



Principles of Liberty

2014

Legislative Summary & Scorecard



2014 Principles of Liberty Scorecard

The Principles of Liberty (POL) scorecard is complete and published at www.principlesofliberty.org. To very briefly summarize, there are three steps to the work that POL puts together: **1) Identify principles** of good governance, **2) Apply those principles** to Colorado state legislation to determine whether the legislation supports/opposes those principles and rate the bill accordingly, **3) Tabulate voting data** on POL rated bills to identify trends for all 100 legislators regarding each individual principle, as well as create an overall aggregate score.

POL rated 274 bills this year. This is about a 15% increase over 2013 and can be attributed to an increase in the capacity of our volunteer analyst team. Our legislative analysis for the 2014 legislative session, along with the voting records of state legislators, generated a total of 47,318 points of data this year. This creates a statistically significant set of data to analyze in order to identify clear trends and relative patterns among the voting records of all 100 legislators.

1) Identify Principles

The POL Principles are clearly defined on our web site at www.principlesofliberty.org. We have also summarized a review that we completed of each of the 3 major political party platforms for 2012 (Democrat, Republican, Libertarian) to see if there was common ground among the parties on these principles. We found that all three groups hold common ground on these principles. Their adherence to these principles clearly may be questioned, but the fact is that they all recognize, to some extent, the existence of these principles. Our review of the three party platforms is also posted on the website.

2) Legislative Analysis

The annual legislative analysis is a robust effort to apply the POL principles to proposed Colorado state legislation to determine whether the legislation supports/opposes these principles. This work was completed weekly during the 2014 session. POL rated 274 bills this year. Every bill that was rated by POL has a corresponding worksheet posted on the POL website to document the work and the rationale behind the rating. The vast majority of these bills are rated **BEFORE** legislators start voting on them, so there is no “cherry-picking” of bills that could create any perceived favoritism.

3) Scorecard

After the session is completed, POL tabulates all of the votes in (a) the first assigned committee in each chamber, and (b) the final votes on the floor of each chamber, depending upon how far a bill may progress. Each bill that is rated by POL typically has 2 or 3 applicable principles. So for every bill rated by POL, there could be anywhere from a handful of data points to as many as a few hundred data points generated from the votes of all 100 state legislators on that bill. Our legislative analysis for the 2014 legislative session generated a total of 47,318 points of data. These data are compiled for each legislator. The typical number of data points per legislator ranged from about 350 to 500.

POL used 7 of the 9 principles on this year’s scorecard, leaving 2 of the principles off of the scorecard because they did not have a statistically significant amount of data to report (averaging a number of data points only in the single digits to low teens per legislator). Since there was not enough data to identify trends in any meaningful, consistent way for those 2 principles, they were not included in the 2014 scorecard. All 274 bill positions (too many to print here) are listed on our web site.

Overview of Legislator Scores

Scores – The overall scores are not subjectively weighted or skewed, and they represent the raw percentage scores with no curve or any other mechanism applied to sugar coat the results. As a mathematician and a former high school teacher of math and physics, my perspective is that the raw scores are indicative of the consistency of the application of our clearly defined principles. In an age where everyone seems to get a blue ribbon for participating, POL could be considered “old school”. An “A” must be earned and is exceptional. A “B” is truly above average, and a good score. A “C” is average/acceptable, but unremarkable. Here is my view of what the scores represent:

87%+	is rock star status (A- to A+)
78%-86%	is good to very good (B- to B+)
69%-77%	is ok to good (C- to C+)
63%-68%	is cause for concern or alarm (D to D+)
0%-62%	is clearly a voting record that is not consistent with POL principles (D- or lower)

Senate Republicans - This year the scores ranged from a low of 29% to a high 92%. Senator Vicki Marble led the Senate with a score of 92%. Significant moves up in the rankings were accomplished by Senator Randy Baumgardner (from 12th in 2013 to 2nd in 2014) and Senator Owen Hill (from 11th to 6th). Several Senators recognized the negative impact that the Senate Consent Calendar had on 2013 scores, and they made a concerted effort to more carefully review bills on the Consent Calendar in 2014. This additional scrutiny resulted in more diligent oversight and improved scores. Leading the charge on this front were Senators Marble and Baumgardner. This is an example of how POL has helped to improve the diligence of our legislators. The highest average scores were earned on the principle of “Individual Liberty”, and the lowest average scores were on “Free Markets”. Despite the top scores going up, the bottom end scores went down, driving the overall Senate Republican average score down from 70% in 2013 to 65% in 2014.

Top 5:	Marble	91.7% A	Bottom 5:	Herpin	47.3% F
	Baumgardner	84.6% B+		Rivera	43.8% F
	Lambert	83.9% B+		Crowder	42.1% F
	Lundberg	76.7% C+		King	40.3% F
	Renfroe	76.4% C+		Roberts	28.8% F

House Republicans –This year the scores ranged from a low of 40% to a high 97%. Representative Justin Everett led the way for the second consecutive year with a score of 97%. The top 6 scorers in 2014 were the same Representatives as in 2013, with just a little bit of shuffling. Five of those top six scorers in the House in 2014 were finishing the second year of their first term in office. The highest average scores were earned on the principle of “Individual Liberty”, and the lowest average scores were on “Free Markets”. Despite the top scores going up, the bottom end scores went down in the House as well, driving the overall House Republican average score down from 74% in 2013 to 68% in 2014.

Top 5:	Everett	96.8% A+	Bottom 5:	Gardner	54.6% F
	Humphrey	90.0% A		Coram	54.5% F
	Buck	89.8% A		Wilson	54.2% F
	Saine	88.7% A-		McNulty	53.9% F
	Holbert	84.9% B+		Gerou	40.0% F

Senate Democrats –The narrow range of Democrat scores is once again alarming. In 2012, Democrats' scores in the Senate ranged from 22% to 35%, and in 2013, their scores ranged from 9% to 13%. This year's scores ranged from 14% to 20% - another VERY tight range. With a range of scores that tight, it is very difficult to distinguish one Senator from another. The lowest scores for Democrats came on "Free Markets", followed by "Fiscal Responsibility". The lone (barely) bright spot for Democrats was on the principle of Individual Liberty. By far, this principle scored the highest average for the Democratic Senators with an average of 67%, a D+. There was even some variability among scores in this category, with a low score of 50% and a high score of 80% shared by three Senators. This score of 80% even bested a couple of Republicans, Senators King and Roberts, on the principle of Individual Liberty.

House Democrats – The narrow range of Democrat scores is also once again alarming. In 2012, Democrat scores in the House ranged from 22% to 46%, with one outlier scoring a 65%. In 2013, their scores ranged from 8% to 12%, with one outlier at 18%. Scores ranged narrowly between 13% and 22% in 2014. No outliers this year. The lowest scores for Democrats came on "Free Markets", followed by "Fiscal Responsibility". As in the Senate, the lone (barely) bright spot for Democrats was on the principle of "Individual Liberty". By far, this principle scored the highest average for the Democratic Representatives with an average of 59% - still an F. There was even some variability among scores in this category, with a low score of 45% and a high score of 75%. This lone 75% bested half a dozen Republican Representatives on the principle of Individual Liberty.

Highs & Lows

The **HIGHEST average scores by both parties** came under the principle of "**Individual Liberty**", with **Republicans averaging overall in the mid-80% range, and Democrats averaging overall in the mid-60% range**. It seems that the past couple of years, Coloradans have been vociferous about their individual liberty, and the Colorado Legislature has had to begin to respect that to a certain degree, particularly after the unprecedented backlash against the majority Democratic Party in response to their partisan gun legislation of 2013.

The **LOWEST average scores by both parties** came under the principle of "**Free Markets**". This is appalling, because a free society can only exist when property rights and free markets exist. BOTH political parties just can't seem to help themselves when it comes to intervening in the free markets and picking winners and losers, although the degree of big government intervention differs between parties in terms of magnitude. The **average overall "Free Market" score of Democrats was 4%**. That's not a typo. 4%. The **average overall "Free Market" score of Republicans was about 60%**, which, while far better than 4%, is still an F.

Neither party was stellar on the principles of "**Fiscal Responsibility**" either. **Democrat scores averaged about 9%. Republican scores averaged about 64%**, barely passing.

Summary

The primary goal of POL is not to rate legislators. The POL scorecard, while a valuable tool, is simply a **by-product** of the work that POL does. The goal is to focus the conversation on the principles of good governance and how those principles are being applied at the state capitol. If legislators and constituents are having that thoughtful policy conversation, then POL is accomplishing its mission.

How should you view the POL scores? Think it through, regardless of your political party affiliation or whether you're affiliated with any party at all. 1) Are you in general agreement with the principles as stated clearly and succinctly in this brochure? All of these principles are supported by the 2012 Republican Party Platform as well as the 2012 Libertarian Party Platform. Most of them are supported by the 2012 Democratic Party Platform (do a word search for "Property Right" or "Limited Government" and you'll see that they are absent from the 2012 Democratic Party Platform). So, if you are in general agreement with the principles, then the next question is, 2) Do you generally agree with how POL applies these principles to Colorado legislation? To answer this, you'll need to do some homework. Read some bills, use our analysis checklist, and see what you think. Do NOT take your legislators' condescending word for it that "... they just don't understand the whole story down here..." We do understand it pretty well. We have a team of analysts who work regularly with legislators and others to make sure that we do understand. We have become a significant resource for many legislators who use our research. That doesn't happen if you "... don't understand what's going on..." 3) If the answers to #1 and #2 are both yes, then you must honestly evaluate the data and come to your own conclusions. The methodology is transparent and objective. The data set is statistically significant. The patterns and relative comparisons are clear for you to see.

It is truly eye-opening to see the scores, the patterns that emerge, and the relative comparisons between legislators. When people are shocked to see low scores by their favorite legislators, they should stop and consider if their opinions are based upon perception and personality, or upon data and actual performance. Politicians are very good at saying what voters want to hear and being friendly to voters, donors, and volunteers. But constituents must be vigilant in following what legislators DO as opposed to what they SAY. Have you read all of the bills that your legislator voted on? Do you know how your legislator voted 450 times this past session? This takes effort. Fortunately, POL has invested an incredible amount of effort into this objective analysis on your behalf. It is now up to you to understand and use this information to help bring about the requisite citizen oversight to our state government.

Next Steps

Given this tool, what will you do with it? You can choose to do nothing, you can choose to fight against this analysis for a particular agenda, or you can use this tool as an engaged citizen when you approach your legislator about their actions at the capitol. Whether you want to support or oppose something, start by finding the principles that you have in common, and then have a conversation on how to apply those principles. This is a non-partisan approach founded on critical thinking and a consistent view of the role of government. Still trying to sort out or clarify what you think the role of government is? Then **attend our next training session**. You might end up being an analyst for POL, and we can always use more of those! Go to our website and sign up for our legislative update emails, and you'll be notified when we schedule our next training session.

2014 House Legislator Principles of Liberty Scorecard

Rank	Principle			Individual Liberty	Personal Responsibility	Property Rights	Free Markets	Limited Government	Fiscal Responsibility	Equal Protection / Rule of Law	Overall Score	Grade
	# of Vote Data			983	3073	1101	5455	13075	5968	2379	32034	
Average Score	Leadership Positions	Party		69%	38%	46%	30%	43%	35%	33%	38.7%	
1	Everett		Rep	100%	96%	92%	97%	96%	98%	98%	96.8%	A+
2	Humphrey		Rep	95%	87%	87%	86%	92%	91%	92%	90.0%	A
3	Buck		Rep	92%	88%	81%	89%	90%	96%	85%	89.8%	A
4	Saine		Rep	92%	88%	90%	90%	88%	89%	85%	88.7%	A-
5	Holbert		Rep	92%	87%	78%	79%	85%	89%	84%	84.9%	B+
6	Nordberg		Rep	94%	82%	84%	77%	85%	82%	70%	81.8%	B
7	Lawrence	Min Whip (2)	Rep	79%	80%	73%	73%	77%	74%	65%	75.2%	C+
8	Szabo	Asst Min Ldr	Rep	92%	72%	89%	73%	77%	72%	68%	75.0%	C+
9	Joshi		Rep	88%	77%	85%	70%	77%	75%	60%	74.7%	C+
10	Sonnenberg		Rep	91%	74%	83%	64%	76%	74%	75%	74.0%	C
11	Priola	Min Whip (1)	Rep	91%	78%	86%	67%	73%	70%	62%	71.8%	C
12	Wright		Rep	93%	71%	67%	64%	72%	73%	74%	71.1%	C-
13	Dore		Rep	90%	70%	76%	59%	72%	64%	53%	68.0%	D+
14	Landgraf		Rep	75%	59%	81%	62%	67%	67%	63%	66.0%	D+
15	DelGrosso	Min Leader	Rep	83%	69%	64%	62%	66%	65%	64%	65.8%	D+
16	Scott		Rep	83%	67%	67%	58%	68%	65%	65%	65.8%	D+
17	Waller		Rep	71%	63%	67%	57%	62%	58%	47%	60.1%	D-
18	Swalm		Rep	63%	62%	60%	58%	62%	57%	53%	60.0%	D-
19	Navarro-Ratzlaff		Rep	88%	64%	57%	57%	62%	57%	49%	59.7%	D-
20	Conti	Caucus Chair	Rep	81%	59%	67%	49%	63%	58%	46%	58.6%	F
21	Stephens		Rep	89%	58%	73%	49%	59%	52%	61%	57.3%	F
22	Rankin		Rep	81%	64%	68%	47%	59%	51%	48%	56.5%	F
23	Murray		Rep	71%	65%	53%	45%	60%	55%	46%	56.2%	F
24	Gardner		Rep	73%	60%	61%	47%	58%	51%	37%	54.6%	F
25	Coram		Rep	75%	60%	55%	47%	58%	48%	53%	54.5%	F
26	Wilson		Rep	83%	60%	56%	43%	58%	52%	48%	54.2%	F
27	McNulty		Rep	63%	44%	71%	50%	58%	50%	56%	53.9%	F
28	Gerou		Rep	67%	49%	57%	28%	43%	34%	39%	40.0%	F
29	Labuda		Dem	63%	11%	19%	15%	28%	18%	19%	22.1%	F
30	Rosenthal		Dem	69%	18%	33%	12%	26%	14%	10%	21.0%	F
31	Lebsock		Dem	75%	17%	50%	6%	26%	11%	9%	20.6%	F
32	Vigil		Dem	63%	17%	32%	6%	25%	11%	9%	18.9%	F
33	Becker		Dem	58%	9%	30%	9%	23%	15%	9%	18.0%	F
34	Garcia		Dem	63%	14%	41%	6%	23%	8%	6%	18.0%	F
35	Hamner		Dem	58%	18%	32%	8%	24%	12%	12%	18.0%	F

- (1) Minority Whip for partial session.
(2) Minority Whip for partial session.

2014 House Legislator Principles of Liberty Scorecard

	Principle			Individual Liberty	Personal Responsibility	Property Rights	Free Markets	Limited Government	Fiscal Responsibility	Equal Protection / Rule of Law	Overall Score	
	# of Vote Data			983	3073	1101	5455	13075	5968	2379	32034	
Rank	Average Score	Leadership Positions	Party	69%	38%	46%	30%	43%	35%	33%	38.7%	Grade
36	Williams		Dem	53%	14%	26%	8%	24%	9%	16%	17.7%	F
37	Court	Caucus Chair	Dem	56%	17%	18%	6%	24%	11%	10%	17.6%	F
38	Buckner		Dem	56%	17%	25%	3%	24%	11%	9%	17.5%	F
39	Ryden	Deputy Whip	Dem	63%	14%	26%	7%	24%	9%	15%	17.5%	F
40	Kagan		Dem	56%	13%	25%	5%	23%	10%	11%	17.3%	F
41	Melton		Dem	56%	9%	19%	6%	23%	13%	11%	16.7%	F
42	Fields	Spkr Pro Tem	Dem	45%	10%	22%	7%	23%	12%	9%	16.7%	F
43	Exum		Dem	64%	17%	30%	6%	22%	9%	12%	16.6%	F
44	Foote		Dem	63%	9%	25%	5%	23%	10%	11%	16.6%	F
45	Singer		Dem	55%	12%	29%	6%	22%	9%	9%	16.5%	F
46	Salazar		Dem	55%	11%	25%	3%	23%	8%	11%	16.4%	F
47	McLachlan		Dem	56%	16%	24%	1%	20%	12%	12%	16.2%	F
48	Pabon	Asst Maj Ldr	Dem	58%	14%	20%	4%	22%	10%	12%	16.2%	F
49	May		Dem	50%	16%	21%	4%	22%	9%	10%	16.1%	F
50	Kraft-Tharp		Dem	62%	17%	25%	5%	22%	8%	15%	16.0%	F
51	Moreno	Asst Cau Chr	Dem	65%	11%	24%	2%	22%	8%	16%	16.0%	F
52	Pettersen		Dem	56%	17%	25%	1%	22%	8%	9%	15.9%	F
53	Lee		Dem	58%	18%	24%	1%	21%	7%	11%	15.8%	F
54	Hullinghorst	Maj Leader	Dem	58%	10%	29%	3%	22%	11%	10%	15.7%	F
55	Ferrandino	Speaker	Dem	58%	13%	29%	4%	22%	8%	10%	15.7%	F
56	Duran		Dem	58%	11%	23%	2%	23%	9%	10%	15.6%	F
57	Primavera		Dem	63%	13%	21%	4%	21%	10%	9%	15.5%	F
58	McCann		Dem	50%	10%	25%	6%	20%	11%	9%	15.3%	F
59	Young		Dem	58%	15%	27%	3%	20%	11%	10%	15.3%	F
60	Mitsch-Bush		Dem	62%	12%	33%	1%	20%	9%	12%	15.0%	F
61	Peniston		Dem	62%	16%	18%	1%	21%	9%	12%	15.0%	F
62	Tyler		Dem	62%	13%	19%	3%	20%	9%	12%	14.8%	F
63	Ginal		Dem	53%	12%	19%	3%	19%	9%	11%	14.3%	F
64	Fischer		Dem	62%	10%	25%	2%	18%	7%	12%	13.6%	F
65	Schafer		Dem	50%	8%	17%	4%	18%	8%	9%	12.8%	F

2014 Senate Legislator Principles of Liberty Scorecard

	Principle			Individual Liberty	Personal Responsibility	Property Rights	Free Markets	Limited Government	Fiscal Responsibility	Equal Protection / Rule of Law	Overall Score	
	# of Vote Data			452	1320	499	2545	6388	2930	1150	15284	
Rank	Average Score	Leadership Positions	Party	76%	39%	45%	28%	44%	33%	36%	39.1%	Grade
1	Marble		Rep	92%	89%	92%	91%	91%	93%	94%	91.7%	A
2	Baumgardner		Rep	90%	87%	83%	82%	87%	79%	87%	84.6%	B+
3	Lambert		Rep	90%	83%	82%	80%	86%	83%	85%	83.9%	B+
4	Lundberg		Rep	89%	65%	67%	72%	80%	80%	70%	76.7%	C+
5	Renfroe	Caucus Chair	Rep	89%	77%	60%	67%	79%	76%	83%	76.4%	C+
6	Hill		Rep	91%	64%	77%	78%	79%	74%	59%	75.4%	C+
7	Scheffel	Asst Min Ldr	Rep	90%	78%	58%	66%	78%	76%	72%	74.8%	C+
8	Balmer		Rep	92%	69%	54%	67%	73%	73%	64%	71.0%	C-
9	Harvey		Rep	95%	82%	73%	62%	74%	61%	71%	70.8%	C-
10	Grantham	Whip	Rep	90%	74%	73%	62%	69%	62%	52%	66.1%	D+
11	Brophy		Rep	90%	73%	73%	57%	66%	53%	52%	62.7%	D
12	Cadman	Min Leader	Rep	90%	60%	55%	53%	66%	58%	52%	61.0%	D-
13	Herpin		Rep	91%	48%	71%	34%	51%	33%	46%	47.3%	F
14	Rivera		Rep	80%	53%	62%	31%	50%	36%	34%	43.8%	F
15	Crowder		Rep	90%	38%	58%	32%	47%	34%	40%	42.1%	F
16	King		Rep	71%	46%	46%	27%	45%	32%	39%	40.3%	F
17	Roberts		Rep	78%	29%	35%	13%	34%	25%	30%	28.8%	F
18	Jahn		Dem	80%	24%	31%	8%	27%	10%	17%	20.3%	F
19	Guzman	Pres Pro Tem	Dem	65%	21%	30%	3%	24%	6%	17%	18.4%	F
20	Schwartz	Whip	Dem	67%	19%	33%	5%	24%	9%	15%	18.2%	F
21	Tochtrop		Dem	80%	21%	35%	2%	24%	8%	15%	17.7%	F
22	Hodge		Dem	64%	17%	25%	3%	24%	7%	15%	17.1%	F
23	Zenzinger		Dem	75%	16%	23%	3%	24%	8%	14%	17.1%	F
24	Carroll	President	Dem	80%	17%	27%	2%	23%	7%	15%	17.0%	F
25	Newell		Dem	61%	18%	27%	3%	22%	6%	15%	16.9%	F
26	Jones		Dem	53%	13%	41%	1%	24%	6%	14%	16.9%	F
27	Steadman		Dem	70%	17%	27%	2%	23%	7%	15%	16.7%	F
28	Johnston		Dem	59%	19%	20%	4%	22%	9%	12%	16.6%	F
29	Heath	Maj Leader	Dem	70%	17%	27%	2%	23%	7%	15%	16.4%	F
30	Kefalas		Dem	69%	17%	33%	3%	22%	7%	14%	16.3%	F
31	Todd		Dem	70%	16%	25%	3%	23%	8%	13%	16.1%	F
32	Ulibarri		Dem	55%	12%	19%	1%	22%	9%	13%	15.4%	F
33	Kerr		Dem	70%	15%	23%	3%	21%	9%	13%	15.4%	F
34	Nicholson	Caucus Chair	Dem	69%	13%	25%	3%	20%	6%	13%	15.1%	F
35	Aguilar	Asst Maj Ldr	Dem	50%	10%	24%	1%	20%	6%	13%	14.1%	F

Summary Statistics – Senate

		Individual Liberty	Personal Responsibility	Property Rights	Free Markets	Limited Government	Fiscal Responsibility	Equal Protection of Rule of Law	Overall Score
Democrat	Min	50%	10%	19%	1%	20%	6%	12%	14%
	Max	80%	24%	41%	8%	27%	10%	17%	20%
	Range	30%	14%	22%	6%	7%	5%	5%	6%
	Avg	67%	17%	28%	3%	23%	8%	14%	17%
	S Dev	9%	3%	6%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%

		Individual Liberty	Personal Responsibility	Property Rights	Free Markets	Limited Government	Fiscal Responsibility	Equal Protection of Rule of Law	Overall Score
Republican	Min	71%	29%	35%	13%	34%	25%	30%	29%
	Max	95%	89%	92%	91%	91%	93%	94%	92%
	Range	24%	60%	57%	78%	57%	69%	65%	63%
	Avg	88%	66%	66%	57%	68%	61%	61%	65%
	S Dev	6%	18%	14%	22%	17%	21%	20%	18%

Summary Statistics – House

		Individual Liberty	Personal Responsibility	Property Rights	Free Markets	Limited Government	Fiscal Responsibility	Equal Protection of Rule of Law	Overall Score
Democrat	Min	45%	8%	17%	1%	18%	7%	6%	13%
	Max	75%	18%	50%	15%	28%	18%	19%	22%
	Range	30%	11%	33%	14%	10%	11%	13%	9%
	Avg	59%	13%	26%	5%	22%	10%	11%	17%
	S Dev	6%	3%	7%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%

		Individual Liberty	Personal Responsibility	Property Rights	Free Markets	Limited Government	Fiscal Responsibility	Equal Protection of Rule of Law	Overall Score
Republican	Min	63%	44%	53%	28%	43%	34%	37%	40%
	Max	100%	96%	92%	97%	96%	98%	98%	97%
	Range	38%	53%	39%	69%	53%	64%	61%	57%
	Avg	83%	70%	72%	62%	70%	67%	62%	68%
	S Dev	10%	13%	12%	16%	13%	16%	16%	14%

Free People

Free Markets

Good Government

Free People

Individual Liberty – the principle that individuals have an unalienable right to act in their own interest with complete control over themselves and their production (i.e. property) and are the sole arbiters of what is best for themselves so long as their actions do not infringe upon the liberty or property rights of others. The Bill of Rights (Constitutional Amendments 1-10) is the original constitutional protection of our civil rights (individual liberties) from an intrusive federal government. The same principles behind the Bill of Rights should apply at all levels of government, including the state. Individual liberty means the freedom to make wise decisions, to make foolish decisions, to succeed, and to fail.

Personal Responsibility – the principle that individuals who are free to determine their own course of action have the responsibility for the consequences that ensue from that action. Individual liberty is symbiotic with personal responsibility. In the long run, one cannot flourish without the other. Actions have consequences. Personal Responsibility means owning the results of those actions. To ameliorate the consequences of individual actions is to steal the very essence of liberty and replace it with tyranny, no matter how benevolent the intent.

Free Markets

Property Rights – the principle that the right to determine ones own actions (liberty) extends to ones production. Production comes from an individual's mind and efforts and is as unique to that person as any other aspect of that person. As such, production (and, subsequently, property acquired through voluntary transaction between parties) is the sole dominion of its creator. This is the essence of property rights – the right to maintain ownership control and determine the use and disposition of ones property so long as it does not infringe upon the liberty or property rights of others.

Free Markets – free markets spring from property rights and liberty. Political freedom and economic freedom are inexorably intertwined to make up the DNA of the greatness of this country. Property rights dictate a free market economy in which one may exercise the liberty to use and dispose of property in the manner that the owner determines is in his best interest. Government's role with respect to the free markets is to defend and preserve property rights and uphold the rule of law. It is reasonable for government to enforce/adjudicate contracts, protect property rights, enforce justice & restitution for fraud, etc. It is not the role of government to create barriers to entry, disturb free market mechanisms such as price signaling, compete with private enterprise or distort the markets through regulation or other intrusions to advance a social, political or any other end.

Good Government

Limited Government – to quote Jefferson, “*The natural progress of things is for liberty to yield and government to gain ground.*” The premise of this statement is that for liberty to be preserved, government must be held in check. A corollary to this concept would be the principal of subsidiarity – that is, that the level of government that serves best is the one that is capable of performing the desired function which is closest to the people (e.g. local, then state, then federal).

Fiscal Responsibility – Government cannot “provide” anything that it has not first taken from the people. This means that we must always evaluate the opportunity cost of the government’s takings from the people. The private markets are subject to competitive pressures on price, services, products, quality and profitability; the government is not. It is largely because of these pressures that the market is more efficient than government. Therefore, government should only take that which is necessary to perform its proper role, minimizing the opportunity cost to the people. In order to help minimize this lost efficiency and opportunity cost, government must be held accountable to fiscal responsibility. Government has a moral and a fiduciary duty to be responsible and accountable to the people for that which it has coercively taken from the people.

Equal Protection of the Rule of Law – this is the principle that all citizens should receive equal protection under the law, and that no groups of people receive either favorable or unfavorable treatment from government. This is not to be confused with the more specific “equal protection clause” codified by the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This principle, as used by the Principles of Liberty, is more generalized from both a federal and state perspective. It is not the role of government to create a special group or class of citizens for protection or punishment, special treatment or penalties. The force of government is only legitimate if it is limited and applied equally for the protection of the rights of all.

State vs. Federal Balance of Power – the principle that the powers of the federal government are few and enumerated, while the powers left to the states or the people are broad and undefined. The nation’s founders who argued for ratification of the U.S. Constitution made their case based largely upon the premise that state governments would always hold the limited powers of the federal government in check. The principle of subsidiarity also supports this approach toward the balance of state vs. federal power.

Uphold the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Colorado – this principle is based upon the concept that these constitutions outline the basis of our federal and state governments, guiding the voluntary delegation of power from the people to the government for specific purposes. If a constitution is found to be lacking or needing change, there is a specific process to effect that change, but until such change might be made, the constitution is to be upheld. Upholding these constitutions requires not only a reading of those documents, but also a study of the context in which those constitutions were written, including contemporaneous writings and events surrounding the adoption of those constitutions to enhance the understanding of their meaning and intent.



Principles Of Liberty

www.principlesofliberty.org

What? Find out what is going on legislatively at the state capitol.

How? We analyze legislation based upon defined Principles of Liberty.

Why? Be informed about how your legislators actually vote.

What are the Principles?

Free People

- ✓ Individual Liberty
- ✓ Personal Responsibility

Free Markets

- ✓ Property Rights
- ✓ Free Markets

Good Government

- ✓ Limited Government
- ✓ Fiscal Responsibility
- ✓ Equal Protection of the Rule of Law
- ✓ State vs. Federal Balance of Power
- ✓ Uphold Constitutions of United States and the State of Colorado