



# Platform

## 2023-2025 South Carolina Libertarian Party Platform

This Platform was ordained and established by the South Carolina Libertarian Party State Convention in North Charleston, South Carolina, on November 11, 2023

### 1. PREFACE

Governments, when instituted, can only tolerably be established to protect the rights of all persons under their jurisdictions to life, liberty, and property. The only tolerable purpose of Government is to preserve and protect individual rights.

### 2. PERSONAL LIBERTY

The SCLP supports a completely free society. In keeping with its only tolerable purpose, Government shall not enact statutes that infringe on the free choice of individuals, nor shall it direct those individuals as to their health, finances, safety, or lifestyle. Furthermore, neither Government nor any individual should be held responsible for the choices of another individual. Individuals are entitled to live

according to their own lifestyles, as long as they do not impose their values on or harm the life, liberty, or property of others, and each individual is solely responsible for the consequences of their own actions.

Therefore, the SCLP calls for the immediate repeal of any and all statutes which infringe on the free choice of persons within the State of South Carolina.

### 3. PROPERTY RIGHTS

One of the foundational principles of the Libertarian Party is the right to own property. The SCLP supports a completely free market economy, based on universal respect for property rights. In further keeping with its only tolerable purpose, Government shall not make any effort to plan the economy; redistribute income; subsidize businesses, individuals, or groups; or interfere with voluntary association among employers, employees, and unions. The only tolerable role of Government in economic activity is protection of property rights and voluntary trade.

Therefore, the SCLP calls for the immediate repeal of any and all Government regulation and spending in the State of South Carolina contrary to this purpose. The SCLP further calls for immediate and significant reduction and eventual elimination of income tax, sales tax, property tax, and all other forms of taxation in the State of South Carolina and for all tolerable functions of Government to transition to funding by voluntary means, just like every other organization already must do.

### 4. CIVIL ASSET FORFEITURE AND EMINENT DOMAIN

The SCLP condemns civil asset forfeiture and eminent domain. Since it is an inherent right to own property, the Government cannot infringe upon that right without first having just cause to acquire a legal warrant, and then following the

full course of due process before the legal ownership of personal or real property may be subject to surrender. This due process must include a separate court proceeding that definitively determines if the property was gained by virtue of criminal behavior.

## 5. CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

The Government of the State of South Carolina is poorly constituted with respect to its only tolerable purpose of protecting the rights to life, liberty, and property of all persons under its jurisdiction. The SCLP therefore supports the following measures of constitutional reform.

### 5.1 PROCEDURAL CHANGES

The SCLP supports the right of citizens to recall elected officials, the right of citizens to place binding referendums on ballots, and the inclusion of a binding "None Of The Above" option on all ballots for elected offices and replacement of top-two-runoff voting with ranked choice voting.

### 5.2 ON-THE-RECORD VOTING

The SCLP supports a State constitutional amendment that would prohibit voice votes in the General Assembly and require a recorded vote from each of its members on all matters.

### 5.3 ETHICS

The SCLP supports a State constitutional amendment that would permanently place the members of the General Assembly under the authority of the State Ethics Commission and require all elected officials to report their income sources.

Additionally, as Government employees investigating and adjudicating alleged misconduct by other Government employees or elected officials presents a clear conflict of interest, the SCLP supports a State constitutional amendment that at least 51% of every ethics commission investigative panel should be composed of registered voters chosen from the appropriate jury pool.

### 5.4 JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE

The public deserves confidence that judges rule independently of the Legislature whose laws they judge. South Carolina is the only State in the nation in which the Legislature unilaterally appoints judges even when vacancies arise. Therefore, the SCLP supports a State constitutional amendment that would have the Governor nominate judges, with advice and consent from the Senate.

## 5.5 EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The State's boards and commissions should be under the Governor so that there will be someone to hold directly accountable for the successes and failures of those organizations. Therefore, the SCLP supports a State constitutional amendment that would make the Governor fully accountable for the Executive Branch. The Attorney General and the Comptroller General should remain independent constitutional offices as a check and balance on the Governor's power.

## 5.6 OPEN BUDGET PROCESS

State law requires that the Governor, not the Legislature, write the first draft of the budget, and that the Legislature make revisions to the Governor's budget in "joint open hearings", but this requirement is routinely ignored. Therefore, the SCLP supports making this law into a State constitutional amendment to discourage the Legislature from changing or ignoring it at its whim.

## 5.7 EXEMPTIONS FOR LEGISLATORS

The SCLP believes that there should not be a ruling class that can exempt itself from the laws that it imposes on the citizenry of South Carolina. Therefore, the

SCLP supports a State constitutional amendment prohibiting lawmakers from granting themselves any exemptions or favors.

## 5.8 GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

In order to have a tolerable government, the Government must be held accountable through transparency and allow its citizens affordable and easy access to its records. By implementing prohibitive costs and bureaucratic red tape, Government agencies have effectively denied access to essential records. Therefore, the SCLP supports a State constitutional amendment requiring that all Government records must be digitally archived and made available to the public at no cost.

## 5.9 REDUCE LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS

South Carolina has one of the longest legislative sessions in the country, which creates more demand for lobbyists and special interest legislation and favors career politicians over citizen-legislators. Therefore, the SCLP supports a State constitutional amendment to set the session to occur bi-annually, January through June, and to require all legislation to be passed and signed by the Governor prior to the end of session in order to be enacted into law.

## 6. DECENTRALIZATION OF POWER

The SCLP supports the repeal of the 17th Amendment to the United States Constitution, thereby restoring to the State legislatures the power of appointment of United States Senators. By so doing, senators will be directly accountable to their State legislatures and reduce the benefit to be had from trading favors for votes. Senators, as per the founding fathers' intent, must be the representatives of their respective States and not the individual voters. We also affirm our support for the 9th and 10th amendments to the Constitution of the United States, the rights of the citizen to perform jury nullification, and the power of local governments to nullify any state laws which exceed the tolerable purpose of government, as detailed in Planks 1 through 3 above. One essential of a free government is that it rests wholly on voluntary support. Therefore, we further proclaim our support for the right of dissociation by any individual, group or entity from any other.

## 7. NATIONAL ISSUES

As an affiliate of the national Libertarian Party, the SCLP stands firmly behind the Statement of Principles found in the Libertarian Party's platform. The SCLP has no official position on the national issues in the remainder of that platform.