

Libertarian Harry Browne's platform

PREAMBLE

Government doesn't work. It can't deliver the mail on time, it doesn't keep our cities safe, it doesn't educate our children.

Government programs have failed. Government reforms have failed. Democratic and Republican politicians have failed. Government doesn't work.

Still, whatever the issue, Republican and Democratic politicians propose more government as the answer - even when, as is usually the case, it is government that has caused the problem.

Libertarians stand for individual liberty, self-responsibility, and freedom from government - on all issues at all times. If there's a problem, our first question is not, "How can government solve this problem," but "What government program must be eliminated to improve this situation?"

We are the only party dedicated to dramatically reducing government - and doing it now, not in some pie-in-the-sky future year.

We are the only party that recognizes that the federal government has expanded far beyond the small, limited government envisioned by the Founding Fathers.

We are the only party that believes the Bill of Rights is an absolute document, to be taken literally. Government has no right to violate the Bill of Rights in any circumstance.

This means:

- * You, and every other person, have the right to speak and write freely - on paper, on the airwaves, on the Internet - even if the government and the politicians don't like what you say.

- * You have the right to keep and bear arms - even if some lunatic shoots up a restaurant in Texas.

- * You have a right to be safe from unreasonable search and seizure - even if a DEA agent thinks you fit his profile of a drug dealer.

- * You have a right to financial privacy - even if an IRS agent demands to know everything about you. You have a right to the full use of your own property - even if some bureaucrat wants to declare your backyard a wet lands.

Because politicians have long disregarded the limitations of the Constitution, the federal government has exploded in size. It is intrusive, oppressive, and obscenely expensive. And we the people suffer from all its failed programs.

Government doesn't work. Its War on Poverty has expanded poverty. Its War on Drugs has created a huge, illicit drug industry, escalated drug use, and generated a crime wave in every American city.

Still, politicians of both old political parties insist that the next government program will work, will pay for itself, will improve America, will solve some social problem.

But government doesn't work.

THE LIBERTARIAN DIFFERENCE

The overriding question in this Presidential election is: *How can we make the federal government much smaller?*

Democratic and Republican politicians try to pose as supporters of smaller government. But on issue after issue, they still call on government to solve problems.

The differences among them are trivial. But the differences between their positions and those of Harry Browne, the Libertarian candidate, are as night and day.

I. Reducing Government

Democratic and Republican politicians are both responsible for the over bloated \$1.6 trillion federal government. Republican Presidents and Republican Congresses, Democratic Presidents and Democratic Congresses have all served to make government bigger and bigger and bigger.

With the exception of the retrenchment period after World War II, every President - Republican or Democrat - since Calvin Coolidge has left a government that's bigger than the one he inherited. We have to stop this trend.

Today, with the American public overwhelmingly anti-politician and antigovernment, politicians of both parties try to convince us that they, too, are for "smaller government," "lower taxes," "less regulation." But the specific proposals they make will all lead to bigger government.

- * Democratic politicians play games by "reinventing government," even though every reform they propose makes government bigger and more expensive.

- * Republican politicians play games by proposing to

close down Departments of the federal government, even though they intend to transfer the functions and expenses of those Departments to other agencies - leaving government just as big as ever.

- * Harry Browne, the Libertarian candidate, says government doesn't work - and he wants to remove the federal government immediately and completely from every activity not specified in the Constitution - education, energy, regulation, crime control, welfare, housing, transportation, health care, agriculture, and all the other areas the federal government has stuck its nose into unconstitutionally over the past 60 years.

2. The Income Tax

The enormous tax increases of 1982, 1983, 1990, and 1993 show that neither of the old parties stands for lower taxes. Republican and Democratic politicians alike are quite willing to raise your taxes anytime, on any pretext.

Today they try to convince us that they have changed, that "We are all low-taxers now." But their proposals would only rearrange the existing tax burden. Because they have no concrete plans to reduce government significantly, there is no way they can lower your taxes significantly.

The income tax is the biggest government intrusion into the lives of the American people. It forces every worker to be a bookkeeper, to open his records to the government, to explain his expenses, to fear conviction for a hardness accounting error. Compliance wastes hundreds of billions of dollars. The income tax penalizes savings and creates an enormous drag on the U.S. economy. It is incompatible with a free society.

We must get rid of hundreds of federal programs, but we can't remove them one at a time, because each program has beneficiaries and supporters who will fight us. We can overcome their resistance only by combining all the spending cuts into a single package that includes the largest tax cut in American history - the total repeal of the federal income tax. That way most people can see that they'll save far more in taxes than they lose in subsidies.

By combining the reduction of government with the repeal of the income tax, every voter will know that the price of keeping today's federal programs is to continue paying the income tax. Every voter will know exactly how much he can gain by eliminating the complete package of unconstitutional programs.

But this isn't what politicians of the two old parties want. They like the power that comes from controlling your income.

- * Democratic politicians like a progressive income tax that's based on the "ability to pay" - meaning that those who have earned the most by doing the most for others should be penalized the most. But their "progressive" tax rates somehow always hit middle-class Americans the hardest.

- * Republican politicians pretend to be helping us by proposing to end the current version of the income tax, and replace it with a giant sales tax - or with a "flat tax" that contains so many wrinkles, it's actually just another progressive tax. But because they aren't reducing government, they are merely rearranging the same oppressive tax burden.

- * Harry Browne, the libertarian candidate, wants to end the income tax and abolish the IRS his first year in office and replace them with *nothing*. By reducing the federal government to its Constitutional functions, we can do away with all direct taxes - the income, estate, gift, capital gains, and Social Security taxes - financing national defense and the federal judiciary with the level of tariffs and excise taxes being collected already. Harry Browne makes this offer to every American: Would you give up all your favorite federal programs - such things as farm subsidies, student loans, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and any other programs - in order to be free of the income tax forever? (see note1)

3. Social Security

Social Security is a fraudulent insurance scheme in which the government collects money from you for your retirement and immediately spends the money on something else. All polls show that an overwhelming majority of Americans have little hope of getting back a single dollar for the 15% of their wages they're pouring into it.

- * Democratic politicians deny what every working American knows: The Social Security system is bankrupt and close to collapse.

- * Republican politicians want to keep Social Security afloat through tax increases and benefit reductions - including raising the retirement age, invoking a means

test, and changing the cost of living index on which yearly changes are calculated.

- * Harry Browne, the Libertarian candidate, knows the only way to avoid the coming Social Security collapse is to get the government completely out of Social Security. He wants to sell trillions of dollars worth of unneeded federal assets to finance the liquidation of Social Security through the purchase of private retirement annuities for the senior citizens who are dependent on Social Security. These people will have guaranteed contracts with private companies who have never broken their promises - unlike the U.S. Congress. And you will never again have to pay the 15% Social Security tax which is really just throwing pan of your wages *down* a rathole.

4. Government Spending

In their Alice-in-Wonderland world, when politicians talk about smaller government, they don't mean a government that is actually smaller. They mean a government that is smaller than some hypothetical government that is much larger than today's government. In other words, to a politician, "smaller government" means government that doesn't grow as fast he wants.

- * Democratic politicians want a "smaller government" that continues to grow by 4% a year.

- * Republican politicians want a "smaller government" that continues to grow by 3% a year.

- * Harry Browne, the Libertarian candidate, knows that government doesn't work. He doesn't just want to stop government growth - he proposes slashing the federal budget 50% the first year as a first step.

5. Balanced Budget

An unbalanced budget isn't just a bookkeeping curiosity. Every debt incurred on your behalf by the politicians means you have to pay a larger interest cost every year. Today we are paying \$275 billion a year in interest expense, which means we are continuing to pay for long-since-abandoned, long-forgotten schemes by the politicians of yesterday - schemes that were going to make health care more affordable, that were going to improve education, that were going to clean up the environment. The schemes failed, the politicians retired with generous pensions, and we are left paying the interest expense year after year after year.

We must get rid of that interest expense by retiring the entire federal debt. But first, we must put a stop to the *growing* debt by balancing the budget immediately.

- * Republican politicians want to increase federal spending for seven more years, pretending that a future Congress will balance the budget by making spending cuts the current Congress is unwilling to make.

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- * Harry Browne, the Libertarian candidate, plans to balance the budget his first year in office by reducing government spending. He also plans to sell off federal assets - and use the proceeds to pay off the federal debt entirely.

6. Welfare

Prior to the 1960s, the word "welfare" was rarely used in conversation. Instead, people spoke of "charity" - administered by churches, service clubs, foundations, the United Way, and other agencies. "Welfare" was a small department in the back of City Hall somewhere. The notion that someone could be permanently on the dole was virtually unheard of.

Today millions of Americans have been consigned to a lifetime of poverty, dependency, disrespect and hopelessness as permanent wards of the state. The welfare laws, - laws, minimum wage laws, and other regulations discourage them from leaving welfare to become self-supporting citizens. This is what the American people have received for the trillions of their dollars the politicians have wasted on a bizarre plan to have government do away with poverty.

- * Democratic politicians have various plans to "reform" welfare, even though every previous welfare reform bill has increased the cost and the number of people on welfare.

- * Republican politicians want to send federal welfare

money to the state governments, tied up in a multitude of strings.

- * Harry Browne, the Libertarian candidate, knows that federal welfare doesn't work. It has consigned millions of Americans to a life of dependency and despair, and it has cost us trillions of dollars. He wants to end it completely and immediately.

7. Education

There is no Constitutional authority for the federal government to be involved in education in any way whatsoever. The growing amounts of money and control coming from Washington have been matched by lower SAT scores, declining standards, more dangerous schools, and generations of Americans who have no basic education in history, geography, the Constitution, mathematics, science, or literature.

This doesn't bother the politicians, however, because they don't see federal aid to education as a means of raising literacy and knowledge.

- * Democratic politicians want to use federal aid to education as a way to implement their social agenda.

- * Republican politicians want to use federal aid to education as a way to implement their social agenda.

- * Harry Browne, the Libertarian candidate, knows that no federal educational program will work, and he wants to get the federal government out of education completely and immediately. The most effective way we can improve education in America is to repeal the income tax, so that you can afford to educate your child your way - in a private school that offers the curriculum you want in a religious school that teaches the values in which you believe, or through home-schooling conducted your way.

8. Crime & the War on Drugs

Before there were drug laws in America, there were no drug problems. And prior to the federal government's declaration of War on Drugs in the 1960s, there were no muggers on the street trying to support a \$100-a-day habit, no pushers on high school campuses trying to hook children on drugs, no gangs fighting over monopoly drug territories, no drive-by shootings, no crack babies, no overdose problems. Outside of the 14 years during alcohol Prohibition, nothing like this had ever been seen in America. It took the War on Drugs to make it happen.

- * Democratic politicians like the War on Drugs just as it is - because they love the power it gives the federal government.

- * Republican politicians want to *accelerate* the War on Drugs - by taking away more of your Constitutional liberties, by taking away more of your privacy, by turning America into more of a police state.

- * Harry Browne, the Libertarian candidate, says the War on Drugs is a total failure. Government can't keep drugs out of the country; it can't even keep drugs out of its own prisons. He wants to *end* the insane War on Drugs - which will take the criminal profit out of the illicit drug trade and bring peace to our cities once again. On his first day in office, he will pardon every one who has been convicted of a non-violent federal drug offense - to empty the federal prisons of the marijuana smokers and others who are no threat to society, and make room for the truly violent criminals and other thugs who escape prison through early releases and plea bargains to return to the streets and termite our citizen.

9. Health Care

Today 51% of all health care dollars in America are spent by government. This has run up the prices of doctor visits, hospital stays, and health insurance - far outpacing the rate of general inflation. Government has failed utterly to make health care more accessible or affordable. But the politicians see this failure as an excuse to impose even more government upon us.

- * Democratic politicians want to remake the American health-care system in the image of the disastrous European systems, attempting to blame government's failures on the free market.

- * Republican politicians pass legislation that will regulate the private health insurance companies out of business, and will lead to the imposition of a "single-payer," Canadian-style health system in America. (See note 2)

- * Harry Browne, the Libertarian candidate, says government health care doesn't work and he wants to get government out from between you and your doctor. By

getting the federal government completely out of health care, we will have more choices, better health care, and lower prices for doctor visits, hospital stays, and health insurance.

10. The Federal Judiciary

The American judiciary was supposed to protect the American people from politicians and bureaucrats who wanted to overstep the bounds of the Constitution. Instead, the judiciary has been a main part of the trashing of the Constitution. Judges talk about 'penumbras' in the Constitution. They say the Constitution is a living, changing document (which really means that it's a dead, meaningless document). They throw out the Bill of Rights on the grounds that the government has a "compelling interest" in overruling it.

Either the Constitution limits the government or it doesn't.

- * Democratic politicians want the President to appoint judges who will use the law to implement their social agenda.

- * Republican politicians want the President to appoint judges who will use the law to implement their social agenda.

- * Harry Browne, the Libertarian candidate, will appoint only judges who consider the Bill of Rights to be a literal, absolute document that allows no exceptions to your right to free speech, freedom of religion, freedom to keep and bear arms, freedom to be secure in your property, safe from search and seizure. He will appoint only judges who take the 9th and 10th amendments seriously, and thus will not tolerate the federal government involving itself in activities not authorized by the Constitution.

11. Personal Values

The Constitution gives the federal government no authority to tell us how to live our lives. However, the politicians will not be restrained. They want to govern every aspect of our existence.

- * Both Democratic and Republican politicians believe that Americans are dysfunctional children who need government to act as their parents. They both seek to impose their values in the most intimate personal and family relationships and admit to no limits on their authority to do so.

- * Harry Browne, the Libertarian candidate, respects the right of all Americans to choose and act on their own personal values, to work together in their families and communities to achieve the goals they set for themselves. Americans throughout their history have proven their ability to solve problems their own way, without government interference.

12. Immigration

At one time, America attracted only those from around the world who were seeking freedom - freedom from oppressive governments, freedom to build a future for their families through hard work. Today, America attracts too many people who come here only to take advantage of government welfare benefits.

- * Republican politicians want to solve this problem - created by government- by putting another layer of government on top of it. They want to keep out the productive people along with the freeloaders, they want to build a wall or a ditch along our borders, and they want to beef up the military to patrol the borders.

- * Democrat politicians don't know what they believe on this issue, because the polls aren't conclusive yet.

- * Harry Browne, the Libertarian candidate, wants to dismantle the welfare state - which will automatically solve our immigration problems. Once there is no more gravy train, the only people who will want to come here will be those who want the freedom to work and to build a better life for their families.

13. National Defense & Foreign Policy

Our government has spent trillions of dollars on the military since World War U, and yet we are completely vulnerable to the whims of any two-bit dictator who can get his hands on a nuclear missile. And by involving ourselves in a multitude of treaties around the world, we are liable to be drawn into World War II by a petty dispute between third-rate powers.

- * Republican politicians believe we must defend our "national interests" by roaming the world in search of trouble. And, somehow, almost anything that happens

anywhere is cited as a threat to those national interests. Consequently, the Republicans keep us on the brink of trouble at all times.

- * Democratic politicians don't have a clear-cut attitude toward foreign policy. But to prove they're as tough as the Republicans, they put our money and lives on the line in the affairs of other countries all over the world.

- * Harry Browne, the Libertarian candidate, will bring American troops home to America at once. He will remove us from the entangling alliances that Thomas Jefferson warned us against. He will see to it that America has a proper defense against any missile attack, so that we will no longer need retaliatory weapons and intimidating military power. We will be far safer than we are now, while spending less money on the military.

DON'T WASTE YOUR VOTE THIS YEAR

The overriding issue this election year is *smaller government*. And on that issue, there is no real difference between the two old parties - no difference that could effect a real improvement in your life now.

Only the Libertarians offers specific, workable, credible proposals to dramatically reduce the size, cost and intrusiveness of government.

For years, you may have wasted your vote - giving it to candidates who have served to make government bigger and bigger. Don't waste your vote again by giving it to candidates like Bob Dole or Bill Clinton, whose entire careers have been devoted to making Big Government bigger.

It's time to make your vote count for a change - time to vote for someone who is determined to make government much smaller now.

If you cast your vote wisely, you can make a difference. But if you don't vote for what you want, you are throwing your vote away.

- * **If you want huge tax cuts now, vote for them now.**

- * **If you want huge spending cuts now, vote for them now.**

- * **If you want a balanced budget now, vote for it now.**

- * **In other words, if you want much smaller government now, vote for Harry Browne, the Libertarian candidate for President.**

Stop voting against what you're afraid of, and start voting for what you want.

Vote for the only candidate who has the will and determination to immediately reduce government to a fraction of its size today.

Vote to take back your freedom, to take back your life. Vote to end the income tax and abolish the IRS. Vote to keep your earnings in your hands - to spend, to save, to give away as you see fit.

Vote to affirm your support for the small and limited Constitutional Government given to us by the Founding Fathers.

This year, vote for:

- * Harry Browne for President
- * Libertarians for Congress and the Senate
- * Libertarians in state and local races.

This year, don't waste your vote.

Vote Libertarian

NOTES: Income Tax & Health Care

1. A proposed six-year federal budget showing revenues and expenditures, is laid out in chapter 24 of *Why Government Doesn't Work* by Harry Browne (245 pages, St. Martin's Press, available at any bookstore, \$19.95).

2. The Kennedy-Kassenbaum bill was passed 100-0 in the Senate in May 1996; a similar bill was passed in the House. It compels private insurance companies to issue unprofitable policies - guaranteeing that insurance premiums will rise, leading the politicians to impose price controls, and driving the insurance companies out of business.