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## The Views and Ideas of the Libertarian Party:

### A Rhetorical Analysis

Libertarians are the voice of freedom, and in their platform, they provide insight into the way of life in which citizens of the United States should live. They strongly believe in independence and individuality. Every person should be viewed as an individual free from the influence of others. The citizens of the United States are free to live their lives independently and do as they please if it is peaceful. Therefore, the government should be excluded from people's lives in all areas of society, and rather, the people should have the right to govern their own lives without the impedance of government. The personal lives of people should be protected from authoritarian power and people should be free to make their own decision and constitute their own regulations for such matters. Whether libertarians agree or disagree with these decisions is irrelevant.

Personal liberty is a very important plank of the Libertarian political platform. It addresses many aspect of people's personal lives that are important to address on a political level. The main thesis, or claim, that this specific plank states is that the government should be excluded from all personal affairs and each person should have the freedom to make their own decisions regarding their personal lives. The personal liberty plank states, "Individuals should be free to make choices for themselves and must accept responsibility for the consequences of the choices they make" (LIBERTARIAN). It explains that the opinion of Libertarians on such life

choices is irrelevant and people are free to decide for themselves while also taking full responsibility of their actions.

The libertarians give adequate support for their thesis through the plank. Under personal liberty, they give many examples of specific aspects of personal lives that are necessary to address. By elaborating on each standpoint, they strengthen and give a better understanding of the thesis. A form of personal freedom in which this party follows is self-ownership. An individual takes complete ownership of the body they are in and in doing so, can make their own decisions regarding it. The libertarian political platform states, "Individuals have the freedom and responsibility to decide what they knowingly and voluntarily consume, and what risks they accept to their own health, finances, safety, or life" (LIBERTARIAN). People can decide for themselves what they put into their body. They can eat whatever foods they please, even if it is harmful to their body. Government should not interfere with any such choices. Their statement excludes any substances that may enter a person without them knowing. This shows that libertarians truly care about the well-being of the people. Therefore, nobody else may deceitfully cause a person an individual to consume a substance without them knowing. Along with having ownership of one's body comes the freedom to engage or disengage in any sexual activity with another person. An individual has the right to decline any offers of sexual behavior with another person. Included in having freedom to self-ownership of a one's body, is the freedom of abortion. As stated previously, libertarians are adamant about keeping the government out of personal decisions. This means that the government should also not be involved in abortion policies. The libertarians believe that, "government should be kept out of the matter, leaving the question to each person for their conscientious consideration" (LIBERTARIAN). A woman has every right to her own body and therefore she can decide for herself if she chooses to have an abortion or

not. Self-ownership and abortion policies are effective examples of freedom that support their thesis. Both are concisely described and the libertarian's stance on each one is descriptively expressed.

This idea of personal freedom shows a lot about Libertarians' values. These are warrants, values that, although are not conspicuously stated in the platform, the libertarians are understood to hold. I know from the reading that in almost all aspects of personal life, they want the government disassociated with it. Although it is not stated, this leads me to believe that the warrants expressed from this platform are individuality and independence. Libertarians think each person should be free to be themselves and think and make decisions as an individual. They value independence from the government and from other people. People's beliefs and actions are to be decided by themselves. This also shows that they value free will; the will to make one's own choices and decisions in life. Allowing people to do so also implies that libertarians are open-minded and accept others. Libertarians offer these freedoms to every person without excluding any specific category of people. This means that they accept each person and their decisions in life.

Many the ideas that the libertarians expressed do not have qualifiers. Qualifiers are words or phrases that limit the thesis. Anything that implies that the argument applies to only a certain group of people or under specific circumstances. Language of possibility usually generates a qualified thesis. However, most statements that the libertarians explain use language of absolutes. Libertarians expressed this by stating, "No individual, group, or government may initiate force against any other individual, group, or government" (LIBERTARIANS). They do not exclude any specific category when claiming this. Words such as *no* and *any* help demonstrate this because they are both absolute; there are no exceptions. One qualifier that this

party may hold that limits their thesis is that it only pertains to people in the United States. This party's entire perspective is rooted in the belief to improve the United States and its citizens.

Backing is expressed in the platform in the party's preamble. Backing is what supports the warrant. It helps clarify and further explain these values. Before the libertarians explain their personal liberty plank, they provide background and insight into the core of their beliefs. The warrants of the platform are individuality, freedom, and diversity. In the preamble, it states, "We believe that respect for individual rights is the essential precondition for a free and prosperous world, that force and fraud must be banished from human relationships, and that only through freedom can peace and prosperity be realized" (LIBERTARIAN). They explain here that these values are important for our world to prosper. By doing so they are supporting their warrant for individuality. The preamble also states, "Our goal is nothing more nor less than a world set free in our lifetime, and it is to this end that we take these stands (LIBERTARIAN). By explaining their goal and appealing to most people's desire for freedom they support their value for freedom. Diversity is also valued by the libertarians and it is supported when the preamble states, "We defend each person's right to engage in any activity that is peaceful and honest, and welcome the diversity that freedom brings. The world we seek to build is one where individuals are free to follow their own dreams in their own ways, without interference from government or any authoritarian power" (LIBERTARIAN). They explain that diversity will come because of freedom and they accept it. By explaining in the beginning of their platform their reasoning for their beliefs and the world they believe will be created because of it, they adequately support the warrants present.

The authors of this platform also provide some aspects of the rhetorical triangle. One element of the rhetorical triangle that the libertarian platform lacks is pathos. It does not contain

many uses of empathy to influence the reader. The goal for the platform is to allow people to live free lives. Pathos appeal to people's emotions, and while some policies may be an emotional topic for some people, such as abortion, the platform does not use many emotional language or stories to try and achieve their goal. Some form of the emotional appeal that they provide is the idea of equality for all. They state, "Consequently, we defend each person's right to engage in any activity that is peaceful and honest, and welcome the diversity that freedom brings. The world we seek to build is one where individuals are free to follow their own dreams in their own ways, without interference from government or any authoritarian power" (LIBERTARIAN PARTY PLATFORM). This appeals to people's beliefs that everybody should be treated equal and be given the same opportunities to succeed in life. Along with pathos, the libertarians do not offer many examples of logos included in their platform. There is no use of credible studies that provide purely logical explanations for their stances, such as references to credible studies. However, it does provide logical explanation for each policy that they take a stance on. They explain that each policy is backed by their idea that the government should not interfere with each one. Ethos also do not play a big role in this platform. Because all the policies are truly backed by opinion, there can be no true perfectly correct form of government that every political party attempts to establish. It is almost impossible to give credibility to their ideas. In some cases, a party's ideas could be credible if they provide examples of times where their policies proved to be positively effective in society. However, in the case of libertarians, there has never been a government controlled by libertarians.

I have never voted in an election or followed politics closely. However, given the circumstances of the current election and the tendency of social media to exaggerate its events, I have learned about this election more in-depth. From reading this platform of the libertarians, it

has influenced my position. I know that neither Clinton nor Trump are libertarians, however I know that libertarian and democratic ideas are similar. I, too, believe that people should have the right to govern their own lives without interruption from the government. I am a strong believer that humans need to work together but, at the same time, every person is unique and should be able to make choices for themselves. Perhaps in this election, if I vote, I will vote in favor of the democratic party.

The libertarian party platform suggests a new way of life in which people have the power to make their own decisions for their personal lives based on their own independent ideas and beliefs. Currently, the government controls many aspects of citizens' lives in the United States so the libertarian beliefs and policies is a different and unique form of thinking. A world in which people have the power to govern their own lives is a world of freedom.

Works Cited

"LIBERTARIAN PARTY PLATFORM." (n.d.): n. pag. As Adopted In Convention, May 2016, Orlando, Florida. Web.