

White Paper – On Resurrecting Liberalism & Individualism

1. **Liberalism = Individualism:** According to the Oxford dictionary, Liberalism is “a political ideology centered upon the individual (see individualism), thought of as possessing rights against the government, including rights of due process under the law, equality of respect, freedom of expression and action, and freedom from religious and ideological constraint.” Individualism is not simply about race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. At its highest level, **Individualism is about the freedom to choose one’s unique path to self-determination.** Meanwhile, Government = Collectivism. Under the guise of the “Public Good,” government puts limits on the individual’s freedom to choose. It does so in essentially two ways: (1) by laws and (2) by persuasion. Persuasion is government’s method of convincing you that its choice is preferable over your choice. The mass media is government’s means to persuade you to choose its path over yours. Yet, there is also an important behavioral element in American politics which makes the media much more effective as an indoctrination tool: “division politics”—better known as Tribalism.
2. **Tribalism = Collectivism:** We each have a unique set of values, yet our political system essentially boxes us into one of two camps: Republican or Democrat. In almost forcefully having to choose one camp over the other, we give up much of our individualism. Anyone voting for a certain party candidate is quickly lumped into a homogenous mass of fellow voters to be more easily and brutally labeled and attacked by the opposing camp. We blindly defend our tribe and its leaders, even if our values do not always align with theirs. Criticism of one’s tribe results in ostracism from fellow tribe members (social media). Tribal leaders have the final word, and loyal tribe members cannot question it. The tribe effectively takes over the power of choice from the individual. Individuals are inducted into the world of *Groupthink* and *Partythink*, yet still believe that they somehow remain free-thinkers and critical-thinkers, making their own choices and setting their own paths. Nothing can be further from the truth for party loyalists. Division politics and tribalism are the most effective tools in American politics to trigger individuals to freely yield away their power of choice. This both encourages and empowers government to grow further and to subjugate the people through even greater means of control and manipulation. As government consumes more power that takes choices out of individual hands and places them into government hands, Liberalism fades proportionally. Just peek over the fence and you’ll see that it is happening today at an alarmingly accelerated pace.
3. **Resurrecting Liberalism:** While government remains persistent and diligent in seeking ways to deprive us of our personal choices, individuals become complacent and overly-trusting, producing a worrisome concern about the preservation of our individual freedoms through the Bill of Rights. Although the situation looks grim today from an individual’s perspective vis-à-vis the pathogenic and power-consuming government machine, there are solutions that will decentralize some of this power and provide greater freedoms for individual choices that were yielded away in the past. By deploying them, Individualism would advance over Collectivism, with the end result that a fading Liberalism could be resurrected and flourish in a healthier and purer form. This is the essence of our platform and Santa Cruz District 4 would be its beneficiary. Yet, two fundamental changes must lend themselves to this scenario before Liberalism can be successfully revived and the choices made for the betterment of the community are not made by a political party (government) and special interests, but by the individuals who reside there.
 - a. **Declare Nonpartisanship** – in renouncing party loyalty, at least at the local level, you would be exiting out of the tribal system and into what we might call “neutrality.” In neutrality, you are no longer under the burdensome oversight of your tribe. You cannot be attacked as a traitor going over to the other side because you have chosen to be on no side. You are now left alone to rediscover your inner voice and unique values, to form opinions outside the boundaries of your former tribe, to analyze your world more independently and critically, to challenge both tribes for their failures, and to make individual choices based on this new-found clarity of mind. Nonpartisanship weakens the effectiveness of government persuasion.
 - b. **Declare Semi-Autonomous Direct Democracy** – we mentioned two essential means for government to put limits on individual choice: (a) laws and (b) persuasion. While nonpartisanship takes away much of the power of persuasion when one exits the tribal system, a semi-autonomous direct democracy effectively places limits on government power to force its choices onto it through new laws, edicts, mandates, taxes, etc. Through consensus, residents of the direct democracy may reject these government choices via community referendums if those choices are incompatible with advancing the district’s own agenda. For more specifics on how a direct democracy would be implemented in district 4, please visit greghyver.com.