for employers, but not for employees or unemployed people who bought their own. Also the premiums were cheaper for employers than for individuals. So not only can few people afford to purchase their own insurance, when they lose their jobs they become uninsured. How sane is that? Some are allowed to continue the old policies previously paid by their employers, but they are for the most part unaffordable.

Before HMOs and comprehensive medical insurance, doctors tended to keep their fees on the low side, as they were motivated by competition from other doctors. With third-party payment, they are motivated to charge as much as is allowable, and to do unnecessary tests and procedures to stave off lawsuits. In HMOs, they are motivated to do less than could be done, since they are paid the same no matter how much or how little they do. Medical decisions are no longer up to the patient and doctor, but to the employees of the insurance company or HMO.

All other industries have gradually reduced costs with the rise in technology, but with the health-care industry it has been just the opposite - mostly because of government interference. Administration costs are higher, the threat of lawsuits with the current level of impersonalized care is higher, and waits of months for third-party payment are the rule rather than the exception. These are impossible conditions for the operation of any business.

But what is the government's proposed solution to this mess caused by regulations? More regulations! Both parties want national health care for everyone. Politicians need to look at our veterans' hospitals, which are a disgrace. Their care is even worse than that of HMOs. Why should private citizens expect better care from the government than it gives to its national heroes?

Doctors can still operate outside of this HMO/insurance system, and a few do. They don't take insurance or Medicare or Medicaid payments. They have low fees which are paid by the patients. They can concentrate on medicine instead of billing. Their patients are largely low-income working people who can't afford insurance but don't qualify for government assistance. It's hard to find this type of medical service any more, which is too bad, because it's what everyone used to have access to.

The drug industry is also currently a mess - drug prices have risen even faster than the fees for medical services. "Big Pharma" is very corrupt, spending more money than any other industry on lobbying, and is dependent on government-granted monopolies. In the 1980-2000 era, new laws allowed the results of taxpayer-funded research to be turned over to drug companies, along with patents to give them exclusive rights (previously, taxpayer-funded developments were available to everyone equally). Lobbying has extended the patent period, among other benefits generated by the industry's lobbyists. In 2002, the total profit of the ten Fortune-500 drug companies exceeded that of the other 490 companies in other industries combined. Their profit as a percent of sales runs 3 to 5 times that of the other industries. They spend little on research and development, and much on marketing and administration. They have few new drugs, and the ones they do have mostly come from taxpayer-supported research. When a patent is about to run out, they make minor changes to an old drug so they can get a new patent, but the great majority are no better than the old ones. Their money is spent convincing doctors to prescribe the "new" expensive drug.

This is a perfect example of what happens when big business and big government become partners.

Another problem is that the FDA, since 1962, has required drug companies to prove that a new drug is effective before approving it. That takes much longer and is much more expensive than proving it is safe, the only requirement before 1962. As a result, many people die while waiting for the approval process. This was a big problem with the drugs developed for the treatment of HIV - there were lots of unnecessary deaths during the years of enforced testing.

The status of my profession, veterinary medicine, offers an interesting comparison. We are subject to much less regulation than human medicine, at least so far. There is regulation in food animal medicine because of threats to the safety of the food supply, and also in the drugs we use - many of them are the same drugs used for people, and the FDA is in charge of both human and veterinary drugs.

But for the most part., the government leaves us alone, compared to our MD colleagues, except for the restrictive laws and taxes that are burdens to all small businesses. Insurance is starting to become a factor in pet medicine, but it is still not a problem because it reimburses the owner for money spent - we do not have to bill them and wait months for payment.

The result of the relative freedom from government control of the veterinary profession is that your pets can generally get much more efficient and cost-effective treatment than you can, and more personal service - the way you could 40 years ago. I would much rather go back to that than move into what Washington is proposing for our future health care.

CHAPTER 10

IMMIGRATION

The position of the Libertarian Party on illegal immigration is that it should not be illegal for honest immigrants to enter our country. Most immigrants over history have been hard workers and contributed much to our society.

We do need to regulate entry into our country to the extent that we must be able to exclude those who present dangers to our citizens. The basic rule of Libertarianism is that people should be free to live as they please as long as they don't harm others. How might immigrants harm us? The most obvious way is if they are criminals. Another way is if they are carrying a communicable disease that endangers our health.

We do have procedures for a limited number of legal immigrants, who must follow strict guidelines, and patiently wait their turn. In contrast, we have huge numbers entering illegally and, if they manage to cross our border, they usually can live in our country with no restrictions whatsoever. It is a farce, calling them illegal but looking the other way when they enter. Along with the majority who are decent hard-working people, we get criminals and freeloaders and people with dangerous infectious diseases. We need to find a middle ground in which we can let more people come in, but screen all of them for security risks and communicable diseases.

In our federal prisons, 30% of the inmates are illegal immigrants. Many of our most vicious street gangs consist of illegal immigrants who are not assimilating with our society. They thrive largely because of the illegal drug trade. If we can keep out the security risks at our borders, and also legalize the drugs that these gangs import and sell, our cities will be much safer.

Among the millions of illegal immigrants that cross our southern border annually are thousands that came from terrorist countries. They know that is the easiest way to get into our country without detection. Of course, most of these people are not themselves terrorists, and a sizable number of them are actually fleeing persecution that they would face in those terrorist countries, such as LGBT people. This is because our country shamefully turns away thousands of valid asylum cases every year, leaving innocent people the grim choice of returning home to face torture and even death, or to violate our immigration laws. Is it any wonder that they choose the latter?

As for the sick immigrants - my spouse is a retired public health nurse, and from her accounts, the worst of the communicable diseases come in from other countries. Our public health departments have done a good job of controlling dangerous diseases in our country, which is a legitimate role of government because it is a way of protecting people from other people. The recent flare-ups of previously controlled diseases largely come from other countries, so we need some method of screening at the borders for people carrying diseases that pose risks to the public. This is true of tourists and other visitors, as well as immigrants, as it is not only illegal immigrants who bring us unwanted diseases.

One of the biggest problems with unrestricted immigration is that it cannot exist in a welfare state without bankrupting the country. That is what is happening to us. We need to stop making it so easy for immigrants to receive handouts and free services. If they know they are going to have to work for their livelihood when they enter our country, the non-workers won't be so anxious to come.

Illegal immigrants cost California taxpayers over \$10 billion a year. The border states bear the biggest burden, but even Massachusetts spends over a billion dollars a year on them. The whole country spends over \$20 billion on welfare for illegal immigrants, and over \$30 billion to educate illegal immigrants and their American-born children. Over \$3 billion is spent on healthcare for illegal immigrants, plus an equal amount to incarcerate those who are criminals and who are caught and imprisoned.

In California, it costs the average family around \$2000 a year in taxes to support the growing illegal immigrant population. California public schools average over 15% children of illegal immigrants.

Some employers encourage illegal immigration because they want cheap labor, and Washington's reluctance to control the problem is largely a result of pressure from such businesses. As a result, many illegal immigrants are paid under the table and escape paying the taxes that the rest of us pay, while their employers are not paying the payroll taxes that they pay on their legal employees. It's true that the Libertarian Party is opposed to heavy taxation, but those taxes are currently a reality, and it is unfair for the people who are the heaviest users of public services to be the ones to escape paying the taxes.

Even those illegal immigrants whose employers withhold taxes and pay them to the government are mostly unskilled, and therefore low-paid, so their contributions to the tax system do not support their heavy rate of using services. We have plenty of natural citizens who are in this category also, of course, but it doesn't make sense to increase their ratio to those who support them. This would all be resolved by cutting both taxes and public services. Then the hard-working and honest but poor segment of society would be better able and more motivated to improve their lot, and there would be less immigration of the unskilled, because they would know they could not get a free ride by crossing borders.

CHAPTER 11

ABORTION AND RIGHTS OF THE INCOMPETENT

I have grouped these topics together because they are touchy subjects for some Libertarians. The reason is that there can be perceived conflicts between the rights of the adults involved and those of a fetus or child or senile person. The same can be said when mentally or physically incompetent adults are involved, so they are also part of this discussion. Libertarianism assumes that individuals are competent to take care of themselves under normal circumstances, but there are cases where this is not so. So if each person is responsible for himself, who is responsible for those who cannot be responsible for themselves?

First, let's eliminate from the discussion those who could be responsible for themselves, but have learned that they don't have to be. There are many people "on the dole" who just expect to be taken care of. They may have learned from their parents who were on welfare that this is the way to live. Or their parents may have been hard workers who for some reason did not require them to start pulling their own weight. They may have been "trained" to be lazy by receiving handouts with no requirement for learning responsibility. They may have been genuinely helpless at one point in their lives, and just decided to keep taking advantage of whatever has become their source of support.

My Dad was very impressed by what a tour guide in Israel once told him: "If you give a man a fish he can eat for a day; if you teach him to fish, he can eat for a lifetime". The people who are on welfare but could become self-sufficient need to be taught "how to fish". The government does not even attempt to do this, and by continually supplying fish it leaves them without motivation to learn to fish. Once these people do learn how to be responsible for themselves, they are much happier and have a greatly improved outlook on life. They feel competent, and learn that life is worthwhile after all. Self-reliance is the most fulfilling attribute of a human being.

But let's get back to the truly helpless. We are not automatically responsible for anyone else, but we assume responsibility for others in various ways. The most obvious ways are by becoming pregnant and by having or adopting children. These are essentially contracts to be responsible for your children until you can teach them to become self-reliant.

If a pregnancy is accidental or the result of a rape, no such contract has been entered into. This is an area of disagreement among Libertarians - the right of the fetus to live vs the right of the mother to have control of her own body. You will find Libertarians on both sides of the issue, but most would leave the decision to the mother even when they disagree with what she decides to do.

Another issue on abortion is when the fetus is shown, usually by amniocentesis, to have a life-threatening or life-limiting deformity. Libertarians may have varying personal opinions on what should be done, but few would restrict the right of the parents to make their own decision.

When we raise children, we have an inherent responsibility to not do them harm, and to teach them to become responsible adults who can take care of themselves. Sometimes it can be difficult to determine whether this is happening, but other times child abuse is pretty obvious. If a parent is harming his or her children and it can be proven, who assumes responsibility? Often it is the state, and often it is a caring relative or friend. We all know which alternative usually produces better results, and it is not being shuffled around by "the system".

It used to be that private charities operated orphanages for abused, neglected, and unwanted children. They still do, but for the most part the government has taken over. Government-arranged foster care is quite variable in effectiveness and humaneness. If a child is raised by anyone who does not love him and have his best interests at heart, the results are not good for the child or for society.

A society in which people accept responsibility for themselves and their dependents would lead to fewer marginalized children. Our society tends to teach dependency on "Big Brother" and

that leaves many children who are unwanted, unloved, abused, and neglected. It is a sad situation that perpetuates itself from generation to generation. Every child needs at least one parent who loves him and puts him first, whether a natural or adopted parent.

Aging parents are becoming a growing burden on younger generations, as medical science enables us to live longer. Many of them become senile or otherwise physically or mentally incompetent, and need to be taken care of. If they have been good parents, their children usually voluntarily care for them, either providing the care themselves or placing them in an institution that cares for them. Some such institutions are government-run and some are private, run by charities or for profit. There is a wide variation in level of care in these institutions; the happiest dependent parents are usually the ones living with their adult children.

Other adults also become incompetent due to mental or physical limitations, and some of them have no relatives to see to their needs. Whose responsibility are these people? Private charities are usually the best answer, but there needs to be at least one person willing to step up and get him in contact with an organization that can help him.

The bottom line is that there are some incompetent people of all ages that have nobody to assume responsibility for them. When a competent person is in trouble, he can speak up and ask for help, or lodge a complaint against someone who is victimizing him. But the truly incompetent cannot do this. I think it is everyone's responsibility to act as their voice in asking for help for them, or reporting crimes against them when we see such things happening. But it is a moral responsibility and should not be a legal responsibility.

If we had a society that encouraged responsibility rather than dependence, more people would help a stranger in trouble. Too many people ignore the plights of their neighbors because they tell themselves, "It's the government's job".

CHAPTER 12

FOREIGN POLICY

Libertarian foreign policy consists of free trade and non-interventionism. This works best between countries just as it does between individuals.

My Dad's policy with the neighbors was to treat them with kindness and respect, and sometimes to trade goods and services with them for mutual benefit. He didn't try to tell them how to run their lives or bail them out of messes they got themselves into. He didn't loan them money or borrow from them. The neighbors were welcomed as visitors but did not have free access to our house. He expected reasonable treatment from neighbors, and generally got it. He would have defended himself had a neighbor threatened or attacked him or anyone else in the family, but that never happened.

Isn't that the same way we as a country should treat our neighbors, both across our immediate borders and around the world? Originally our country was on that path, as specified in our constitution. But as in other matters, we have gotten further and further away from that ideal over the years, and in the process have gotten deeper and deeper into trouble on a world scale. What we are doing currently just is not working.

We are giving money to many countries, both those we call allies and those we perceive as enemies. And we have military presence in 130 countries (70% of the countries in the world).

We give away \$13 billion a year, most of which (90%) we require to be spent on products made by American corporations. So in addition to its effect on foreign countries and our budget, it is a form of corporate welfare. Our largest benefactor is Israel, but her enemies combined receive even more than she does from us. We are trying to buy the right to control events in the Middle East and elsewhere. But in the long run we are buying enemies. Nobody wants to be controlled that way.

To me it seems like a parent (in our case a self-appointed adoptive parent) of grown adult children supporting them and controlling their actions. It may work for a while, but the kids are sure to rebel sooner or later. They are prevented from living their own lives, and they make the parents miserable. Besides that, the process could bankrupt the parents.

As an aside - individual Americans also give a lot of money to foreign charities, just as they do to domestic charities. In fact, in 2006 they gave 3 times as much as our government to help people overseas. This does no harm because it has no strings attached; it actually helps people and makes them happy instead of making them resentful. The donors are free to choose whoever they think deserves their help, and they generally make good choices because they have no ulterior motives.

Our military was intended to be only for self-defense, not for trying to correct the wrongs of the rest of the world or to build an empire. We had the right to go after Al Qaida after they attacked us on 9/11, but Iraq did nothing to us except for offending our sensibilities. This war was a mistake from the beginning, and it hasn't accomplished anything worthwhile. But it has certainly done a lot of damage.

Our military expenditures - just the maintenance of our presence in 130 countries - cost us a trillion dollars a year, and the war in Iraq has cost us an additional two trillion dollars. We borrow over two billion dollars every day, mostly from China and Japan, to support our foreign aid programs. Our total debt is around nine trillion dollars, not counting about fifty trillion in entitlement liabilities (Social Security etc), and our dollar is in free-fall. Our interventionism is both bankrupting us and making us less secure.

It is unreasonable not to expect people to grow resentful when your government bombs them, supports police states in their countries, and imposes sanctions on them - the CIA calls this Blowback (the unintended consequences of military interventionism). Our government has put us in greater

danger and made us more vulnerable to attack; both major parties have supported the tactics that have endangered us. The terrorist attacks of recent decades have come not from foreign governments, but from groups of individuals. They are often led by religious idealists, but their rank and file members are for the most part not religious - they are people fed up with our interventionism.

Our interventionism is bankrupting us as well as making enemies, thus making us less secure. All past empires have ended in financial catastrophe because they destroy their own currency. We can stay with our present tactics and end the same way, or we can start withdrawing gracefully. Do we want to saddle the next generation with a bankrupt empire, or give them a chance for financial independence and pursuit of their own goals?

CHAPTER 13

THE ECONOMY

The economy as I learned about it from my Dad was simple. Do an honest day's work for an honest day's pay, and don't spend what you don't have. Save for big purchases and save for a rainy day, before making unnecessary purchases. Keep your savings in a safe place, and don't gamble with it (as in the stock market) unless you can afford to lose it. Don't borrow money except for large necessities like a house and maybe a car - and only if you have a reasonable expectation of being able to pay it back. If you don't pay it back, the lender becomes the owner of the house or car or whatever. Be aware that you are gambling by borrowing, and accept the responsibility as your own.

If you choose to go into business for yourself, the ideal way is to save up the startup money first. If you don't, you can borrow part of the money, and pay it back with interest. Or you can get part of the money from one or more investors, who become part-owners of the business and receive a portion of the profits.

Your business is free to succeed or fail, based on what you do and what happens around you. The business produces goods or services that other people want and are willing to trade for. If people don't want what you produce, you cannot succeed in your business.

If things stayed this simple, there would be no large-scale problems like we have today. But the bigger a business becomes, the more it acts like the government. It seeks special power and advantages over its competitors. The most dangerous way this happens is when a business gains special favors from the government, and is no longer free to succeed or fail on its own. It gains advantages over its competitors via laws passed in its favor, or is bailed out when it is in danger of failing. It becomes interwoven with the government, so that the government considers it essential to the economy. It sends lobbyists to Washington to court the people who pass and enforce the laws. All of this is destructive to the economy and unfair to private citizens. And the business is no longer free to fail!

How can businesses be kept small enough to not develop this government-like power? They must be free to fail, and they must have to compete with other businesses for the money of the consumers. Government must keep a hands-off policy.

Money is merely a means of trade - so that we don't have to find someone who wants what we produce, to swap for what they produce. When trading stays in the present, there is generally no problem. But when it goes into the past or the future, a gamble is involved. Money is commonly devalued over time - so we are paying off loans with money worth less than it was when we borrowed it. Money saved for the future will be worth less when we eventually spend it. The amount of the devaluation depends mostly on what the politicians do, like artificially setting interest rates and printing money when they run out. They try to fix a problem and usually end up making it worse. In a Libertarian society, money would not be so unpredictable. This whole problem is very complicated and I will leave it to the experts to try to explain it more fully. My point here is that it is best to buy current needs with current dollars as much as is practical - and vote for Libertarians so we have a possibility of a more stable economic future.

Businesses are heavily regulated today, and at the same time some of the giants among them are granted favors based on costly lobbying and other connections with government. These factors are the cause of many of our economic problems. Occasionally a politician tries to deregulate a business to fix things, and when it doesn't work, many people assume that we need more regulation instead. Why doesn't it work? It is because we are deregulating one small aspect of a whole interwoven regulated system, and all it does is switch someone from a more favored to a less favored position, and vice versa. It would be necessary to remove all regulations at once, as well as all special favors, and even that would most likely not work because our giant corporations have become

used to their abusive power and would not voluntarily give it up. I don't know the answer as to how we can get from here to there, except to start over. But I do know that if we continue the way we're going, the system we have now will self-destruct, taking most of the country with it. The corruption gets worse over time, and it's now almost as hard to find an honest CEO of a giant corporation as it is to find an honest politician. I do believe President Obama is one of the rare honest politicians, and one who is willing to listen to opposing opinions and to think outside the box. But he still buys into the premise that government intervention can fix things, and he has been handed an impossible situation. He is probably our best chance for a temporary fix.

As I write this, President Obama has just signed his Economic Stimulus Bill. Time will tell whether it helps the situation. It may temporarily stabilize things as past interventions have done, but this time our situation could be beyond what can be patched up with band-aids. If Obama's interventions do help, they will postpone but not prevent the inevitable collapse. They might even postpone it beyond the life-span of my generation, but our children or grandchildren will eventually have to deal with it.

We are deeply in debt and spending more rather than less. Our entire banking industry seems to be corrupt, and the rest of the world no longer trusts us. Unemployment is rampant and businesses are failing. But the corrupt giant corporations are being bailed out. People have no money, but the goal of the stimulus plan seems to be to encourage people to buy on credit. This is part of what got us into trouble - too many people took on mortgages that they can't afford and ran up credit card debt that they can never repay. Our economy has become dependent on false financial growth fueled by everybody living on credit, and huge numbers of individuals have become addicted to all the gadgets they buy on credit. The government is spending money it doesn't have and individuals are expected to continue doing the same. The government prints money when it runs out, a practice that devalues everything.

Our governments already collect close to half the GNP in taxes, and every administration increases the spending as well as the controls over people and businesses. Eventually it will all have to collapse, and we will have to start over from scratch. Hopefully by that time, the Libertarian Party will be strong enough to take the lead, and the second life of our country will be what our founding fathers intended the first time around.

CHAPTER 14

WHAT IS A WASTED VOTE?

My parents voted in every election, and encouraged us kids to register as soon as we were eligible. My Dad said that anyone who doesn't vote should not complain about the results of the election. Not only was it essential to vote, but to learn about the candidates and vote one's conscience. A vote is an important thing and should not be wasted.

The most common objection to voting for third party candidates is that it wastes your vote. But a truly wasted vote is a vote for the lesser of two major-party evils when there is a third (or fourth or fifth) choice that you prefer. If a minority of voters really believes a third party candidate is a better choice but doesn't vote for him, the major parties will not even know that both parties are displeasing people. And a third party can't become a viable choice overnight - it has to grow gradually. If you don't vote for them because they can't win, they can't build momentum year after year.

It is very difficult and expensive for third parties to get on the ballot for state and national elections. The process varies state by state, some being much harder than others. Large numbers of signatures must be gathered, within certain time constraints. But once a party achieves certain numbers in registered voters and/or votes cast for certain offices, the gathering of signatures is no longer required. This is another reason to vote for your choice instead of one of the major parties - you will contribute to the requirements needed to skip the gathering of signatures next time around, and make it easier for the party to concentrate on getting their message out to the public.

Libertarians are getting elected in towns and counties, and occasionally in state offices. In 2007 there were 439 Libertarians in local elected positions in the United States. Twelve Libertarians have been elected to state legislatures since the party began in 1971. Unfortunately we have yet to elect someone to a national office. Some Libertarians have registered in a major party in order to get elected - for example Ron Paul. After being a Republican congressman in the 70's and 80's, he ran for president on the Libertarian ticket in 1988, getting 0.5% of the vote. Then, as a Republican, he got re-elected to congress in 1997, and ran for president in the 2008 primary, coming in fourth out of seven candidates.

So PLEASE vote for the candidate you believe is the best choice, whether you think he has a chance of actually being elected or not.

APPENDIX

BOOKS:

- Atlas Shrugged, by Ayn Rand (1957)**
- Breaking Free, by Nathaniel Branden (1970)**
- Economics in One Lesson, by Henry Hazlitt (1946, 1978, 1996)**
- Free to Choose, by Milton and Rose Friedman (1979)**
- The Great Libertarian Offer, by Harry Browne (2000)**
- Healing Our World in an Age of Aggression, by Dr. Mary Ruwart (2003)**
- How I Found Freedom in an Unfree World, by Harry Browne (1973)**
- Libertarianism in One Lesson, by David Bergland (2005)**
- A New Dawn for America, by Roger McBride (1976)**
- The Revolution, by Ron Paul (2008)**
- Short Answers to the Tough Questions, by Dr. Mary Ruwart (1998)**
- A Time for Truth, by William E. Simon (1978)**
- The Truth About Drug Companies, by Marcia Angell, MD (2005)**

ORGANIZATIONS:

OUTRIGHT LIBERTARIANS (for gay Libertarians)

www.outrightusa.org

LIBERTARIAN PARTY

www.lp.org

ADVOCATES FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT

www.theadvocates.org

CATO INSTITUTE

www.cato.org

REASON FOUNDATION

www.reason.org

WHERE DO YOU STAND POLITICALLY?

To find out, take the world-famous...

World's Smallest Political Quiz

For years, politics has been represented as a choice between left (or liberal) and right (or conservative). Growing numbers of thinkers agree this is far too narrow a view — and excludes millions of people. The political map on the Quiz gives a much

more accurate representation of the true, diverse political world. **The Quiz measures tendencies, not absolutes.** Your score shows who most agrees with you in politics, and where you agree and disagree with other political philosophies.

— Scoring: For each statement, circle A if you Agree, M for Maybe (or don't know), or D if you Disagree. —

How do you stand on PERSONAL ISSUES?

20 10 0

- ◆ Government should not censor speech, press, media or Internet. A M D
- ◆ Military service should be voluntary. There should be no draft. A M D
- ◆ There should be no laws regarding sex between consenting adults. A M D
- ◆ Repeal laws prohibiting adult possession and use of drugs. A M D
- ◆ There should be no National ID card. A M D

How do you stand on ECONOMIC ISSUES?

20 10 0

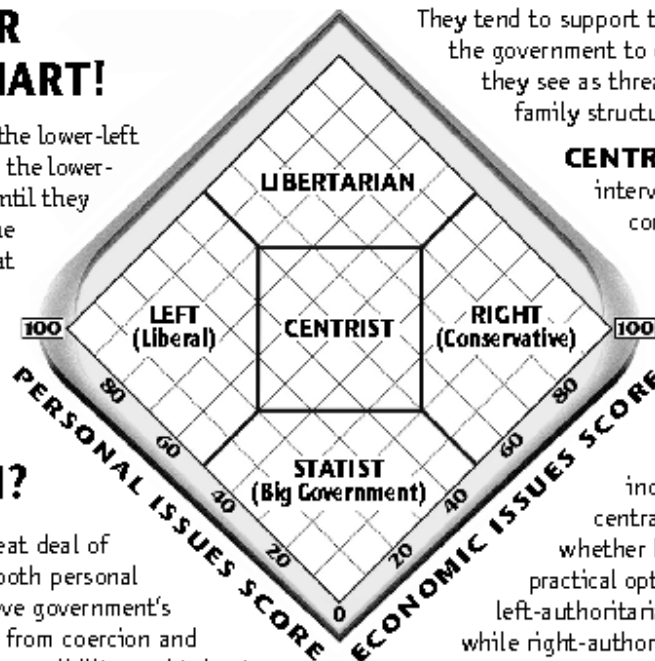
- ◆ End "corporate welfare." No government handouts to business. A M D
- ◆ End government barriers to international free trade. A M D
- ◆ Let people control their own retirement; privatize Social Security. A M D
- ◆ Replace government welfare with private charity. A M D
- ◆ Cut taxes and government spending by 50% or more. A M D

SCORING 20 for every A, 10 for every M, and 0 for every D: _____

SCORING 20 for every A, 10 for every M, and 0 for every D: _____

▶ NOW FIND YOUR PLACE ON THE CHART!

Mark your **PERSONAL** score on the lower-left scale; your **ECONOMIC** score on the lower-right. Then follow the grid lines until they meet at your political position. The Chart shows the political group that agrees with you most.



They tend to support the free market, but frequently want the government to defend the community from what they see as threats to morality or to the traditional family structure.

CENTRISTS favor selective government intervention and emphasize what they commonly describe as "practical solutions" to current problems. They tend to keep an open mind on political issues. Many centrists feel that government serves as a check on excessive liberty.

STATISTS want government to have a great deal of control over individuals and society. They support centralized planning, and often doubt whether liberty and freedom of choice are practical options. At the very bottom of the chart, left-authoritarians are usually called socialists, while right-authoritarians are generally called fascists.

▶ WHAT DOES YOUR SCORE ON THE CHART MEAN?

LIBERTARIANS support a great deal of liberty and freedom of choice in both personal and economic matters. They believe government's only purpose is to protect people from coercion and violence. They value individual responsibility, and tolerate economic and social diversity.

LEFT-LIBERALS generally embrace freedom of choice in personal matters, but support central decision-making in economics. They want the government to help the disadvantaged in the name of fairness. Leftists tolerate social diversity, but work for what they might describe as "economic equality."

RIGHT-CONSERVATIVES favor freedom of choice on economic issues, but want official standards in personal matters.

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