



Ontario Libertarian Party

The Party of Choice

Vision

Communities of freedom, harmony, and abundance.

Mission

To enable endless possibilities through recognition of, respect for, and protection of individual liberty.

Values

- We stand for personal responsibility.
- We stand for individual liberty, and controls and restrictions on governments.
- We recognize property rights.
- We stand for free and voluntary associations.
- We stand for freedom of expression.
- Governments must be limited to protecting the liberty and property of their citizens from domestic and foreign aggressors.
- We believe in voluntary, not forced, mutual aid.
- Government may not grant monopoly privileges to any individual or organization, including itself.
- We accept people as they are.

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The Ontario Libertarian Party is proud to be known as "The Party of Choice." Choice is what we stand for, and promoting choice is why we exist.

Choice, according to the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, means both "an act or instance of choosing between alternatives" and "a range from which to choose. To "choose" means to "select from a number of alternatives," "decide," "like," and "prefer."

Human choice is always individual, as only individual minds can choose. Libertarians consider the recognition of, respect for, and protection of individual human choice to be the highest political good.

Why the highest good? Because choice appears necessary for so many other things that we consider good. Indeed, it is hard to separate the idea of choice from that of good: If you (or I) consider something (X) to be good, that is only because you (or I) have chosen X as a good; believing that X is a good necessarily also means believing that choosing X is good. Whatever we value in life, we value by our own choice, and in valuing it we also value our own choosing.

Choice is necessary not just for ourselves, but for everyone. Respecting the choices of our friends, family, neighbours - indeed, all of humanity - seems essential to respecting them as persons. Honouring the choices of others seems a necessary part of the idea of morality.

Equally, choice looks like a basic part of the idea of justice. Phrases like "he brought it on himself" or "you made your bed, now lie in it" reflect a basic intuition that it is just for people to experience the consequences of their own choices. Similarly, we consider it unjust to hold people responsible for actions they did not choose to commit, or had no choice but to commit.

As well, choice appears necessary to human progress and abundance. Without the ability of humans to imagine and act on preferred alternatives, we would literally still be living in caves. All creativity, all advancement, every new idea and invention, exists only because

of the power of choice. The market and the price system - an economy directed by nothing more than individual choices - makes these ideas and inventions widely available, empowering us to live without the age-old fears of starvation, poverty, and disease.

Despite all this, some people worry about choice. One worry is that people's choices often conflict. Letting everyone do whatever they choose can only lead to disagreements and conflicts; rules that override or trump individual choice are needed to solve these conflicts.

That is a legitimate concern. Libertarians agree that choice should be governed by rules and principles; what they deny is that any of these trump the principle of choice. Rather, they come from that principle itself.

What John wants to do to himself is a matter of his own choice; but what John wants to do to Mary, is not simply a matter of John's choice, but also (and more importantly) of Mary's.



The idea of choice requires the complementary idea of individual human rights - of what philosopher

Robert Nozick calls the 'moral space' within which each person's acts are governed solely by his own choices. In turn, the idea of human rights helps define, and protect as well as limit, the scope of everyone's freedom of choice.

Acting on one's choices requires not just moral but also physical space, and (often) access to physical things. Human choices about how to use these spaces and things are a fertile source of conflict. So choice requires property rights, as a necessary part of human rights.

Another anti-choice objection is that some people make bad choices - some choose to rob, some to murder, some to defraud. Why should those choices be respected?

But this second objection is simply a special case of the first - that choices conflict in some cases - with the same solution. Recognizing the principle of choice, means recognizing that actions which violate the personal and property rights of others (without the choice of those others) should not be respected, or

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

A Libertarian government would introduce a system in which owners have full control of their property to the extent that their actions do not infringe on the rights of others.

Pollution and Restorative Justice

Pollution of another person's property, including their body, is a violation of individual rights. Pollutants refer to substances that are harmful or unwanted from the point of view of the injured party, and can include noise, odours, toxic and non-toxic substances, radiation and litter.

Polluters must be held strictly liable for the harm they cause to health and property, and be required to cease the pollution and make restitution to the injured party for all costs.

Such a libertarian system of restorative justice would be costly for offenders, and would have a powerful deterrent effect. However, this would not be a sufficient reform, as another major weakness in the current system is the prevalence of public property.

Public Property vs. Private Property

Private ownership of property leads to responsible maintenance of that property. The owner has invested in it, so he evaluates the costs of his own actions and the actions of those to whom he rents. With publicly owned land, there is little incentive for users to respect the resources they use.

Only 11% of land in Ontario is privately owned and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources holds jurisdiction over 88% of Ontario's forests. With a Libertarian government, this situation would be corrected. Public lands would be auctioned off to private individuals, businesses and groups who could make use of them, including First Nations communities.

Today when a company dumps toxins in a lake, the government threatens them with fines. In a libertarian system, lakes would be divided among property owners for fish and other resources, and those owners would be much more motivated to detect pollution and take legal action. Property rights will need to be defined in more detail, especially in the case of air and water. The water that flows above and below the ground can be described in terms of property. Each household owns the proportion that they use. Both the air and water - polluted or otherwise - flow into and out of a definite space that is also defined as a person's property.

Ownership of rivers follows the riparian system in Ontario, which is a sound com-

mon-law system of ownership based on usage. Unfortunately, Ontario has a comprehensive permit system which enables the province to supervise all major consumptive uses of water.

Natural resources would become the property of those who access them, based on agreements with landowners who control the source. Private owners of parks and beaches could open them to the public. There would also be private hunting and nature reserves in which owners had a vested interest in protecting endangered species.

Land Use

In a libertarian system, land use will be determined by owners and not by governments! Governments will not be able to override the decisions of owners in the interest of revenues or "green space". No one except the owner will decide whether he is doing too much with his resources or too little. Libertarians will repeal the numerous oppressive land management laws such as the *Greenbelt Act*, which prevent property owners from developing their property as they wish.

Free Market Solutions

Since pollution would be costly for violators, respect for the health and property of others would be much more common. Property owners would pay responsible waste management services to remove all kinds of waste. The disposal rate for a particular material would reflect the reality of real costs and would tend to affect the buying habits of consumers. In turn, consumers would cause manufacturers to reconsider their materials.

A genuine free market would be a major factor in controlling pollution. Beachgoers, for example, care about pollutants in the water and sand. Also, consumers are interested in how their foods are produced. There would be more consumer information services to provide data about the safety of products. Insurance companies would offer better deals for responsible owners to cover possible infractions.

Agreements among neighbours would be another factor that would replace top-down regulations. Property owners and tenants would make contracts concerning levels of pesticide use. Airports and airlines would deal with property owners directly and pay them to allow a specified level of noise onto their property.

In a libertarian society, each person will own his own life and will be free to decide the type and quantity of substances he is willing to expose himself to. In order to avoid liability, owners will be

pushed by economic concerns to make employees, residents and customers aware of this information.

A libertarian society will empower people to be aware of their own environment. They would test their own air, soil and water (using companies that specialize in testing), and would take charge of what goes into their bodies and homes. They would decide what they can and can not live with.

Many people have serious concerns about air pollution in Ontario. For automobile pollutants, property owners would complain to those who managed highways and roads. The companies that replace the Ministry of Transportation could be sued for pollution. As a result, those who administered roads would tend to charge drivers higher fees unless they switched to cleaner fuels and technologies. Property owners living adjacent to the road could sign contracts to allow a certain level of air and noise pollution in exchange for fees or shares in the road companies.

Liberty is Human-Centred

Today there is a lot of hot air about respecting nature, but there is no respect for the nature of man, who requires freedom to act and choose. "Green-house gases", such as carbon dioxide, which are blamed for global earth-warming are a natural by-product of living and breathing human beings. Individuals must be free to do what they think is best for their own well being, and that includes burning fuels to heat their homes and to run their vehicles and businesses.

Education Policy (Cont'd)

fostered. It will flourish when libertarian ideas concerning the proper role of government prevail. Respect for liberty encourages benevolence and wealth creation. When such conditions exist, there will certainly be spontaneous voluntary help for needy children.

We have experienced great progress and innovation in fields left untouched by governments. Most advances have come about in unpredictable ways and very few would have occurred if a government ministry had been in charge. We continue to be held back by present day thinking bestowing legitimacy upon government interference in far too many areas of human activity. A total change in that thinking is the only way to end stagnation in education.

HEALTH CARE POLICY

When governments decree all will have free medical care, the laws of nature seem to have been abolished. There is at last something for nothing for everyone.

Time passes. Needs keep growing by leaps and bounds. They become difficult to satisfy. Meanwhile, the taxpayers reach their limit of tolerance for demands to hand over ever more of their money to satisfy the wishes of others.



No more can be extracted from them. The easy times are over.

There are now many problems with government health care in Ontario. Notwithstanding high taxes and enormous expenditures, there are shortages of medical staff and facilities, poor allocation and distribution of resources, and inadequate patient care. Treatments are often available only after long waits if at all. These are the consequences of unrestrained demand for "free" services coupled with central bureaucratic planning and government mandated supply restrictions.

In spite of all the problems, 35 years of government health care makes it difficult for many to envision that this important service can be provided without any government involvement whatsoever. Nonetheless, getting government entirely out of health care is the only way to provide the greatest access for the most people to the best available treatment at the lowest possible cost. That is the policy of the Ontario Libertarian Party.

The old line political parties proclaim themselves able to preserve medicare in its current form. No matter what they

say, you can expect further deterioration to occur while they continue to spend more money attempting to address the scandalous issues which happen to receive media attention. Furthermore, health care will become increasingly privatized in the near future. There is no other way to provide the services. Even now, many who can afford it are forgoing the lower quality service in Canada and are choosing to receive medical treatment in the U.S. To relieve pressure on local facilities, the Ontario government is already sending patients there for treatment.

A mix of private and government medicine will approximate what now exists south of the border. U.S. medical care is probably the best in the world. However, it is very expensive and often unaffordable for people who are ineligible for government assistance and do not have health insurance. Contrary to commonly held belief, high cost and inaccessibility results primarily because American health care is not even close to being free market medical care, with governments in the U.S. being very much involved in controlling and paying for it.

Ontario will begin to have competitively priced, widely accessible, high quality health care the day there is no Minister of Health. A number of outcomes are predictable. Firstly, all the taxes needed to support government health care will be entirely eliminated. Ontario residents will have more money in their pockets. They will then be able to afford to pay for their own medical care and will cease being supplicants begging government to give back some of their own money for this purpose. Another predictable outcome is that variously structured private health insurance plans will spring up to provide protection against disastrous major illnesses. Unlike the U.S. system, the cost of insurance will not be boosted by government laws forcing extended coverage upon insurance companies for political reasons. Those who wish to obtain insurance for more than major medical catastrophes will be able to do so at additional expense.

Once government is out of the picture, there will be less frivolous use of medical services. When the benefit of a service is received and the cost paid by

one and the same person, it is less likely there will be abuse. If privately owned insurance companies are paying, they will protect themselves from having their money spent without good reason. At the same time, competition and the need to preserve and improve their businesses will result in a reasonable balance being struck between heavy handed coverage restriction and too easy payment of benefits. For similar reasons, there will be less health care fraud. Governments simply do not have the same interest in protecting money under their control that you and private insurers have.

A Libertarian government will eliminate any requirement for government licensing of physicians, medical treatment facilities, or other medical care providers. The existing government licensing monopoly reduces competition in medicine by erecting needless barriers preventing or impeding entry into the medical services field. Getting rid of these will lead to increased supply of medical personnel, less costly health care services, and more innovation. Private certification will let us know whether someone is qualified to provide medical treatment.

Dismantling government health cannot be done overnight. A transition period will be necessary. This could take the form of government continuing to pay for medical services for the elderly while requiring co-payment on an increasing scale as age decreases. Another possibility is to have the government continue to pay for more serious illnesses with the level of payments decreasing over time. Eventually everyone will be responsible for the full cost of their own health care.

What about the poor or the unlucky? This question is often asked. An important Libertarian objective is freeing people to create abundance. Abundance cannot be achieved in the absence of free markets. Where there is abundance people will be more benevolent to those who need help. Where there is scarcity benevolence is less likely and there will be many more poor people needing charitable assistance. Government meddling in health care has led to scarcity. A truly free market in medical services will lead to greater abundance which will benefit everybody including those unable to provide for themselves.

EDUCATION POLICY

A long history of government involvement makes it difficult for most to envision an Ontario in which there is no government role whatsoever in providing this important service. Nonetheless, the policy of the Ontario Libertarian Party is to create conditions in which quality education can develop by completely ending all government participation.

There are many talented, conscientious educators working within the public system. However, direction by government bureaucrats through the Ministry of Education will always limit what can be accomplished. No amount of fiddling with the existing system or spending more confiscated money on education will fundamentally change anything.

Until now, it is only a small minority which has either been able to afford, or has been prepared to make financial sacrifices to receive the benefits seen in private education. The rest have had no alternative but to hope for the best from the public system. In a Libertarian society, parents will therefore be able to choose the best education for their children from the offerings of many different schools.

The mind is the human means of survival which nature has provided. The acquisition and implementation of knowledge in the pursuit of happiness and prosperity



are both natural and necessary. Training the mind should be an exciting, empowering prospect, not an ordeal to be endured. Private education will succeed in this where public education has failed. Excellence will be acknowledged and rewarded. There will be an end to political arguments about academic goals and standards, teacher credentialing, school

accreditation, curriculum, financing, or whatever else happens to be in dispute at any particular time. Exciting innovation and advances will become the norm instead of the exception.

Libertarian ideas must be understood in context. Getting government out of education will eliminate the considerable taxes now levied for that purpose, but more than that will change. Once libertarian ideas are generally accepted, growth of productivity and higher incomes will make it easier to afford a good education. Everyone, no matter what their circumstances, will have more opportunities than what is now available. Undoubtedly there are some who will have financial difficulty in caring for their children. That number will be small. Over time it will become even smaller.

It is normal for humans to cooperate with one another to achieve common goals and, when able, to help others in difficult circumstances. That natural human trait has been stifled by taxes and other obstacles to prosperity which governments have imposed as well as the general culture of irresponsibility which they have

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Your Choice *(Continued)*

even permitted; not because one person's choice is not important (it is), but because everyone else's choices are equally important (they are).

That leads to the Libertarian theory of law: that actions which violate the rights of others should be legally forbidden, while those that do not should be left alone. What is important, in judging a law good or bad, is the nature of the acts it forbids. Does an action affect only the person acting, or only those who consent (or choose) to be affected? Then it should not be interfered with. Does it hurt those who have not consented? Then it should not be allowed. Whom an action affects; where it takes place (in one's home? on a public street corner?); and whose property it uses or affects; are what the law should consider when judging any action.

Applied in this way, the Libertarian theory of human and property rights makes possible a free society, one based on and maximizing individual choice. That society of choice, in turn, makes possible the realization of those other values of liberty, respect, justice, harmony, progress, and abundance.



Statement of Principles

We, the members of the Libertarian party, support the following principles:

1. Each individual has the right to his or her own life, and this right is the source of all other rights.
2. Property rights are essential to the maintenance of those rights.
3. In order that these rights be respected, it is essential that no individual or group initiate the use of force or fraud against any other.
4. In order to bar the use of force or fraud from social relationships and to place the use of retaliatory force under objective control, human society requires an institution charged with the task of protecting individual rights under an objective code of rules. This is the basic
5. task of, and the only moral justification for, government.
6. The only proper function of government whose powers must be constitutionally limited, are:
 - a) settling, according to objective laws, disputes among individuals where private, voluntary arbitration has failed;
 - b) providing protection from criminals;
 - c) providing protection from foreign invaders.
7. As a consequence of all the above, every individual -- as long as he or she respects the rights of others -- has the right to live as he or she alone sees fit, as a free trader on a free market.